

The function of oral presentation english language essay

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



ORAL PRESENTATION The function of oral presentation is to communicate the main ideas of the research problem and the findings to convince the audience of the success or otherwise of the research. Oral presentations are meant to be heard, not read. It is not satisfactory merely to read a research report or paper, but it is necessary to arrange the facts and arguments in an orderly and logical manner. To be a successful speaker a separate speech should be written. The final presentation should be clear, concise and aurally attractive. The purpose is to give guidance on oral presentation, focussing on some of the problem areas and suggesting sound speaking practices. It is applicable to both large and small audiences. On completion of this course the student should confidently be able to present the research findings orally. The aim is to make students aware of: ♦ the difference between written and oral communication, and ♦ the skills that are necessary for presenting an oral report. The objective is that the student will be able to: ♦ write an oral report, and ♦ present an oral report.

8. 2 Preparing a speech

Speeches are meant to be heard, not read. We may have been impressed by a speech and later read the same speech and wondered why we were so impressed. It may seem mediocre in print. Why? It may have been the manner of delivery, or the personality of the speaker ♦ but this is probably not the complete explanation. It was probably prepared to be heard, not read. It was designed to catch the ear, not the eye. Reverse the process. Try to say your research report aloud to an audience. It may be a very good report, but it will not be a good speech. You will most likely realize that it is flat while you are delivering it. Good speeches and good reports have many points in common. Both should be: ♦ clear, not muddled; ♦ the

facts and arguments should be orderly and logical; there should be no waste of words or digressions; the style should be simple, direct and unambiguous.

8. 2. 2 Initial steps

The speech needs preparation in advance. Persons who can get up and make an extempore (off the cuff) speech without preparation have usually had a lot of public speaking experience and know the subject thoroughly. Do not leave preparation till the last minute. You will probably not be able to rise to the occasion without having given the speech some thought beforehand. Think about your subject and decide what you want to say. Get it in your mind, then get it onto a piece of paper. Write down all your ideas. Get them into order so one follows on to the next. Cut out repetition and irrelevance, Check the facts to make sure they are right. Put these ideas into the form of short notes. These will form the basis of your speech. Write an initial speech. The initial speech will need revising several times. The speech should be written quickly. It helps if you say it aloud as you write it down. If it sounds right it is right. Do not mind what it looks like. Continue to say the words aloud when you revise the speech. Notice how different they seem when they are heard instead of read.

8. 1. 2 Your audience

Consider yourself. Remember that you have to deliver the speech. Know your ability of expression. Know your limitations. Do not set yourself a task that is too hard for you. It is no good writing an elegant perfect speech if you cannot deliver it elegantly. Consider your audience. This needs a lot of thought. They are your audience. What sort of people will be in your audience. Age, sex, technical aptitude, social status, relationship to you. If you know most of them by their first names, do not speak to them as strangers. If you do not know any of them, do not pretend

that you do, even by implication. ♦ Be sincere. Do not say something that you disbelieve, it will not ring true, and is insulting. Do not say anything that might give offence. Do not say something just to please your audience, unless you can say it with honesty and sincerity.

8. 1. 3 Brevity and simplicity ♦ Be brief. People seldom complain that a speech is too short (unless they are paying you), but people complain that a speech is too long. ♦ Keep to a time limit. If you are not given a time limit, set one for yourself, and keep to it. ♦ Make allowances for pauses. Also, hopefully, applause and laughter. It is better to finish before your time is up than go way beyond the limit. ♦ Write your speech in short sentences. They are easier to remember, deliver, and for the listeners to grasp. If you lose the thread of a long sentence, it is difficult to finish gracefully. ♦ Use simple sentences. Construct each sentence to consist of subject, verb, and predicate. Avoid involved dependent clauses. Short, staccato sentences may not be good literary style, but are safe in a speech. If you normally write rather long sentences, split them up ruthlessly in revision. ♦ Avoid taking a breath within a sentence. Faults in preparation haunt you when you deliver the speech. ♦ Do not use long words if you know shorter ones that mean the same thing. Use of long words instead of short ones are a sign of ignorance, not education. This is a bad fault of style even in written language; in a speech it is inexcusable. It is good practice to revise the speech just to weed out the long words. ♦ Do not use uncommon words when the same thing can be said in familiar terms. Uncommon words sound pompous and affected. Those in the audience who do not understand the words will be irritated. Those who do understand them will think you are pretentious. ♦ Only use

