



Australian
National
University

Effective presentations

ANU Academic Skills

Question: What's the most important thing to consider when giving a presentation?

The key to a successful presentation is a clear **key message**, with a logical **structure** and good **visual aids**

Preparation and practice are also key to a professional and stress-free **delivery**



Presentation vs speech



What's a key message?

- “in a nutshell” statement, the “take-home message”
- Your overall answer to the question
- Your argument
- The main thing you want your audience to remember / be convinced of
- What is significant or important or meaningful about your research



The right scope

- How will your key message meet the needs of your audience?
- How much time do you have?
- What would you need to do in order to support your key message?

Know your audience

- What do they want to know?
- What will they understand?
- What would make it easy for them to understand and follow your argument?



What's your key message?



An unclear key message

I will discuss emerging fields of research and look at whether or not they can be predicted.

A slightly clearer key message:

This thesis investigates ways to predict emerging fields of research.

A clear key message:

This thesis produces a novel method for predicting emerging fields of research.



Your key message determines

- How you will structure your presentation
- What information to include and leave out
- Be concise and precise!



Structure

Introduction

- Context/background/hook
- Debate/problem/question
- **Key message**
- Signposting

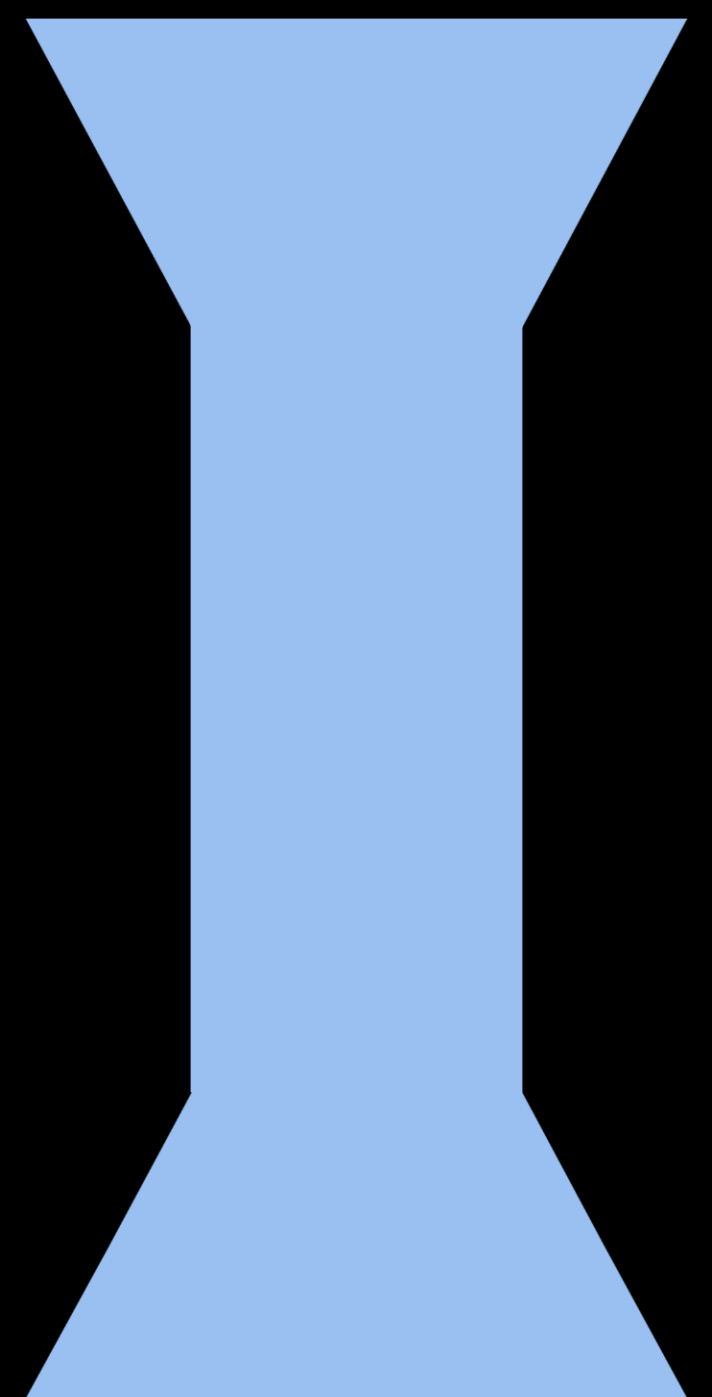
Body

Structured according to your key message e.g.:

- Point 1
- Point 2
- Point 3

Conclusion

- Bring together all the main points
- Restate your key message
- Implication or so what?



What to include?

- What do you need to do in order to explain your argument/key message?
- How many steps will this take?
- How many points could you make in the time that you have?
- Which points are the macro (major/main) ideas and which are in support of those ideas (the details)?

Section	Item	Content
Introduction	State purpose or key message	
Body	Main point 1	
	Main point 2	
	Main point 3	
	Main point 4	
Conclusion	Reiterate purpose and demonstrate how it was met	

Template available on our website. Google "ANU Presentations"

Is there a place for programs such as the Koori Court in the Australian legal system? Should there be courts for other groups in our society?

Section	Item	Content
Introduction	State purpose or key message	There is a place for the Koori Court and other specialist courts like it.
Body	Main point 1	Indigenous Australians are the most disadvantaged group and there is an urgent need to address this imbalance.
	Main point 2	Other specialist courts already exist and do not undermine the justice system.
	Main point 3	The Koori Court of Victoria has limitations but provides better outcomes for offenders.
	Main point 4	Extending the Koori Court model can improve justice for all Australians.
Conclusion	Reiterate purpose and demonstrate how it was met Implications, or so what?	The Koori Court has created real benefits for Aboriginal people without undermining any legal principles The case of the Koori Court shows how the Australian legal system has the potential to deliver better outcomes for minority and disadvantaged groups, providing benefit to all of society.

