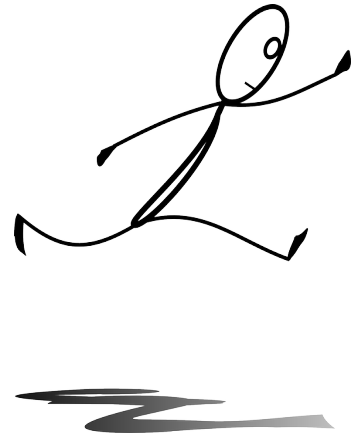




# Challenges, Joys, Heartbreak of Presenting

Associate Professor Mark Weeks  
Department of Academic Writing Education



# Vocabulary

engagement

pragmatism

scenario

thesis / hypothesis

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Take a minute to check the meaning

# Introductory Questions

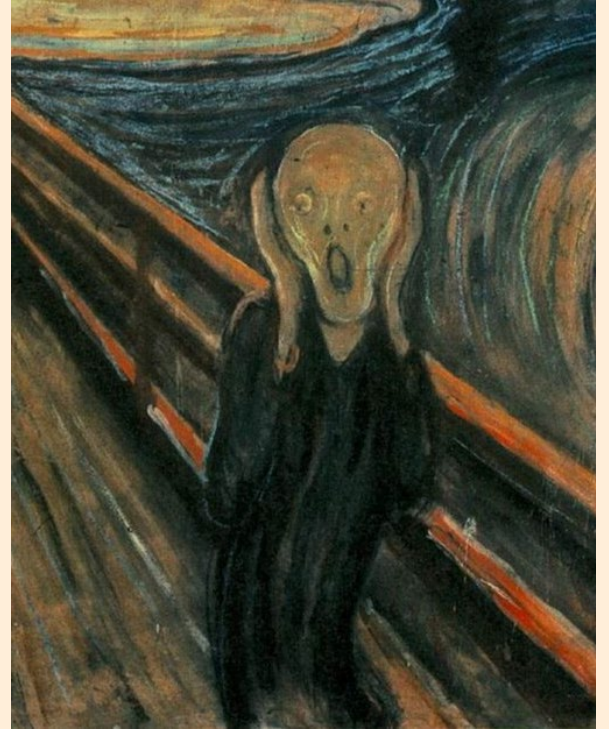
Do you often watch presentations, such as TED.com, online?

Do you ever imagine yourself presenting on a big stage?

Do you think you are as brave as the average person?