words you normally use in everyday conversation. If you use them incorrectly, you may be subject to ridicule. If you do have a naturally large vocabulary, do not restrict yourself. ♦ Be natural. Be yourself. The audience will soon spot your posturing. ♦ Do not use more refined or educated language than you usually use. You will merely show your lack of refinement and education.

8. 1. 4 Cliches and obsolete words ♦ The use of obsolete and archaic words is an affectation. Words become obsolete because there is no longer any need for them. They have usually been supplanted by new words ♦ use these. ♦ Avoid cliches. A cliché is often an indirect way of expressing a simple idea. It was probably clever when first used but has been used too often. The novelty has worn off and cliches are now tedious. Cliches are often used in the wrong context, become banal, hackneyed and meaningless. ♦ Some cliches are difficult to avoid. We read them everyday. We hear them on the radio and television. We use them in normal conversation. Cliches are faults in the language and especially irritating in a speech. ♦ Weed out the cliches from the first draft. The first draft should be written quickly, and is full of cliches. Get rid of them. ♦ Use an original and effective way of expressing something. Perhaps it will find its way into a list of cliches.

8. 1. 5 Use of jargon ♦ Do not use jargon or slang on a non-technical audience. Jargon is part of the technical vocabulary. Use jargon with restraint. Jargon used properly can be used with great effect. ♦ When in doubt, avoid jargon. Do not use jargon for the sake of it ♦ it is a sort of inverted snobbishness.



Vulgarity should always be avoided. Vulgarity may get a few cheap laughs, but will not win over an audience. Do not use swear words. Avoid even the milder swear words, such as damned. Avoid blasphemy. You do not gain anything by using them, and may cause offence.

8. 1. 6 Quotations Be careful using quotations. An apt quotation can be very effective but it must be apt. Do not quote too much. Do not use a quotation to show off your learning. Avoid foreign quotations. This is the sign of an uneducated person. Avoid hackneyed quotations. An unfamiliar quotation has more impact. Use quotations correctly. Check the quotations before using them.

8. 1. 7 Humour Humorous stories are valuable additions to most speeches. They loosen up the audience. It helps win the audience. They are easy to tell. You can tell a story more naturally than when speaking formally. Some humour is desirable in most speeches, even research reports. Jokes must be in good taste. The safest joke is a joke against yourself. Humour must be amusing. An original joke is best the audience will not have heard it before. Never repeat a joke heard on the radio, television or read in a newspaper. It will be well known. Avoid puns. They are not clever. Jokes must have some bearing on the subject matter of the speech. If a joke has just been put in, it loses its point. If you cannot think of anything humorous, leave it out. Remember the punch line. Timing is of utmost importance in storytelling.

8. 1. 8 Last-minute changes Prepare your speech so that you can change it at the last minute. You may be anticipated by a previous speaker. Your humour may already have been used. You may be expected to reply to a previous speaker. Audiences are impressed when they hear

something fresh. ♦ Preserve the continuity of your speech. You may need to make cuts, close the gap or add new material. ♦ When you have to make an addition, try to make it at the beginning. The audience will still have the point fresh in their mind, and be expecting a reply. It does not interrupt your prepared speech.