Visual aids

Visual aids need to support your key message

- What style of slide design do you find appealing?
- What slide design have you seen—from other students or your teachers or on YouTube, etc.,—that you really liked?



Common problems with slide design

- Too much text
- Poor quality images
- No charts / graphs / tables
- Inconsistent / sloppy design

The following slides are from our previous outline example. What issues can you identify?

A better title would be one that signals the key message of the presentation, rather than a question.

Is there a place for a Koori Court?

Too much text here. Avoid writing out full sentences on your slides.

Introduction

- The Koori Court is a Victorian initiative that seeks more appropriate legal processes and outcomes for Indigenous people. Since Aboriginal people are overrepresented in poor legal outcomes, the Koori Court aims to improve this reality. This is possible through the Koori Court's more culturally sensitive approach to sentencing.

There is a place for Koori court because:

- Indigenous Australians are the most disadvantaged group
- Urgent need to address imbalance
- Numerous precedents for special courts exist
- Its successes provide a model for the broader legal system

Poor quality images, poor formatting, too much text



The most disadvantaged group

Random / messy image formatting, unclear direction (where should viewers focus?), random different coloured text and bolding. There are other ways to express this point—perhaps a chart?

- ❑ Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
- ❑ *Bringing them Home* report
- ❑ Need to address the **power imbalance** between the **legal system** and Indigenous Australians
- ❑ Reports listed above; *Smith and Crowe* (2012)



DISADVANTAGE



Bringing Them Home Report

- “Grief and loss are the predominant themes of this report. Tenacity and survival are also acknowledged. It is no ordinary report. Much of its subject matter is so personal and intimate that ordinarily it would not be discussed. These matters have only been discussed with the Inquiry with great difficulty and much personal distress. The suffering and the courage of those who have told their stories inspire sensitivity and respect.”

Too much text, unclear how this quote supports the key message. What other visual aids could be used to show how this report supports the key message?



Random / sloppy formatting,
poor quality images,
inconsistent animation, too
much text



- Other specialist courts provide precedent for the Koori Court model
- Family Court: jurisdiction on basis of kin relations
- Industrial Relations Commission: on basis of common interest
- Even though Koori Court selects on race, it does not undermine the impartiality of justice as the legal system already discriminates
- Legal system discriminates against low education and income

- Provides better outcomes as it addresses underlying problems
- Lower rates of recidivism
- Shaming offenders by Elders is more effective than prison
- Encourages the offender to deal with underlying problems through rehabilitation
- Greater acceptance by the Aboriginal community
- Constant review is needed to ensure that offenders are not disenfranchised
- Limit the marginalisation of the offender's solicitor
- Be careful that the move from formal processes does not threaten impartiality of outcomes

Too much text—there are many other ways to represent this information visually!

Justice for all Australians

Poor quality image, too much text

- It can be extended to other disadvantaged groups who are suffering from imbalance of power
- For example, other groups facing social or cultural disadvantage



Too much text,
random bolding

Conclusion

- **Specialist courts** have long been accepted in this country. The Koori Court's **successes** demonstrate the gains that could be made if its practices were to be extended. The **Koori Court** has created real benefits for Aboriginal people without undermining any legal principles. It has led to a **greater level of justice** through being more culturally sensitive during sentencing. Improved legal outcomes result for this highly disadvantaged group.

Visual aids

Slides

- A clear message is vital and will create confidence
- Good slides:
 - Support your message
 - Ensure organisation
 - Foreground the concepts
 - Allow eye contact
 - Allow improvising
 - Give some room for error
 - Are worth a thousand words

So, what are your design options?
What are the pros and cons?

- Bullets
- Small images
- Charts / graphs / tables
- Large images

Bullets

Pros

- Can be good to boost the presenter's confidence and keep them on track
- Can help guide the audience through the content
- Can make good handouts



Cons

- Can be very boring
- The presenter might feel tempted to just read out the bullets
- Too much text is overwhelming and an instant turn off



What to do:

- Identify the main message and use the points to support
- Use as few words as possible
- Use them to SUPPORT what you are saying – don't just repeat them
- Use Smart Art

How to
present:

Consider your audience

Engage them – keep them interested

Keep things simple - the one message rule

Help them to understand your material

Choose the visual aid which best supports your message

3 months

Apr – Jul
2016

- **Akosombo (and Accra), Ghana**
- Participant observation
- Archival research at Volta River Authority (VRA) & Univ. of Ghana

4 months

Jul – Dec
2016

- **Birmingham (and elsewhere), United Kingdom**
- Archival/library research (Univ. of Birmingham, SOAS Univ. of London, Rhodes House Oxford & National Archives)

9 months

Jan – Sept
2017

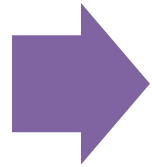
- **Akosombo (and Accra), Ghana**
- Participant observation
- Semi-structured interviews

16 months
total

Small images

Pros

- Adds appeal
- More memorable
- Reinforces key message



Cons

- Hard to find good images
- Hard to find the right images
- Less text means more preparation and improvisation



What to do:

- Include just the key message of that slide
- Look for data that you can highlight
- Find images that match

