

PRESENTATION OF PAPER

SCRIPT

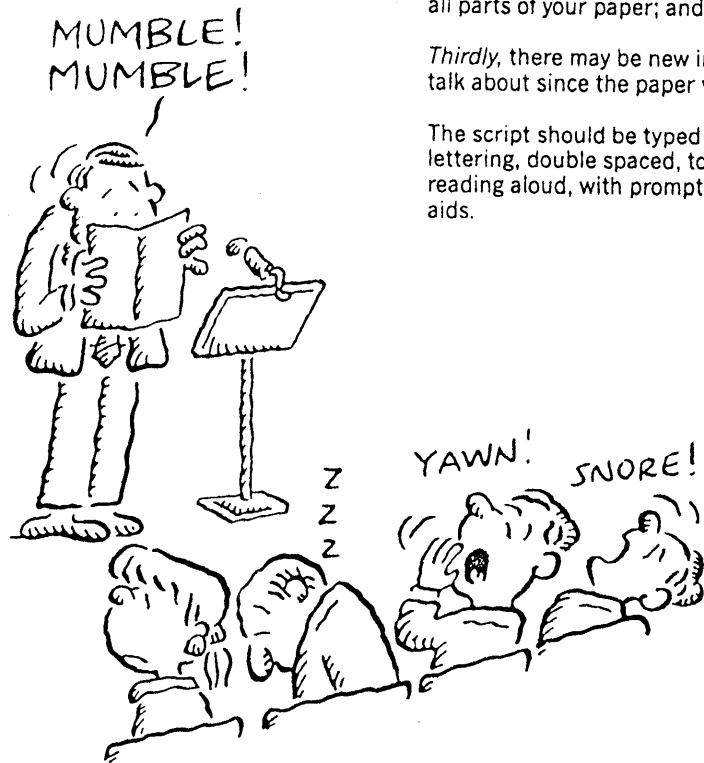
Having written your technical paper for publication in the IMechE Conference Proceedings, the next task is to write the script for your presentation. In most cases, delegates will have received the volume of papers in advance, will have read those they are interested in, and will have the papers in front of them when you begin your presentation. It is certain that the heads of your audience will soon be nodding if you merely read your published paper, or even extracts from it!

Firstly, spoken style should be different from written style;

Secondly, there will not be time to cover all parts of your paper; and

Thirdly, there may be new information to talk about since the paper was written.

The script should be typed in large lettering, double spaced, to enable easy reading aloud, with prompts for visual aids.



PRESENTATION OF PAPER

STRUCTURE

A well thought-out structure will convey your material memorably. Do not try to cover too many points — if your paper is long, choose only the important and most interesting parts and concentrate on those.

The most effective structure is as follows:

- Introduction: Statement of Argument
- Main Body: Technical Support (for the Argument, maximum of five examples)
- Conclusion: Restatement of Argument

About 110 - 120 words per minute is a rough guide to the amount that can be presented, but additional time must be allowed for explaining slides. Therefore, for a 20 minute presentation with 12 slides, your script should be no longer than 2000 words, and preferably nearer to 1500.

Some speakers begin with a joke — but this can be risky if it is received by a wall of unsmiling faces, leaving you less relaxed than when you began.

Your introduction must capture the interest of the audience and you must lead them on into the development of your main theme. The progression of the presentation must have direction and maintain continuity. The rhythm is also important — it must be balanced, but the pace should allow time for the digestion of what is said.

Bear in mind the discussion period. Keep back some information which can be used then, or better still, purposely include something in your presentation that you know will give rise to discussion.

A brief conclusion, restating the main points and defining any proposed action or recommendations is necessary to complete your presentation.



PRESENTATION OF PAPER

REHEARSING

Rehearse your presentation at home or at the office well in advance of arriving at the conference, in order to a) check the timing b) see if it sends anyone to sleep and c) make sure it is interesting and understandable. The use of a tape recorder or video can be very revealing!