8. 1. 9 Grammar ♦ Your speech should be grammatical. There are no special rules about grammar for speeches. Grammatically, the spoken word does not differ from the written word. If you fail on grammar, it has nothing to do with speech writing. ♦ Do not be pedantic. Remember grammar was made for us, not us for grammar. Grammar is a good servant, not a bad master (a few clichés!). Good style in writing and speaking is grammatical. Excessive or misplaced regard for grammatical rules may ruin style completely. ♦ Never end a sentence with a preposition. A sound rule that sometimes has to be broken to avoid an ugly sentence. This is bad in writing, but worse in speaking. ♦ Do not split infinitives. Probably more bad English is written by those who try to avoid splitting infinitives (and yet do not really understand what a split infinitive is) than those who split infinitives with gay abandon.

8. 1. 10 A few more hints ♦ When preparing a speech your primary object is to make your meaning clear. The words must be chosen and assembled primarily for this purpose. ♦ The clearest way of saying something is usually the simplest. ♦ Avoid unnecessarily long words and circumlocution. ♦ Never use two words when one will do. ♦ Always try for the maximum economy of language. ♦ Wasting time takes up your time, obscures your meaning, and irritates your audience.

8. 2 Writing a speech The preceding section included general instructions on preparing a speech. This section contains instructions for writing a good speech. A speech is not a

written report or paper, and preparing something to be heard is quite different from preparing something to be read. The medium is the spoken and not the written word. The art of preparing a good speech on the research paper lies in the method. However good the paper is, unless an established method is followed the speech will not be coherent and effective. The objective of the speech is to convey a set of facts from your research to the audience, and convince them of the authenticity of your conclusions. Start by putting your ideas down on paper. Let the ideas come naturally and do not invent ideas not included in the report. At this stage there is no need to try to get them into any sort of order, but list them under two headings: Facts and Arguments. The facts should all be in the research paper: What was known at the start of the research, how they were used, and what new has been determined. After having written the research paper you are the current expert on the subject, so the facts should follow naturally. The arguments are used to convince the audience that you started with the right facts, that they have been assembled and used correctly, and that the results obtained are convincing. The conclusions drawn are based on your expert opinion of the value of the research. At the end of your speech you will probably be expected to defend your paper by answering questions. You must bear this in mind, and try to anticipate and disarm criticisms. You should also be careful not to say anything that will give your critics an opportunity to challenge you. Try and restrict possible questions to clarification and expansion of points made in the speech. Your first notes are your thoughts on the subject, and they should be allowed to run freely. Let one idea lead to another, without reference to the research paper. Do not

worry about how you are going to express your ideas, or the right words to use, or that you expressed it differently in the written paper. Simply put everything down as it occurs to you until your ideas dry up. Leave these notes for a day or two. Now sort your notes out. Simply group the ideas together, linking up the ideas. Add any new ideas that occur to you, but do not try to impose a definite order at this stage. Check all the facts carefully with what is included in the written paper. It is vital that you do not make an error of fact or detail. An otherwise excellent speech can be ruined by such a mistake. And so can your reputation. Test the validity of all your arguments. Are they convincing? If you are not convinced, they will not convince your audience. A single unconvincing argument will open all your arguments to scepticism. You are the expert on the subject and are able to speak with authority. So sound convincing. Do not copy from the written paper, it is your speech and expresses your ideas. That is why it is important to write down your ideas rather than delving into the paper. If you find other facts and arguments from your perusal of the paper, write these in a different colour, so you can distinguish your original ideas which remain the basis of your speech. When you have your material assembled, your established facts and your sound arguments, it is time to compose your speech. A speech generally consists of three parts: the beginning (pre-oration); the middle or discussion; and the end (peroration).

8. 2. 1PreorationThe beginning should capture the attention of the audience. Avoid saying the obvious, and avoid starting a technical paper with a joke. A topical reference is a good way to make a strong start to your speech and relate a current debate to your subject. Enlarge on this from your original notes. This part of your speech

should be brief, factual and provide a vivid picture of the topic. Do not exaggerate or express any opinion at this stage.

