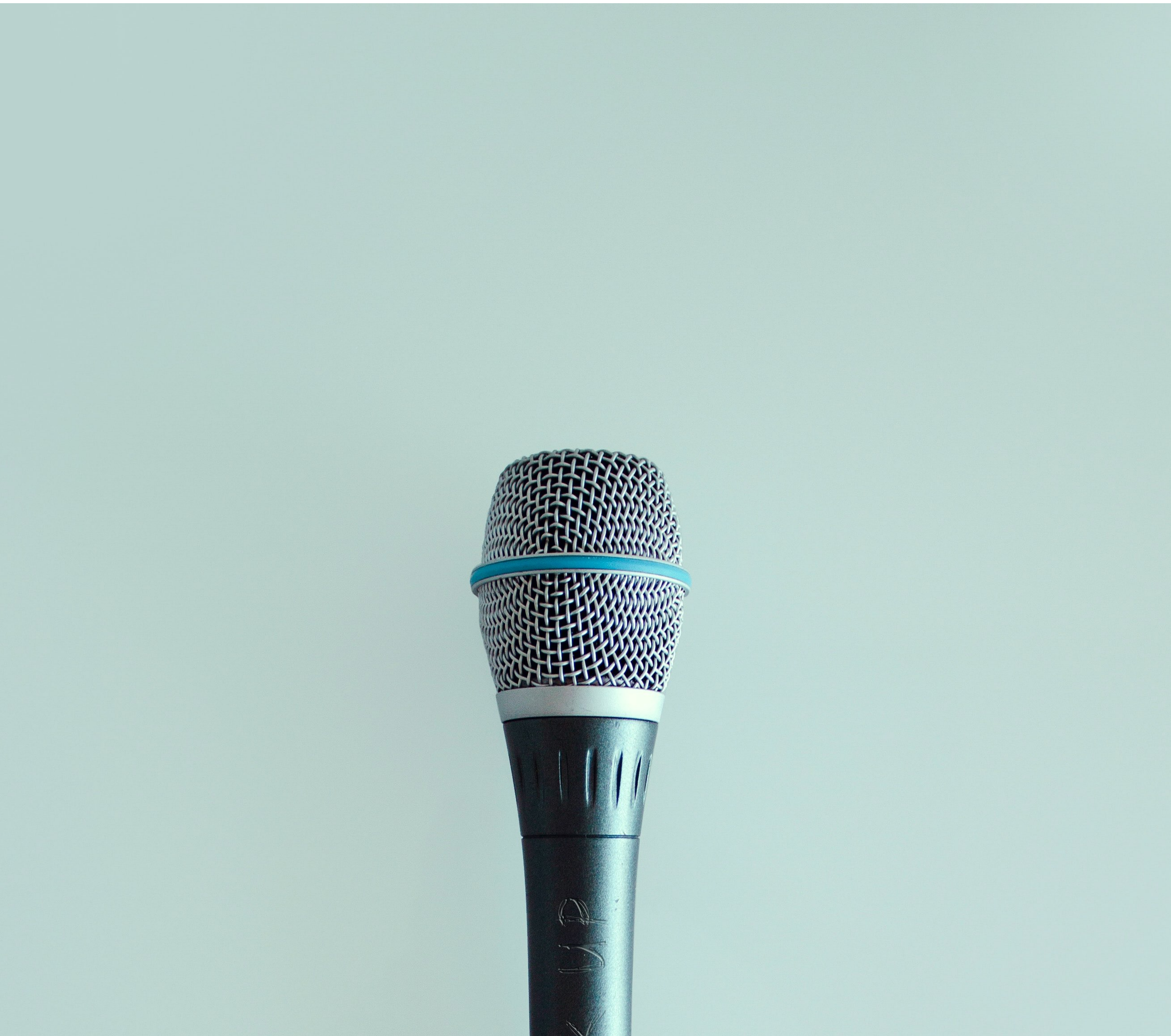
Rethinking Active Learning and Distance Education
Funded by Erasmus - Project KA226

Course
The Art of Scientific Presenting

Workbook



Course Overview

Learning materials & tasks

Supporting Video	Learning Task	Group session	
Intro to course			
Who are you presenting for?			Preparing presentation content
Structure and pace your presentation			
Designing an engaging presentation			
Designing an engaging poster			
Behind the Presentation	1: Study example	Group discussion + Q&A	
Expert presentation			
Verbal and non-verbal delivery techniques			Delivery of presentation
Stress management for presenting			
Presenting online vs in public			
		Q&A session	
	2: Prepare a self-recorded presentation	Peer review the presentation	
	3: Prepare a short poster presentation	Peer review the poster presentation	
Asking the right questions			Engaging in discussion
	4: Prepare your own questions	Answer others questions + Q&A	
	5: Prepare Live online presentation	Live online presentation with questions	
	Scoring presentations	Q&A session	
Recap and final words			

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Index

Welcome 5

1. Understanding your audience 7

2. Structure and pacing 13

3. Designing your slides 23

4. Designing an engaging poster 32

5. An expert presentation 40

6. Deliver a presentation 44

7. Dealing with stress 49

8. Presenting online vs in public 53

9. Practice with presentations 57

10. Engaging in scientific discussion 61

11. Practice with questions 65

12. The final presentation 67

Welcome

Welcome to the "Online Academic Presenting" course! We, the RALDE Project team, are thrilled to have you join us on this educational journey. Our mission is to empower you with the essential skills needed to effectively communicate and present academic content.

This course is meticulously designed to guide both educators and students through the nuanced art of academic presenting. With a focus on communication skills, the course unfolds a systematic 4-Step Approach to mastering online academic presentations:

1. Analyse your audience	2. Determine structure & pace
3. Design your materials	4. Deliver and interact

How to Use This Workbook

This accompanying workbook is your go-to resource for exercises and practical tasks that reinforce the concepts discussed in the course. For optimal learning, engage with the workbook as you progress through the course, completing relevant exercises and reflecting on your learning.

Course Components

The course offers a rich blend of informational videos, recorded webinars, assignments, and group sessions. This workbook seamlessly integrates with these resources, providing you with a structured pathway to practice and internalize your learning.

Getting Started

Ready to dive in? Start by accessing the course materials on the RALDE Youtube Channel, where you'll find a curated playlist of all course content. Remember to download this workbook, and let's embark on a transformative learning experience together!

General reading

Throughout the workbook, you'll find a selection of “Further Reading and Watching" sections. These segments are carefully curated to extend your learning beyond the core material, providing deeper insights and broader perspectives on each topic. Featuring links to a variety of source materials, including scholarly articles, videos, and TED talks, these resources are invaluable for those eager to delve further into the nuances of academic presenting. We encourage you to take advantage of these resources to enhance your learning experience and broaden your academic skillset.

J.V. Emden, L. Becker, Presentation Skills for Students, Bloomsbury
https://books.google.be/books?hl=en&lr=&id=cRxHEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=academic+presentation+skills&ots=B5edMYaht0&sig=NxAV0eKACXoGW0qiT8oLdaqeCqY&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=academic presentation skills&f=false

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L. Lingard, 2015, Joining a conversation: the problem/gap/hook heuristic, Perspect Med Educ
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Beth Malow, 2022, The Art of Communicating Science, TEDxVanderbiltUniversity
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N. H. Mokhtar, et al, 2011, The Effectiveness of Storytelling in Enhancing Communicative Skills, Centre of General Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042811011372

M. Sykes, A. N. Malik, M. D. West, Stories that Move Mountains: Storytelling and Visual Design for Persuasive Presentations, Wiley
https://books.google.be/books?hl=en&lr=&id=nHWxu4jIxWEC&oi=fnd&pg=PR10&dq=storytelling+presentations&ots=6gvRoMwcAn&sig=Nqg6lhUi6XVRUaU1Txrxbev12jk&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=storytelling presentations&f=false

S. Tuomainen, 2016, A Blended Learning Approach to Academic Writing and Presentation Skills, University of Eastern Finland, Finland
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310818004_A_Blended_Learning_Approach_to_Academic_Writing_and_Presentation_Skills

Lesson 1
Understanding your audience

1 Understanding your audience

This is a crucial step for the success of your presentation. In the next exercises we'll reflect on a presentation you will give in **learning task 3**, and identify your audience. Consider their interests, expectations, and level of expertise in the topic you are presenting. First, the most important decision: What will be the topic of your presentation?

My presentation topic is about:

2 Context of your presentation

Different contexts require different approaches to presenting.

Identify the context of your presentation: is it a conference, seminar, or classroom presentation? Is it formal or informal? Are there time constraints? Reflect on how the context influences your presentation style and content.

3 Stepping into your audience's shoes

Consider the characteristics and expectations of your audience. Answer the following questions to gain a deeper understanding of your audience:

- **What type of work do they do?**
- **Why are they interested in your talk?**
- **What do they already know about your topic?**
- **What do they expect to learn from you?**

4 Defining your audience's scientific background

Tailor your presentation to your audience's level of familiarity with your topic. Define their scientific background and adjust your content accordingly.

1. **How would you describe your audience’s science background and until what depth would they be able to follow?**

2. **Also identify some technical terms and try to explain them without oversimplifying or overwhelming your audience.**

5 Clarifying the purpose of your presentation

Set clear goals for your presentation. Define its purpose:

Is it to inform, convince, or showcase?
What exactly?

Ensure your purpose aligns with your audience's needs and expectations. As you build your presentation, keep this purpose in mind and make sure your content supports it.

6 Choosing the right tone and language

Select the appropriate vocabulary and tone for your audience. Consider whether a formal or informal tone is suitable, whether to use technical or common language, and how much detail to include.

What would be the best way to communicate with your audience without alienating or confusing them?

7 Planning for post-presentation engagement

Plan how you want to engage with your audience after your presentation. Is there a call to action you can integrate?

Do you want them to ask questions, collaborate with you, read your paper, share your ideas,...? Think about where you want to direct their attention afterwards.

If you've completed these steps, you've successfully analysed the context and audience of your presentation. From here we can start building the content of your talk and start with designing the slides.

When you are ready you can continue with lesson 2: Structuring and Pacing. First, watch the course videos and afterwards apply the theory to your own presentation. Good luck!

Further Watching

EU Science & Innovation, 2017, Understand your audience - The EU Guide to Science Communication, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eM8leT2tlD4&ab_channel=EUScience%26Innovation

Paulo Simas, 2018, Get to know your Audience, TEDxIowacity
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smajeIVjCSc&ab_channel=TEDxTalks

Seth Godin, 2020, To Find Your Audience, Ask Yourself This Question, Youtube: Inc.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvbRR0w1mL8&ab_channel=Inc.

