BAD PRESENTATION BINGO SM

Text-heavy slides	Confusing graphics, charts	Zips thru too many slides	Use of jargon	Reads slides out loud
Facing screen, not audience	Introduction of introducers	Reads a written talk	Uses Laser Pointer	Glued to podium, stiff as a corpse
Struggles with technology	Excessive data	FREE	Runs long; no time for Q&A	Long tangents
Disorganized rambling	No eye contact with audience	Cheesy PowerPoint graphics/ templates	Starting late	Talking at slides with the pointer
No plot, characters or storyline	Lacks enthusiasm	Speaks too softly; no mic	Monotone voice	Small fonts (<20pt)

Bad Presentation Bingo is inspired by the Illinois Science Council to encourage presenters to be considerate of their audiences (especially public audiences) by paying attention to a presentation's format and delivery as much as to its content.

The Science of Presenting Science

A bad concept, if presented well, dies eventually
(e.g., earth-centered solar system, Kardashian family television shows)

A good concept, if presented badly, dies immediately
(e.g., umm..., I can't remember any)

For the good of science, you are strongly encouraged to continually improve your communication skills just as you would your research. Please practice being a good presenter and avoid bad presentation habits – especially when speaking to a non-scientific audience.
The future of science funding depends on good communication to non-scientists.

Some things to consider:

Humans remember things best when conveyed in the form of a compelling story. No one remembers a deluge of facts – that's more like a shopping list. Science discoveries, and the scientific process, are good mystery stories. Make sure your talk has characters and a plot and that it follows a vivid and memorable storyline.

If you're telling a good story, you shouldn't have to read a written script. (If you don't know the topic well enough to talk without a script, someone more knowledgeable should've been invited to speak in your place!) Telling a story means you look people in the eye, not at the screen behind you, or at your shoes, or off in space like you're trying to remember the details.

Scholarly papers and grant proposals require specific terminology – talking to the public does not. Unless you're addressing professional peers, loosen your tie/let your hair down and talk like you would to a new friend at a cocktail party. If you don't know what's jargon and what's not, tell your story to someone outside your field. When their eyes glaze over, that's probably due to jargon. Use everyday language and easily understood examples to keep your audience engaged.

PowerPoint would seem to be mandatory for presentations, but it's not. It's just a tool, like a pipette or a buzz saw, and when used improperly it causes confusion and pain. Slides should facilitate and expand on what you say, not serve as closed captioning. Images tend to better illustrate meaning than bullet-pointed text. Keep graphs and charts simple. If they aren't, make new ones. Bouncing laser pointers don't clarify charts, they make the audience seasick.
Use any visual aids to complement, not control, your presentation.

Slides should be used like hand gestures at a dinner party – not like a word processor. People read much faster than you can speak. If slides are full of text, your audience will have already finished reading when you begin to read out loud. They will be annoyed that you consider them illiterate and start checking their phones. Use every slide as a point of departure for you to more fully explain the concept or idea.

Common courtesy applies to presenting just like to being a party guest. Don't use technology as an excuse for your failure to start on time. Be enthusiastic, not a wallflower. Be engaging, not monotonous. And don't overstay your welcome thereby avoiding questions. Consider your presentation the start of a conversation. Give your audience enough information – in a form they can understand – so they will want to discuss it further with you.