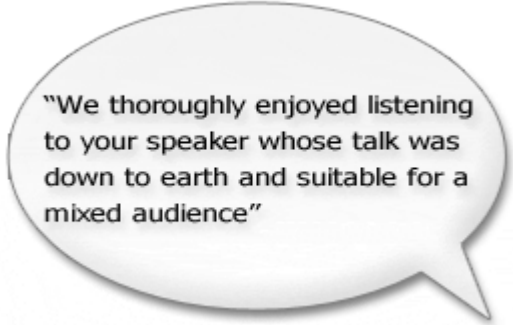


Advice on giving presentations

Thorough preparation is the foundation of a successful talk. Allow adequate time to prepare your talk so that you know your subject and know your audience. If you are well prepared you will also be more confident, and less nervous.

How to prepare for a talk

1. Ask yourself: Who? Why? When? How? Where?
2. Decide on your key messages
3. Structure your talk
4. Make notes
5. Rehearse



"We thoroughly enjoyed listening to your speaker whose talk was down to earth and suitable for a mixed audience"

1. Ask yourself: Who? Why? When? How? Where?

Who is your audience?

To ensure your talk is relevant and interesting, you need to consider your audience. Six useful questions to ask about your audience are:

- What is their knowledge of WaterAid? Have they had a WaterAid speaker before? Do they have a project link?
- What other levels of knowledge do they have? For example, do they have engineering, accounting or charity knowledge? If you are talking to a school, what level of knowledge do the children already have about water?
- What are their interests? For example, have they travelled or worked overseas? Are they church goers? If you don't know, ask!
- Are they predominantly male or female?
- How old are they?
- How many people are you speaking to?

Why are you doing your talk?

What do you want your audience to think and do after your talk? In other words, what are your objectives? For example, speaking to a group for the first time, your three objectives could be:

- To convince them of the need for safe water in the developing world
- To explain the vision, aims and ethos of WaterAid's work
- To offer them an opportunity to either make a donation or to raise funds now or in the future



What else do you hope to achieve from the talk? For yourself? (eg experience of speaking in public). For your company?

When are you going to do your talk?

What time do you need to arrive? (Give yourself plenty of time to set up equipment).

What time does your talk start?

How long do they want you to talk for? (But be prepared for last minute changes).

What else will be happening at the same event?

Will there be other speakers?

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How will you do your talk?

What visual aids will you use?

What literature will you take to hand out? For example, Oasis, On Tap, Annual Review, Fundraising ideas leaflet, Covenant leaflet, Payroll giving leaflet

What will you wear? Don't wear jeans to a Rotary dinner! Wearing the right clothes for the right occasion is important for your inner confidence. So choose your clothes carefully, then forget about them!

Where will it be?

Find out if you will be talking in a large draughty hall, a school room, or the corner of a canteen. Is there car parking?

2. Decide on your key messages

There are a huge number of things you could say about WaterAid. If you try to say too much, however, you will simply overload your audience with information. Decide on three or four (no more) key messages you want to get across and concentrate your presentation on these.

3. Structuring your talk

'Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you've told them.'

These are the words of Winston Churchill and perfectly sum up how best to structure your presentation. A typical structure is:

Beginning

Introduce yourself. Tell them what to expect i.e. how long will you talk, what about, what visual aids will you use, when can they ask questions.

Middle

Key points illustrated with examples.

End

Summary.

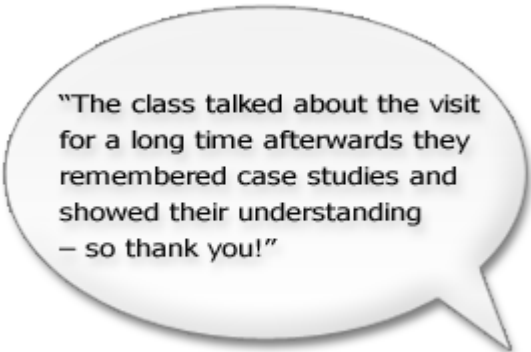
Call to action.

It is important to structure your presentation for the following reasons:

It makes preparation easier

It helps you to be clear and stick to the point

It makes sure you get your message across



"The class talked about the visit for a long time afterwards they remembered case studies and showed their understanding – so thank you!"

4. Make notes

Everyone has their preferred way of preparing notes for a presentation and the best thing is to use what you feel happiest with. As a guide here are some pluses and minuses of three methods:

Full script

It is difficult to read out a full script and not sound as if that is exactly what you are doing! However, at least you won't forget what to say.

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Write out beginning and end

This helps a smooth start and confident conclusion. But try not to make it sound as though these bits are read.

Outline notes

Use a careful selection of headings, sub-headings, key words and phrases. Make sure that you refer to these so that you don't get lost.

Any of the above can be written on cards, however, make sure that they are numbered and held together, treasury tags are good for this.

5. Rehearse

You will find that rehearsing, even on your own in an empty room, is really good to help you familiarise yourself with your material. It will also help you to:

- Judge the timing
- Get used to the sound of your own voice
- Build confidence - once you've practised, you'll know you can do it!
- Giving life to a presentation

Credit: WaterAid/Juthika Howlader



How can we make our presentations successful and memorable?