Seth Godin, 2020, Finding your who, Youtube: Hubspot Marketing
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UC4A2aimQaE&ab_channel=HubSpotMarketing

Simon Clark, 2022, My three step approach to talking about science, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ec_cTrLh3h4

Square, 2021, How to Define Your Target Audience, Youtube,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoBc9tNtVDQ&ab_channel=Square

Lesson 2
Structuring & Pacing

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8 Start with some inspiration in structure

Understanding and mastering structuring and pacing in your presentation comes with practice. The best way to start is to learn from others. Luckily we can learn a lot from watching somebody else present their work.

Take some time to explore some presentations and reflect which ones were well-structured and well-paced. Next jot down below what made them so effective. You can search on YouTube or –better yet– have a look around on TEDX.

9 Crafting your hook

A compelling hook grabs your audience's attention from the start. Craft a hook for your own presentation using the Problem, Gap, Hook approach. Consider a problem you want to address, identify the knowledge gap, and formulate a statement that piques interest.

The problem you're trying to fix with your research

The gap in knowledge surrounding this problem

How are you closing the gap?

From this, formulate a statement that piques interest.

Ex. Did you know you can study whales from space?

10 Act 1 The Setup: Identifying the Core Problem

Clearly set up the specific problem your research or study is addressing. Provide context and significance. This is where you draw information from your introduction.

Exercise:

1. **Articulate the core problem your presentation will address**
2. **Explain the significance of your research**
3. **What are the implications?**

11 Act 2 Transformation: Bridging the Knowledge Gap

This section is the heart of your presentation. Outline how your research seeks to close the identified knowledge gap. Discuss the methods, challenges, and transformations experienced during your research.

Exercise:

Outline how you'll discuss your

- **Methods and materials**
- **Experiment design**
- **Challenges of the research**

12 Act 3 Resolution: Unveiling Your Findings

You have set the stage for your research, you explained the implications and the essence of your methodology. Now it's time to think how to convey your results with clarity and concise language.

Exercise:

Plan how you will present the findings of your research in a clear and engaging manner.

- **Can you use visuals?**
- **What metaphors or analogies can you use?**
- **What is the conclusion of these results?**
- **What comes after?**

13 Ending Your Presentation Effectively

Summarise the key points of what you discussed and reaffirm the significance of your research. Craft a memorable end statement to keep your presentation top of mind and don't forget to include your call to action.

Exercise:

Write the concluding section of your presentation, making sure it leaves a lasting impression.

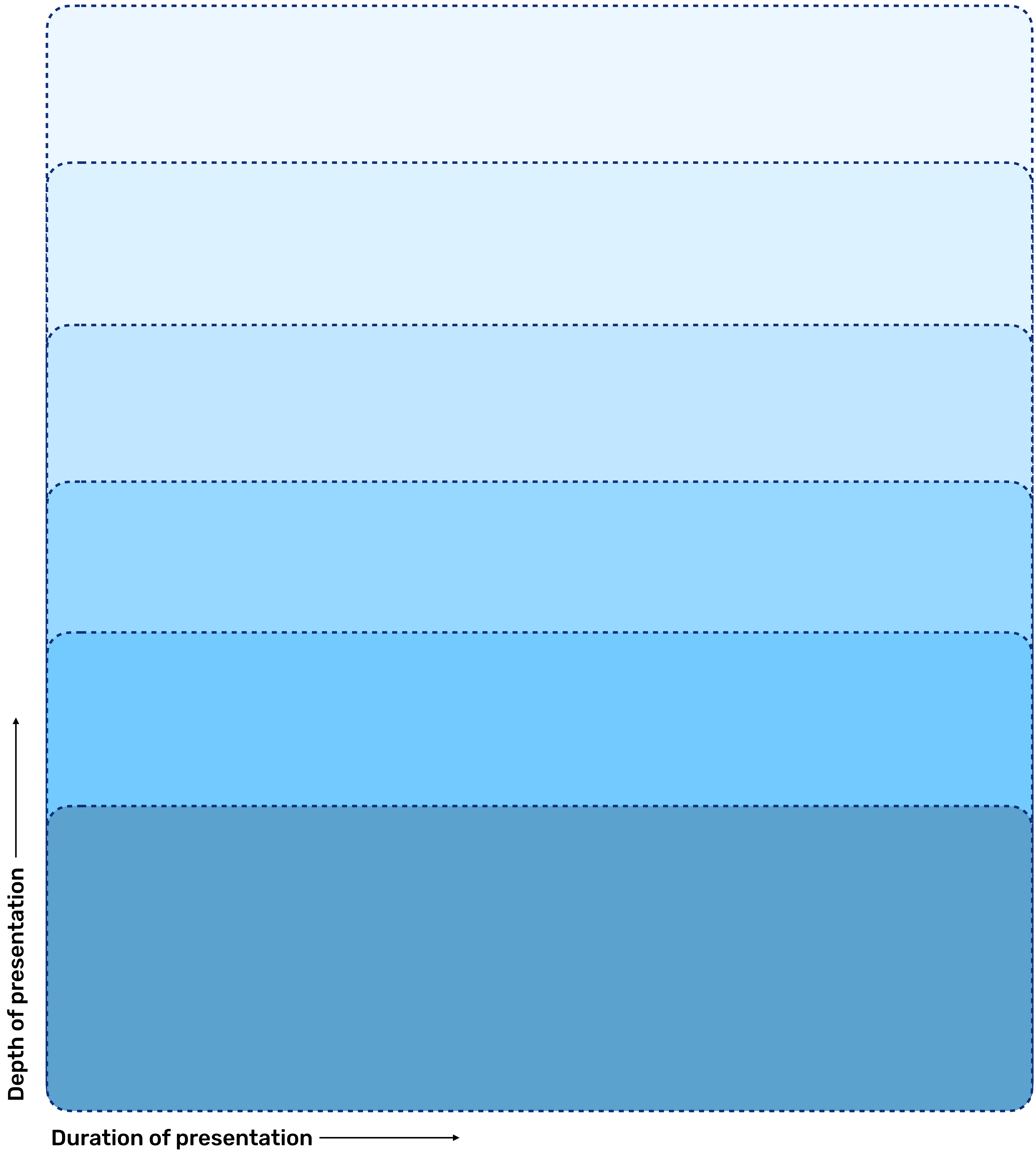
- **What are the most important take aways from your research?**
- **Can you close the hook you started your presentation with?**
- **Is there a funny or memorable way to end?**
- **What do you want the audience to do after your presentation ends?**

14 Understanding Pacing: The Diving Deep Analogy

Pacing is crucial for maintaining audience engagement. Using the 'diving deep' analogy, plan the pacing of your presentation. Identify when you will dive deep into details and when you will surface for breathers.

Exercise:

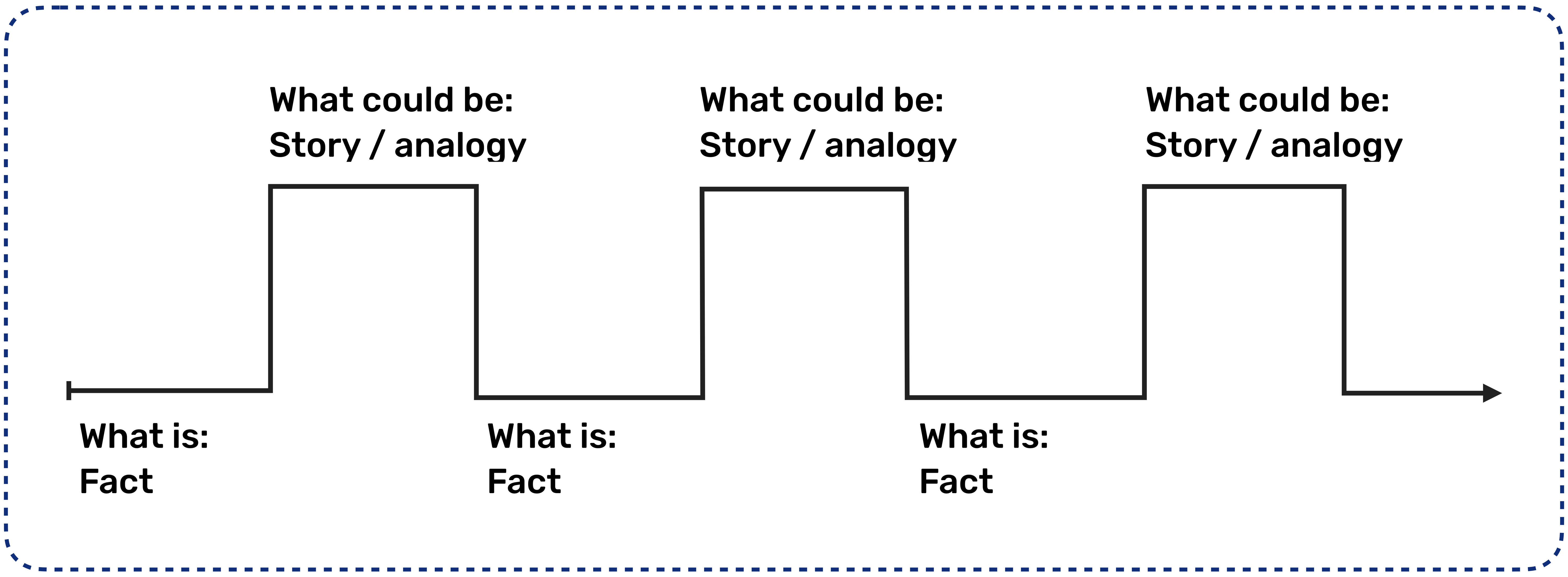
Use the outline you created for Act 1, 2 and 3 as the building blocks of your presentation. Now plan the pacing of your presentation using this diving analogy.



