

## Unit IV: Technical Presentation

Final Oral Presentations on April 27, 29, and May 7/9

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### Project Description

Select a technical object, mechanism, or process (from your discipline, previous assignments, prospective field of employment, or something of interest that you would like to research and explain), and develop a 7-10 minute oral presentation using technical description to describe how it works to a general, uninformed audience. You should choose an appropriately complex object, mechanism, or process for the time limit.

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### Stage 1: Select Your Subject [memo draft due 4/11, final proposal due 4/13]

For this project, you should select a technical object (e.g. a bicycle, a compass), mechanism (e.g. a fly reel, a cell phone), or process (e.g. cell division, baking bread) that can be explained in under 10 minutes. Consider your major, profession, or hobbies; what are things you use or do on a regular basis that could be broken down to their component parts and understood better? Note: you are not showing your audience how to use this object or perform this process. Instead, you are disassembling your subject down into its parts/steps and showing how it works or functions. You will do this by using partition, classification, context, and/or other rhetorical strategies.

Your subject should be...

- Understood by a non-technical (or lay) audience of your classmates,
- Complex enough for a 7-10 minute presentation, and
- Shown visually in some manner.

Once you have selected a subject, analyze the rhetorical situation of the topic and presentation by answering the following questions: Who is your audience? What experience might they have with this subject? What biases, values, and expectations might the audience have? What will they need to know? Why might this presentation be helpful for your audience in some way? Particularly consider what technical definitions will be needed. Summarize your subject and analysis of the rhetorical situation in a **one-page memo**.

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### Stage 2: Consider Your Visuals [memo due 4/15]

Given your audience, decide what sorts of visuals you will need. What will the audience need to see, both about the context and the subject itself? What will these visuals look like? What purpose will your visual aids have, and how will you create them? Consider the needs of your audience, as well as the technology you have and will be able to use.

You will need to have at least 10 PowerPoint slides (or the Prezi equivalent), and you will need at least one graphic/diagram that shows the parts of the object/mechanism or the steps in a process. The type of graphic guidance and labeling you provide your audience is more important than your artistic skill. If you use someone else's graphic, you must cite it. You will also need to provide a one-page handout for your audience. Consider carefully what information should go on the handout; what information do you want your audience to take home with them?

Be intentional about the visuals you choose. These visuals should enhance your oral presentation, not detract from it. They should support your communication instead of conflict with it. Discuss your plan for visuals in a **half-page to one-page memo**.

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**Stage 3: Find Your Sources [citation information due 4/20]**

To write your technical description, you will need to conduct research. Consult a minimum of three credible sources (scholarly journals, textbooks, reputable online sources; not Wikipedia or howitworks.com).

However, the technical description you write should be your own. If you quote (especially on slides or in the handout), provide citations using MLA style. You should also provide a list of all sources on your last slide and in a works cited page to be handed in on your presentation day.

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**Step 4: Present Your Material [presentations on 4/27, 4/29, & E2: 5/9 OR E7: 5/7]**

This will be a drafted presentation, not extemporaneous. I highly recommend practicing and timing your presentation. You must provide me with a copy of your presentation text, though you may not follow it word for word. Be prepared for a post-presentation Q&A. Also, consider the following as you prepare:

**Required Components of Technical Process Description:**

- Choose an appropriately complex technical object/mechanism or process.
- Establish a framework up front. Explain what the object/mechanism/process is and its use/purpose.
- If you describe a process, give an overview of the steps. List the steps in a logical order, and explain each step of the process.
  - Remember that you are not explaining, for example, how to get a health care bill passed, but you are explaining the steps a bill must travel before becoming law. You could trace coffee processing, from the coffee bean to Starbucks, but you are not explaining how to make a cup of coffee, how to start your coffee plantation, or giving fine details so that someone could process coffee.
- If you describe an object/mechanism, discuss its parts, and provide definitions as necessary.
  - An object would also need some sort of functional explanations, too. Follow a logical order when discussing its parts and function.
- Provide graphic/diagram(s) to help readers visualize relationships and steps.
- Keep the presentation to under 10 minutes, and use at least 10 slides.
- Provide a handout for your audience to take with them.
- The technical description is your own creation.
- Cite at least three credible sources.

**Write with Clarity and Concision:**

- Provide content appropriate for a general audience.
- Provide clear and limiting title (state exactly what the presentation will deliver).
- Use precise and informative language.
- Use consistent terms.
- Avoid too much detail.

**Actively Guide the Listener:**

- Provide prose/visual cues and clear labels.
- Use familiar/conversational language directed at a general audience.

**You will turn in hard copies of 1) your presentation text, 2) a works cited/consulted list, 3) any visuals (printed PowerPoint slides or Prezi link), and 4) your handout.**  
**You will upload everything to Canvas the morning of your presentation day.**