

Practise

It is very rude to exceed your allotted time. Put time markers into your talk. Make the section of your talk immediately preceding your conclusion optional, and practise jumping straight to the conclusion if you are behind your schedule.

Practise in front of people and preferably in the room where you will actually perform.

If you can, consider videoing yourself. Watch your performance and identify ways of improving.

Walk through your presentation in the actual room, on the actual computer, if you can. Changing from the computer on which you made your presentation can often affect graphics, fonts, and film clips. Test the lights, volume, and AV controls. Practise using the microphone in a large room.

If you possibly can, run your PowerPoint from your own laptop (but practise connecting it to the projector so that goes seamlessly). If this is not possible, test every slide well ahead of time, and avoid complex video or sound.

Delivery

If you think that your audience will need it, provide a handout. This is good for very detailed material, definitions or contact details. Never just print your slides, unless you are asked to do so.

Address the audience in the second person (*you*), so that they are part of a conversation.

Dress like a professional. Visual impressions are important.

If you are performing in a large room, use the microphone.

Gestures are fine if they come naturally to you and help to communicate your meaning. Avoid pre-rehearsed movements.

If possible, move out from behind the lectern or desk and move closer to your audience.

Make eye contact with different people in the room, not forgetting those at the back and down the sides.

Speak naturally, as though to a single person.

Do not read your script. Know your material well enough to be able to look up most of the time, but do not learn it by rote and recite it.

If you know that you speak very quickly, try to slow down.

If there is a chance that the audience may have problems with your pronunciation, find a native speaker to coach you.

Factor pauses into your talk: they are especially effective before and after important statements.

Do not try to talk over noise, such as coughing. Wait until it has stopped before resuming your talk.