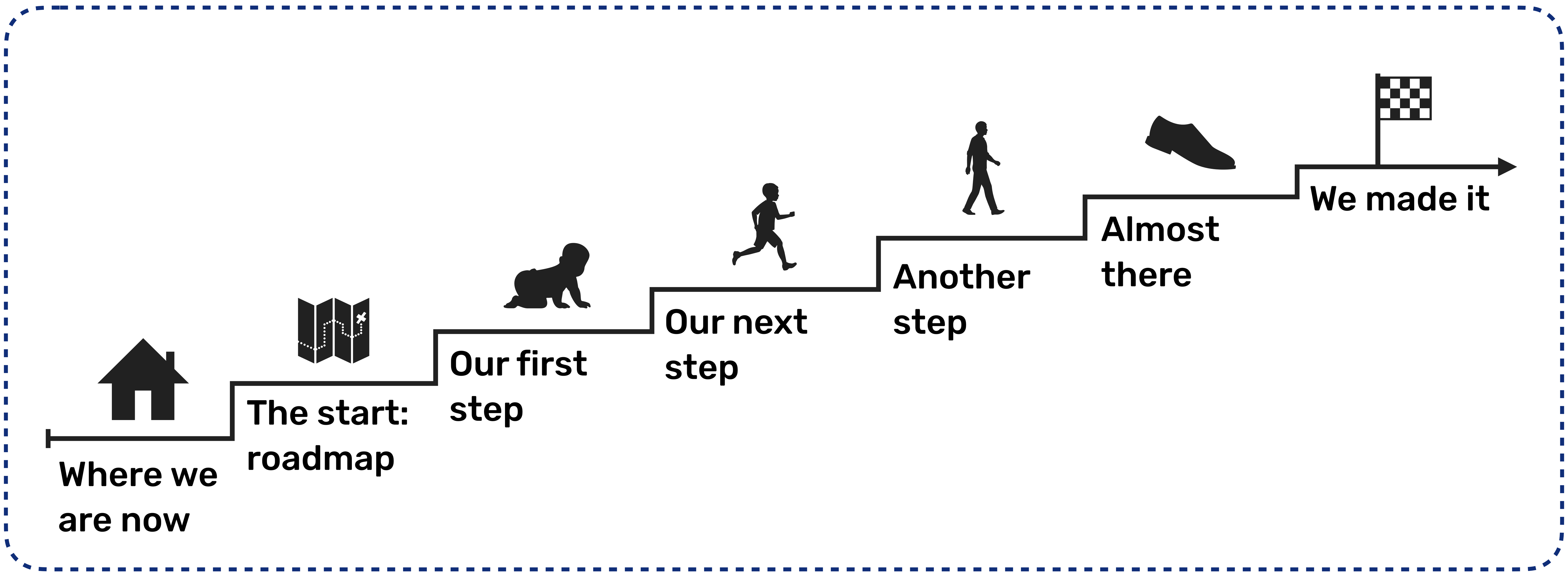
15 Exploring Different Presentation Structures

If this doesn't feel right, or doesn't fit with your research, consider different structures for your presentation and choose one that best fits your message. Reflect on the structures discussed below and select one that aligns with your presentation's objectives.

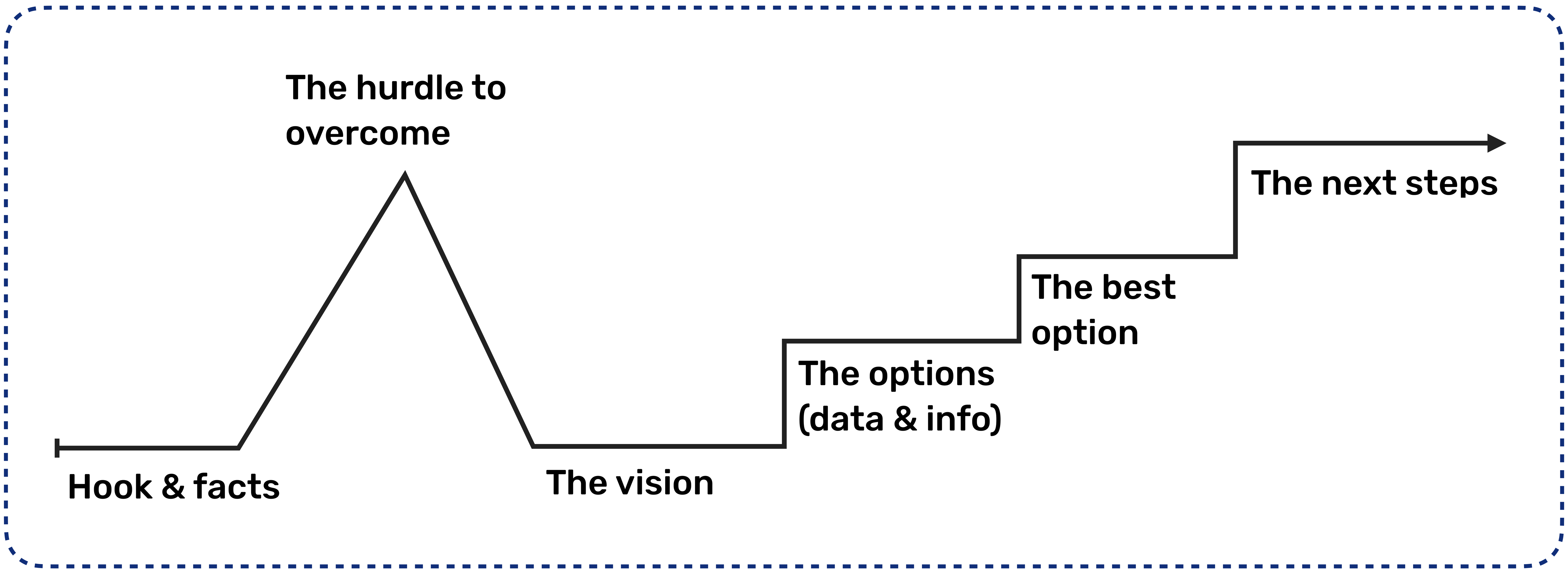
Fact & Story line



The Explanation



The pitch



Further Watching

Melissa Marshall, 2015, Presenting Your Science to a Diverse Audience, Youtube; B-BIC Skills Development Center
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fv-io4muGK0&ab_channel=B-BICSkillsDevelopmentCenter

Patrick Winston, 2019, How to Speak, Youtube
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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S83MGNoa0co&t=1s&ab_channel=ASMEFutureMECareerDevelopment

University of Melbourne, 2015, Academic Skills - Presenting Effectively, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNIO5Kklq7Y&ab_channel=ServiceCommitment-UniversityofMelbourne

Visme, 2019, Presentation Skills: 7 Presentation Structures Used by the Best TED Talks, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMk5s1y486I&ab_channel=Visme

Lesson 3
Designing your slides

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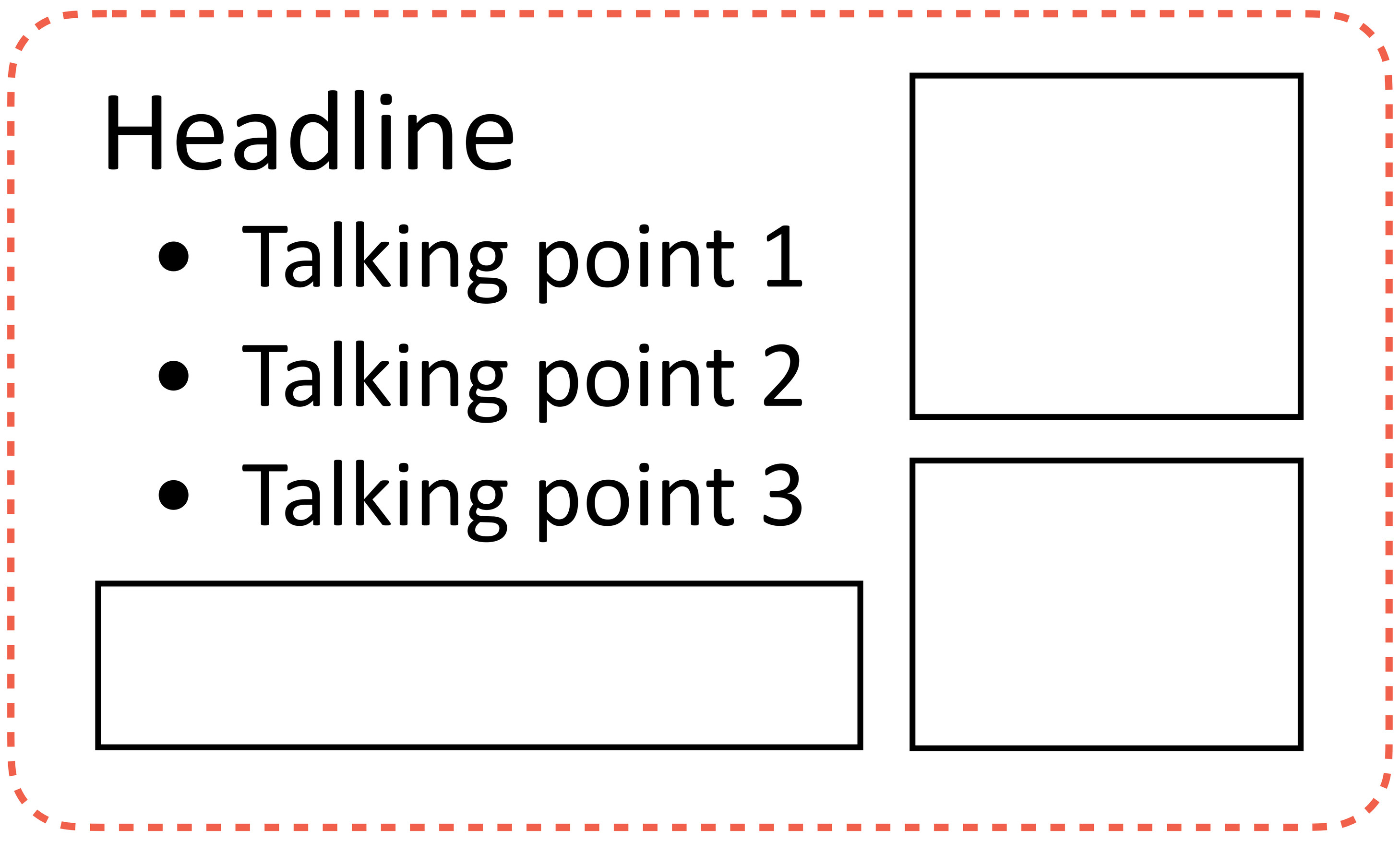
16 Start with some inspiration in design

