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# **How to Give an Academic Talk: Changing the Culture of Public Speaking in the Humanities**

## **The Awful Academic Talk**

## **Principles of Effective Talks**

- (1) communicate your arguments and evidence,**
- (2) persuade your audience that they are true, and**
- (3) be interesting and entertaining.**

## How to Give a Great Talk: Some Rules of Thumb

### USUALLY BETTER

- Talk
- Stand
- Move
- Vary the pitch of your voice
- Speak loudly and clearly, toward the audience
- Make eye contact with the audience
- Focus on main arguments
- Use visual aids: outlines, pictures, graphs
- Finish your talk within your time limit. Corollary: rehearse your talk
- Summarize your main arguments at the beginning and end
- Notice your audience and respond to its needs
- Emulate excellent speakers

### USUALLY WORSE

- Read
- Sit
- Stand still
- Speak in a monotone
- Mumble, facing downward
- Stare at the podium
- Get lost in details
- Have no visual aids
- Run overtime. Don't practice.
- Fail to provide a conclusion
- Ignore audience behavior

Talk

Stand up

**Move around,**

**Vary the pitch of your voice.**

**Speak loudly and clearly, facing the audience**

**Tip:**

**Make eye contact with the audience.**

**Focus on main arguments.**

**Use visual aids.**

**About Powerpoint:**

**backup, backup, backup.**

**bring backup**

**Finish your talk within the time limit.**

***Timing***

**rehearse**

**Tip:**

**Another tip:**

**My last tip on timing:**

**Summarize your talk at the beginning and again at the end.**

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**Notice your audience and respond to its needs.**

**Tip**

**Emulate excellent speakers.**