8. 2. 2 Discussion

The middle can usually be divided into four parts:

- ◆ Statement of the proposition or argument that you wish to prove, i. e. your hypothesis.
- ◆ Details of the evidence, i. e. the data and the model.
- ◆ Summary of the evidence, i. e. the results of the modelling.
- ◆ Exposition of the conclusions drawn logically from the evidence.

The statement of your proposition indicates what you want to prove. Here you should state what is, and what in your opinion should be. Carefully select from your list of Arguments those that are relevant to the question, leaving out the weaker points. Arrange them in order, making notes of the salient points. The evidence in detail will occupy a large part of your speech and comes from your list of Facts. Its quantity will be determined by how much time you have for your speech. You should be ruthless in your selection, and the facts that are included should be compressed. You want to include as many facts as possible, but do not try to include everything if you cannot do anything justice. Leave out the less impressive facts and make the most of the strongest ones. Weed out anything that is not relevant or does not add anything to your argument. Do not digress from your main argument and arrange everything in a logical and orderly manner. Each point should lead naturally on to the next. The summary of the evidence should be much briefer and only include pertinent results. The results should follow from the logical arguments presented in the details of the evidence. Do not pluck results from nowhere, without preceding them with evidence of how they have been obtained.

8. 2. 3 Peroration

Now come the logical conclusions to be drawn from all the

evidence presented. This is the most important part of your speech and should be clear and forceful. It must anticipate any possible criticism of your arguments, and disarm them. Bring out the most constructive features of your argument. Start with constructive criticism of the current state of affairs, pointing out the things that are wrong, and say how they could be improved. Finally comes the ending, probably the most difficult part of your speech. Like the beginning, it should capture your audience, but in a different manner. Your objective is to leave your audience with something to remember. An apt quotation, an epigram or a paradox often provide a good ending.

8. 2. 4 Speech notes

The whole pattern of your speech is now in note form. It is a good idea to reduce these notes to a more compact form containing key thoughts, facts and ideas, laid out in the correct logical sequence. These should be expressed as single words and phrases which are sufficient to remind you of the longer notes. Keep these for later use for delivering your speech. The longer notes contain the framework of your speech. Read these notes as critically as you can. Ask yourself whether they include anything that does not fit in or could be omitted without weakening your argument; if there is repetition or ordering that will cause your speech to be longer than necessary; if the arrangement is logical and orderly; and whether the arrangement really represents what you want to say. Go back to your original Facts and Arguments list and see whether anything of importance has been omitted. See how they can be included without disturbing your sequence. Then write out your speech in full.

8. 2. 5 Speech drafts

Write the speech quickly without trying to find the best word or turn of phrase. Speak it aloud as you write, and do not try to make revisions. Stick

to the headings and points. Any new ideas can be noted on a separate piece of paper for later consideration. When you have finished, read it aloud.

Revise it, polish it, rephrase it, and try to improve in every possible way. If a word does not seem right, try to find a better one. Find synonyms from a dictionary and thesaurus. Look at each argument and try to be clearer and more forceful. Be highly critical of your speech. Ask for a second opinion if possible. Put the speech aside for a day or two. Take out your speech and repeat the activities of the previous paragraph. Time the speech, allowing for pauses. If it is too long, cut it ruthlessly. Do not think that you are weakening your arguments. Your strongest arguments come at the end, but your audience should still be with you, not fast asleep. When your speech is the right length, or slightly shorter, polish it again, and again, right up until you come to make the speech. A good word processor is invaluable for this.

Compare your speech with your notes to see whether it all hangs together.

