

Presentation Writing

Many people find presentations daunting, but they are necessary projects in academic and professional settings. Essential preparation through writing can make this task less stressful. Presentation writing consists of creating an outline, putting together a script, and producing text on the slides. The writing process, while drafting and giving a presentation, will help keep your audience engaged and meet the criteria outlined by your professor or employer.

Presentation Preparation

When preparing your slide deck and outline, you must consider the following criteria to create an effective presentation. Your work should respond to the assignment criteria, whether for work or school, which should be done by considering your objective, content, and audience.

Objective

What do you hope to accomplish? The objective of the presentation is what you hope to achieve by presenting. For class projects, think of the assignment rubric to understand what the focus of the presentation should be and the necessary components you must respond to. In this context, the objective is to show your understanding of a topic while meeting your professor's expectations. In a professional setting, the assignment expectations must also be considered, but the objective will be more focused on persuading an audience or instructing them on a topic. The objective should be the guiding focus as you write your script, outline, and slide text.

Audience

Who is reading and engaging with your presentation text? As you prepare your presentation outline, consider what your audience already knows about your topic and how to tailor your writing to their learning styles. For a class presentation, consider what information will keep your peers engaged by choosing brief facts or explanations they will understand and make connections to the course content. For a work presentation, the tone used in your slide text and script will be more direct as you are likely persuading or informing the audience of professionals who already have some understanding of the topic. Think of your audience and objective as interacting with each other, as the writing in your presentation will help the audience gain new knowledge and achieve the objective.

Content

What information do you need to convey through the presentation text? As you are planning, determine the most important aspects of your topic and create a slide deck outline based on these details. You must consider the audience and objective to decide what background information, facts, and statistics are important to include to meet the presentation expectations. Based on what

information is necessary, draft an outline and script that conveys the information logically and appropriately according to the audience and assignment expectations. The text for your content outline should describe the order of subtopics you will focus on and the primary information each slide will contain.

Presentation Outline

The presentation outline acts similarly to any other writing outline, in that it details what will be included in the presentation. By creating an outline, you will determine what points will be discussed and included on your slides, the flow of your presentation, and how you will manage your time. For more support on writing an outline, view our [Outline Template](#) handout.

Presentation Script

The presentation script works with your presentation outline to organize your thoughts. This writing will usually not be seen by other people, but it is a necessary part of presentation writing as it will ensure your project is focused and meets expectations. During the presentation, you may veer from the written script as you speak naturally, so this part of writing is here to support and guide you. While presenting, you should not read directly from your script; instead, use the script document for preparation and guidance.

Introduction

The introduction of your script should include information about the presentation's focus, your claim, and any necessary background information. Like an essay, the introduction of the presentation is used to “hook” the audience on the topic at hand. Because of this, the introduction section of your script should outline possible anecdotes or facts that will contextualize your focus and give the audience a reason to want to be engaged.

Body of the Presentation

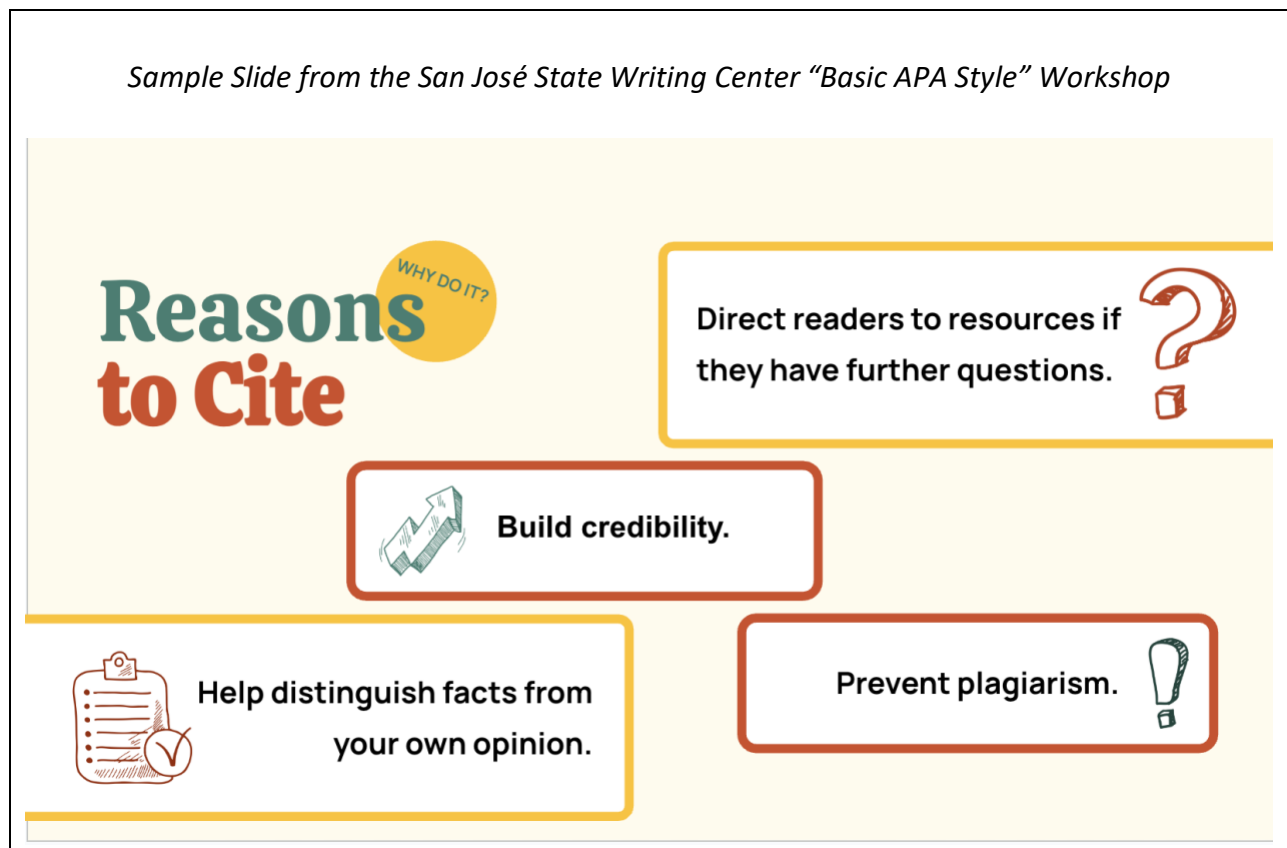
Write enough information for each subtopic of your presentation to guide you through the slides. As a general rule, each slide should have about two minutes' worth of information (or one long paragraph) in your script. This part of the presentation should explain the topic more in-depth and relate it to the objective of the presentation. If appropriate, in this part of the script, you can write interactive moments—like questions or activities—to engage the audience.