Yes / No

**What are you most afraid of in life?**

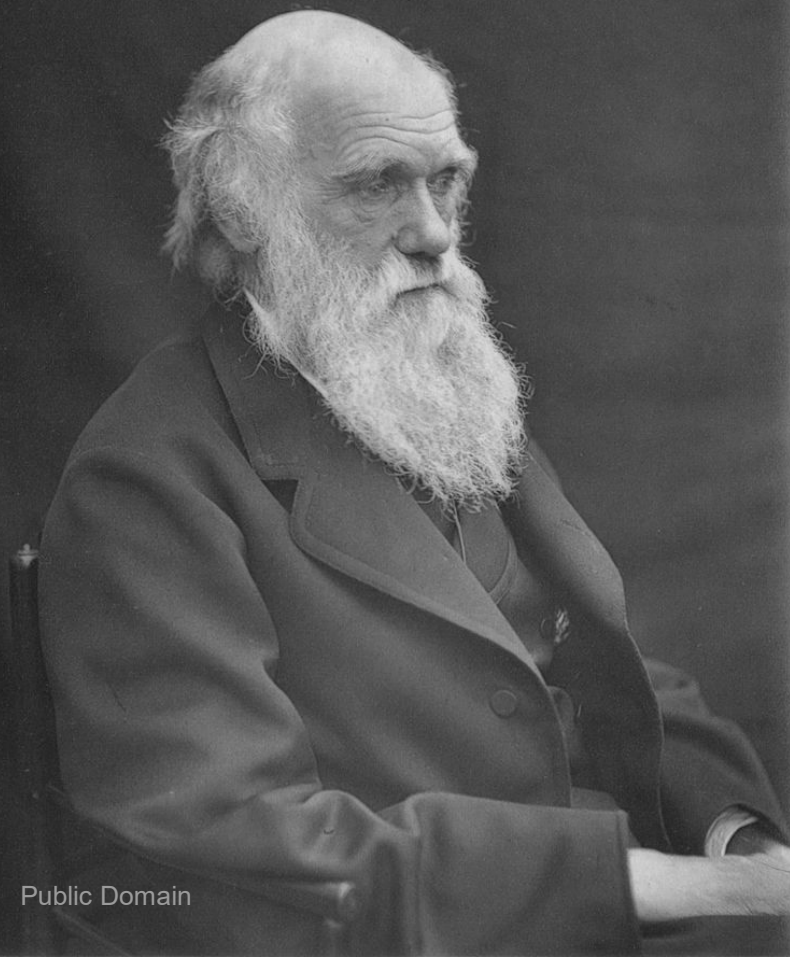


Think about it for a minute and write down a list.

% of Americans who fear...

**What are you most  
afraid of?**

2014. \*1500 people surveyed



## Charles Darwin

“I could see nothing all around me but the paper, and I felt as if my body was gone, and only my head was left.”

Quoted in Alley, *The Craft of Scientific Presentations* 178.

What's my aim?

**Help you think about presentations differently.**



## Outline

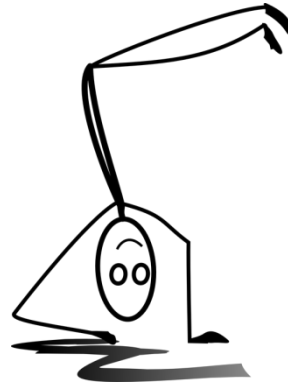
1. How can we become less nervous?
2. What kind of preparation works best?
3. What's the best way to present?



# Be flexible

Different context = Different presentation form  
style  
content

There are no rules.



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# Why Me?

I do presentations.



# My Recent International Presentations

- ▣ Delhi, India
- ▣ Krakow, Poland
- ▣ Bangkok, Thailand
- ▣ Sydney, Australia
- ▣ Williamsburg, USA
- ▣ Manila, Philippines
- ▣ Istanbul, Turkey
- ▣ New Orleans, USA
- ▣ Oakland, USA
- ▣ Dublin, Ireland
- ▣ Toronto, Canada
- ▣ Tokyo, Japan

# Why Me?

I do presentations.

I teach presentation skills.

Graduate school researchers

Undergraduate English classes



Part 1. How can we become less nervous?

My little story



Le Moustier, Charles R. Knight 1920)

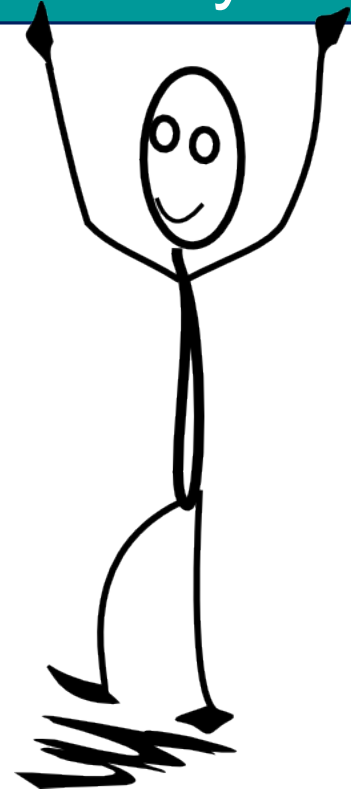


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We think it's an exam.



It's usually NOT.





# Consider why you are presenting

In the “Real World”, why do we usually present?

**To get useful feedback/input from others for the future**

To share our ideas

To impress people

**It's not the end... it's part of a process.**



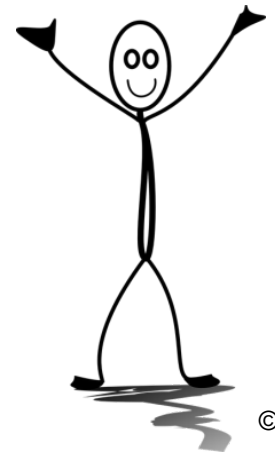
So, it's NOT about YOU. It's about your ideas and the audiences help.

Presentations are communication  
collaboration



[commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wiki\\_Club](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wiki_Club)

What do YOU think is the BEST thing that can happen?