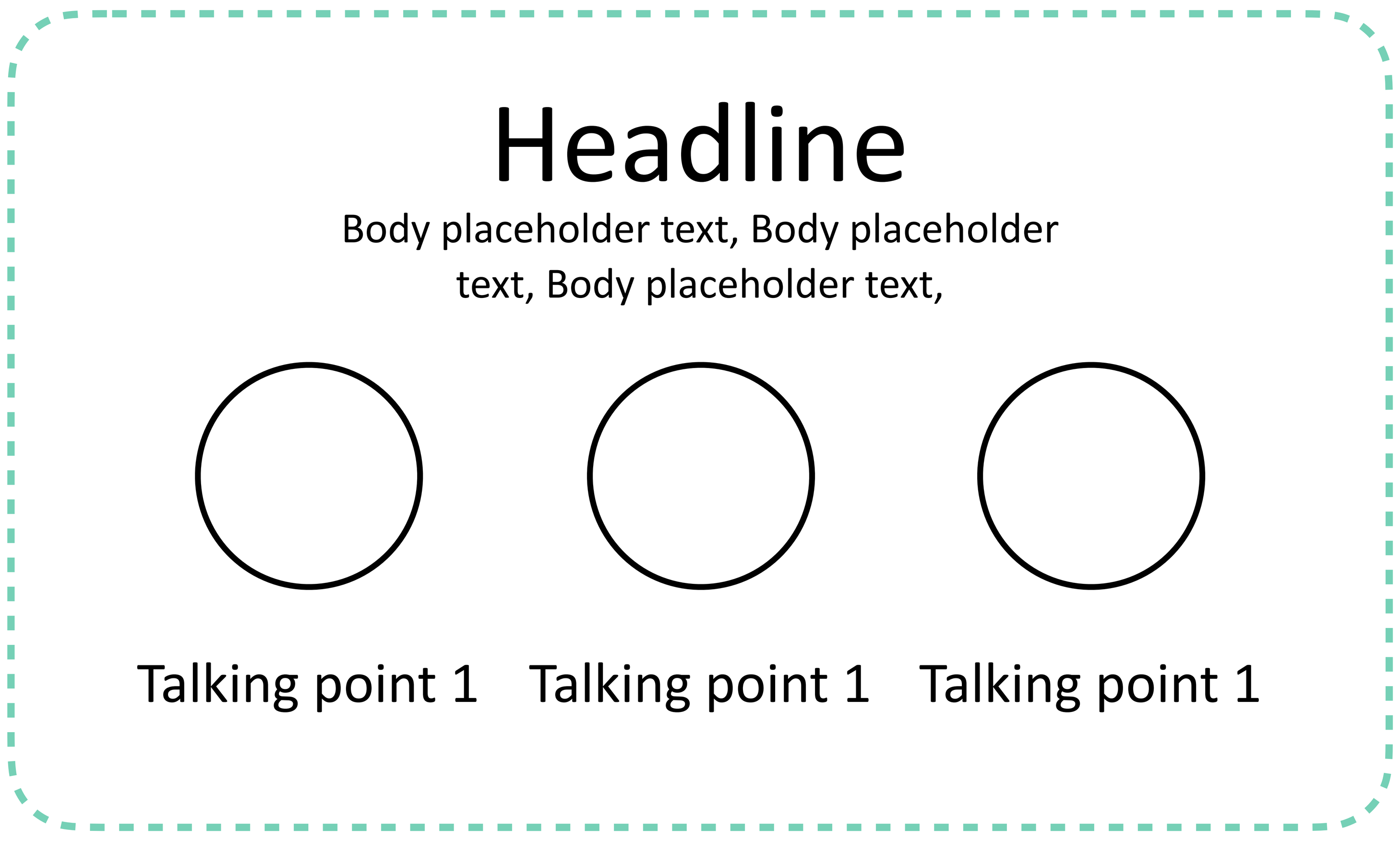
In this section, we delve into the importance of effective design in presentations. A well-designed presentation not only enhances your message but also keeps your audience more engaged when you talk to them.

Take some time to explore some presentations and reflect which ones were well-designed with clear messaging. Next jot down below what stood out to you in their design and what you can learn from that. You can search on YouTube or –better yet– have a look around on TEDX.

17 Overpopulating Slides

One common mistake presenters make is overcrowding their slides with too much information. This not only overwhelms your audience but also distracts them from your main points.





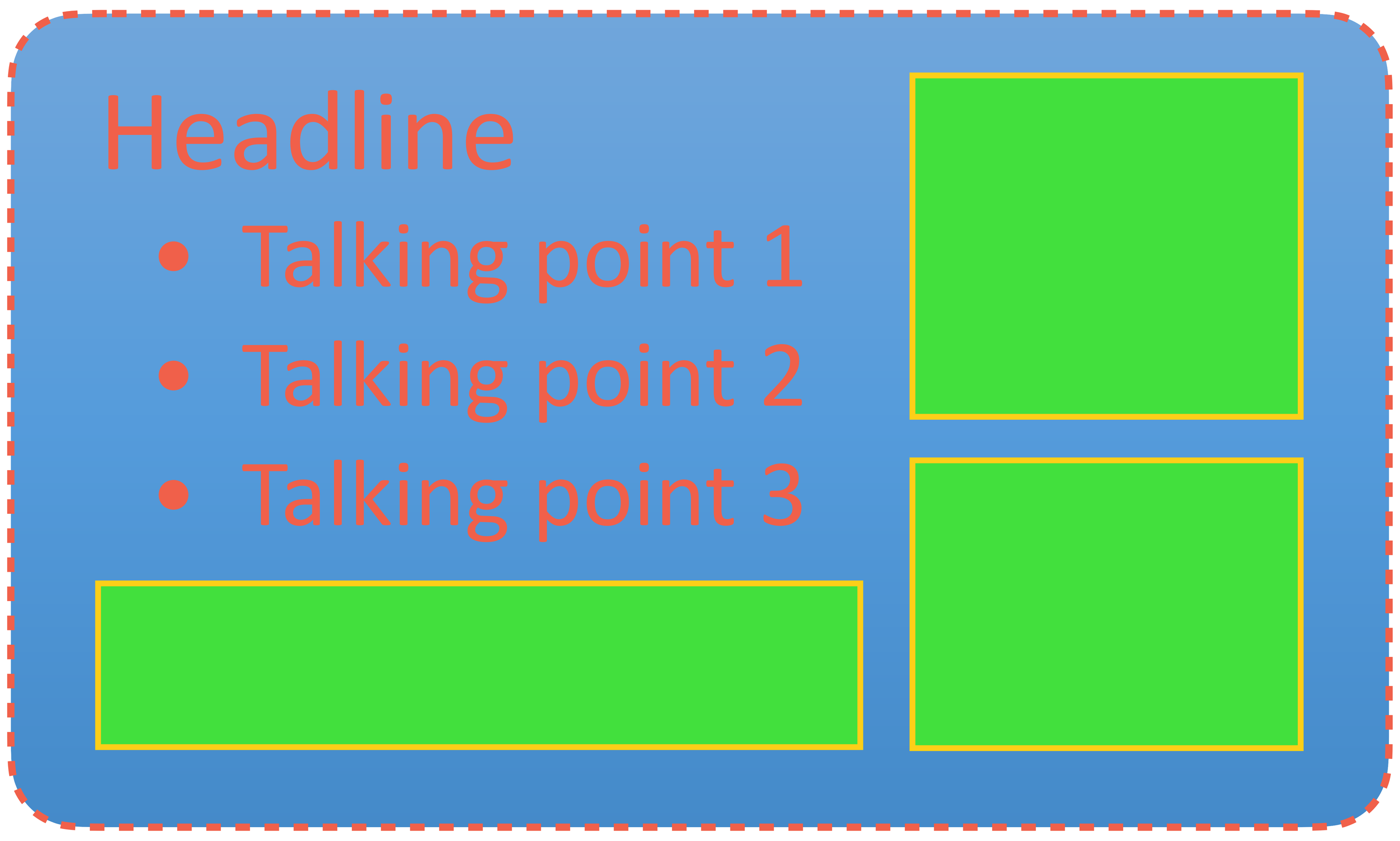
Exercise:

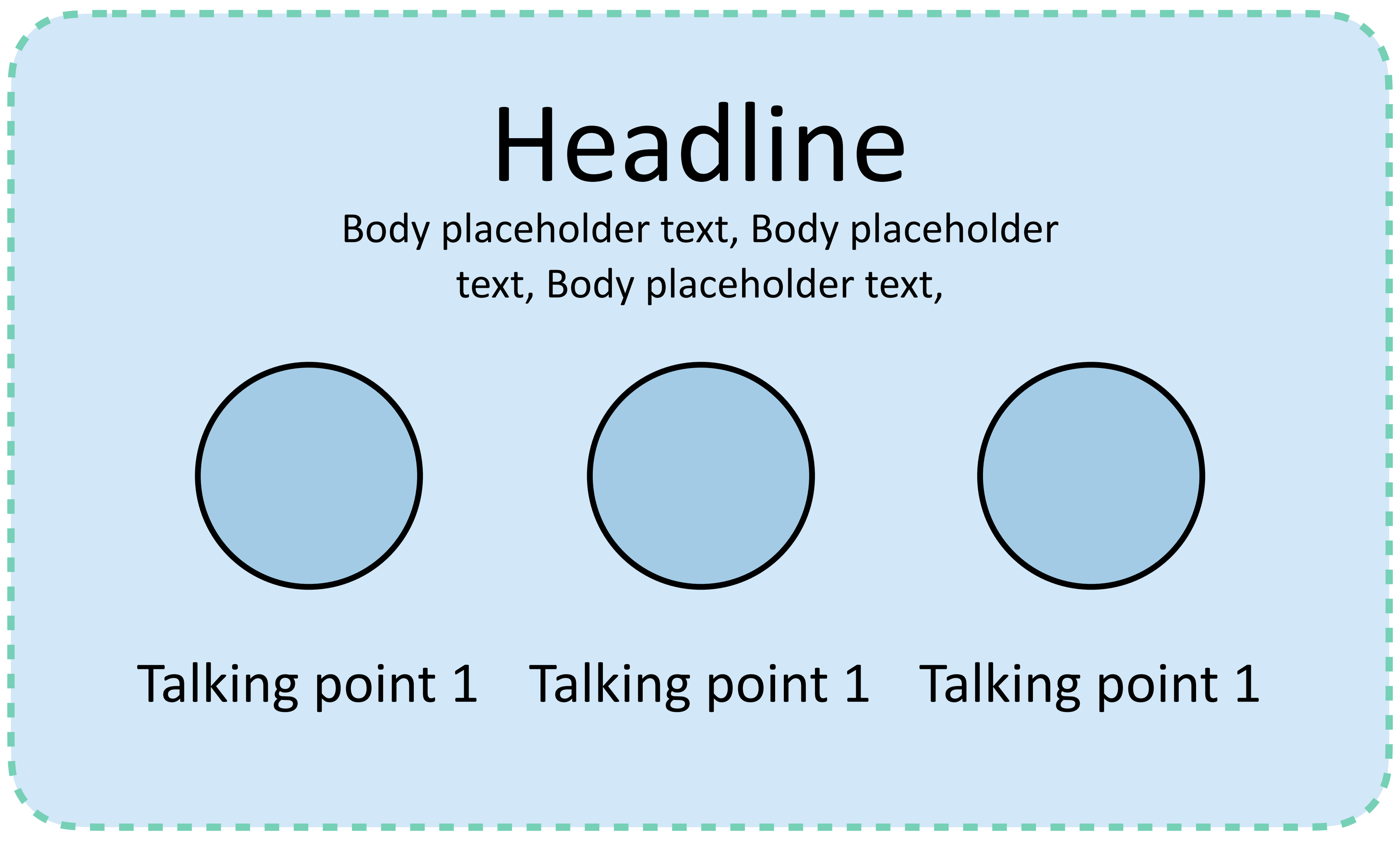
1. **Review one of your past presentations that you know can still use some work.**
2. **Find 2 slides that needs redesigning and identify areas where you have included too much information.**
3. **Consider how you can simplify and declutter the slide while still conveying your message. You can make a rudimentary drawing below.**

18 Bad Alignment and Color Combinations

Proper alignment and color selection are crucial for creating visually appealing slides.

- Misaligned content can make your slides appear disorganized
- Bad color combinations can strain the eyes and detract from your presentation.





