

# What Makes a Good Oral Presentation?

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The following features of a good presentation were formulated by the students of HUM/RS 4324 Gender and Mysticism at Virginia Tech during the Spring semester, 1999. If you have other items to add to the list, let me know!

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1. Remember that in an oral presentation, your job is to **TEACH** your topic to the class and the professor. So you may want to think about the best teachers you have studied with. What made them good teachers? Why did you like their teaching style? How can you imitate the best features of their teaching in your presentation?
2. Know your subject thoroughly.
3. Speak clearly and with confidence. Make eye contact with your audience.
4. Present your material in an organized manner. Try not to memorize the actual words; this will make the presentation seem stiff and unnatural. Know the order in which you will discuss your topic and then talk about your topic in a natural manner.
5. Choose a topic in which you have a personal interest and then don't be timid or afraid to show that interest when you talk about your subject. The very best talks are those in which the speaker has interest.
6. Get the class involved in the presentation through questions and discussion. Include audio and visual aids if possible.
7. Challenge the class to rethink assumptions or consider a new idea.
8. Add humor if appropriate. The most confident speakers will use humor when the subject matter is appropriate to do so. Humor gets the audience involved and releases tension.
9. For a week or so before your presentation, observe professors and their public speaking styles. Mentally critique their public speaking and think about what features you want to imitate and what you want to avoid.