Koori Court



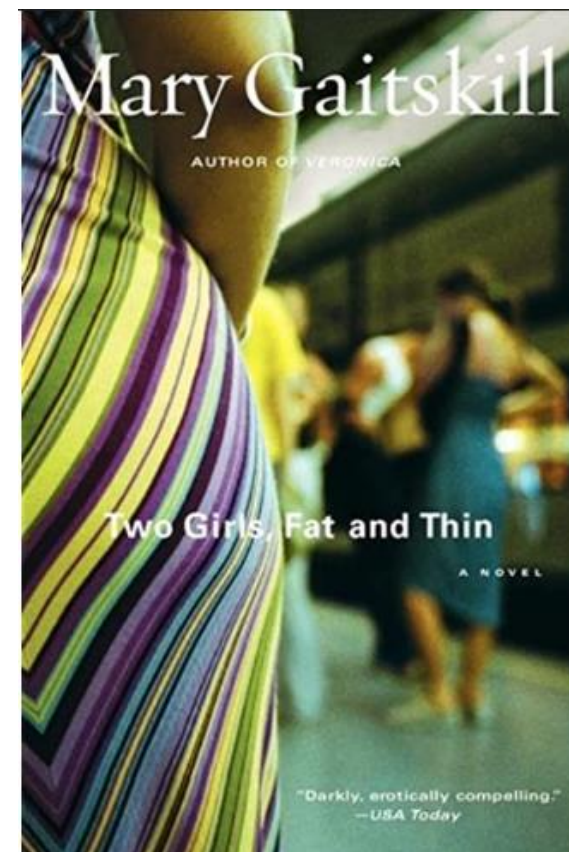
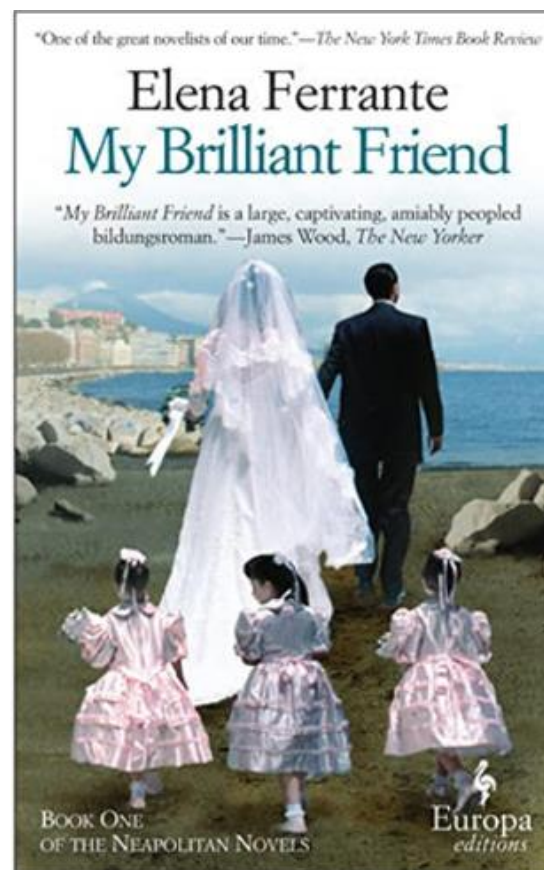
Indigenous
Australians are
the most
disadvantaged
group

Urgent need
to address the
imbalance

Numerous
precedent for
special courts
exist

Female friendship

- ▶ a repeated conscious choice
- ▶ but a limited choice
- ▶ often looks hopefully toward a better future
- ▶ but not without contradiction or pain



Simple visuals aid
memory retention



Charts, graphs, diagrams

Pros

- Adds appeal
- Adds clarity
- Often necessary



Cons

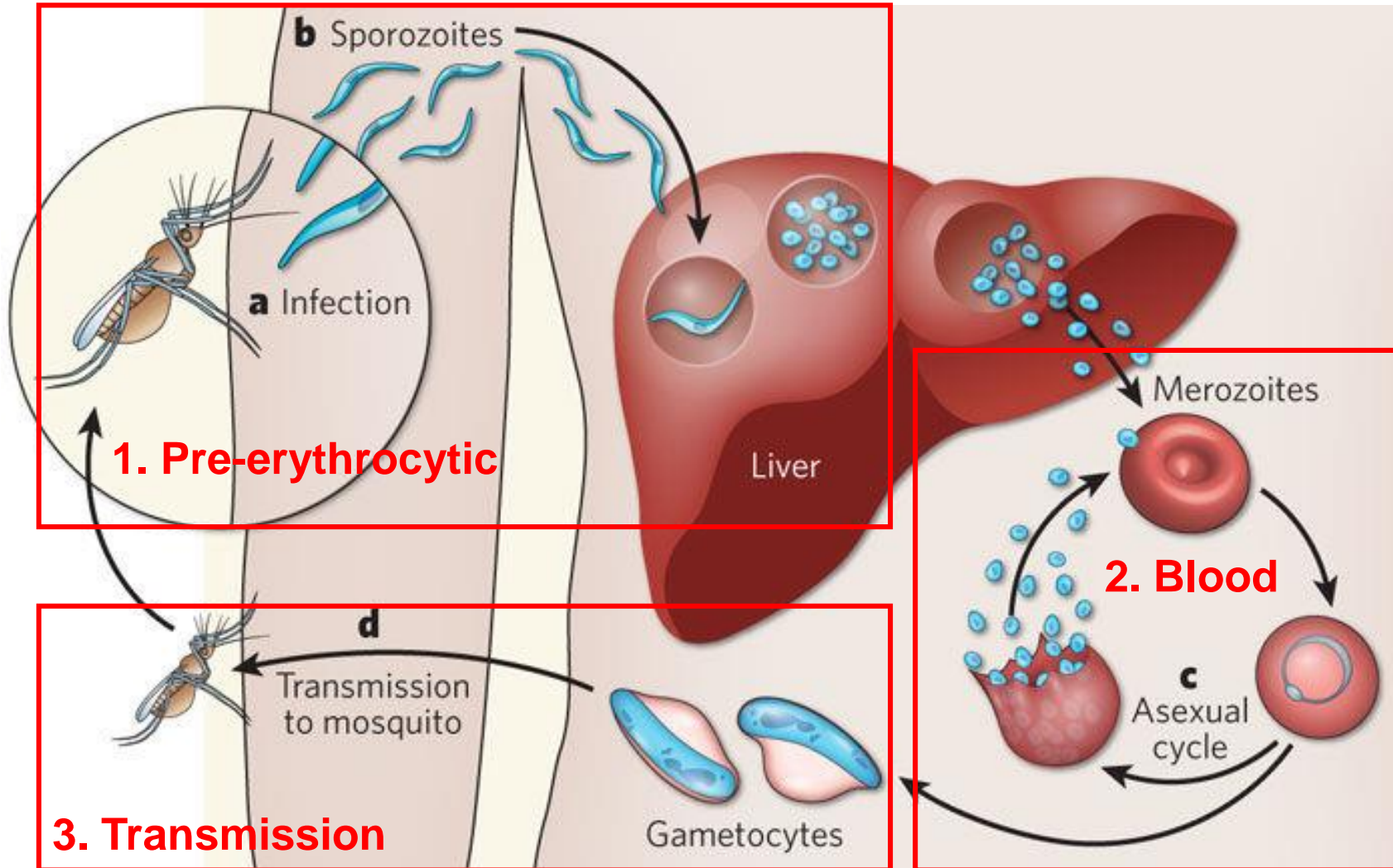
- Hard to decide on the right format
- Hard to make your chart streamlined with a clear key message
- Takes practice to speak to



