# Oral Presentation Guidelines: “Something You Know a lot About” (SYKALA)

## The Presentation:

Your assignment is to give a 5-minute oral presentation (strict limit: try to get as close as possible without going over!) on a topic on which you feel you have some expertise. This can be (almost) anything. Your goal is to teach your classmates about some subject of great interest to you and make clear why the subject is so interesting to you. Students have successfully presented on playing pool, painting sneakers, belly dancing, fundamentals of art, surfing, turbocharging a car, reading music, fashion, hair braiding, hog hunting, how to survive a zombie attack, and many others. The best presentations have been those on something relatively unusual, or an unusual take on something ordinary. Sample presentations can be found on the UNF Honors website.

The presentations will take place during the Honors Retreat, so you need to prepare over summer. You will be asked to bring an outline or printout of your slides to the Honors Retreat when you arrive on campus in August.

## Goals:

In addition to helping you get to know the others in your cohort, this assignment works on several skills: oral communication, anticipating audience, organizing a presentation, and contextualizing your work.

## Anticipating Audience:

The biggest challenge in this project is figuring out what your audience is likely to know already. Students who present on soccer have to figure out what is obscure enough that it isn’t already obvious to the class, and yet is still interesting to a non-soccer obsessed audience. The student who presented on hair braiding, for example, had a handout that listed and defined technical terms, and brought samples and pictures so the audience could see what she was talking about.

## Organization:

The second biggest challenge is organization. Because you are speaking on a topic that you know well, it is tempting to wing it. Students who have tried this, though, find that they forget things when they are nervous, and are not able to figure out quickly what their audience needs to know as background. Even if they offer abundant information, they don’t present it logically, and so the audience is lost. They have to go back and explain something when they see that the audience has missed something. That kills organization and is frustrating to the audience. You lose credibility.

## Context:

The third challenge is to make it clear why your topic is interesting or worthwhile. Be sure you spend some time explaining why someone would want to do the activity or learn about the subject. Answering the “So what?” or “Who cares?” questions is very important.

## Rubric:

Your peers will each submit a rubric giving feedback and evaluating your presentation. The highest scoring presentor in each facilitation group will be a finalist, and all finalists will be reviewed by a committee. The top three winners will present to the whole class and will receive a prize. The evaluation rubric is on the back page. Please look at it carefully to be sure you have included everything to get the highest possible grade!

## Checklist:

* Notes to organize you but not so detailed that you are tempted to read them!
* Examples to support your points
* Audio-visuals to support your points
* Clear explanations for all unusual terminology you use.
* Clear explanations of any processes you describe (maybe an illustration of the steps or flow chart)
* An explanation of why you care about the topic and why someone else might care!
* Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse to increase fluidity!
* DO NOT READ the presentation.
* DO NOT put the text you plan to say on the slide if you are using PowerPoint! The examples you want to refer to go there. The slides should *illustrate --not narrate*-- your presentation!
* The presentation is as close to 5 minutes as possible without going over!

Top three winners will receive a prize and will give the presentation to the whole class and invited guests at the Awards Ceremony at the Honors Retreat. The hardcopy of the notes/outline is due **the first day of the Honors Retreat at check in,** so you need to prepare this over summer!!

## Presentation Rubric

| **Category** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **Total Points** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organization** | Student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow. It is clear that the presentation was planned and rehearsed. It is close to 5 min but not over | Student presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow. It is close to 5 minutes. | Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around. It is over or under 5 minutes. | Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information. It is way over or under 5 minutes. |  |
| **Audience** | There is abundant evidence (concrete and specific examples, including good audio-visuals) to support the points being made. Audience understands terminology and processes. Topic or approach offers something new to most of the audience. | There is some evidence (concrete and specific examples) to support the points being made. Maybe some audio-visuals, but perhaps not enough. Audience understands terminology and processes. Topic/approach is new to some of the audience. | There is little evidence (concrete and specific examples) to support the points being made. Minimal audio-visuals. Some questions remain about terminology or processes or topic/approach is too obvious. | There is no evidence to support the points being made. No audio-visuals. Much is not clear. Audience is lost or bored. |  |
| **Context** | It is clear why the topic is interesting to the presentor and the audience has a new appreciation for or interest in the topic. Audience learns something. “So what?” is clear. | It is clear why the topic is interesting to the presentor. There is some attempt to answer, “so what?” | Presentor keeps interest during the talk, but it isn’t clear why he or she cares about the topic, nor is it interest in the topic sparked by the presentation. | It isn’t clear why the audience should care. |  |
| **Presence** | All audience members can hear presentation. Student maintains eye contact with audience, seldom returning to notes. Student looks confident, prepared and at ease. | Most audience members can hear presentation. Student maintains eye contact most of the time but frequently returns to notes. Some stumbles, but student looks prepared. | Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation. Student occasionally uses eye contact, but still reads most of report. Looks under-rehearsed. | Student mumbles and/or incorrectly pronounces terms. Little eye contact.  Look frightened, looks unorganized |  |