Closing

The closing text in your script should reiterate the main points of the presentation. Write out what is necessary to meet the presentation's objective, but plan to reference other information that your audience may find interesting based on questions. The closing should also include a “so what” that connects the focus of your presentation to larger concepts from your course, professional projects, or world issues. You need to demonstrate to your listeners why your topic is important and relevant.

Slide Deck Text

The text on each slide of your presentation is often the most important aspect of presentation writing, as it is the writing your audience will engage with directly. This text is used to support your script by emphasizing the main ideas of each subtopic referenced, so it should not repeat what is already spoken but offer more context about the most important information. It should use clear language and be as concise as possible. You do not want the audience to have to read too much information and be distracted from the presentation itself. The slide text should also include descriptive titles for any images or graphs included to provide more context for the viewers. Use only clear, readable fonts in your presentations with at least 24-point size.



Presentation Organization

The presentation, outline, script, and slides should be written in a logical way that helps show connections among your subtopics. Each slide should focus on one idea so that the text is minimal, and the audience can gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic based on the script. This strategy will create a flow from idea to idea and conclude with an answer or respond to the presentation’s claim and objective.

Activity: Writing for Slides

Condense the sentences below to fit into the expectations for text on slides. Summarize the main idea of each sentence so that the example phrases/sentences would be short enough and specific enough to be the only writing on a slide.

1. “The invention of the printing press was important because it allowed for faster and wider spread of information throughout Europe.”
2. “The new marketing strategy will focus on expanding our social media presence, targeting younger demographics through social media platforms.”
3. “Photosynthesis is the process plants use to convert sunlight into energy, which is essential for their growth.”
4. “Technology is evolving at a rapid pace, affecting virtually every aspect of our daily lives in ways that we may not even fully understand.”
5. “The purpose of this presentation is to inform the audience about the many different ways that social media can influence the mental health of teenagers in both positive and negative ways.”
6. “In conclusion, it is incredibly important for all of us to take action to reduce our carbon footprint and help save the environment for future generations.”

Answer Key for Activity

Please note that answers will vary—writers may focus on different parts of the given sentences and may prefer phrases over short sentences.

1. “The printing press accelerated the spread of information.” or “The printing press and the spread of information”
2. “Grow presence on social media to reach younger audiences.” or “Benefits of new marketing strategy”
3. “Plants grow through photosynthesis.”
4. “Technology is rapidly changing every part of our lives.”
5. “This presentation explains social media’s influence on mental health.” or “Social media and teenagers’ mental health”
6. “We must take action to reduce our carbon footprint and protect the environment.”

References

Association of Research Libraries. (2024). PowerPoint Guidelines for Presenters.

<https://www.arl.org/accessibility-guidelines-for-powerpoint-presentations/#:~:text=All%20slides%20should%20use%20a%20minimum%20font%20size%20of%2024%20points.>

Lucid Software. (2025). An effective presentation starts with an effective presentation outline.

<https://lucid.co/blog/presentation-outline.>