There are two ways of delivering your presentation — reading directly from the script, or extemporaneously (improvised).

With the former method, it is harder for your audience to be attentive as there may be little eye contact, and little variation in pace or tone. If you must read the script, practise so that you can look up regularly and at length.

Extemporaneous delivery does not entail memorising the presentation word for word, but is a method whereby the information can be spoken rather than read.

Take each topic and practise reading through until it is familiar, then practise out loud without reading it. It may be useful to highlight specific words in the text, so that you are reminded of each point if you glance down at your script.

Alternatively, after you have fully rehearsed your presentation, make an outline in which you have two or three words or phrases to remind you of each point. This should also include the list of visual aids. The outline will then act as your cue list. A set of cards (numbered and attached together by a treasury tag) is a useful way of listing the main points, with a different subject on each card.

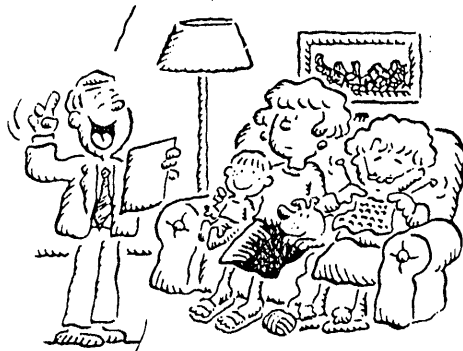
This method has many advantages over script reading. First of all, the rhythm and pace of the talk will be closer to those occurring in natural speech: the speaker who talks rather than reads tends to use shorter sentences, more repetition and natural speech rhythms. Also, better eye contact is achieved. You can gauge the audience response and cut or expand sections as necessary. It must be noted, however, that it is difficult to keep control of time when using this method, and therefore it may be better to read the script until more experience is gained.

A tip for both methods is to write notes for yourself in different colours on your script to help you remember to look at your audience, for instance.

If you wish to rehearse at the venue of your presentation, this can be arranged, although it is not standard procedure. It is unwise to make this your only rehearsal, as you will then have little time to make amendments.

You should run through your slides on a practice projector during the briefing meeting on the morning of your presentation, to make sure they are in the correct order, not back-to-front or upside-down, and do not stick in the carousel.

AND IN CONCLUSION ...



PRESENTATION OF PAPER

DELIVERY

A good and interesting paper can be completely spoiled by bad delivery. There are five important points to remember:

- speak clearly and slowly
- use expression, exaggeration and pauses
- look frequently at the audience
- beware of distracting mannerisms
- smile!

Always try to address yourself to individuals in the room, otherwise speak to the back row. Eye contact should not be always with the same part of the audience.

Linked with good delivery is avoidance of mannerisms. Clear delivery is vital to success, while mannerisms are merely annoying. Typical examples are; stroking the bald patch at the back of the head; putting on and removing glasses; a cough between each sentence. These are generally nervous mannerisms, and if they can be restrained, it is generally well worth the effort.

A very common fault is to drop the voice at or towards the end of a sentence, thereby quite often depriving the audience of the most important word or phrase.

Be prepared to be able to curtail your presentation and give a brief summing up in case you overrun your time, and the chairman has indicated that you should finish.

On some occasions you may be scheduled to speak after the delivery of a long and boring introduction, or at the end of a long day, when the audience is restless or people are leaving the room. Rather than get depressed about it, say straight away that you have taken your paper "as read" and you intend very briefly to highlight three main points. You are more likely to impress your audience by taking a short time to give your points than by overrunning.

If simultaneous interpretation is being used, or there are large numbers of overseas delegates in the audience, remember to keep idiomatic phrases, colloquialisms and abbreviations to an absolute minimum, or dispense with them altogether. (You should bring along a copy of your script for the interpreter if simultaneous interpretation is being provided.)

