

# Talks are Different from Papers

Less formal.

- Can include conjectures, predictions, observations, personal experience
- Can be less precise, incomplete, simplified

Personalized

- Develop a style

Listeners can not pause, review, or scan ahead

- Need to reinforce meaning
- Repeat key points in different ways

# Designing a Talk

Who is the audience?

- Background and sophistication
- Can include extra (optional) slides for additional background

A controversial title can attract attention

Include a title slide (with your name and affiliation)

- If appropriate, include a collaborator/support source slide

Outline the talk at the beginning, progress indicators in the middle, summarize at the end

- Tell them what you are going to tell them
- Tell them
- Tell them what you told them

You might lose people along the way

- Build in re-entry points

# Style

Develop a style

Sparse vs. decorative

Thorough presentation vs. signposts

Regardless of style, keep words (and equations and numbers!) to a minimum.

- Too much on a slide can distract an audience from your presentation
- Too much math will intimidate many listeners

Each slide should have one main idea

Overlays can be used to build up ideas

- When a development won't fit onto one slide, repeat information as necessary

# Judging Time

Different presentation styles make it hard to equate number of slides with time.

In part, it depends on whether the slides carry most of the talk or not.

- Write on blackboard or slide as you go?
- Signpost slides? Or complete?

Rule of thumb: 2 minutes per slide

I'm lucky to get through 10 slides in a 50 minute lecture

The better prepared, the more you can cover

# Common Mistakes

1. Talk is too long
2. Too much text per slide
3. Technique at the expense of presentation  
(Powerpoint abuse)
4. Any sort of animation/motion/blinking
5. Too much detail (rely on the paper for details)
6. Too little motivation and context
7. Too much reliance on listener's memory

# Giving a Talk

## Things you can control

- Don't read from the slide!
- Talk to the audience, not the slide
- Don't speak too quickly
- Don't speak too quietly
- Don't speak too long

## Things that are hard to control

- Be relaxed. (Remember: The audience wants you to succeed.)
- Be dynamic and interesting
- Don't speak in a monotone
- Don't um and er (pause instead)
- Use eye contact with the audience

# Preparing to Give a Talk

If you are inexperienced, write out what you want to say in notes.

- As best you can, don't just read the notes

Can write notes to yourself on the backing paper of the slide

Emphasize just one or two key points that you want the audience to take home

Be sure to give a timed practice talk before the presentation, in addition to your own rehearsals (2-3 times)

# Physical Considerations

How big is the room?

- Is the presentation visible throughout the room?

How well can the talk be heard?

- Will you use a microphone?
- How loud do you need to speak?

How will you point to the slides?

- Hand? Pointing device?

Presentation medium?

- True slides
- Transparencies
- Computer presentation

Blackboard/Whiteboard available?