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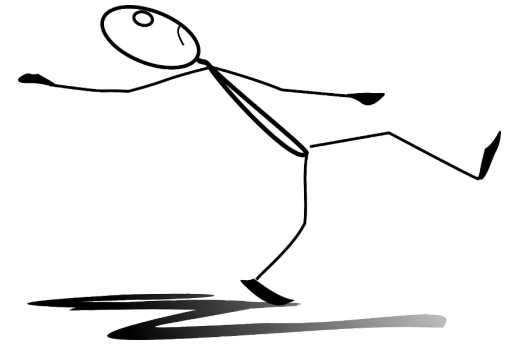
# Best-case scenario *\* for me*



**A lively question time with useful input.**

Someone says, "That was a great presentation."

What do YOU think is the WORST thing that can happen?



# Worst-case scenarios

*\*from my experience*

## No useful questions or comments

Timing problems (didn't finish)

Audience didn't understand

Distracted/sleeping audience

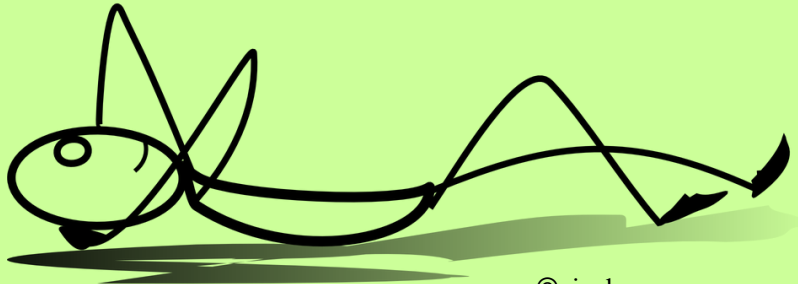
No audience

~~“I forgot what to say. There was a long silence!”~~



# 1. How to relax **Summary**

1. Overcome your inner-caveperson.
2. It's usually not an exam.
3. Consider why you are presenting.
4. Consider your communication as collaboration.
5. Imagine the best and worst scenarios



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# Part 1

Summary question:

Which of the mentioned ways to help you think in a more relaxed way about presenting have you tried before? Which are new to you? Which would you like to try in your next presentation?

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Think about it for a minute



Part 2. What kind of preparation works best?



[microbizmag/50382974363/](https://microbizmag.com/50382974363/) (Creative Commons)

## Part 2

If you have a presentation to do, do you usually start preparing more than 1 week before?

