



Get the timing right

Less is more.

You don't want to sit through a long, meandering presentation, neither does your audience. However, there is often a tendency to want to include as much as you can and that can often be coupled with the hope that if you speed up, or put more words into any information you give out, or on a slide that you use, then you will be able to fit it all in. You can't.

A 20 minute presentation doesn't work when you try and put 30 minutes of material into it.

The other factor is **YOU**. If you are new to this, then as a general rule – **SLOW IT DOWN**. When nervous or excited, you will speak faster, even to the point of 'gabbling' and normally at the expense of not remembering to breathe! Adrenaline is generally a good thing before you start, but a sudden jolt halfway through is not always your friend!

It is too easy to spend all of your preparation time focusing on the content alone, if your delivery is poor, then no-one will remember it for any of the right reasons.

First get your pace generally right.

1. Type, or write out, what it is that you want to say. Write out the 'Items' list' list (see under **Know your audience**), then expand each point until you have the words for each item.
2. Simply talk it through to yourself and **time it**. At this point you aren't too nervous and it can be quite well paced as generally you will read out loud slower than you speak in conversation.
3. A conversational pace, can be a little quick for an audience to take in. If it is too long at this stage, then shorten what you want to say or remove an item.



Speak at the speed you type or write it longhand.

One tip is that to ensure you get the pacing right, you need to remember to pause between sentences, generally more than you do when speaking in conversation

Speak slowly and clearly. See how long it takes to type the paragraph out, or write it longhand, and then say the words at the speed as you type each one. **Time it.** Once complete, use **ALL** that time to say those sentences again. The extra time you now have when compared to a normal conversation can be used to make a clear pause between each sentence (you don't need to elongate the words to fill the time!).

The 'Statement' regarding the Eye Hospital is:



St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group is the only charitable provider of expert eye care in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, treating patients regardless of ethnicity, religion or ability to pay.

It is likely to take you around 15 seconds if you want an audience to clearly understand what it is that you have said. Conversationally it is nearer 10 seconds.

Ask the audience if it is all going too fast.

Generally, when you don't know the audience and they have asked you to speak at their meeting, ask them to tell you if you are either moving ahead too fast (do they understand the content you are talking about and therefore can they keep up), or are you speaking too fast (your delivery).

If you build this in, then by actually asking it, you provide a pause for both you and the audience to collect your thoughts.



Pause.

Some presenters use **bottled water as a prop** to remind them to pause or slow down. Another “planned” or “confirmed” pause is to **ask if there are any questions** at the end of a section (rather than waiting till the end of the talk). It also provides a pause moment, and importantly, an opportunity for interaction and engagement. This isn’t a lecture, so include time for questions and answers in your run-through. If you find people are asking some, then it is a sign of interest and it is likely that they want to know a little more.

Stay on track.

If there are a few questions and you take up some time to answer them, bear that in mind, **DON’T** try and still cram all the information you had planned into the remaining minutes. When a particular section is going well, and particularly if it is an area that you are enthusiastic about, there is a tendency to then ‘add a bit’ of extra information you weren’t originally planning to. That can generally be a good thing providing you then allow for that in the timings. Also ensure you don’t speed up for that part just to get it out there quicker – you will tend to gabble.

Check your timings as you go.

If questions take up time in your presentation, be prepared to adjust on the fly and reduce what you may have to say on a future point. If you are encouraging questions during the talk, you also need to be confident in saying that “**you will be covering that point a little later**”, rather than start to answer it now and then find you quickly end up going ‘Off-Track’.

Remember that if you are engaging with the audience, particularly with a ‘Call and Response’ question approach, that if you ask: “*Have you ever been to the Holy Land?*” somebody may well answer “yes” and then proceed to tell you about it, particularly if you follow up with “*Oh, great, where did you go?*”! That takes an unknown, and perhaps unplanned, amount of time.

Control how you speak.

And the words you use. Remember to articulate, take your time to practice this, pronouncing the words clearly, especially names, and don’t assume that external groups are aware of **any** jargon or acronyms that we may use within the Knights Templar.



Regulate your pace.

Remember that pauses can also be used for effect. You can speak normally during much of the section, but to emphasise a particular point, **slow down and emphasise** just that part. Politicians do this a lot, slowing on the fact that they wish to get across, often accompanied with a hand gesture and even pausing between individual words. With a rhetorical question, you will need to allow time for an 'imaginary' response.

Speak at the pace you read at.

Generally, when reading aloud, you speak slower than you do in general conversation. This is found to be more engaging, more refined and more 'effective' towards the listener.

Breathe.

When nervous, you can easily run out of breath, so take your time, bring in the air slowly. Any calming or relaxation techniques you use, all help you to relax and will help you to get your timing right.

Practise and rehearse!

Obvious, but record yourself, get used to what it is like to have to listen to your voice for the length of the talk, review the content, add intonations, a variety of rhythms etc. and most importantly enjoy it! If you do, your audience will.

Check how it is going.

Don't look at your watch on your wrist, it makes you look impatient and implies that you would rather be somewhere else. I still generally remove my watch at the start and place it in front of me if this is possible. I can then keep an eye on how long I have left – at least the audience knows I will at least be conscious of time, after all. If there is a clock great and remember that your audience normally have something planned after your presentation – dinner, the bar is open, trains will still leave on time, so be conscious of it.

**WHAT YOU SAY IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN
WHAT YOUR AUDIENCE THINKS YOU HAVE SAID.**