Presentation Skills Checklist

Are you ready to knock the socks off your instructor and classmates with your presentation? Below is a checklist of polished presentation behaviors. If you can master all these elements, you will deliver a knockout presentation that should earn you a good grade. Since presentations are often given by groups of students, the word “presenter” below can also refer to “presentation team members.” As you rehearse your presentation, have a “mock audience,” someone who will have the checklist in front of him or her and evaluate your presentation against this list.

- Presentation appears well-rehearsed; presenter appears to know content well and be comfortable with it. Presentation is smooth and professional.
- Presentation takes the appropriate length of time. (Your instructor has probably assigned minimum and maximum times; be sure your presentation is not longer or significantly shorter.)
- Technical equipment is set up and presenter knows how to work it with ease.
- Presenter has backup plan if something goes wrong with equipment.
- Presenter may refer to notes, but does not read presentation, is not dependent on notes.
- Presenter makes frequent eye contact.
- Presenter makes eye contact with all parts of the room, not just one side.
- Presenter delivers presentation with energy and enthusiasm.
- Presenter makes eye contact with all parts of the room while speaking, but does not pace.
- Presenter keeps hands out of pockets.
- Presenter projects voice well enough so everyone in the room can hear it.
- Presenter speaks at a normal pace — not too quickly or too slowly.
- Presenter varies voice pitch and does not speak in a monotone.
- Presenter is dressed nicely enough to seem authoritative and persuasive. Business attire/business-casual attire is always a nice touch.
- Presenter introduces self, especially if giving a team presentation.
- Presenters in a team presentation do not murmur among themselves during the presentation.
- Presenter refrains from wearing distracting headgear, such as a ballcap.
- Presenter appears calm and relaxed. If presenter is nervous, it doesn’t show.

- Presenter keeps “pause words,” such as “umms” and “uhhs” to a bare minimum.
- Presenter avoids inserting pause words such as “like” and “you know.”
- Presenter refrains from distracting behavior, such as chewing gum, while speaking.
- Presenter refrains from rustling papers or fumbling with/dropping notecards while speaking.
- Presenter refrains from making inappropriate gestures involving hands and face, such as scratching or wiping nose.
- Presenter asks audience for questions.

Lectern Body Language

- Presenter refrains from hugging or leaning too heavily on lectern.
- Presenter refrains from pushing lectern away from self or tipping it forward.
- Presenter refrains from rocking back and forth at lectern.
- Presenter refrains from swaying from side to side at lectern.
- Presenter refrains from tapping or drumming on lectern.

Visual Aids

- Slides have just a few key words or phrases; they are not overly text-heavy.
- Type on slides is mostly in caps and lower-case instead of all caps.
- Fonts on slides are easy to read and transparencies don’t contain an excessive number of fonts.
- Type on slides is large enough to be read in all parts of the room.
- Slides are simple in design without too many colors or hard-to-follow graphics.
- Slides are free from typos.
- Presenter refrains from turning back to audience while reading transparencies/PowerPoint slides.