

## Oral Report guidelines

There is not much time to speak during the oral report; I find it a good idea to focus on one or two of your most interesting elements rather than rush through a comprehensive presentation of your entire report. If you feel you must cover details of derivations or results, provide hand-outs and only highlight the most interesting parts or steps. Handouts of computer output and code will be useful too—it should be condensed or highlighted so that your audience does not have to wade through a lot of irrelevant or extraneous information.

Having said that you should concentrate on only one or two elements, take care that you do not spend too much time on these elements—don't get stuck! In the past, I have recommended specific elements of their reports for students to discuss. Almost invariably, students go into too much detail on these elements and end up exceeding their time limit. And then I get the blame for having encouraged them to discuss a topic in detail. Be aware that a short time limit has to be enforced in order that all students have the opportunity to present their talks. If you're rehearsing your talk, and find yourself spending more than a minute or two on a given slide, you either need to shorten your material (strongly recommended!) or add another slide. Don't get stuck on a slide—it's a signal that your talk will drag on too long.

John Spurrier's referenced page has a lengthy list of do's and don't's. The mechanical mistakes I commonly observe in a short presentation mostly involve a failure to engage the audience. Students like to address the overhead projector, talk to the screen, stare out into middle distance, stare at a corner of the room—anything but talk to the audience. You can refer to your overheads or note cards as a reminder, but be sure to step away from the overhead and talk directly to your classmates. In addition, idiosyncrasies that are acceptable for a long lecture should probably be avoided for a short talk—don't put your hands in your pockets, balance on the outside edges of your shoes, hold your hands behind your back, rock back and forth, etc. Movement is good, but nervous movement is distracting.

The amount of information on any single overhead or slide should be minimal. Relying too much on standard computer output formats is never effective; pull out the relevant information only and reproduce it using a large font if possible. If you are using PowerPoint, make sure your presentation has been pre-loaded and that your version of PowerPoint is compatible with the Statistics Department. I don't require visuals or slides as part of the presentation, but I have noticed that your fellow students judge a presentation much more harshly if no visuals are available.