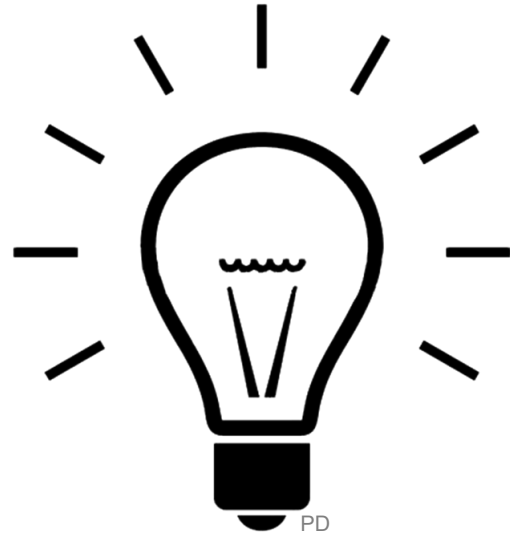
Yes / No

# Consider your audience

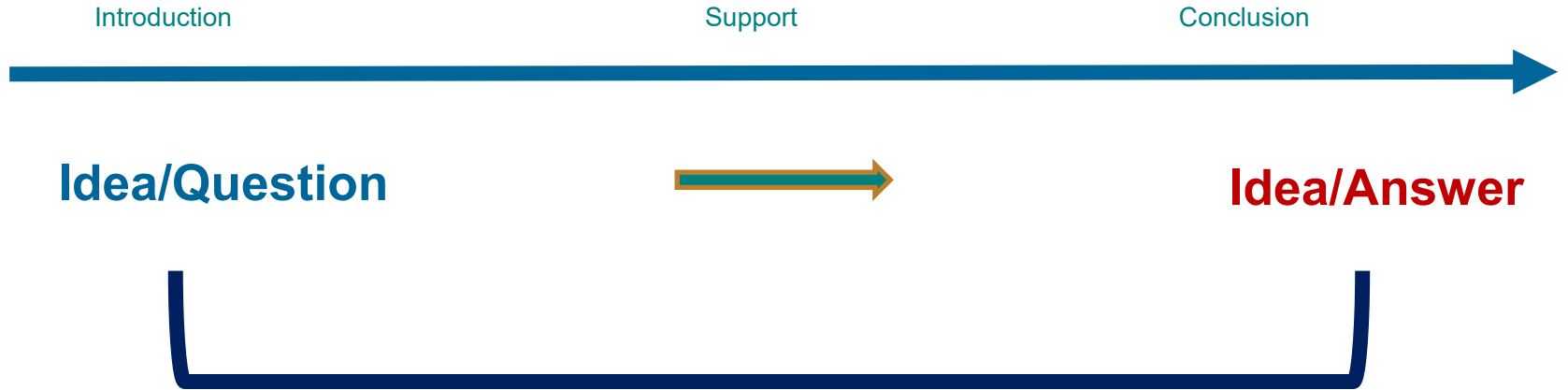
If you don't understand your audience...  
they're not going to understand you.



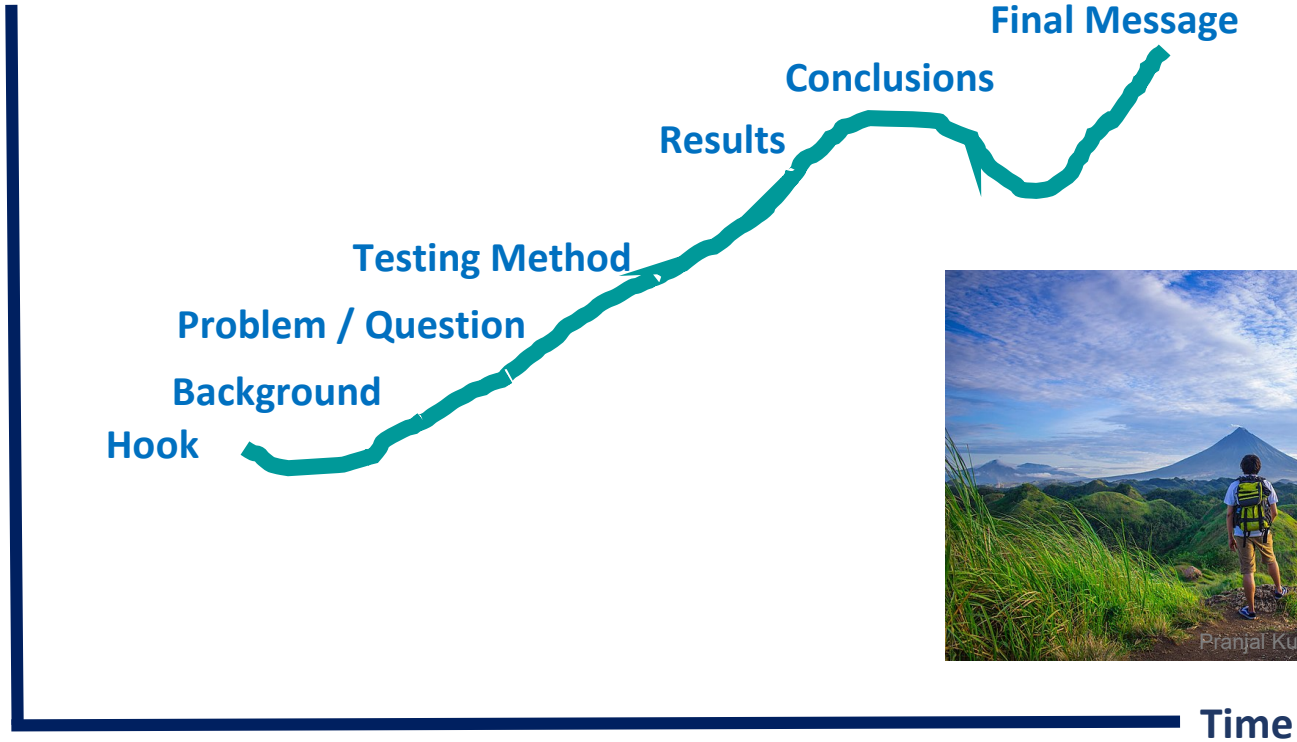
Work from a single question / idea



# Create a Through-Line = Connection



Excitement Level



Anything can become a story.