Exercise:

Review a slide from a past presentation and adjust the alignment and colors to improve its visual appeal. Consider how these adjustments enhance the overall effectiveness of the slide. You can use the space below to note down what you learned.

19 Foundational Design Rules

The principles of **alignment, negative space, proportion, and contrast** are foundational to effective slide design. Each of these principles serves to enhance the clarity and impact of your presentation.

Exercise:

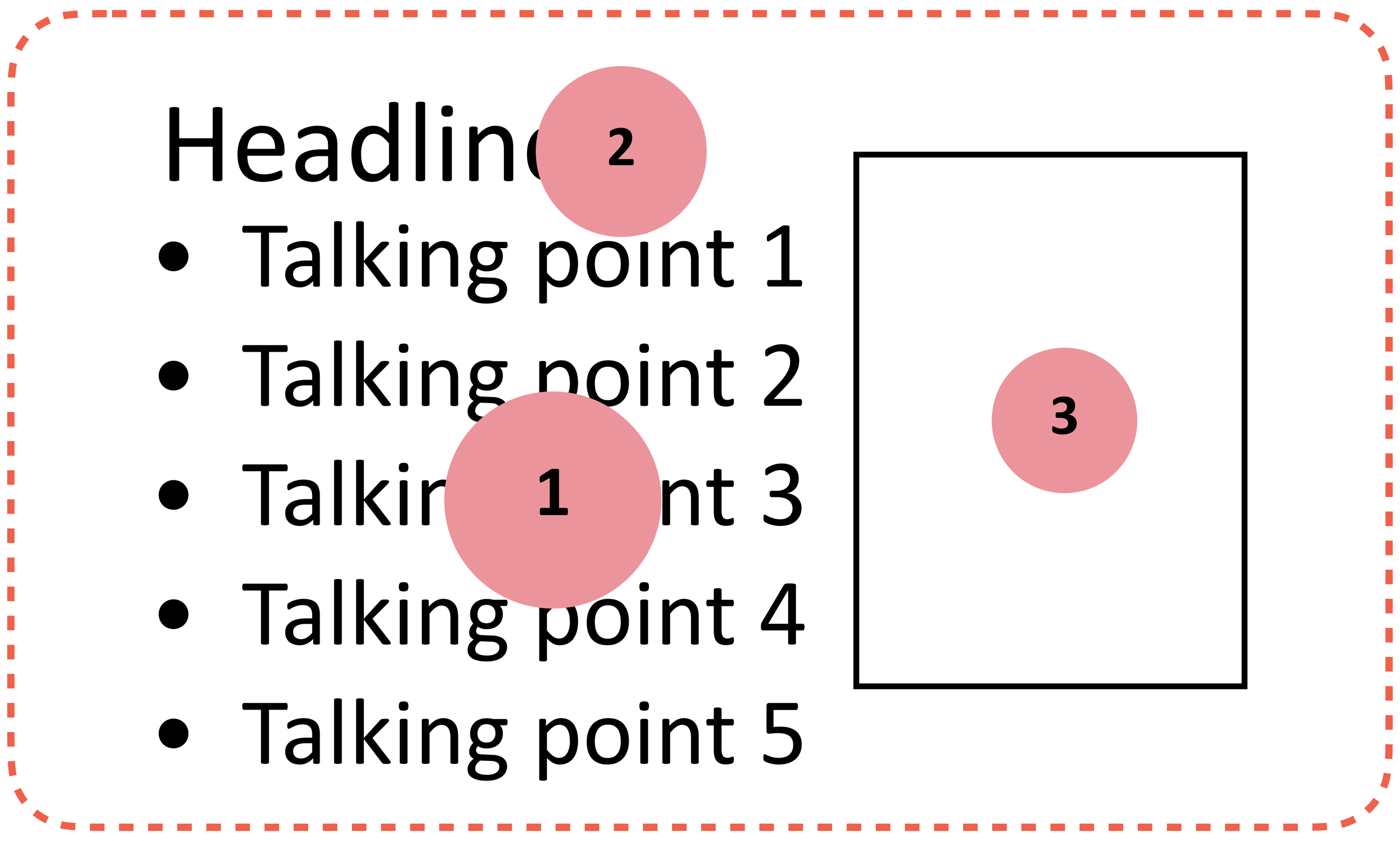
Select a slide from a previous presentation and apply these design principles to improve its layout and visual impact. Here is a checklist to keep you on track:

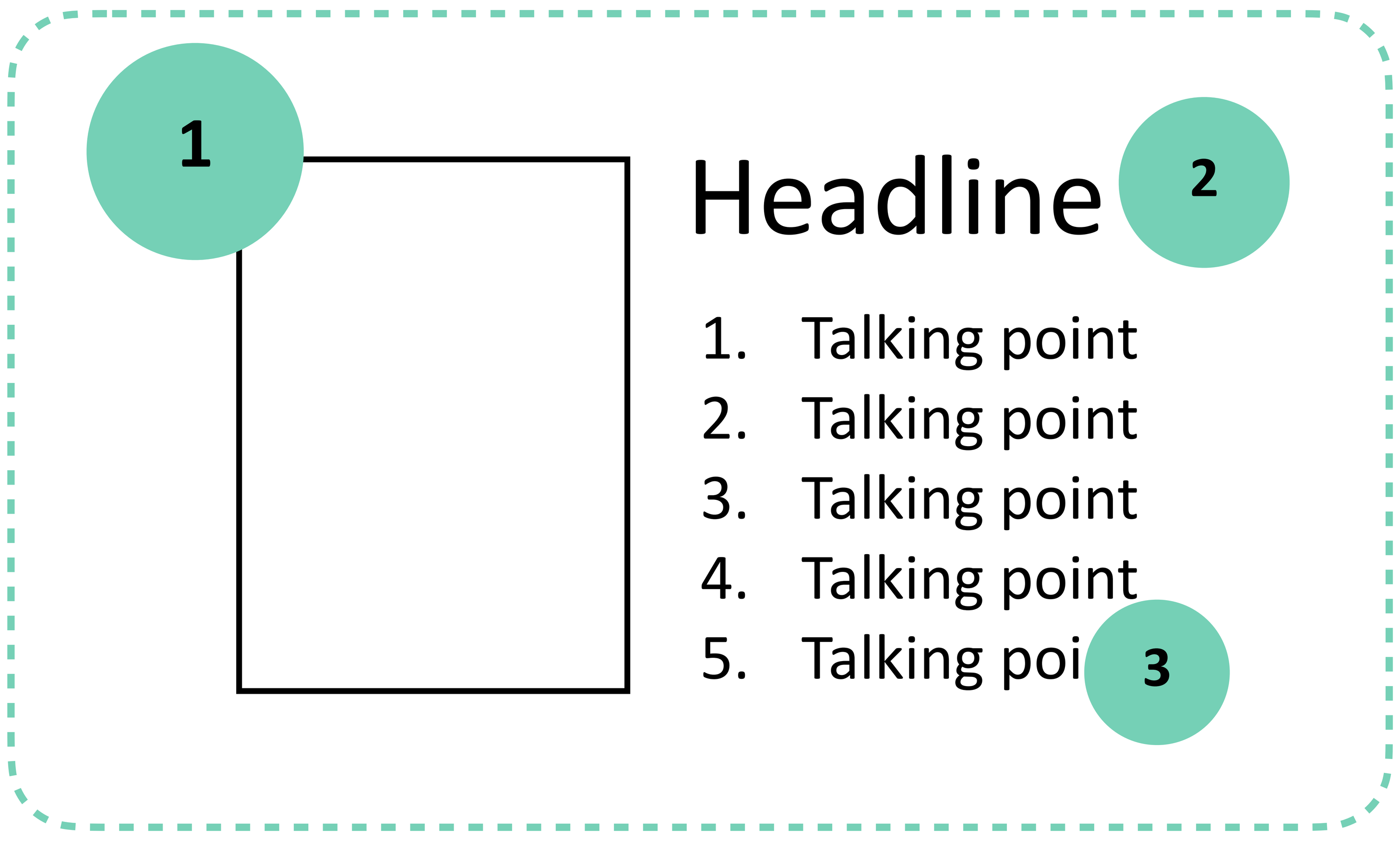
- [ ] **Is there enough CONTRAST between the main points and supporting materials?**
- [ ] **Is there any WHITE or NEGATIVE SPACE seperating the content of the slide?**
- [ ] **How are the PROPORTIONS of the elements on the slide? Do they show similarity or contrast?**
- [ ] **Are all elements ALIGNED properly to create a focussed message?**
- [ ] **Is the slide BALANCED? Does it fulfil the need for balance on the slide?**
- [ ] **How do all these elements aide in the visual hierarchy on the slide? Do they guide the eye towards the keypoints and supporting materials?**

Reflect on how these changes improve the slide's effectiveness in conveying your message.

20 Visual Hierarchy

Visual hierarchy guides your audience's eyes through your presentation in order of importance. This design principle helps to organize your content in a way that is logical and easy to follow.





Exercise:

Redesign a slide from a past presentation to establish a clear visual hierarchy. Consider the most important elements on the slide and use design techniques to highlight these points. Draw the before and after in visual hierarchy below.

BEFORE
Sketch the layout of the slide as it is now.

AFTER
Sketch the layout using the principles we saw before.

21 Use what you learned

Now you can start designing your own presentation. Use the lessons from last module and start with populating your content on basic slides. From there come up with a color scheme and design language you can repeat in your other slides to make them feel more like one cohesive presentation.

1. **Review the content for your presentation we wrote down in Lesson 2 (structure and pacing).**
2. **Write the copy that needs to go on each slide. Don't think about design, only write down the essentials first.**
3. **Start designing the slides based on the teachings from Lesson 3: Alignment, color scheme, contrast, negative space, proportion and visual hierarchy.**

You can use the space below to write notes during the process

22 Repetition vs. Redundancy

While repetition can strengthen your presentation by creating a cohesive look, unnecessary repetition of content can be monotonous. Carefully consider the use of repetition in your slide design to enhance, not detract from, your presentation.

Exercise:

Review the slides you designed and identify areas where you have used repetition. Is the repetition purposeful and effective, or is it redundant? Make adjustments as necessary.

