

# Guidelines for Oral Presentations at Meetings of the Acoustical Society of America

## Preparation of Visual Aids

- Allow at least one minute of your talk for each slide (e.g., Powerpoint, Keynote, or transparencies). No more than 12 slides for a 20-minute talk (which includes 3 minutes for questions and answers and 2 minutes to allow audience to move to other sessions).
- Minimize the number of lines of text on one visual aid. 12 lines of text should be a maximum. Include no more than 2 graphs/plots/figures on a single slide. Generally, too little information is better than too much.
- Presentations should contain simple, legible text that is readable from the back of the room.
  - Characters should be at least 0.25 inches (6.5 mm) in height to be legible when projected. A good rule of thumb is that text should be 20 point or larger (including labels in inserted graphics). Anything smaller is difficult to read.
  - Make symbols at least 1/3 the height of a capital letter.
  - For computer presentations, use all of the available screen area using landscape orientation with very thin margins. If your institutions logo must be included, place it at the bottom of the slide.
  - Sans serif fonts (e.g., Arial, Calibri, and Helvetica) are much easier to read than serif fonts (e.g., Times New Roman) especially from afar. Avoid thin fonts (e.g., the horizontal bar of an e may be lost at low resolution thereby registering as a c.)
  - Do not use underlining to emphasize text. It makes the text harder to read.
  - All axes on figures should be labeled.
- No more than 3-5 major points per slide.
- Consistency across slides is desirable. Use the same background, font, font size, etc. across all slides.
- Use appropriate colors. Avoid complicated backgrounds and do not exceed four colors per slide. Backgrounds that change from dark to light and back again are difficult to read. Keep it simple.
  - If using a dark background (dark blue works best), use white or yellow lettering. If you are preparing slides that may be printed to paper, a dark background is not appropriate.
  - If using light backgrounds (white, off-white), use dark blue, dark brown or black lettering.
  - Use colored lines only if required to distinguish different curves, lines or elements. However, remember that some people cannot distinguish between common colors (e.g., red/green) and so using different symbols can be a better approach.
- Embedding sounds and movies into your presentation is advisable when possible.

## Presentation

- Organize your talk with introduction, body, and summary or conclusion. Include only ideas, results, and concepts that can be explained adequately in the allotted time. Four elements to include are:
  - Statement of research problem
  - Research methodology
  - Review of results
  - Conclusions
- Generally, no more than 3-5 key points can be covered adequately in a 20-minute talk (which includes 3 minutes for questions and answers and 2 minutes for audience to move to other sessions) so keep it concise.
- Rehearse your talk so you can confidently deliver it in the allotted time. Session Chairs have been instructed to adhere to the time schedule and to stop your presentation if you run over.
- Arrive early enough so that you can meet the session chair, load your presentation on the computer provided, and familiarize yourself with the microphone, computer slide controls, laser pointer, and other equipment that you will use during your presentation. There will be many presenters loading their materials just prior to the session so it is very important that you check that all multi-media elements (e.g., sounds or videos) play accurately prior to the day of your session.
- Each time you display a visual aid the audience needs time to interpret it. Describe the abscissa, ordinate, units, and the legend for each figure. If the shape of a curve or some other feature is important, tell the audience what they should observe to grasp the point. They won't have time to figure it out for themselves. A popular myth is that a technical audience requires a lot of technical details. Less can be more.
- Turn off your cell phone prior to your talk and put it away from your body. Cell phones can interfere with the speakers and the wireless microphone.