

Chemistry Seminar Presentation Tips

I. Timing/Content (based on a 50 min talk)

1. Keep your audience in mind

This is the most fundamental rule

2. Introduction (2-4 min)

- a. **Clearly state the problem** you are studying
- b. **Clearly state why** you are studying it
- c. **Clearly state the ultimate goal** of the research

3. Background – LOTS (20+ min)

- a. History of problem
- b. Review basic principles or reactions
- c. Review similar/related reactions
- d. Review instrumentation/equipment
- e. Describe any unusual instrumentation, equipment, or chemicals

4. Data and Results (15 min)

- a. What did you find
- b. Focus on **KEY** results
- c. Use **LOTS** of figures, graphs, tables, schemes
- d. Avoid lengthy calculations, reactions or complex tables (save these for Q & A)
- e. Use Summary Slides

5. Interpretation (5-10 min)

What do your results mean?

6. Summary (2-3 min)

A **brief** recap of **KEY findings** and their **significance**. Bullet points are best.

7. Future Work (3-5 min)

8. Acknowledgements

- a. Mentors/Advisors
- b. Key Coworkers
- c. Source of Funding
- d. Sources of Inspiration

9. Q & A – after the 50 min seminar

II. Slide Preparation

1. Keep the slides SIMPLE and clean.
2. Use space (1.5 space or more between lines)
3. Minimize use of full sentences
4. Use **LOTS** of visuals - focus on KEY results
 - a. graphs
 - b. images
 - c. figures
 - d. schemes (cartoons)
 - e. tables
 - f. bulleted lists
5. Keep important text visible
nothing smaller than 18-point font for a room this size with this type of projector.
6. Select a “clean” font
avoid lots of swirls, serifs, and do-hickeys
7. Minimize gimmicks – use them only to highlight key points
 - a. sound effects
 - b. blinking text or images
 - c. moving text or images

8. Use of color
 - a. Most text should be in black.
 - b. In text, use color only to highlight key points.
 - c. Use vibrant, rich, dark, or strong colors
 - d. Minimize use of pastels and light colors (they are hard to see)
 - e. In figures and images use color to differentiate regions or components of systems
 - f. Be careful in your choice of backgrounds; select a background that does not “hide” the content
 - g. Orange and yellow can be particularly difficult colors to deal with

III. Prepare and Practice

1. Talk to your mentor/advisor
2. Talk to the seminar coordinator or any faculty member.
3. Practice your talk with the seminar coordinator, your mentor, and/or an audience

Some Useful Resources

Isis Draw from MDL is a freeware program for drawing organic structures

ChemDraw is a commercially available option that is available on some computers within the department

Dr. Jantzi also has a freeware drawing program written by his Ph.D. advisor.