What to do:

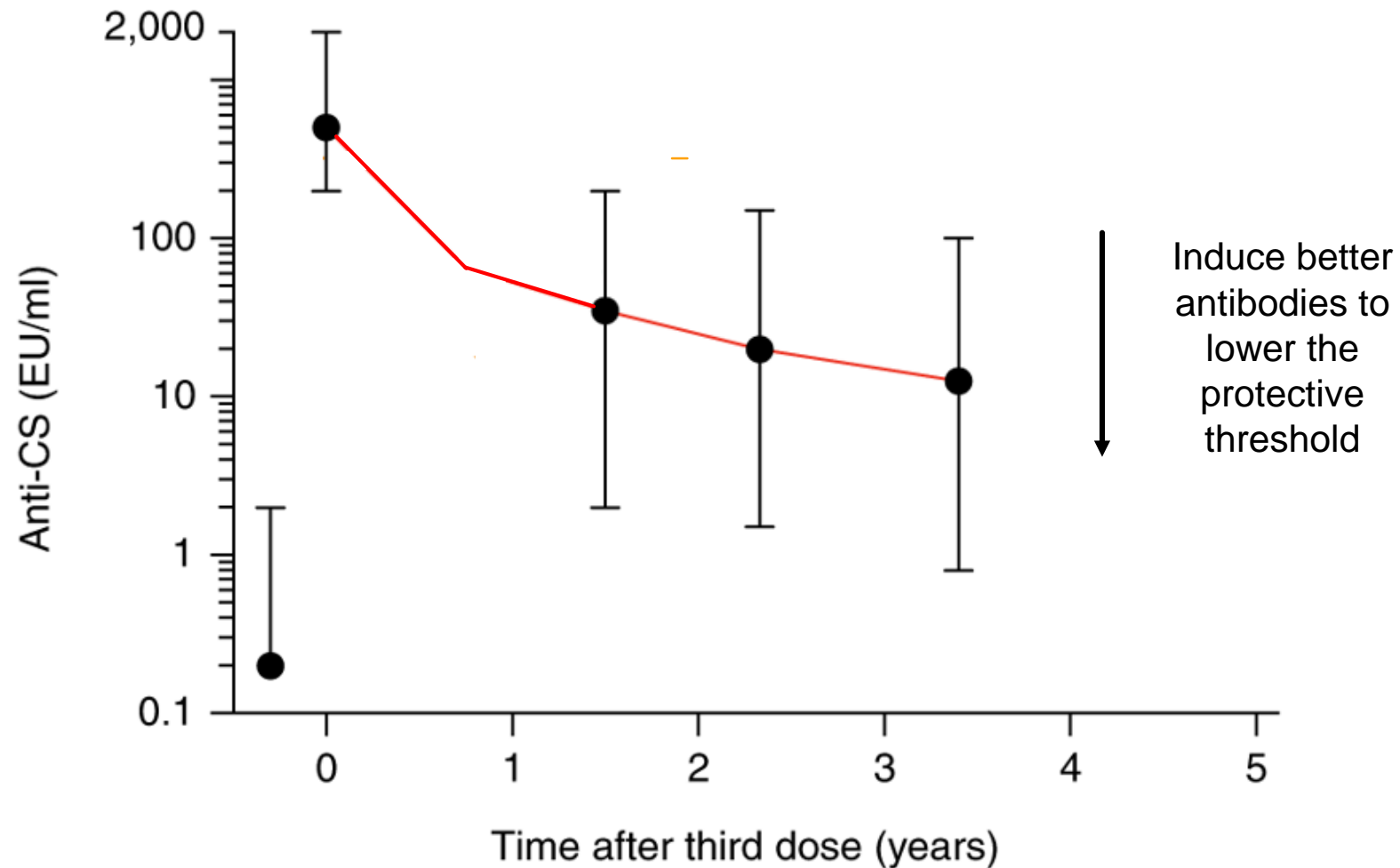
- Use different software (Excel, Word, other?)
- Choose the most appropriate chart for the data
- Simple representation – don't use overly complex charts
- Take care with colour and contrast