Try not to speak facing your slide for too long. If you have to point at something on the slide, turn back to address your audience as soon as you can.

It may be well worth a day or two of your time to go on an effective or public speaking course — your personnel department should be able to help. Alternatively, there are some useful audio tapes available from newsgroups on how to speak in public.

If you have made good preparations (well-thought out script, rehearsed, visual aids professionally designed) you will be confident in your delivery and this will be much appreciated and remembered by your audience.



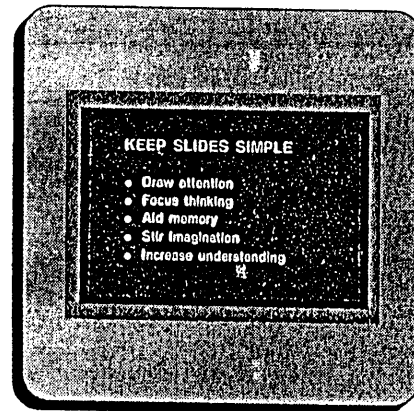
PREPARATION OF VISUAL AIDS

GENERAL

Appropriate and timely illustrations can do much to enhance your presentation. They can draw attention, focus thinking, aid memory, stir imagination and increase understanding. It is normal for the attention of an audience to wander; visual aids bring them back to the point and give shape and colour to what might otherwise be a monotonous monologue. Also, many people absorb information more readily through their eyes than through their ears.

Visual aids require as much thought and preparation as the wording of the presentation, but take longer to produce and cannot be altered at the last minute. The script and visual aids should be planned at the same time.

A picture is worth a thousand words only if it can be seen clearly and assimilated by an audience at a glance.



PREPARATION OF VISUAL AIDS

CHOOSING THE DEVICE

The status and possible size of the audience, and the size and type of the room should be taken into account when deciding which visual device to use.

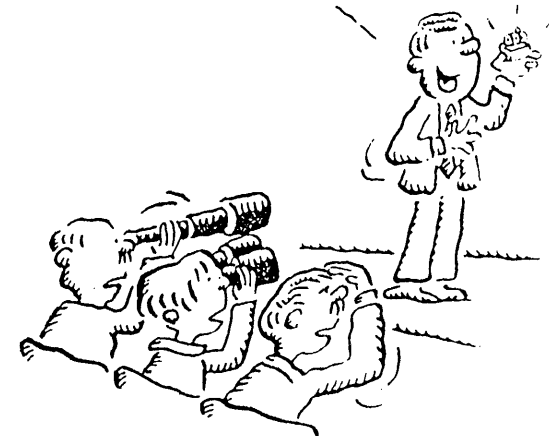
■ *Overhead projectors* do not convey a professional image, and should be avoided if at all possible. Exceptions are when last-minute information needs to be incorporated, or when an illustration is needed during discussion to clarify a point, or when a drawing such as a flow chart needs to be built up while speaking (although several slides can achieve the same result). If overhead transparencies must be used, keep the information on each one to a minimum and type or print in large, bold lettering. Avoid handwriting, as it is usually messy, unprofessional and illegible.

■ *Film/Video*. A film (16mm) or video (Umatic or VHS) is useful to supplement your presentation, but check that the equipment will be available. It is better to project the video than to use monitors, which may be difficult to see. It is also preferable to speak over a soundless film or video than to oblige the audience to re-tune their ears to a recorded voice. Keep the length to a maximum of five minutes.

■ *Models* of items, or actual examples referred to in the presentation, can be held up or handed around, but if the audience is large, this may not be feasible. Similarly, the demonstration of a model at the lectern may not be seen by a large portion of the audience, unless video equipment is used.

■ *Slide Projectors* enable good quality diagrams, text and pictures to be amplified onto a large screen which will be visible to the whole audience. By using a remote control device, the changing of slides is automatic and you can leave the technicalities to the projectionist. Having checked beforehand that your slides are correct and in order, you can relax rather than have to fumble with overhead transparencies which may be upside-down or out of focus. Slides are easy to produce, although they take time to make. Early decision and liaison with your photographic and/or publicity department are essential. If your company does not make slides, try contacting the IMechE Conference Department for the names of recommended slide producers.