Take a deep breath and prepare for delivery. 8. 3Delivering a speechThe

best advise on making a speech is said to be ♦stand up, speak up, and shut up♦. Brevity has already been discussed. The question of delivery is

discussed here. 8. 3. 1Memorizing the speechThe speech can be memorized

in four ways:♦it can be read,♦it can be learnt by heart and recited,♦it can be broadly memorized, but not delivered word for word, or♦it can be

memorized for delivery with the aid of a few notes. The worst method is reading the speech. The main disadvantage is that it never sounds

convincing or sincere. The audience is unsympathetic from the start. It does not allow the speech to be modified during delivery in response to what has

been said by previous speakers. This latter disadvantage is also applicable to

reciting a speech learnt by heart. Such deliveries usually sound flat and artificial, unless the speaker has a natural flair. Confusion, embarrassment and panic ensue if the speaker loses the place. Broadly memorizing the speech is for the practised speaker, where it involves a good memory and adeptness in the use of language. It is not recommended for the novice but should be a desirable objective. The most suitable method is to memorize the speech with the aid of notes so that the speaker will be able to deliver it nearly in the form in which it was prepared. The memorizing is done subconsciously during the preparation and writing of the speech, and the brief notes have already been developed. Having carefully crafted a brilliant speech, you may be loathe to abandon the words you took so much trouble to prepare, write, revise and polish. Take comfort in the fact that your memory, however bad you think it may be, will rise to the occasion and retain the best parts from your prepared speech, and reject the ineffectual parts. The notes should be clearly written or typed on a postcard size card. They must be easy to read at arm's length or when placed on a table or lectern. It is better to place the card on a table in front of you, rather than holding it in your hand, unless you are short sighted. Glance at the card unobtrusively, preferably during pauses for applause or laughter. You only need to glance at the card for assurance of the next point of your speech. Good delivery comes from practice. Go into a room alone and deliver your speech in front of an imaginary audience, or a full length mirror. Or even a few constructively critical friends. As you have decided not to learn the speech by heart, do not try to find the words that you have written. Sacrifice these for others. These may be more suitable and fluent. Do not think you

have wasted your time writing your speech in full ♦ you have been learning it all along. Your new speech will probably sound more natural. When you make your speech sound natural, you are in fact deceiving the audience into believing that your speech is spontaneous. This does not happen where the speech is merely read or recited, unless you are a great actor. Practising the delivery of the speech will probably expose expressions that sound stilted or ambiguous. Change them. Do not think that your beautifully written speech is perfect. It is never too late to improve a speech. Your tongue is often wiser than the pen.

8. 3. 2NervesMost good speakers are nervous before delivering a speech. But if you are well prepared, these will disappear when you stand up and open your mouth. That is why a good opening is so important. It helps relax you to speak in a natural, conversational style, and brings the audience onto your side. Overcoming this stage fright is only a matter of confidence. You can do it. Even the most eloquent of speakers have a touch of nerves. It opens up a flow of adrenaline that helps you get off to a good start. The audience response helps sustain you. On the other hand, do not seek to bolster your courage with a drink of alcohol. Although it is a temporary stimulant, it could prove disastrous by clouding your brain when it should be its sharpest. Rather, just before you rise to speak, deflate your lungs fully, take in a deep breath and expel it slowly. Repeat two or three times to increase the supply of oxygen to your blood and your brain, and steady your nerves.

8. 3. 3Stand upThe way you rise to speak is very important. It is your first communication with the audience. You probably feel nervous and slightly sick. Your legs feel flabby and you want to avoid the gaze of the audience. Your natural response is to get up slowly and

reluctantly with your knees bent while you shuffle to the podium or speakers stand. You have lost the audience. Remember that the audience is yours, until you lose them. Keep them. Get a grip on yourself and stand up smartly, but not too eagerly. Stride easily to the podium. Face your audience squarely. A good show of confidence will make you feel confident. And your nerves will disappear. Your standing should be easy and comfortable. Place your feet firmly apart and stand at ease. It is better to put the weight of your body on one foot rather than both. It is less tiring, and allows you to transfer your weight to the other without disturbing the audience. Keep your feet still during your delivery. Stand upright and do not slouch. Make sure your notes are in a convenient position where you can see them, and they will not fall off or blow away. Do not let your hands hang limply by your side as you will feel and look ill at ease. Do not fold them across your chest as this restricts your breathing. Do not put them on the table in front of you, as the table will probably be too low and you will find yourself leaning forward. Do not fidget. Locate the back of a chair or a rail on the lectern at the proper height that you can grasp with confidence. Or put your hands behind your back, out of sight, out of mind. If necessary, keep them in your pockets, but do not jingle coins or keys. Control your hands and arms. Do not gesticulate unnecessarily, but make spontaneous gestures. Let them come naturally to give emphasis to what you are saying, otherwise they interfere. When you are speaking keep your head up, and if possible slightly tilted forward. This keeps the air passages open and your throat will not be restricted unless your head is held too high. This is the reason podiums are raised above the audience. Do not look at the floor or the ceiling. Keep your eyes on your

