Module 5: The Literary Response to the Changing World
Topic 5 Content: Developing an Oral Presentation Notes

Introduction

Creating an effective and engaging presentation is similar to writing a research paper in that it is helpful to follow a step-by-step process. Following a process helps you prepare for the presentation well in advance, and it increases the chance that you will arrive on the presentation day ready to interact with your audience. In this interactivity, click on each of the steps to learn how to create a formal oral presentation.

Topic

The first part of creating an effective presentation is selecting a topic. You should select a topic that will be interesting to you, and takes into account your audience's interests. If you are working as part of a group, you should discuss the topic together and come to a consensus, or agreement, on what you will be presenting.

Purpose

Now, determine the purpose of your presentation. Are you trying to persuade your audience of something, or educate them about a specific topic? Does your presentation relate to a special event, like an award or the recognition of someone or something? Or, is the purpose of your presentation simply to entertain a group of people? Once you have selected your topic and identified your purpose, develop a thesis that is indicative of these two components.

Research

Now, you should conduct research to support your presentation. There is a wide diversity of sources from which to choose, including digital and web resources; print publications such as books; reference texts; periodicals; and multimedia like documentaries or interviews. You can even undertake your own primary research, such as conducting a survey or interview, if such evidence is pertinent to your topic. As you research, you should create note cards and record information and sources carefully.

Outline

Like an outline for an essay, a presentation outline indicates the main structure of your oral presentation. You will need an introduction that includes a hook and a thesis, a body with supporting information, and a conclusion that summarizes your presentation. The language that you use should be appropriate for the topic, but it should also take into account the needs of your audience.

Add

Once you have the outline for the presentation, add details and prompts where you need them. When adding to the outline of your presentation, it is not necessary to write out every piece of information as a complete sentence. You can use note cards to create short segments of information that will provide visual cues to you as you speak. This way, you do not have to completely memorize your presentation; instead, you are familiar with all of the information, and you talk to your audience about it.

Design

An engaging presentation includes visual aids. Visual aids enhance and clarify the points that you are making in your oral presentation. They provide the audience with a visual representation of your speech, and they can help increase audience engagement. You should design your visual aids carefully and with purpose.

Practice

You have probably heard the saying "practice makes perfect." While practicing cannot guarantee that you deliver your presentation perfectly, it can decrease your chances of making an error or being nervous while you speak. The more you practice the presentation delivery, the more comfortable you will be. If you are working in a group, you should not only practice individually, but also with other members of your team. As you practice, take into consideration the organization, pace, and transitions throughout the presentation. If your visual aids have technology requirements, you should conduct testing in the location where you will be making your presentation.

Present

On the day of your presentation, double check to make sure that you have your notes, any visual aids, and that any technology that you are using is charged. Try to look your best, since you will be standing in front of the audience while you present. If you are nervous, remind yourself that the other members of the audience will all be presenting at some point and will understand how you feel. Remember to engage the members of the audience and use appropriate facial expressions to convey the tone of your presentation.