

# GIVING A SPEECH: DO'S AND DON'TS

## HONORS COLLEGE SYMPOSIUM FOR SCHOLARLY & CREATIVE RESEARCH

### TIPS FOR POSTERS

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For scientific posters, be sure to clearly state the question your study addresses, your hypotheses, and your conclusions. Give a brief description of your methods.

Use handouts to supplement your poster, if appropriate

Place related materials (for instance, a photo with accompanying text) close together, then highlight themes by framing collections of material with blank space.

### TIPS FOR PRESENTATIONS

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#### General Guidelines

- Practice, practice, practice. Be aware that your real talk will take about 10 – 20% longer than your practice talk.
- Dress appropriately.
- Introduce your topic in its proper context at the very beginning of the talk. (What is the question? Why is it important? Who cares about it? Who studied it before you did? What is your contribution? What will you tell us?)
- Speak loudly, slowly, and clearly.
- Be professional: don't use profanities, colloquialisms, and space fillers (such as "you know," "so," "um," "uh," or "like).
- Know your audience. Avoid special terminology and technical formulas. Define all key terms before you use them.
- Don't go over time. It's impolite to the audience and the speakers following you.
- Don't ask for questions at the end of the talk; let the moderator ask for you.

#### Visual Aids

USE VISUAL AIDS WITH CARE. REMEMBER THAT VISUAL AIDS ARE EXACTLY THAT – AIDS. THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO *HELP* YOUR TALK, NOT TO *BE* YOUR TALK.

- Don't read from the slides – explain them.
- Prepare separate notes for each slide. Be careful not to block the view – keep your shoulder away from the projector.
- Have a pointing device handy.
- Maintain eye contact with your audience. Don't look at the screen or your notes too much.

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### **PowerPoint**

KEEP IN MIND THAT USING POWERPOINT WILL NOT MAKE A BAD TALK LOOK GOOD! IF YOU USE POWERPOINT, THE FOLLOWING APPLY:

- Place the title, author(s), and affiliation (or project status) on the first slide.
- Use a few well-written slides. Count about 2 minutes per slide (e.g. a 15-minute talk should have no more than 6 – 8 slides).
- Each slide should clarify only one topic and have a short (one-line) title.
- Print a few well-spaced lines (12 or less) per slide.
- Use standard font of large size: at least 28 point or ½” in height. (Sans serif fonts, such as Arial, look better than serif fonts, such as Times New Roman, in PowerPoint)
- Make sure your graphs, charts, pictures, and photos are large enough and clearly visible.
- Use a few basic colors (black, blue, red). Don't mix red with green; this particular color combination can be difficult to read.
- Don't depend solely on the computer.
- Don't go wild with the colors; use one of the professional-looking color schemes. Make sure your slides have enough contrast between the foreground and background colors.
- Don't use cute but distracting and annoying transitions, animations, sounds, etc.
- Press the space bar to go to the next slide and the backspace key to go to the previous slide (it's easier than fumbling with the mouse in the dark).
- Run your PowerPoint presentation in any HC classroom to make sure that your version of PowerPoint is compatible with the version used in HC classrooms.