AS YOU CAN SEE
FROM THIS ...



PREPARATION OF VISUAL AIDS

CONSTRUCTING SLIDES

The main points to remember when constructing slides are

- Keep each slide simple
- One main point to each slide
- Be bold and big
- 6 words per line
- 6 lines per slide
- Design for back row to see

The purpose of a slide is to clarify or highlight the point you wish to impress upon your audience. If the slide is too complicated, this will detract from your speech, and similarly, if the slide is too simple, the audience will be annoyed.

If you have to say "You probably cannot read this at the back, so I will read it to you," then that slide is worse than useless.

If a slide takes more than one or two minutes to explain, redesign it into several simple ones.

A chart of keywords is not only easy to read, but provides your audience with a set of "trigger" words to help them recall your message, for instance:

- simplicity
- boldness
- clarity

Do not, however, fall into the trap of merely reading your chart — explain each point.

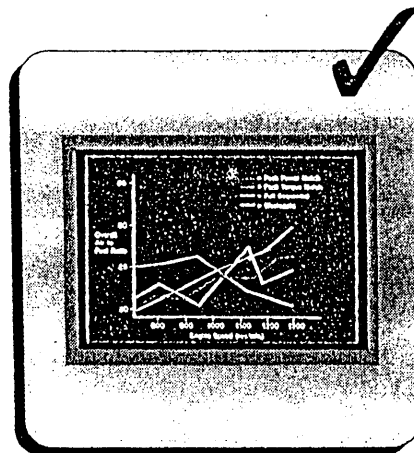
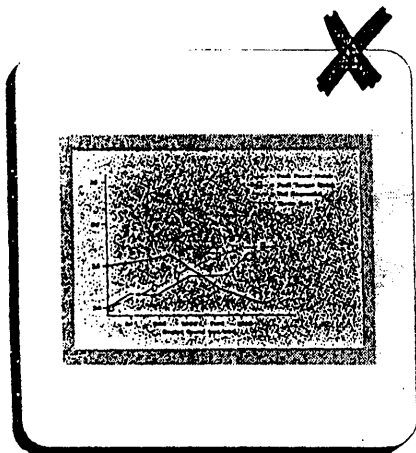
The content of your slide should be legible to the naked eye at a distance of 30cm (12 inches).

Colour slides are very effective, but make sure you use a dark background, such as dark blue or green, and contrast the lettering and lines in white or yellow.

Where possible, use graphics, such as coloured bar charts and graphs, and use shading rather than numbers.

Mathematical workings and large tables of results do not make good slides.

Photographs must be sharp and not under-exposed.



PREPARATION OF VISUAL AIDS

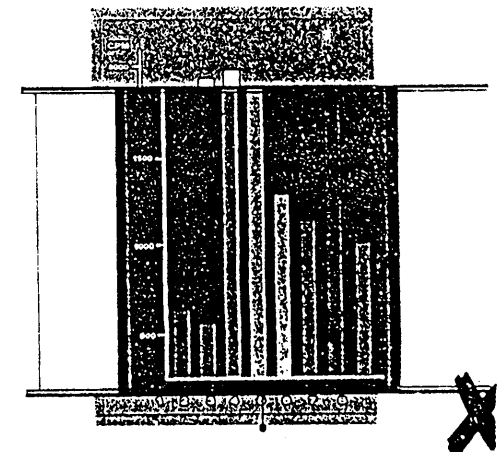
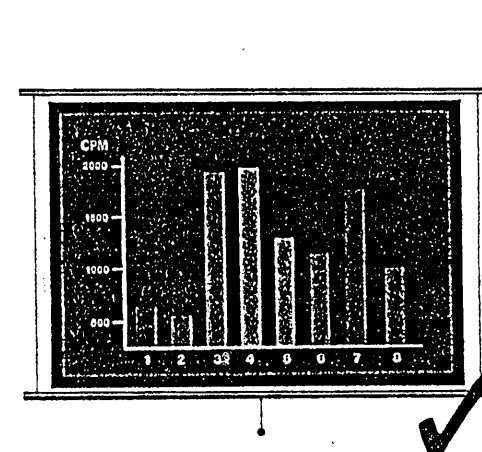
CONSTRUCTING SLIDES