Further Watching

Canva, 2021, Understanding the Principles of Design, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmHMVU6dceA&ab_channel=Canva

Canva, 2021, How to use Principles of Design, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jg0DjhGXHbg&ab_channel=Canva

Don't forget the Bubbles, 2021, Top 10 slide design tips for online teaching - get your slides right, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTtL04YRxfg&ab_channel=Don'tForgetTheBubbles

GCFLearnFree, 2016, Beginning Graphic Design: Layout & Composition, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5KYlHNKQB8

PolyU ELC, 2021, Giving an Academic Presentation, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgB9bgAFhIE&ab_channel=PolyUELC

Tiny Technical Tutorials, 2021, PowerPoint Design for Non-Designers | 4 Tips to Instantly Improve Your Slides, with Lots of Examples, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mk29L97uCXs&source_ve_path=MjM4NTE&feature=emb_title&ab_channel=TinyTechnicalTutorials

University of Melbourne, 2015, Academic Skills - Presenting Effectively, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNIO5Kklq7Y&ab_channel=ServiceCommitment-UniversityofMelbourne

Visme, 2019, 11 Visual Hierarchy Design Principles - Learn How to Improve and Create Beautiful Graphic Designs, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXItTIjC0Wk&t=1s&ab_channel=Visme

Lesson 4
Designing an Engaging Poster

Introduction

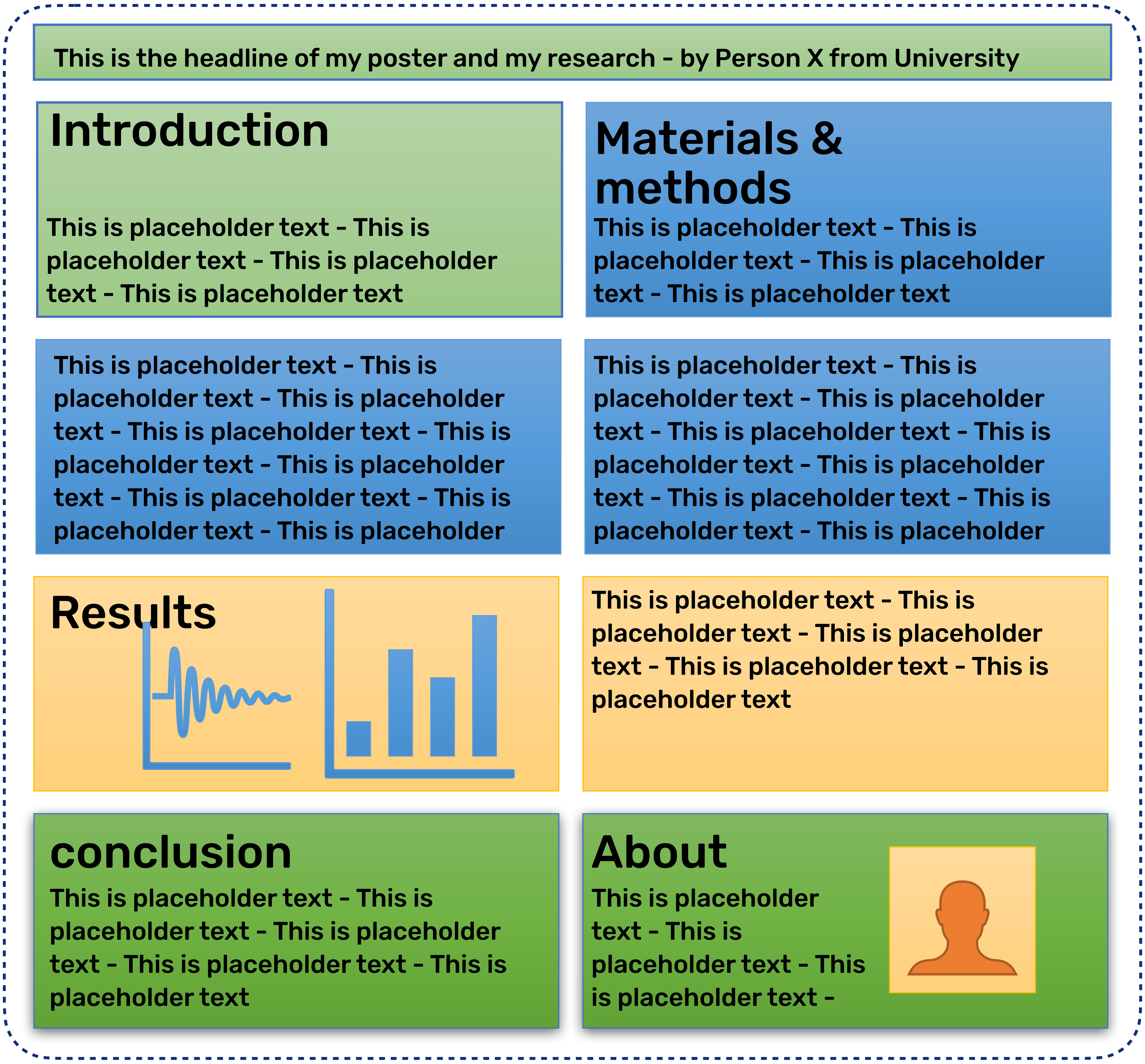
In this lesson, we will address common mistakes made during poster presentations, explore the goals of an effective poster, introduce a new design approach for posters, and discuss transforming your presentation for social media.

Common Mistakes in Poster Presentations

- **Overpopulating Presentations:**
  Avoid cluttering your poster with excessive information.
  This can overwhelm viewers and detract from your main message.

- **Bad Alignment:**
  Ensure all content on your poster is well-aligned to maintain a professional and clean appearance.

- **Bad Color Combinations:** Choose colors that are easy on the eyes and provide good contrast to improve readability.



Goals of a Poster Presentation

The primary goal of a poster presentation is to effectively transfer knowledge. A well-designed poster allows viewers to quickly understand the main findings, facilitating efficient interaction and networking during the presentation session.

This approach saves time and effort for both presenter and viewer, allowing for a more engaging and productive experience.

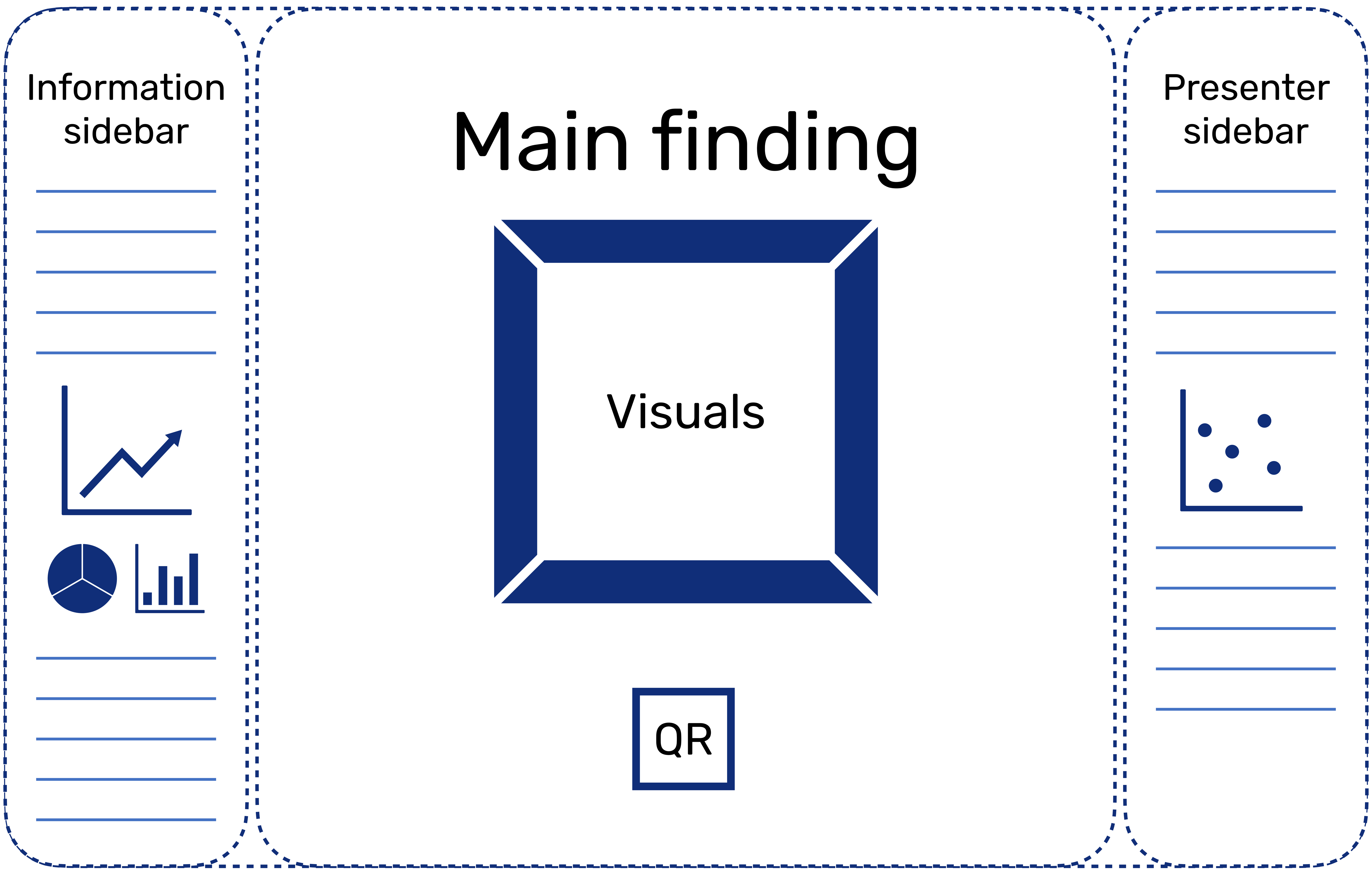
A New Poster Design

Main Finding: The core of your poster should highlight your main finding, presented prominently to attract attention.

Information Sidebar: Include additional details, methods, data, and references on the side for interested viewers.

Presenter Sidebar: Have a section with notes and key points to aid your presentation and facilitate discussion.

Visuals: Incorporate relevant figures, graphs, and visuals to support your main finding and enhance understanding.



