

# Oral Communication Resources

## Presentational Speaking

### Presenting a Paper

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#### Presenting a Previously Written Paper

Think carefully about the differences between a reading audience and a listening audience. Think about your reactions to speakers when an audience member. If the speaker reads to you and if you are like most people, you find it hard to pay attention and remember what the speaker is saying unless the paper is very well written and the speaker is extremely skilled in reading with great vocal inflection, allowing you to forget that the speaker is reading.

- The first lesson here is: **don't read your paper** (unless you are an extremely skilled writer with great vocal charisma). Written language use and oral language use are quite different, and we are not used to listening to written academic papers.
- Realize you cannot cover everything you have written in the typical amount of time granted a speaker. That means you must focus your remarks differently than you did as a writer.
- "Signpost," that is, use verbal markers to indicate where we are in your presentation or argument. "Signposts" include such things as transitions, internal summaries, and previews.
- Be redundant. Say things in different ways, and give your audience members more than one chance to hear important points. Oral language is usually much more redundant than written language. We say things in several ways. We speak in incomplete sentences, inserting bits that help elaborate an idea.

Communication modes have different requirements. A reading audience can re-read, and can look over previous evidence and arguments to try to fit together pieces of ideas. A listening audience is unable to do this with ease. You as the speaker need to provide these opportunities to your audience, giving a listening audience several chances to hear and understand the points you think are particularly important.