Lifecycle of Malaria



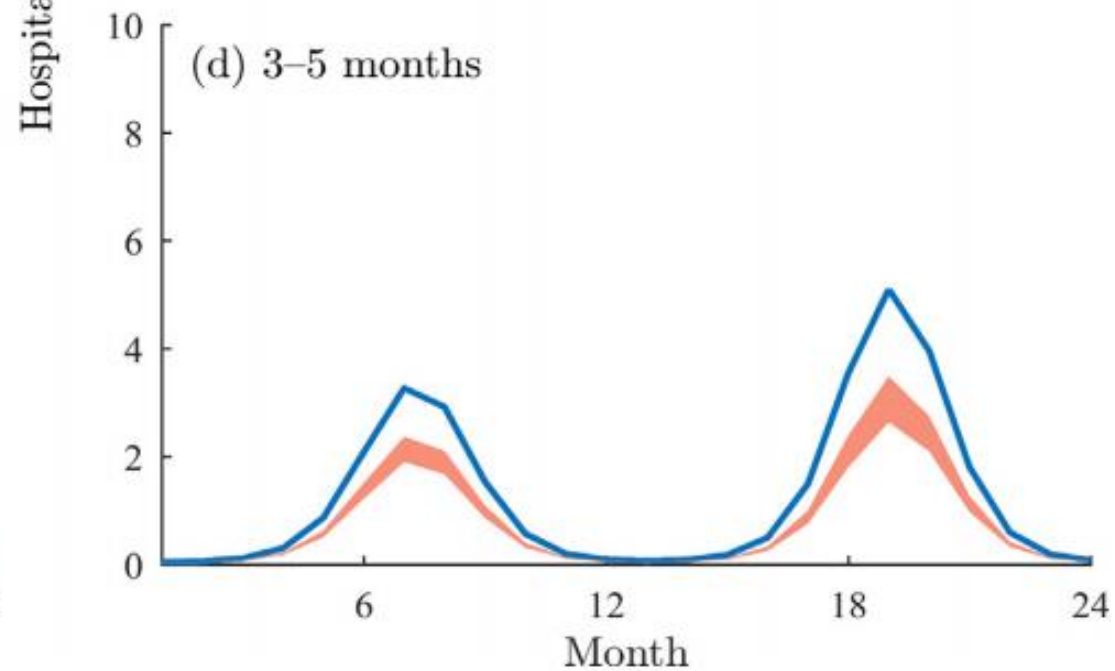
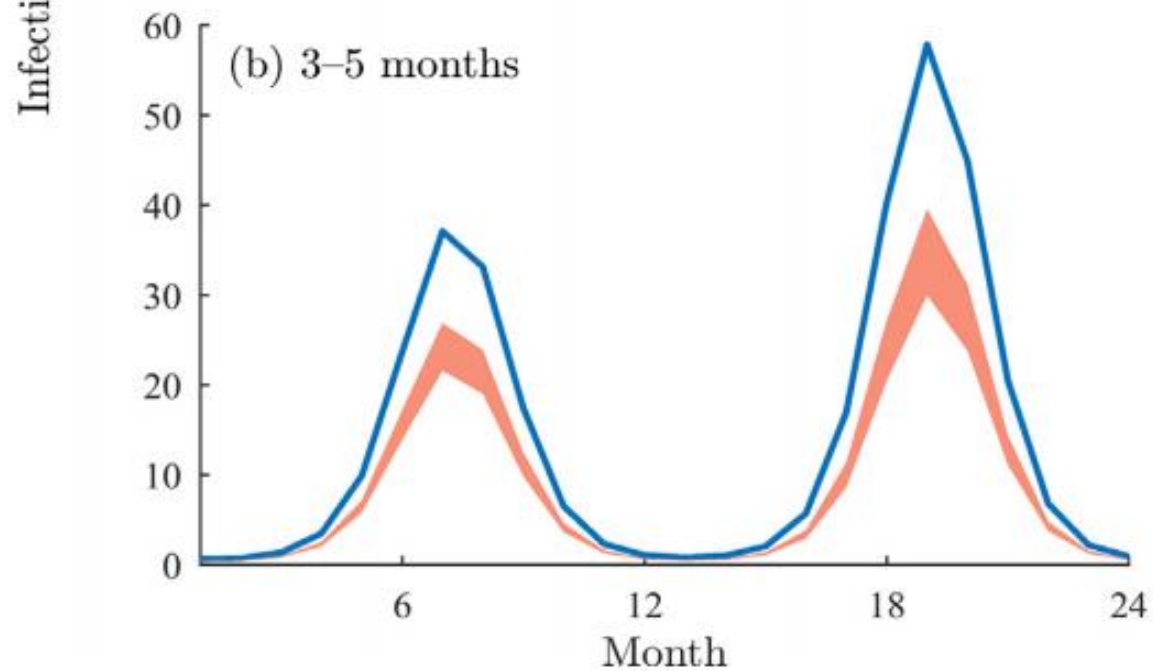
