

11

Introduction to presentations

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Explain the uses of presentation software
- Illustrate the features of a presentation document

Unit at a glance

- A presentation is a form of oral communication in which the speaker shows and explains the content of a topic to an audience.
- There are different types of presentations including lectures, speeches and the giving of reports.
- A presentation document provides an outline of the main ideas to be discussed.

Have you ever listened to a speech, lecture or debate? How interesting was it? Did the speaker read the entire presentation or just refer to notes at intervals? If you are called upon to make a presentation, will you write out and then read the entire speech or will you use an outline of the main points? Does the method you use make a difference?

A presentation is a form of oral communication in which the speaker shows and explains the content of a topic to an audience. A presentation is used to explain, educate, train, convince or convey information. There are different types of presentations including lectures, speeches and giving of reports. Whether the audience consists of one person or hundreds, there are some basic guidelines that must be followed to create and deliver an effective presentation.

Know your purpose

A presentation is delivered to achieve a particular goal. You must be clear about what you want the audience to do when the presentation is over. Presentations can be designed to:

- Entertain.
- Provide information.
- Attract attention.
- Convince or persuade.
- Inspire or motivate.

Know your subject

List the main ideas and points that you want to communicate, and then note the supporting details that you will use. Research your topic thoroughly to ensure that you are accurate at all times. Never try to fake, bluff or pretend to know more than you do. Your audience will detect your insincerity or dishonesty and will not value your message.

Know your audience

You must know who will be listening to your presentation and where it will be presented. A presentation for eight-year-old primary school students will be quite different from one for members of the Parent-Teacher Association. One that will be delivered at your graduation ceremony will be

significantly different from one presented at a youth rally. Similarly, there is a difference between a presentation prepared for your integrated science class and one prepared for your school assembly. Your audience will influence your choice of elements such as the subject matter, language, vocabulary and graphics (e.g. pictures, diagrams, charts).

Know yourself

What are your abilities and your limitations? Do you have a powerful voice or do you speak extremely softly? Are you able to use a little humour effectively or do your jokes fall flat? Are you an expert on your selected topic or is your knowledge limited? An honest appraisal of your strengths and weaknesses will help you to determine what strategies you should use. For example, you might need to use a microphone to ensure that you are heard comfortably by all.

Practise

Practise your presentation until you are comfortable with your material. Rehearse several times in front of friends or relatives or the mirror. Get feedback about your presentation. Make changes that will improve your delivery.

Plan well in advance

A **storyboard** is a planning tool used for multimedia such as television, film and advertising presentations. It is a sketch of how to organise a presentation and a list of its contents. A storyboard consists of a series of panels or boxes, each of which includes:

- A representation of the elements that will be used such as graphics and sound effects.
- The text of any points that will be shown to the audience.
- Notes of the details that will be spoken about but not shown.
- How much time each section should take.

To do

Let us prepare a storyboard entitled *Dr Eric Williams – A Caribbean Hero*

- 1 Write out the key ideas related to the presentation (Figure 11.1).



Figure 11.1 Key ideas

- 2 Write out supporting topics for each key idea. For example, some supporting topics for Early life are shown in Figure 11.2.