SIZE

The size of your slides, including the mount, should be 50mm x 50mm (2" x 2") overall and made from 35mm film, which should be preferably horizontal (landscape). It is recommended if at all possible to keep all slides in the horizontal format, as most screens are wider than they are tall, therefore enabling landscape slides to be shown bigger than portrait (vertical) slides. There is quite a big risk that portrait slides would disappear off the top and bottom of the screen, unless all slides are shown at the much smaller size.

LOGOS

Do not include your company logo on the slide. Your technical paper has been accepted on the basis that it contains no overt commercialism. Your presentation should also reflect this.



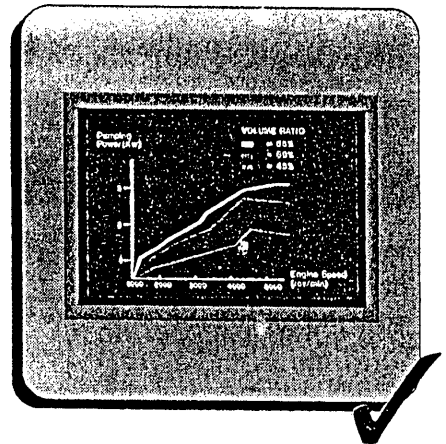
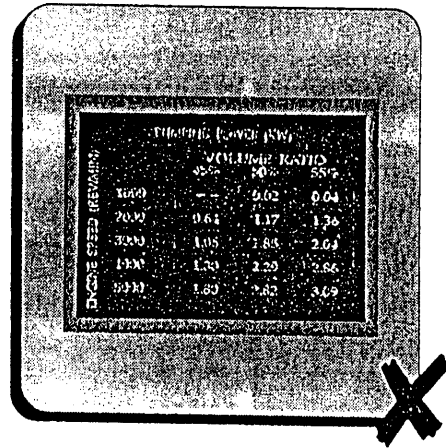
PREPARATION OF VISUAL AIDS

CONSTRUCTING SLIDES

In the interest of clarity and simplicity, there are a few rules which should normally be followed:

1. Do not underline words
2. Vertical lines in a table are not necessary
3. Avoid vertical lettering if possible
4. Lettering should be lower case except where capital letters would naturally be used
5. Spacing between lines of lettering should be at least equal to the height of a capital letter
6. Typefaces should not be of typewriter appearance (i.e. elite or pica) but should be bold-face sans serif (i.e. Helvetica medium, Grottesque 9, or Univers bold) or italic
7. Avoid tables, use bar charts etc instead
8. Do not include too much detail on diagrams, graphs etc
9. Graphs should be drawn on axes with few, if any, scale lines
10. Use different coloured lines, rather than monochrome, on graphs with several curves.
11. If using colouring in slides, try to be consistent throughout the set of slides
12. Avoid mixing red and green — many people are colour blind

13. If you need to refer to the same slide at different points in your presentation, have duplicates made
14. If you are using old slides, make sure they are in good condition. Cardboard mountings are notorious for getting stuck in carousels and these slides should be remounted in plastic. Check that old slides have not warped and have been dusted.



PREPARATION OF VISUAL AIDS

LABELLING SLIDES

Holding the slide so the information is as you wish to be shown on the screen, stick a small light-coloured spot in the bottom left-hand corner of the slide mounting. Then write the numbers of the slides sequentially on the spots, in the order that you wish the slides to appear.