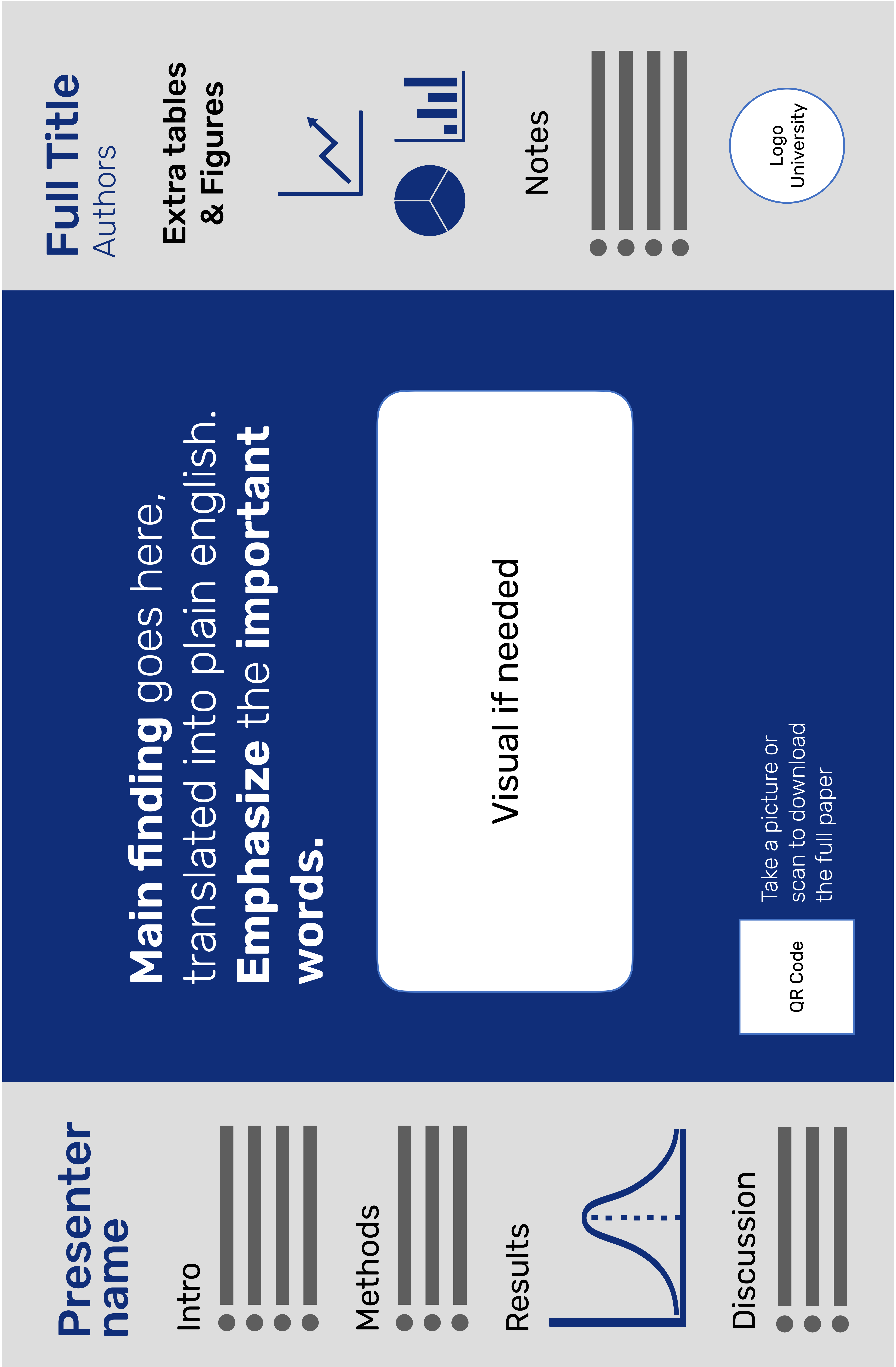
23 Create your own

Use the templates on the next pages to start brainstorming about your poster design. You'll find one vertical and one horizontal template. First, ask yourself the questions and note down your answers below. Next, create your own posters based off the template that fits best with your poster presentation.

Use the presentation we've been creating in this workbook as the basis for your poster.

- **What is the main finding in my research? How can I illustrate that visually?**
- **Are there any important notes I need when explaining my researcher at a poster session? Is there a figure or graph I should include to help myself along?**
- **What information about my study design, results and conclusions might be interesting for a reader who passes along when I'm not at my poster?**


Main finding goes here, translated into plain english. Emphasize the important words.
Visual if needed
Title goes here
Authors
Intro
Results
Methods
Discussion
Extra tables & Figures
Notes
Logo university
Take a picture or scan to download the full paper
QR Code



Presenter name
Intro
Methods
Results
Discussion
Main finding goes here, translated into plain english. Emphasize the important words.
Visual if needed
QR Code
Take a picture or scan to download the full paper
Full Title
Authors
Extra tables & Figures
Notes
Logo University

24 Transforming Your Presentation for Social Media

Create a condensed, engaging version of your poster for sharing on platforms like Twitter and Instagram. This approach allows you to reach a wider audience. To do this you can use the templates below, but feel free to play around with the format. For example:

- Twitter/X: 4-6 slides in widescreen format (800px X 418px)
- Instagram: 4-10 slides in vertical format (1350px X 1080px)

For this exercise, let's create a slide post for twitter of 6 slides. Use the template below. You can use powerpoint or another software to create the materials.

Your Visual

Share your main takeaway on the 1st slide.

Show one of your key figures and explain it here

Continue your explanation here if needed

Explain why your finding matters. Why would it matter for the viewer?

Share your method

Step 1 → Process

Share your method

Step 1 → Process → Step 2

Further Watching

Mike Morrison, 2019, How to create a better research poster in less time (generation 1), Youtube: #Betterscience
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RwJbhkCA58&ab_channel=%23BetterScience

Mike Morrison, 2020, How to create a better research poster in less time (generation 2), Youtube: #Betterscience
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYk29tnxASs&ab_channel=%23BetterScience

Mike Morrison, 2020, How to create a quick Twitter Poster to share new research, Youtube: #Betterscience
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQDL8r3r_d4&ab_channel=%23BetterScience

Mike Morrison, 2022, How to create a better virtual scientific poster for max impact, Youtube: #Betterscience
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uj_Maf-xdhw&ab_channel=%23BetterScience

Lesson 5
Learning Task 1
An expert presentation

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25 What can we learn from the expert presentation?

Keep this workbook close when watching the expert presentation. Previously we have seen the behind the scenes of this presentation. Now you'll reflect on how the final presentation and if all strategies discussed before we're applied. Below you can find a few questions to help you reflect.

Which strategies does this expert apply during the preparation? Think about everything we learned so far about the following steps:

1. Analyse your audience	2. Determine structure & pace
3. Design your materials	4. Deliver and interact

26 **Would you be able to apply the same strategies in your own context? Do you have relevant prior experience with audience analysis for example?**

27 **What do you think of the way the expert designed the slides? Did it follow the guidelines presented in the instructional video?**

28 Compare the actual presentation with presentations you have given in the past. Do you see big differences? What does the expert do differently?

29 Is there something you noticed in the way he build up the story and paced his presentation? Did this match the tutorial videos? Were you able to follow along, or did the expert loose you in the technical moments?

Lesson 6
Deliver a presentation

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(Non)Verbal Delivery of Your Presentation

In this section, we revisit the key concepts from nonverbal and verbal delivery techniques essential for a compelling academic presentation. Remember, the **way** you present can be just as impactful as **what** you present.

- **Body Language**: Your physical presence speaks volumes. A confident posture and purposeful gestures not only convey authority but also keep your audience engaged. Be mindful of your stance, and use hand gestures to emphasise and illustrate your points.

- **Core Speaking Skills**: The way you speak in presentations can also be very multifaceted. Vary your speaking pace to maintain interest, use volume changes for emphasis, and don't underestimate the power of well-timed pauses. These elements can bring your words to life, creating an ebb and flow that captures attention.

- **Engagement Techniques**: Connect with your audience. Eye contact is a simple yet effective tool to establish a rapport. A genuine smile can make you more relatable and approachable. Your audience's response often mirrors your level of engagement and enthusiasm.

You can use the following checklist in the next exercises.

- [ ] **Maintain open and confident body language.**
- [ ] **Utilise gestures to highlight key points.**
- [ ] **Ensure proper posture and stance.**
- [ ] **Vary speech speed and volume for emphasis.**
- [ ] **Use pauses strategically.**
- [ ] **Engage with the audience through eye contact and direct interaction.**
- [ ] **Smile genuinely to appear approachable.**
- [ ] **Practice to become comfortable with gestures and speaking skills.**
- [ ] **Adapt to audience feedback and body language cues.**

30 Exercises: Mirror Practice

Stand in front of a mirror and practice your presentation. Focus on maintaining open body language, using gestures, and varying your speech. Record yourself to observe the following points and note down what you need to practice next.

- **Posture and Presence**: Practice standing in a relaxed yet confident posture. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart, with hands comfortably at your sides. This stance serves as a solid foundation for your presentation.
- **Gestures**: Incorporate a variety of gestures to emphasize different aspects of your talk. Practice using descriptive gestures that align naturally with what you're discussing. Avoid overuse or underuse – the key is to appear natural and at ease.
- **Vocal Variety**: Experiment with the pitch, pace, and volume of your voice. Record yourself and listen to the playback. Are you speaking monotonously, or is there a dynamic range in your delivery? Adjust accordingly.
- **Engagement Practice**: Try speaking in front of a mirror, focusing on maintaining eye contact with your reflection. This exercise can help improve your ability to make eye contact with your audience during an actual presentation.

31 Exercises: Find your Gestures

List down different types of gestures (e.g., 'show' gestures, 'give' gestures). Practice incorporating these gestures into a mock presentation to get comfortable using them naturally.

Further Watching

Ali Abdaal, 2022, How to Be Confident on Camera, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y11SX2oHmw8&ab_channel=AliAbdaal

David JP Phillips, 2019, The 110 techniques of communication and public speaking, TEDxZagreb
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0pxo-dS9Hc&ab_channel=TEDxTalks

Matt Levy, Colin Bailie, Jeong Joon Ha, and Jennifer Rosenfeld, 2014, Make Body Language Your Superpower, Youtube: Stanford graduate school of business
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFLjudWTuGQ&ab_channel=StanfordGraduateSchoolofBusiness

Padraig Hyland, 2017, How to engage an audience, TEDxTallaght
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5h0dHhJYx5s&ab_channel=TEDxTalks

Lesson 7

Dealing with stress before and during a presentation

Understanding Stress in Presentations

This lesson delves into understanding and handling the stress often associated with public speaking, particularly in academic settings. Let's recap the strategies and techniques that can help you maintain your composure and deliver a memorable presentation.

32 Exercise: Recognizing Stress Symptoms

Stress can manifest in various forms, from physical symptoms like shaking hands and a racing heart to mental blocks and racing thoughts. Being aware of these signs is the first step in managing them effectively. Think back to your last few presentations and how you experienced stress. What are the symptoms most common to you? Write these down below.

33 Exercise: Roots of Stress

Often, the anxiety we experience stems from a fear of judgment, not meeting audience expectations, or feeling underprepared. Identifying your specific stress triggers so you can plan with coping methods and learn which techniques can alleviate your stress in the moment.

Preparation Techniques to Alleviate Stress

To get ready for your presentation and feel more confident, it's great to practice a lot. This way, you'll know your content really well, which can help calm your nerves. Try going over your presentation at least 3 times, more if possible.
Also, it can be incredibly helpful to show your presentation to someone you trust, like a friend or a small group, who can give you good advice on what's working well and what you can improve.

34 Exercises to reduce your stress

1. Breathing Exercise

Practice focused breathing techniques. Inhale deeply for four counts, hold for four counts, and exhale for four counts. Repeat several times to reduce stress.

2. Visualisation Exercise

Visualize yourself delivering a successful presentation. Focus on the opening minutes, imagining a confident and smooth start. Now practice this 3 times.

3. Stress Scenario Role-Play

Find a partner and create a role-play scenario where you suddenly face an unexpected stressful situation during a presentation. Practice using the techniques like pausing, breathing, and positive self-talk to manage the situation effectively.