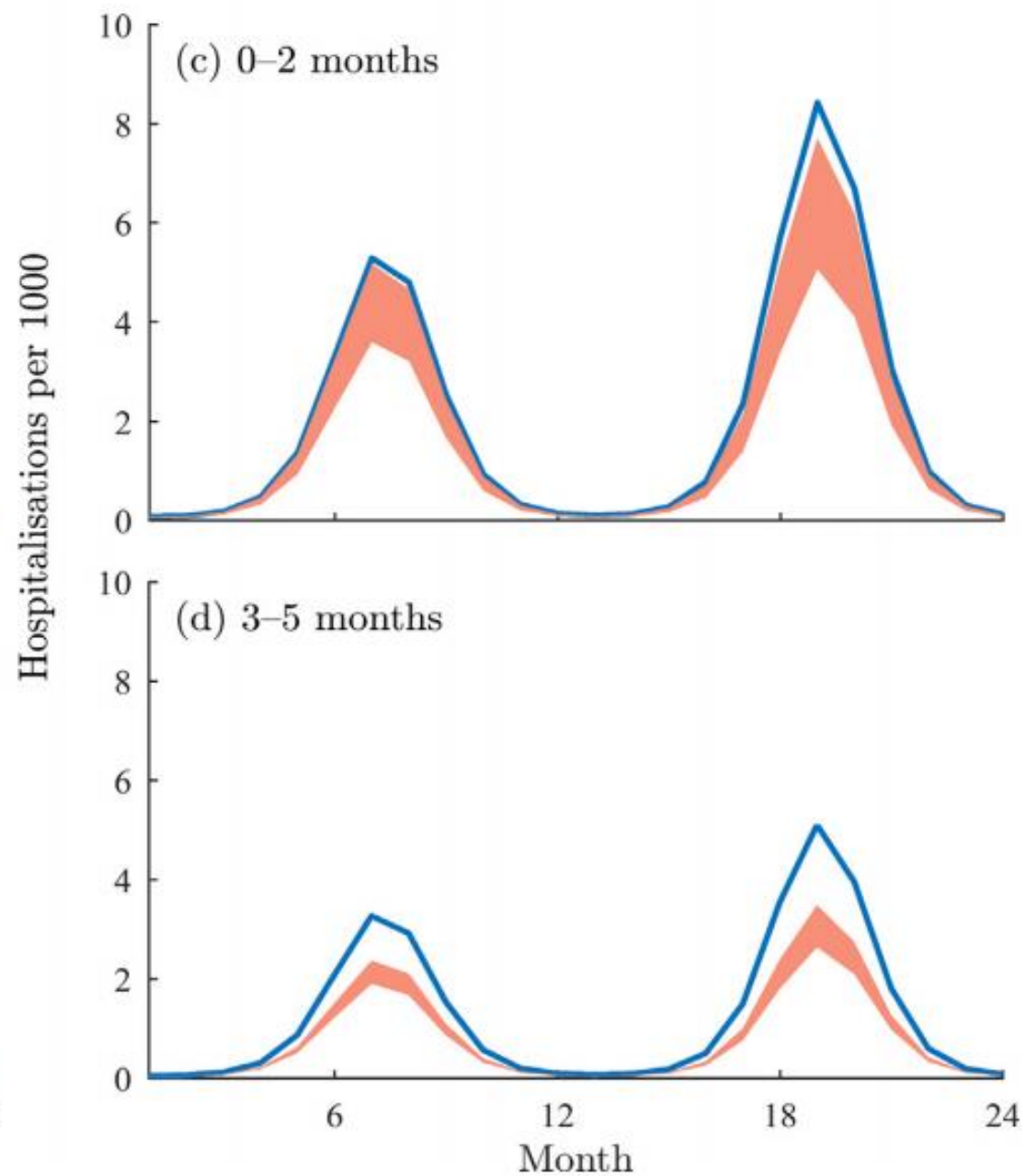
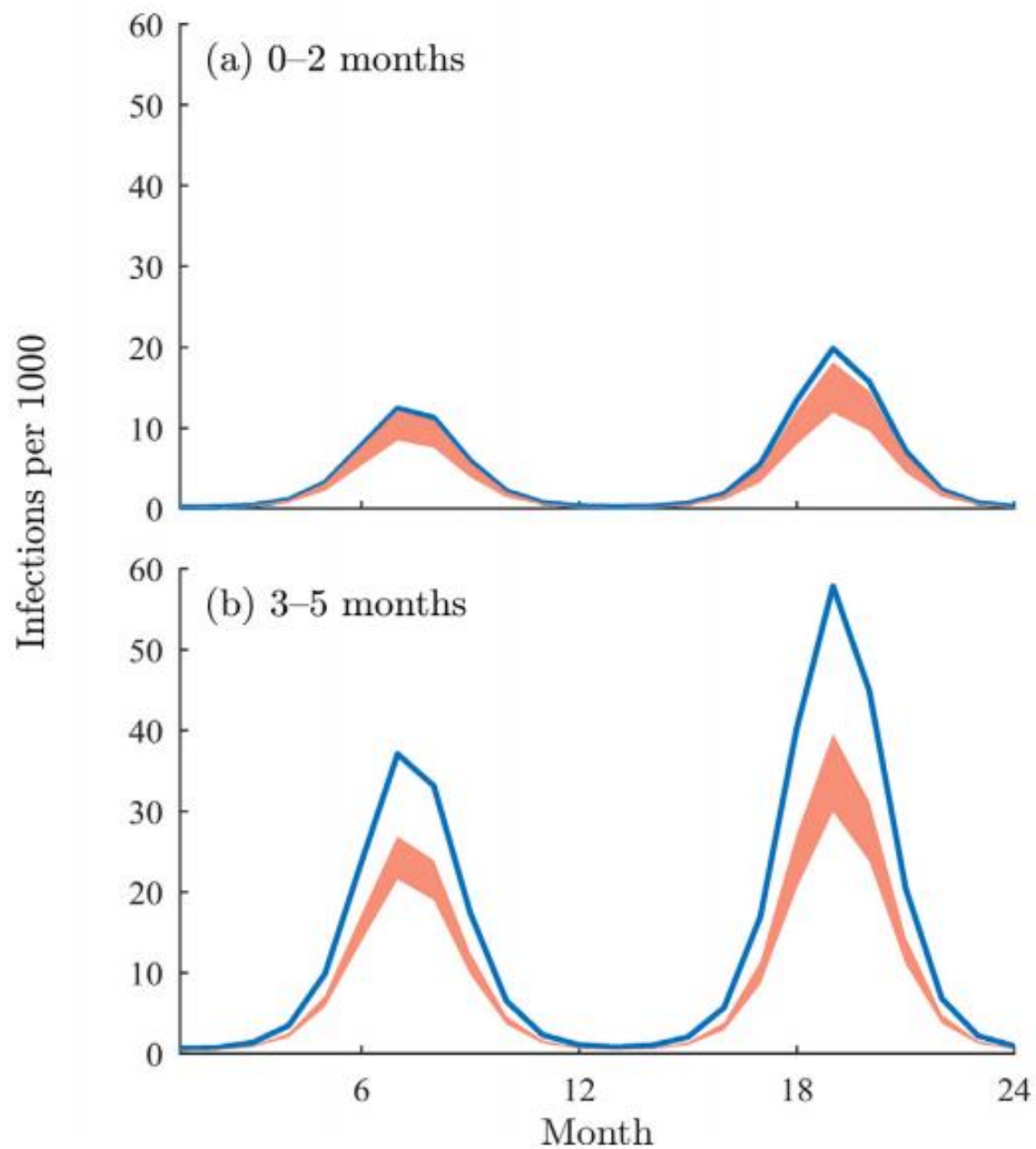
(Michalakis & Renaud,
2009, *Nature*)