# Simplify

If you have lots of extra detail, save it for the Q&A or put it online.



# Write a script?

WHY?

Clear

Safe

Checkable

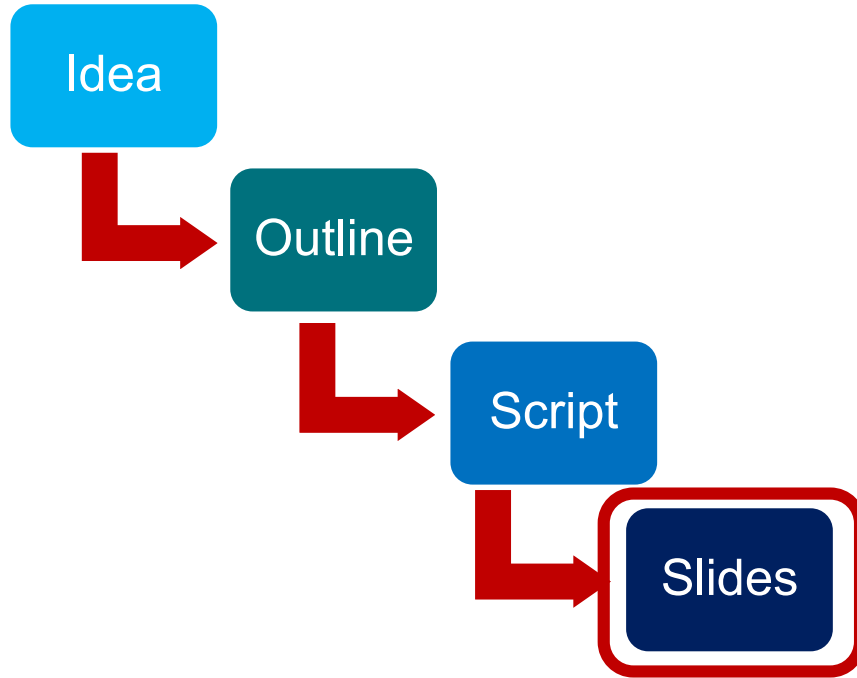
Reusable

Shareable



Wikimedia commons <https://secure.flickr.com/photos/7944769@N03/>

# Recommended preparation sequence



Practice + get feedback

## 2: Preparation Recommendations **Summary:**

- ✓ Think of what the audience knows, wants
- ✓ Have a single main idea/question
- ✓ Have a clear through-line \*connecting to your main idea/question
- ✓ Simplify
- ✓ Write a script, get feedback
- ✓ Preparation sequence: idea/question / outline / script / slides
- ✓ Practice presentation, with timing, and Q&A



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## Part 2

Summary question:

Which of the preparation issues do you think is your strong point / weak point?

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**Think about it for a minute!**

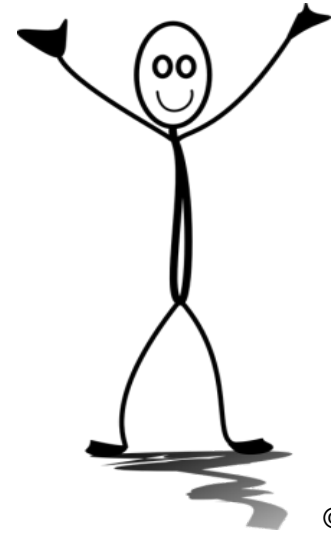
Part 3. What's the best way to present?

# Part 3

Do you think you could ever enjoy presenting?

Yes / No ?

