

## Preparing for the Oral Presentation

You will present the results of your research for about 5-10 minutes, and then answer questions for 5-10 minutes more. These guidelines are designed to help you think about what you will say, and to prepare a handout that will help us, your listeners, get the most out of your presentation.

1. Think about what you learned from your research. Why is it interesting? What is its significance?
  - ⇒ What general question does it answer, or what broad issue does it address?
  - ⇒ Who might be interested in your work? Why?
  - ⇒ Think through what you want to say, and make an outline.
  - ⇒ What are your main conclusions?
  - ⇒ What arguments do you use to reach those conclusions?
  - ⇒ What is the main evidence you draw upon to make those arguments?
2. Make a **THESIS PAPER** (handout for your audience)—see below.
3. Write out a text, about 3 double-spaced pages in length. Read through it to yourself several times. (It takes more than 2 minutes to read 30 lines!)  
Think about how people listening to it will assimilate the information.  
Revise, using language and sentence structures that are easy to understand.  
Read it to a friend and listen to what they have to say (don't be defensive!). Revise more.
4. Put away your text and tell another friend about your topic, using the thesis paper as a guide.  
Revise the thesis paper accordingly.

## Preparing a Thesis Paper

The *purpose* of a thesis paper is threefold (in the presentation, these should come in reverse order):

- a. to inform your audience about a topic (what happened?),
- b. to promote understanding about the topic (why did it happen?), and
- c. to enable others to relate your insights to things that interest them (so what?).

It should contain most of the following elements (not necessarily in this order):

- A. A very brief **introductory statement** about your topic and why it is interesting.
- B. The **question** you are asking.
- C. A clear statement of the main **thesis** (or theses) you are arguing.  
There may be a number of "sub-theses" that you take your listeners through to reach the main thesis.
- D. **Factual material.** A thesis paper organizes in summary form background information necessary for understanding your topic, and highlights evidence for and against your argument.  
This may be done in various ways, including:
  - a *timeline* with important dates/events
  - selections from crucial *primary sources* you use as evidence
  - brief *biographical information* about key individuals
  - synopses of case studies
  - maps, illustrations, statistical tables or graphs
  - quotations from secondary works (e.g. two contrasting opinions)

**NOTE:** a given thesis paper handout may have only one or two of these things!

In your presentation you will guide your audience through this material, interpreting the evidence to show how you reached your conclusions.

D. The **implications and significance** of your work.