Problem of RTS,S Vaccine



— Baseline model

— Vaccination model 60–90% effectiveness



Large images

Pros

- adds variety
- adds emotion
- adds deeper meaning



Cons

- hard to find the right images
- might look informal
- takes practice to speak to



What to do:

- find high quality images that can take up the whole screen
- practice speaking to them
- decide if you feel comfortable
- consider if your image will reach the audience

There is no licensed vaccine for RSV



Malaria

- 216 million cases in 2016
- 445 thousand deaths in 2016
- Every 2 minutes a child dies of malaria

WHO World Malaria Report 2017



“rejection of reason as the source of meaning” (ref)



Finding good images

- Take care with attribution and licensing
- Google images – use tools to filter (country, size, usage rights)
- Flickr, Stock images (if you have access), Canva, Unsplash, Morguefile
- Take your own!
- Use high quality with good contrast

Other considerations

- Themes (fonts, colours, headers etc)
- Animations
- Transitions
- Videos
- Variation
- Accessibility (universal design principle)

Delivery

How do you prepare for a presentation?

Strip your presentation of its scary connotations:

- Accept that presentations are a part of life
- Think of it as just a conversation, a verbal explanation, which you do all the time
- If you feel discomfort, acknowledge that it is just an emotion. It won't hurt you and won't last.



The spotlight effect

- Worried about the experience of being afraid or embarrassed?
- People are paying much less attention to us than we think
- The audience is on your side
- You're not the only one who doesn't like public speaking



“When you remove the unknown and reduce anxiety and nervousness, then confidence is something that will naturally take the place of your anxiety.”

(Reynolds 2006)



Confident in
your message,
confident in
your delivery

How will your practice for your presentation?



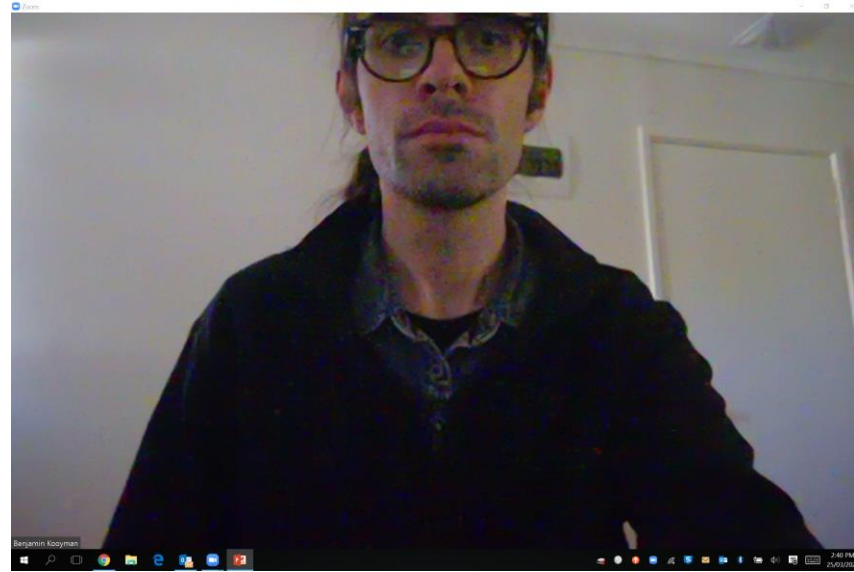
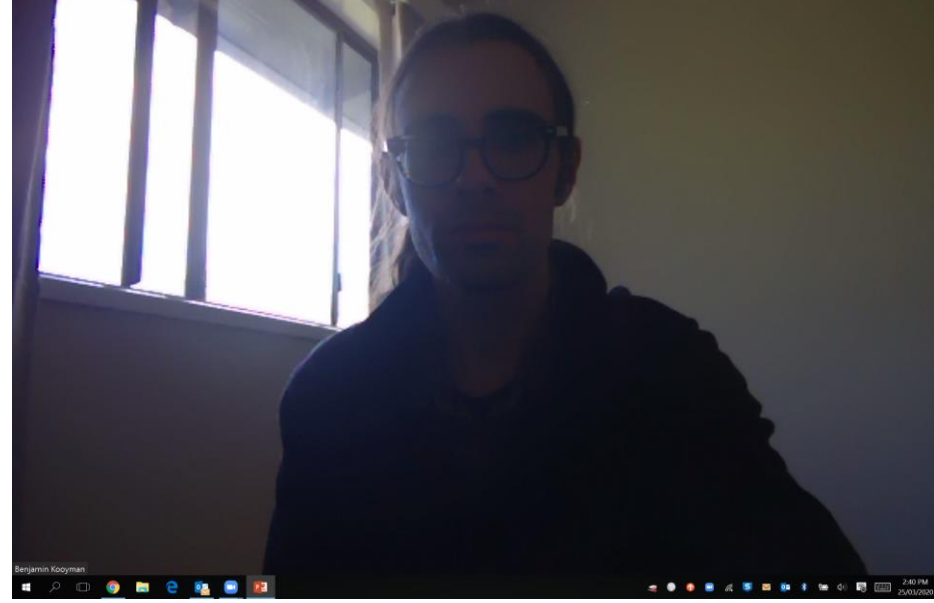
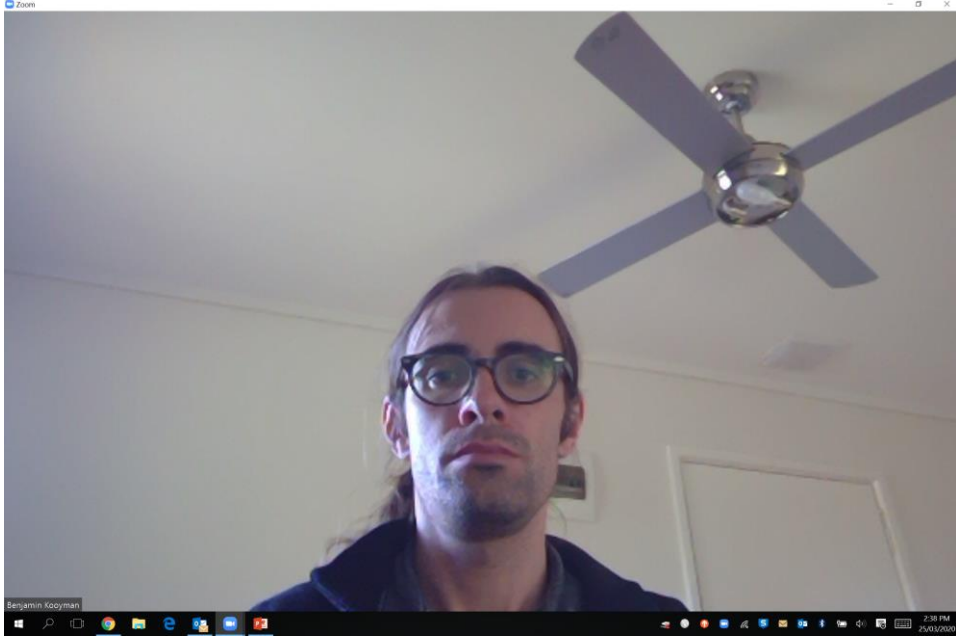
Sound natural and knowledgeable