Speak directly



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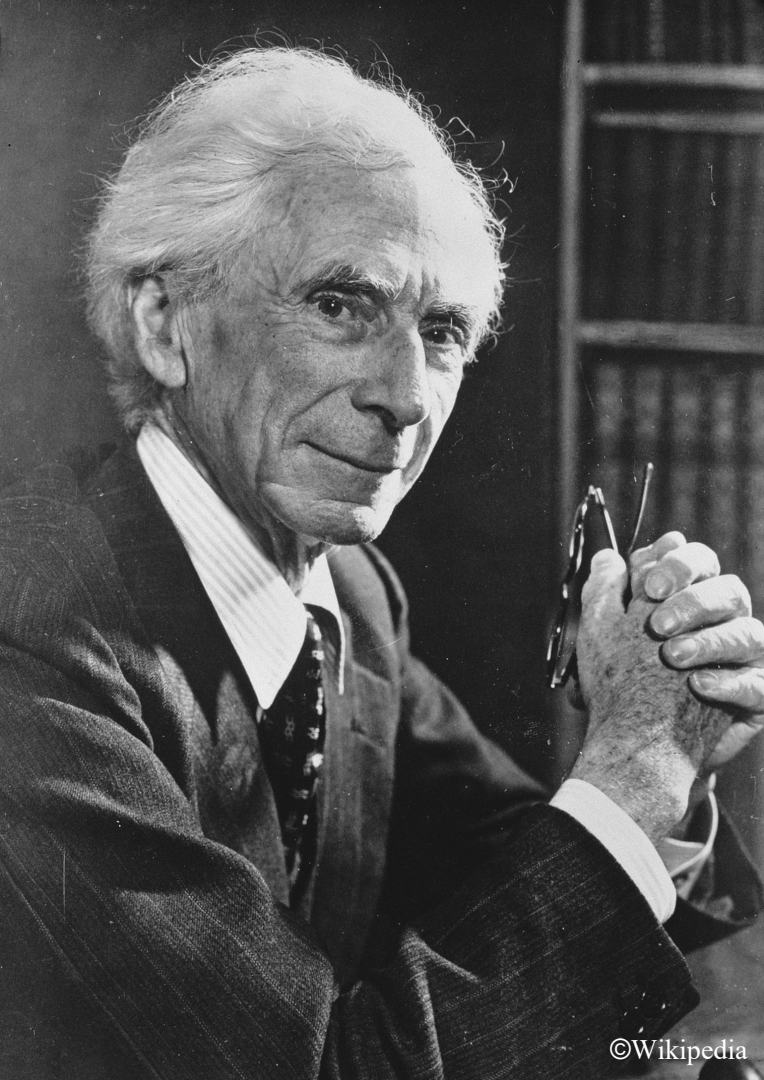


# Don't be afraid of mistakes

Silence never killed anyone.



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**“I taught myself to feel that it did not matter whether I spoke well or badly; the universe would remain much the same.”**

Philosopher Bertrand Russell  
(Nobel Prize in Literature, 1950)

# Question Time (Q&A)

Prepare for it.

But it's not an exam.

It's OK to say, "I don't understand."  
"I don't know."



Cristina Zapata Pérez, CC BY-SA 4.0



You don't need to entertain the audience... but engage them.

The best way to engage them is for you to be engaged with your idea.

You don't need to perform.



Phizz, CC BY-SA 4.0



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Just have focused energy.

**Choose to enjoy yourself.**

# 3. Presenting **Summary**

- ✓ Speak directly \*not reading, not memorizing every word
- ✓ Don't be afraid of mistakes, silence
- ✓ Q&A: Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know."
- ✓ Be yourself, engaged with your content
- ✓ Enjoy yourself



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## Part 3 Summary Question

Which of the points about delivery do you think you most need to work on?

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Think about it for a minute, turn to your neighbours and share!



# Conclusion

**Connect with your content.**

**Think of it as a collaboration, process.**

**Prepare well.**

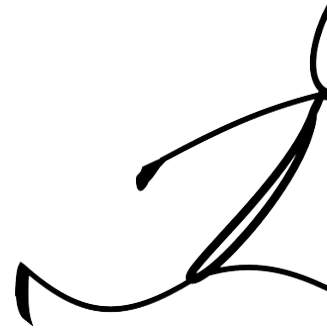
**Forget about perfection.**

**Learn from the experience.**

**Decide to enjoy it.**



*Best of Luck!*



# For CREDIT students only: REPORT questions

1. Why can presentations be considered as collaboration?
2. What are the benefits of writing a script?
3. How would you prepare for a Q&A?

## **Longer question requiring deeper consideration**

Imagine a presentation on any one topic given to two different types of audience. Explain how the presentations for each audience would differ and why.