Here are six key tips to making your talks a big hit! These tips are not rules and they do not all suit everyone or all occasions - just use and practise the ones you feel comfortable with.

1. Be animated - smile and animate your voice and body

Vary your voice - pitch, pace, pause. Pauses are effective - they let your audience catch up with what you are saying and can have a dramatic effect - use them! Smiling relaxes your audience, gets them on your side and helps you to animate your voice. Animate your body and express yourself!

2. Be simple and clear

You will keep your audience interested if you avoid technical language, use simple words, speak in short sentences. George Orwell once said about public speaking: "If it is possible to cut out a word, always cut it out"

3. Don't say too much

Less is beautiful!

4. Illustrate what you say with examples

It will bring life to what you say. Case studies and stories of individuals bring the subject alive and put a human face to the statistics. Vital for all WaterAid talks. Oasis and the Country information sheets are good sources of case studies etc.

5. Humour

Humour is effective if you feel comfortable with it. It is by no means a necessity for WaterAid talks, but if you want to use humour, here are some useful tips:

- Use your natural humour, and be yourself
- Your humour must be appropriate for the audience

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- Use anecdotes and stories; be more careful of jokes
- If you make fun of yourself and not others you will not upset anyone


Finally, if your audience are not responding to your humour, switch it off

6. Involving your audience

Involving your audience is vital to give life to your presentation. If they feel part of what's going on then they're much more likely to be interested and to voluntarily increase their involvement as the talk progresses.

Some ideas of how to get them involved in the first place are:

- Invite questions - you should tell them when you want them to do this
- Do you want them to ask questions as you go along or at the end?
- Ask questions - this can also be a good way of finding out more about what they're interested in and how much they know about your subject
- Check understanding - always make sure that your audience are keeping up with you
- Use YOU, YOUR, WE, OUR - this is an easy way of making them feel part of the presentation
- Use a jerry can! Props such as a jerry can are invaluable for inviting comment and asking questions



"The talk was well received by the pupils and fitted well with our water theme. Super – thanks!"

Jerry cans

Using a jerry can is a good way of getting the audience involved and introducing some of the most important issues surrounding water needs overseas. For the best effect you should fill it with water.

Points to remember and explain are:

- They hold 20 litres and weigh 20kgs (44 lbs) and this is the same as your baggage allowance when you go on holiday
- Women in Africa and Asia carry this amount of water every day of their lives, for distances up to 6 km). Walking this distance and collecting water can take about many hours
- Because water supplies are so far away, this quantity of water may be all that a family of four has for 24 hours. They have to use this for drinking, washing (themselves and their clothes), cooking and for their animals. This is not enough
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) say that everyone needs at least 10 litres a day just for drinking and cooking. WaterAid projects are designed to provide 20 litres a day for each person using the water supply



Ways to get the audience involved are:

- Ask them how much they think the full jerry can weighs
- Get someone to come up and feel how heavy it is
- Ask them how they would prioritise their water use if they only had 20 litres for a family of four

Other props

Dirty Water

A bottle of dirty water can be a simple yet effective way of bringing to life the fact that over 1.1 billion people don't have access to clean, safe water. If it's contrasted with clean water it can make even more of an impression.



Recipe for dirty water:

Take one plastic bottle of water and add any one of the following: a few grains of instant coffee and a drop of milk, a small piece of an Oxo cube, or a spoonful of garden soil. Add the ingredient of your choice to the water and shake well!

Traditional water pots

If you are lucky enough to have been travelling and have any traditional African or Asian water carriers, these can make an interesting visual aid and help bring what you're saying to life.

Nerve control

It is totally natural to feel nervous before a talk. This is a positive thing: nervous tension releases adrenaline and adrenaline will sharpen your mind. Indeed, it is very likely that you will do your best talks on the days when you feel most nervous - so be wary of feeling too relaxed!



We all get the butterflies - the trick is to make them fly in formation. We must try to control our nerves and to appear confident. Remember: If you appear confident, your audience will react to you as someone who is confident, and this in turn will give you the confidence you need.

Here are some tips to help you appear confident.

Breathing

Before speaking take a deep breath in through your nose and then release it slowly through your mouth. Be sure to take proper deep breaths using your diaphragm.

During your talk try to control your breathing - keep it slow and steady. For some people this is the key to nerve control. Smile.

Find a friendly face and smile at it

A smile back can really help to put you at ease. Appear welcoming even if you feel like running away. This will relax your audience and in turn yourself.

Eye contact

Make good eye contact before you start. Nerves can make you avoid eye contact - be aware of this and make the effort - it really helps you to appear confident. Maintain and share your eye contact throughout your talk.

Wait

Take your time and don't start until you are ready.

Slow down and pause

Nerves will make you speed up, so make a conscious effort to start at a walk not a gallop. Make an effort to pause from time to time - pauses are effective and can help you relax.

Reassure yourself

By whatever mantra, prayer or incantation that helps you. Do not drink alcohol.

Prepare

Above all come prepared! Good preparation really is the foundation of nerve control and confidence.

Picture credits (in sequential order): WaterAid/Juthika Howlader, WaterAid/Marco Betti, WaterAid/Caroline Irby, WaterAid/Juthika Howlader

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