

Structure of an Oral Seminar

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Structuring an oral presentation in the right manner leads to a good oral presentation. This is solely due to aiding its easy assimilation by the listeners. Majorly, there are three (3) parts to a typical seminar presentation which include:

1. The beginning (introduction)
2. The middle (body)
3. The end (conclusion)

Beginning (Introduction)

This is the most important part of an oral presentation. This is due to the rapport established with the audience thereby capturing their attention.

(a) Getting the audience's attention and signal the beginning is a useful strategy to start an oral presentation. Also, getting your audience involved in your talk either by asking direct questions or rhetorical questions is also a good method of getting your audience's attention.

(b) Greet the Audience

It is important to greet the audience by any of the saying such as good morning, ladies and gentlemen, members of the jury, members of the board, Mr. Chairman/Chairwoman etc.

(c) Self-Introduction

This is done in order to give important information so that people can know you, to establish your authority on the subject and also for the audience to see your point of view on the subject (whether you are a researcher, layman or student).

(d) Give the Title and Introduce the Subject

Try to situate the subject in time and place, in relation to the audience and/or its importance. Try to give insight or a working definition of the subject. You can do this by saying a, plan to speak about, "the subject of my presentation is", "Today I'm going to talk about" etc.

(e) Give your Objectives (aim, goals, purpose)

When the audience understands and easily recollects a great deal of information given in a presentation or information speech, it has therefore fulfilled its aim. Therefore, you should have two purposes: a general purpose which serves to discuss, to outline, to summarise the present situation or to explain how something is done. The specific purpose which is what termed take-home message is for the audience,

what you want them to do and what they should remember.

(f) Announce your Outline

Two to three main points are usually enough to keep your outline as simple as possible. Hence, the headings of the outline should be of similar grammar form.

(g) Make a transition between the introduction and the body of the presentation. This can be done effectively by referring to your outline.

2. The Middle (body)

a. Content

Your aim or purpose should be supported by all the information given; content should be limited due to time constraint.

b. Quantity

Sufficient information to distinctly develop your idea should be given. Illustration through examples should not be neglected.

c. Organising your Ideas

Ideas should be arranged in chronological order, logical order; from general to specific; known to unknown, problem to solution, accepted to controversial. All headings should be in the same grammatical form regardless of the arrangement chosen.

3. The End (conclusion)

This part needs to be considered specifically, so it should never come as a surprise to an audience. Therefore, it should be sectioned as thus:

(a) Content

The end should include four parts:

- (i) A short reminder of what you tried to show in your speech/presentation and how you tried to achieve it
- (ii) A short conclusion
- (iii) Thanking the audience for listening
- (iv) Invitation to ask questions, make comments or open discussion.

b. Tackling Difficult Question

In dealing with difficult questions, ensure that you properly understood the question by repeating the question in your own words to check that it is understood by you. If not, ask the questioner to repeat.

In answering, delay the answer by saying words such as “just a minute please,” “that’s a good question” etc. to aid pondering well on the question for the appropriate answer to be given.

Thanks and goodluck