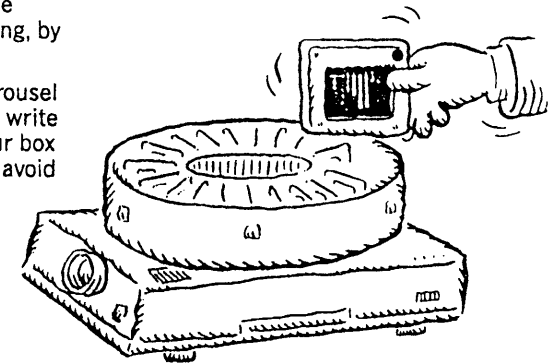
If you wish the screen to be blank at any point in your presentation, place a solid slide in that position and remember to number it.

If you are bringing the slides to the conference in your own carousel, the slides should be placed upside-down, starting from slot number one, but with the right side of the slide facing you. The spots will then appear along the top outer edge of the carousel.

If, however, back projection is being used, the slide should be placed in the carousel back to front as well as upside-down, and the numbered spots will then appear on the reverse of the 'inner' edge.

Your slides can be inserted into the carousel during the briefing meeting, by the projectionist, if you prefer.

Remember to label your box or carousel with your name. It is also useful to write your name on each slide. Keep your box or carousel in a dry warm place to avoid condensation and warping.



Method of loading for front projection.

USE OF AUDIO VISUAL FACILITIES

C H E C K L I S T

When you attend the briefing meeting before you make your presentation, you will be informed about the use of the available equipment.

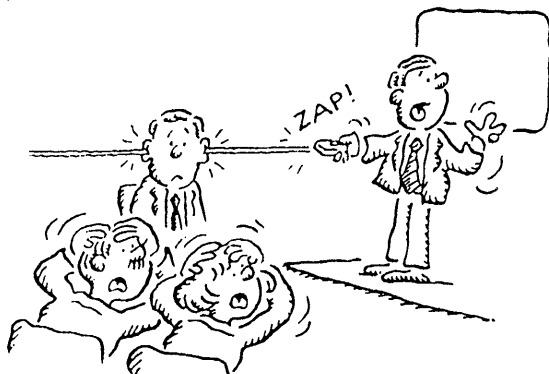
Please remember that if you have not specifically asked for it in advance, video and film equipment will not generally be available.

Most lecterns have a fixed microphone which, if you decide to use it, should not be moved. If the sound level is wrong, the technician will alter it. If, however, you are shorter or taller than average, or if you wish to move about, then a tie or halter microphone is necessary. A tie microphone should be clipped onto your tie or jacket lapel about 25 cm (10 inches) below your mouth. A halter microphone is on a chain and should be put over your head.

Most conference venues will have a remote control for the slide projector, which means that you have direct control of the slide change. If it is an infra-red device (i.e. cordless) you must remember to point it at the slide projector.

The only other piece of equipment you need to know about is the laser pointer. Point it at the screen before turning it on, unless you want to damage your audience!

IS IT WORKING?
CAN YOU HEAR ME?



WELL BEFORE YOUR PRESENTATION:

1. Plan structure of presentation
2. Decide on visual aids
3. Write script
4. Prepare visual aids
5. Inform Conference Department staff of equipment needs
6. Check timing
7. Rehearse presentation

SHORTLY BEFORE YOUR PRESENTATION:

8. Spot and number slides, name box or carousel
9. Prepare condensed notes if not reading script
10. Mark in cues for visual aids
11. Rehearse again

ON ARRIVAL AT CONFERENCE:

12. Hand visual aids to projectionist
13. Try out equipment and see how everything works
14. Relax!

AFTER YOUR PRESENTATION:

15. Collect your visual aids — you may use them again!
16. Congratulate yourself on a job well done!