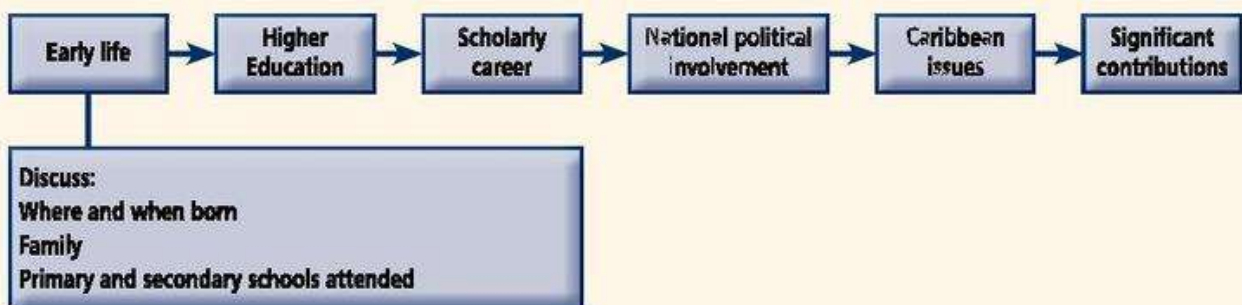


Figure 11.2 Supporting topics

3 Plan the elements that will be used for each topic and sub-topic as illustrated in Figure 11.3.

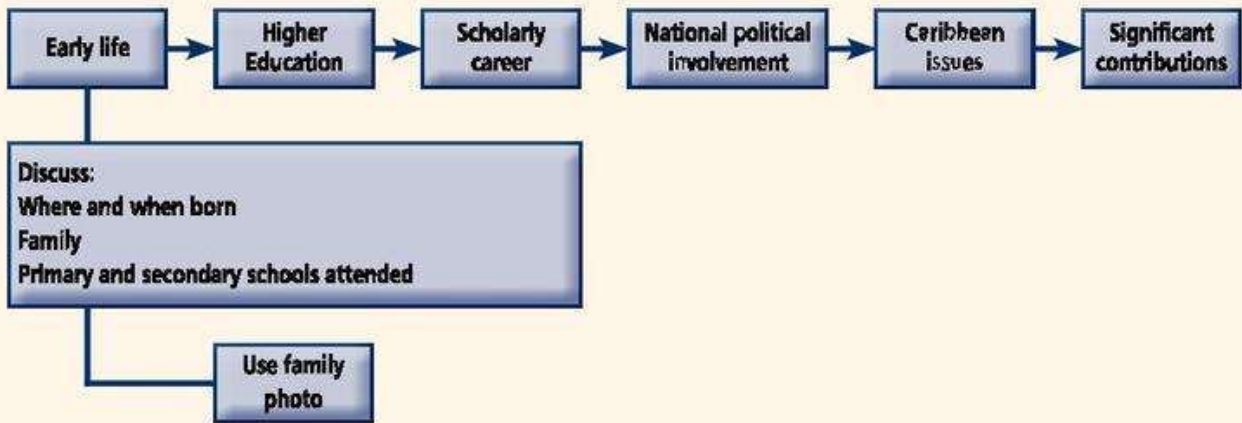


Figure 11.3 Planning graphic elements that will be used

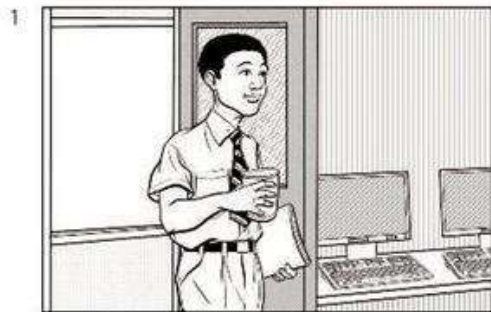
4 Jot down the detail that you will present for each topic.

5 Plan how much time will be spent on each topic. For example, you might plan to talk about his early life for two minutes, but about his contributions for 10 minutes.

A storyboard helps you to:

- Define the limits of the presentation within available resources and time.
- Organise and focus the presentation.
- Decide what medium and method to use for each part of the presentation.

A completed storyboard represents the printed version of a presentation. Storyboards are also used extensively by film directors and advertising agencies because they give a good idea of the product before filming begins. This means that changes can be made before production costs are incurred.



1 Kyle, a student, enters computer lab with drink in hand.



2 Class prefect approaches student.



3 As Kyle turns away he comes into contact with another student entering the lab. The drink spills onto Kyle's shirt and the floor.



4 A shocked Kyle.

Figure 11.4 A simple storyboard

Developing work skills

You work with an advertising agency. You have been asked to plan a television commercial for a new brand of sneakers. Write out a plan for an

advertisement that will attract teenagers. Draw the storyboard for the advertisement (you may use stick figures).

Presentation software

Presentation software allows you to create presentation documents called slides (Figure 11.5). Each slide can contain any combination of elements such as text, pictures, sound, animations and movie clips. A multimedia projector can be connected to the computer to project the slides onto a screen or wall. The slides can also be printed and used as handouts. Examples of presentation software include Microsoft PowerPoint, Lotus Presentation and OpenOffice Impress. You will learn more about using presentation software in Unit 18.

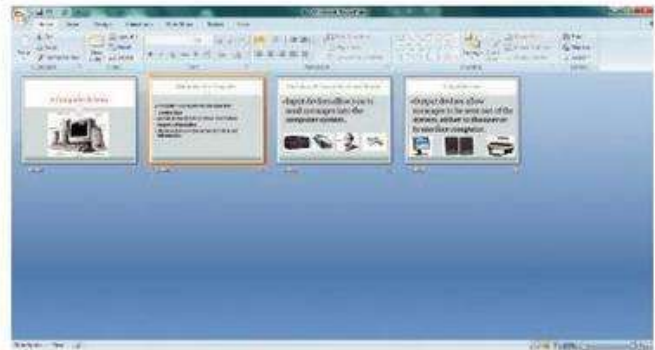


Figure 11.5 Slides in a PowerPoint presentation

My glossary

Write definitions of the following terms.

Graphics	Slide
Presentation	Storyboard
Presentation software	

Examination-type questions

- Explain what the following are:
 - A presentation
 - Presentation software (2 marks)
- Name two examples of presentation software. (2 marks)
- State three purposes of a presentation. (3 marks)
- Discuss three factors that should be considered when planning a presentation. (6 marks)
- Define the following terms as they relate to presentations:
 - Slide
 - Graphic (2 marks)
- You have been asked to deliver a presentation on computer safety to a group of first-form students at your school. Prepare an outline or storyboard using at least three main ideas. (5 marks)