- Avoid scripting
- Refer to the slide's content: should be a clear connection between what you say and your visual aid
- Explain the significance of any quotes, charts or images you include
- Make eye contact
- Speak
 - Loudly
 - Slowly
 - Clearly



How do I present well remotely?

- The same principles apply!
- Create a nice set up
- Eliminate all distractions, especially notifications
- Position yourself well (not too close or too far from camera)
- Record yourself and review
- Practice with a friend
- Watch a friend practice to see the audience's experience
- Make eye contact with the camera
- Don't read a script
 - The listener can distinguish between reading and presenting
- May write cues on post-it notes or poster paper and place on the wall behind your computer

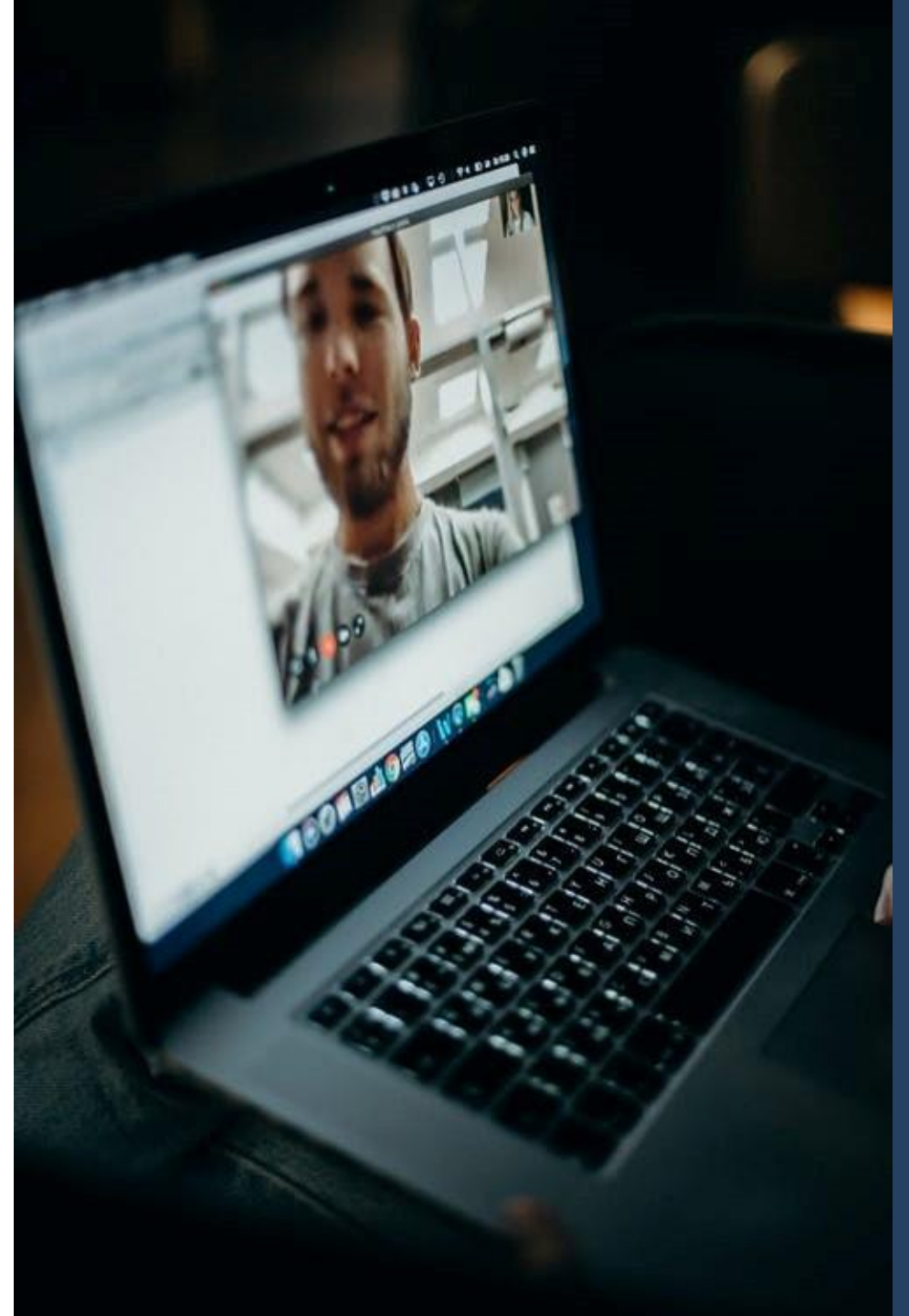


Reference your PowerPoint slides

- Use a referencing system that is easy to read, like Harvard
- Have a reference list as a final slide

Remember

- A clear message will give you confidence
- Practice
- Get the timing right
- The audience is on your side



References

Reynolds, G 2006, 'Dealing with presentation anxiety', Presentation Zen, viewed 14 July 2021,

https://www.presentationzen.com/presentationzen/2006/01/dealing_with_pr.html