



ACTFL
ANNUAL CONVENTION
& WORLD LANGUAGES EXPO

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Tips for Paper Presentations

Papers (20 minutes)

Paper presentations are 20 minutes in length (15 minutes for the presentation with five (5) minutes for questions and answers). Three (3) Papers will be grouped in a session. Presenters should avoid reading papers and/or study results, and instead present the valuable information in an engaging format.

Opening:

- Jump right in by stating the question you will answer.
- Give your rehearsed opening statement; don't improvise at the last moment.
- Use the opening to catch the interest and attention of the audience.
- Briefly state the problem or topic you will be discussing.
- Briefly summarize your main theme for an idea or solution.

Speaking

- Talk at a natural, moderate rate of speech.
- Project your voice.
- Speak clearly and distinctly.
- Repeat critical information.
- Pause briefly to give your audience time to digest the information on each new slide.

Handouts:

- Presenters are advised to post handouts in the presenter Ready Room and refer attendees to the mobile app and the Online Convention Program to download at the beginning and ending of the presentation.
- Remind attendees that this saves paper and makes for a “green” presentation.

PowerPoint Slides:

- Let the pictures or graphics in your PowerPoint slides tell the story – don't overload with text and/or data. Too much text makes the slide unreadable.
- The aim is to have a few powerful PowerPoint slides.
- Prepare an Agenda or Table of Contents slide.
- Proofread everything, including visuals and numbers.
- Font size must be large enough to be easily read. Size 28 to 34 with a bold font is recommended.
- It is distracting if you use too wide a variety of fonts.
- For a long presentation, you may want to change background designs when shifting to a new topic.
- Animation effects can be interesting when used in moderation.
 - o Too much animation is distracting.

- o Consider using animated clip art.
- o Consider using custom animation.
- You can insert video and audio clips into PowerPoint, but the clips must be on your laptop; you cannot access them through the Internet.
- Don't read the slides aloud. Your audience can read them far faster than you can talk.

Numbers

- Numbers are usually confusing to the audience. Use as few as possible and allow extra time for the audience to do the math.
- Numbers should never be ultra precise:
 - o "Anticipated Revenues of \$660,101.83" looks silly. Are your numbers that accurate? Just say \$660 thousand.
 - o "The Break Even Point is 1048.17 units." Are you selling fractions of a unit?
 - o Don't show pennies. Cost per unit is about the only time you would need to show pennies.
- If you have more than 12-15 numbers on a slide, that's probably too many.
- Using only one number per sentence helps the audience absorb the data.
- Consider presenting data in chart or graph form, which is more easily understood than a chart with numbers.

Statistics

- Use the same scale for numbers on a slide. Don't compare hundreds to thousands.
- Cite your source on the same slide as the statistic, using a smaller size font.

Charts

- Charts need to be clearly labeled. You can make more interesting charts by adding elements from the drawing toolbar.
- Numbers in tables are both hard to see and to understand. There is usually a better way to present your numerical data than with columns and rows of numbers. Get creative!
- PowerPoint deletes portions of charts and worksheets that are imported from Excel, keeping only the leftmost 5.5 inches. Plan ahead.

Backgrounds

- Backgrounds in PowerPoint slides should never distract from the presentation.
- Using the default white background is hard on the viewer's eyes. You can easily add a design style or a color to the background.
- Backgrounds that are light colored with dark text, or vice versa, look good. A dark background with white font reduces glare.
- Colors appear lighter when projected. Pale colors often appear as white.
- Consistent backgrounds add to a professional appearance.

Length:

- Research Papers are 15 minutes in length with 5 minutes for Q&A.
- End on time! There is another presentation following yours in the same room.

Conclusion:

- Remind everyone to complete the survey for your paper presentation in the mobile app.

- Be considerate of the next presenter and end on time; you may give attendees an email to follow up with questions or speak with them in the hallway after the presentation ends.