audience, at the back of the audience for preference. If you are speaking from notes, learn to take them in with a quick glance downwards, preferably during a pause.

8. 3. 4 Pauses

An important aspect of speaking is silence. Pauses allow you to give emphasis to the following word or phrase. Pauses are the punctuation in speaking. Punctuation in speaking is not the same as in writing, you have to make additional pauses where there are no commas. Pauses should be made intelligently, and a good pause can say more than words. Pauses should be of different lengths, however, and in general the longer the pause the greater the impact of the following words. Take your pauses seriously because they are a vital part of your speech. Fit your breathing into your pauses and not the pauses into your breathing. It is important that the taking of a breath should be accomplished in silence, especially if you are speaking into a microphone. Not all pauses are necessary for breathing, and do not attempt to deliver too many words without a pause. Unintended pauses for air can spoil the effect of your speech. When breathing take as much air into the lungs as you can, and never exhaust them completely. Keep your shoulders back, your chest out and your abdomen slightly drawn in. Inhale only through the nose if possible. Pause before the speech is begun. Stand correctly. Look ahead. Breathe deeply. Your nerves are now calm and you are ready to speak.

8. 3. 5 Speak up

Just as silence is important, so is speaking up. You should be audible to all the audience. Inaudibility is one of the most common errors in speaking, and is the least excusable. Audibility is not difficult even for those who do not have naturally powerful voices. Open your mouth and speak clearly. Do not mumble or swallow your words. Do not drop your voice at the end of

sentences. There is no need to shout if you speak to the back of your audience ◆ your voice will carry. Do not speak too rapidly. If you are interrupted by laughter or applause, wait until silence has returned before continuing. Do not try to speak over unnecessary noise such as clattering of cutlery or glasses or whispering ◆ silence will usually return after a simple pause. In the written word, italics are used for emphasis. Good writers use italics sparingly. In speaking, however, verbal emphasis is necessary to keep your speech from sounding flat and uninteresting. Emphasis, like the pause, should be varied. Emphasis should range from light to heavy, with good contrast. In the spoken word the verbs will be emphasized, but it should be used with care. If everything is emphasized then the emphasis loses its impact and there is nothing left for the really important words. 8. 3. 6Manner of speakingDo not be pompous or patronizing to your audience, and do not talk down to them. You are delivering a research paper so do not try to be over-familiar with your audience. Do not punctuate your speech with ◆um◆ and ◆ah◆ as these irritate the audience. They can become a habit that is then very difficult to cure. They are usually used when you think there is nothing else to say. Lack of concentration and insufficient preparation of the speech are the main causes, where the speaker gains time to think what is to be said next. If you must pause to think then think in silence. Your tone should be varied according to the subject matter of your speech, and whether you are at the beginning, the middle or the end. Start slowly with well-modulated tones and end your speech by building up to the climax. Put as much meaning as possible into your words, but do not be theatrical. Be natural and avoid monotony. It should be a polished version of your normal