Use this checklist when you feel stressed for a presentation

- [ ] **Recognize symptoms of stress (e.g., shaking, increased heart rate).**
- [ ] **Practice thoroughly to know your content well.**
- [ ] **Present to peers for feedback.**
- [ ] **Develop a pre-presentation routine**
- [ ] **Employ focused breathing techniques.**
- [ ] **Use pauses effectively to regain composure.**
- [ ] **Engage in positive self-talk.**
- [ ] **Use water as a tool to pause and collect thoughts.**
- [ ] **Embrace imperfection and learn from each presentation.**

Further Watching

Matt Abrahams, 2014, No Freaking Speaking: 3 Techniques for Managing Speaking Anxiety, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5naThX63pF0&ab_channel=MattAbrahams

Matt Abrahams, 2014, Quick presentation advice for non native speakers, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tbh_iQPH5AQ&ab_channel=MattAbrahams

Amy Cuddy, 2012, Your body language may shape who you are, TED
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-_Mh1QhMc&ab_channel=TED

Danish Dhamani, 2017, How I Overcame My Fear of Public Speaking, TEDxKids@SMU
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80UVjkcxGmA&ab_channel=TEDxTalks

Expert Academy, 2013, How to deal with presentation stress and anxiety, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryXOW1QS0ZM&ab_channel=ExpertAcademy

Marc Green, 2018, How to Talk Like a Native Speaker, TEDxHeidelberg
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ti_gFEe1XNY&ab_channel=TEDxTalks

Alexander Lyon, 2017, Public Speaking Anxiety Tips, Youtube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEStYVONy-0&ab_channel=CommunicationCoachAlexanderLyon

Lesson 8
Presenting online vs in public

The Dynamics of Public VS Online Presenting

In this section of your workbook, we delve into the fascinating world of academic presenting, exploring the distinct nuances and skills required for both public (in-person) and online formats. The transition between these two modes of presenting brings unique challenges and opportunities. As you progress through these exercises, you'll gain insights into adapting your presentation style to suit each format effectively, ensuring your message resonates clearly with your audience, regardless of the medium.

Our recent panel discussion offered a look at both the contrasts and overlaps between presenting in person and online. The panelists shared their personal experiences, challenges they've encountered, and the strategies they've developed to excel in both settings.

Now, it's time for you to engage with this material actively. Each exercise in this section is crafted to help you internalise and apply the insights from our panel discussion. You'll be encouraged to reflect, analyse, and strategise, developing a toolkit of techniques for both in-person and online presenting. Take these things into consideration while you finish the exercises:

- **Reflect on the Transition:** How do you shift from the digital screen to the physical stage, and what adjustments are needed in your approach?
- **Identify Key Differences:** Understand the distinct elements that set apart in-person and online presentations.
- **Engage Your Audience:** Discover innovative ways to captivate your audience, no matter where they are.
- **Troubleshoot with Confidence:** Tackle technological challenges head-on and maintain the flow of your presentation.
- **Master the Online Q&A:** Learn to navigate the unique dynamics of online Q&A sessions effectively.

35 Exercise: Compare and Contrast

In one column, list the unique aspects of in-person academic presentations. In the other column, list the characteristics of online presentations (as discussed by the panelists or what you can think of yourself).

In-person	Online

36 Exercise: Transition Tactics

Imagine you've been giving presentations in person and are now transitioning to an online presentation for a conference you can not attend. Note down the changes you would make in your approach, considering aspects like audience interaction, use of space, and body language.

Lesson 9
Learning Task 2
Prepare a short online presentation

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37 Practice with Online Presentations

This exercise is an exciting opportunity for you to apply what you've learned from Lessons 1-8 and receive valuable feedback from your peers and teacher. You will be preparing and recording a short online presentation, which will then be shared with your classmates for review. The goal is to present as if you are giving an actual online presentation in, for example, an online conference.

Steps for this Exercise

So far we have already Selected a Topic and Analysed our Audience. You have designed the slides using our guidelines and are now ready to record a presentation your peers can review afterwards.

1. **Record Your Presentation**: Prepare your 7-12 minute presentation. Record yourself presenting as if you were speaking to a live audience.
2. **Share and Review Presentations**: Your recorded presentation will be shared with other students in your group. You'll also receive recordings of their presentations. Watch these presentations carefully.
3. **Provide Peer Feedback**: After viewing your peers' presentations, offer constructive feedback. Focus on what they did well and areas where they can improve. Use the observation instrument provided by your teacher to structure your feedback.
4. **Group Discussion**: Participate in a group discussion where you'll talk about the feedback. If your group is small, this may happen as you watch the presentations together. Discuss any technical challenges encountered and how they were handled.

Tip for recording your presentation

You can use a wide range of software and applications to record your presentations. We recommend sticking to either OBS (free) or something like Zoom, as most of you will have access to these and are universal (Windows/Mac/Linux). Here are a few tutorials from outside sources you can follow in case you have no idea where to start:

Using OBS software

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTjVBlnEiNI&ab_channel=DyeyzzonTeaches

Using Zoom

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9qhoAIzW3E

Lesson 9
Learning Task 3
Prepare a self-recorded Poster Presentation

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38 Practice with Poster Presentations

In this exercise, you'll have the opportunity to present the academic poster you've been working on in lesson 4. Now it's time to print the poster and practice your live presentation techniques we discussed in the previous lessons.

Steps for this Exercise

So far we have already Selected a Topic and Analysed our Audience. You have designed a poster using the template and are now ready to either present it or record a presentation your peers can review afterwards.

1. **Present Your Presentation**: Print your poster and prepare a live presentation of your poster. In the case your teacher requested a recording, record yourself presenting as if you were speaking to a live audience. Make sure your recording captures both you and your poster clearly.
2. **Share and Review Presentations**: Your recorded presentation will be shared with other students in your group. You'll also receive recordings of their presentations. Watch these presentations carefully.
3. **Provide Peer Feedback**: After viewing your peers' presentations, offer constructive feedback. In the case of a live presentation, you can give feedback after each presentation. Focus on what they did well and areas where they can improve. Use the observation instrument provided to structure your feedback.
4. **Group Discussion**: Participate in a group discussion where you'll talk about the feedback. If your group is small, this may happen as you watch the presentations together. Discuss any technical challenges encountered and how they were handled.

Tip for online poster sessions

You can use a wide range of software and applications to record your presentations for full online poster sessions (for example during online congresses).
If your teacher asked you to prepare one of these, we recommend sticking to either OBS (free) or Zoom, as most of you will have access to these and are universal (Windows/Mac/Linux). Here are a few tutorials from outside sources you can follow in case you have no idea where to start:

Using OBS software

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTjVBlnEiNI&ab_channel=DyeyzzonTeaches

Using Zoom (+ a more advanced tip)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIjsKBhqL_w&ab_channel=USLTER

Lesson 10

Engaging in scientific discussion and asking questions

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The art of scientific discussion

The recent panel discussion shed light on the nuances of communication and discussion in an academic settings. As a participant in this world of scientific discourse, it is important that you can convey your ideas but also engage actively and thoughtfully with the ideas of others.

The next exercises are crafted to refine your skills in participating in academic discussions, whether you are presenting your research or contributing as a member of the audience. They aim to:

- Teach you to **identify and transform unproductive questions** into insightful inquiries.
- Help you **develop a robust mental framework** for understanding and connecting diverse concepts.
- Guide you in crafting questions that are both **thought-provoking and relevant.**
- Offer **practical experience** in engaging in scientific discussions, enhancing both your listening and questioning abilities.

39 Exercise: Building a Mental Framework

Based on the panel's advice, create a mind map or diagram that connects the main points of your presentation and research topic you have worked on with broader concepts and related knowledge. This exercise aims to help you build a mental framework that will allow you to handle questions more confidently and comprehensively.

40 Exercise: Crafting Insightful Questions

Think of your presentation through the eyes of listener in your audience. Write down between 5-10 insightful questions you might ask about this topic. These questions should reflect a deep understanding of the topic and aim to advance the conversation after your presentation has finished.

Use the panel's tips on crafting questions that resonate with the theme and drive the discussion.

Lesson 11
Learning Task 3
Guided practice with questions

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41 Practice with questions

Building on your previous learning tasks, this exercise will deepen your understanding of how to engage constructively in scientific discussions, both as a questioner and as a responder. The focus here is on formulating thoughtful, relevant questions based on the presentations you have previously reviewed and practiced answering questions about your own presentation in a constructive and informative manner.

Steps for this Exercise

1. **Review Previous Presentations**: Revisit the presentations you and your peers prepared in learning tasks 2 or 3. Watch them with a fresh perspective, focusing on details and points you might have missed earlier.
2. **Prepare Your Questions**: Reflect on each presentation and prepare a series of questions for the presenter. Aim to craft questions that are relevant, constructive, and insightful. Consider what aspects of the presentation intrigued you, what was unclear, and what you'd like to know more about.
3. **Participate in a Group Session**: In a group setting, you'll have the opportunity to play both roles - an audience member asking questions and a presenter responding to questions about your presentation. Engage actively and thoughtfully in this dialogue.

Feedback and Reflection

After each question round, you'll participate in a feedback session. You will receive feedback from both your teacher and peers. This multi-perspective feedback is invaluable for your growth. Pay attention to the suggestions and use them to refine your questioning and responding skills.

- **As a questioner, were your questions clear, relevant, and constructive?**
- **As a presenter, did you address the questions comprehensively and clearly?**

Lesson 12
Learning Task 5
A live presentation

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42 The final presentation

In this learning task we'll approach the final and most challenging exercise of this course – delivering a comprehensive live presentation. This task encapsulates everything you've learned so far, from preparation and design to delivery, stress management, and active participation as both a presenter and an audience member. It's your chance to showcase your skills and apply the strategies you've practiced throughout the course.

Steps for this Exercise

1. **Prepare Your Presentation**: Develop a detailed presentation, suggested to be between 15-30 minutes long. Implement the strategies for preparation and slide design that you've learned. Focus on delivering your content engagingly, applying the stress management techniques you've mastered.
2. **Deliver Your Presentation**: Present your topic live to your classmates or in an online group setting (you'll receive details from your teacher). This is where you bring together all the elements of an effective presentation – clear communication, engaging visuals, and confident delivery.
3. **Engage as an Audience Member**: When not presenting, actively participate as an audience member. Listen attentively and formulate thoughtful, relevant questions for your peers. Engaging in this dual role will enhance your understanding from both perspectives.

Feedback and Reflection

After your presentation, participate in a feedback session where you'll receive insights on various aspects of your performance, including preparation, design, delivery, and how well you managed stress.
While all feedback is valuable, pay special attention to the areas you previously identified as needing improvement. This targeted approach will help you refine your skills more effectively.

As with previous tasks, you'll receive feedback from both your peers and the teacher. Embrace this as an opportunity for growth, considering the diverse perspectives and experiences of your audience.