

Research Talk Guidelines + Tips

Note Title

4/30/2025

- ***Talk limited to 5 min with 1-2 min extra for questions.*** I will time you and cut you off if you go over 5 min time limit! So practice your talk before!
- Slide should be created in MS Powerpoint. Length ~ 5-7 slides (~ 1 slide per min).
- Talk should have Title slide, Introduction, Methods, Results, Conclusions sections in proper order. There are NOT Abstract or Discussion sections in a talk.
- A list of references can also be provided on separate slide at end of talk. Statistics, figures, tables,..etc. with data from studies may be referenced directly in slides.
- Make sure figures/captions/labels are easy to read, & explain them. Do NOT assume audience understands.
- Use bullet points, which do NOT need to be complete sentences. Do NOT write whole paragraphs of text!
- If appropriate, videos can be used, but should be kept short (< 30 seconds long) and explained well. Multimedia approaches welcomed, but not required.

Talk Guidelines + Tips (cont.)

- Speak slowly & clearly, with no annoying distractions. Do NOT just read off of the screen, or notecards, or paper. This will put the audience to sleep !
- Do NOT memorize, just practice enough that you are comfortable with material on your slides.
- In general, nervous students talk faster than in practice, so try to stay calm and pace yourself. Do not get stuck on one slide - keep things moving along.
- Do NOT use words/figures/tables in your slides that you do not understand, because I will ask you about them! Instead, learn and/or simplify material on slides.
- Know your topic well. The 1-2 min. question period after your talk will be difficult. Try to anticipate what the audience (including your instructor) may ask you.
- Do not make absolute statements (e.g. "this is the greatest"...etc.). Instead, use words like "may" or "possibly" or "has the potential to...",...etc.
- Also, do not make jokes during talk. Do not show any cartoons or figures that are not directly relevant to talk. These just distract from the topic.

Talk Guidelines + Tips (cont.)

- Keep your slide format and color scheme simple, with maximum contrast, so audience can read your slides. (e.g. purple text on black background is not optimal !)
- It is ok to write on slides similar points as you say. The audience can then focus on listening to speaker, reading slides, or both. (and if you forget something it is on the screen for you to see!)
- If you do not know the answer to a question, just say "I don't know" or that is a "good" or an "interesting question". DO NOT make something up!
- Practice & time talk by yourself & with other students.
- Define any terms/abbreviations/acronyms used.
- Introduce yourself at the beginning of the talk.
- Your instructor (moderator) will open up the presentation for questions when you are finished.
- Show enthusiasm during your talk because if you don't look interested, the audience won't be either!

Research Talk Grading Scheme

Following five criteria will be used to grade your research talk:

Content (20%):

- Was talk a comprehensive description of the topic?
- Was there also sufficient detail, not too general or vague?

Physics/Optics (20%):

- Were physical/optical principles used to describe topic?
- Were equations / formulas used to quantify results?
- Were images / diagrams / tables used to help describe topic?

Oral Presentation (20%):

- Was the student a good speaker? Did they speak and articulate slowly and clearly, without any distractions?

Organization (20%):

- Were slides in correct order with all major sections included, and data well labeled and easy to read and understand?
- Did the talk finish on time (< 5 min)?

Comprehension (20%):

- Did student integrate knowledge from multiple sources into a basic level of understanding?
- Was student able to answer the questions asked?