conversational speaking. 8. 3. 7ArticulationYou do not need a loud voice in order to make yourself heard. It is not the volume that makes it possible for your audience to hear what you are saying. It is the way you say it. Correct speaking is clear speaking. It is a manner of communication and you should avoid saying things in a way that prevents your audience from understanding what you are saying. We all speak with an accent, and it is nothing to be ashamed of. In fact it adds character to your delivery, but does not interfere with what you are saying. Do not try to affect another accent ❖ this is an affectation that will neither convince nor please your audience. Use your natural accent. Whatever your accent and however you pronounce words, pronounce them clearly and distinctly. Practice saying each word slowly and distinctly and avoid running one word into the next. Make sure that you open your mouth properly, use your lips and bring your tongue in proper relation with your teeth. Practise in front of a mirror until you have corrected your obvious faults. The first rule in elocution is that each word should be pronounced separately, and that all letters that are meant to be pronounced should be pronounced. Start by making a brief pause between each word and do not lose the end of the word, particularly the final ❖d❖, ❖t❖, ❖k❖ and the ❖g❖ in words ending in ❖ing❖. You will feel awkward and sound stilted at first, but with practice you will find it easier to articulate words correctly than incorrectly. Do not run words together. The pronunciation of the final ❖r❖ depends on whether the next word begins with a vowel. If it begins with a vowel, on the other hand, the final ❖r❖ is barely pronounced. And do not put a final ❖r❖ where there is not one. The letter ❖h❖ causes the most difficulty. Do not drop the final ❖h❖ or add an

h where it does not belong, either at the beginning or end of a word. Some words have a silent h such as honest and hour. Do not ignore the h in words like what, when, where and why. A lot of faults can be avoided by taking care over the pronunciation of the definite article the. When it precedes a vowel (or a silent h), it should be pronounced thee. When it is before a consonant, it should be pronounced as a short th. If these rules are observed, it is hard to get it wrong. A common error is to put the stress on the wrong part of a word. This usually occurs when the stress is put on the second syllable when it should be on the first. Check your dictionary for the correct pronunciation when in doubt. Errors in pronunciation often stem from errors in spelling. If you spell it wrong, then you will probably pronounce it wrong. Conversely, if you pronounce it correctly, you will find that your spelling improves dramatically. This usually occurs when you try to use long or relatively uncommon words whose meaning you do not entirely understand. There is no reason to use a long word when two simpler words are better.

8. 3. 8 Audience reaction

One person speaks, and the audience hears. In a good speech the speaker and the audience are in harmony. The speaker communicates with the audience and there is no misunderstanding. Your speech was prepared with the audience in mind, anticipating their response. You cannot always get it right, however, so you need to observe what effect your words are having on your audience, and be prepared to modify your speech accordingly. You should be able to tell from the reaction of your audience whether they are with you or are bored. Yawns, whispers, limp responses indicate that you should cut short what you are saying and quickly move on to the next topic. If

necessary finish off as quickly as you can and sit down. Your audience will probably now think that your speech was better than they thought. If for some unfortunate reason you have a heckler in the audience, respond with quick wit and try to get your audience to laugh with you at the expense of the heckler. Do not be spiteful or malicious, keep your cool and never lose your temper. Otherwise the heckler has got the better of you and will persist until you sit down.

8. 3. 9Speaking aidsSpeaking aids can boost your presentation tremendously, but can also get in the way of your message if you are not careful. Microphones are a positive boost to your speaking. Use a microphone if it is available, and do not think that you have such a powerful voice that you do not need to use it. Unless you are familiar with the acoustics of the venue, the microphone has been placed there so that everyone can hear. Overhead projection of transparencies can provide useful prompts to the speaker, but be aware that the audience now looks at the screen rather than the speaker. Keep your text and diagrams simple and clear so that the audience can take it all in with one glance. Avoid switching the projector on and off as this usually irritates the audience. Visual aids can often add depth to your speech, where one good picture is worth a thousand words. If you are using unfamiliar technology, bear in mind that if something can go wrong, it will. It is far better not to rely on aids than for an otherwise good presentation to be ruined by technological interference.

TaskGive an oral presentation of your selected research topic. This will be based on your research paper which is to be presented at a conference.