

Guide to Final Oral Presentation and Research Paper

All students taking introductory geology courses are required to present a 10-minute oral presentation using digital media during the final sessions of the lab component of the course. In addition, a written report based on your presentation will also be graded. Below are the instructions and guidelines to follow for a successful presentation and paper.

Choosing a Topic

Your presentation and paper should explain a set of related facts and ideas in a way that is both interesting and understandable to your audience. Remember, your job here is to teach us all something. Assume that your audience knows little to nothing about your topic and it is your job to explain it to us in a clear and logical sequence. You may also want to include in your presentation some discussion of the civic or personal dimensions of your topic. In other words, how does your topic impact or involve human society in political, economic, medical, religious, moral, or cultural ways, or why is the topic important to you? Another good way to approach building a talk is to begin with a question, and then use your talk to answer that question. You should choose a topic that interests you. Try to avoid broad topics in favor of narrow, more focused topics. “Coral Reefs” is an interesting topic, but much too broad to discuss in a short presentation. A better topic would be “Coral Reefs of the Bahamas” or “Threats to Coral Reefs”. Another good approach is to find an article in the news or online and report on that, using additional sources to help explain the content and significance of the article. For example, “Viruses May Be Causing Coral Bleaching and Decline Around the World”, ScienceDaily (July 12, 2012) would be a good basis for a talk and paper on threats to coral reefs.

Oral Presentation

Your presentation must incorporate some elements of digital multimedia (images, charts, graphs, diagrams, video, audio) to accompany and illustrate your spoken text. Traditionally, most students have used PowerPoint to compose their presentations, but if you would like to use a different platform you should first discuss it with your lab instructor to make certain it will work on the classroom presentation equipment. Each presentation should include a minimum of 10 slides and you should compose about a half page to a full page of notes for each slide (this can usually be done within the notes section of your presentation file which is not visible onscreen). As addressed below, such notes will facilitate writing the accompanying research paper that is due in lab at the end of the semester. **Your first slide must be a title slide with your name on it.** The remaining slides should be a combination of photos and diagrams. All images should be referenced in your presentation. List the source (book or web site) in small type below the image. You may include text in your slides to outline your main talking points or to list important facts (use at least 16 pt font so your audience can read the text), but avoid placing too much text on a single slide and DO NOT put your notes on each slide and read from them during your presentation (this is known as “Death by PowerPoint”). Try not to include slides that are all text. Proofread your slides carefully to catch spelling and grammatical errors. To deliver an effective presentation, you should prepare note cards

with what you want to say outlined on the cards or use the notes feature in your presentation software.

When giving your presentation, face your audience and speak loudly and clearly, making eye contact with people around the room. Use your note cards to remind yourself of what you want to say, but avoid reading too much directly from the cards. If you are using technical terms, local place names, or other unfamiliar vocabulary, find out the correct pronunciations ahead of time. It is always a good idea to practice your presentation ahead of time in front of a live audience composed of family or friends.

Written Report You must also hand in a written report, based on your oral presentation, in fulfillment of the writing requirement for distribution courses at Hofstra. You should research your topics carefully, compile facts and ideas, and derive some real information to transfer to your student colleagues. By including factual notes with your slides, as suggested above, you will easily be able to extract and edit your notes to produce a paper. A list of references, including web site references, must be included in your paper as well as in your presentation. Hofstra University requires that all graded written assignments include a bibliography that follows an established format such as MLA or APA. For guidance on how to cite sources and format a bibliography, go to the Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Sources guide at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>.

Checklists for a Successful Presentation and Written Report

Presentation file delivery

1. Email file or deliver on CD or USB drive to your lab instructor **at least one day** prior to your presentation.
2. Make sure any movie files or sound files in your presentation are included in a folder with your presentation file or they will not work.
3. DO NOT bring your presentation to class expecting to present it using your own laptop.

Oral Presentations Using PowerPoint

1. Presentation logically organized, accurate, and complete
2. Slides relevant and helpful in successfully teaching about your topic
3. Minimum 10 slides, including title slide
4. Slides include a combination of text, images, and diagrams – no slides with only text
5. Images referenced on the slide
6. DO NOT read from your slides
7. Speak clearly and project your voice
8. Make eye contact with your audience
9. Correct pronunciation of technical terms, place names, and unfamiliar vocabulary
10. Discussion of human / personal dimension of your topic (optional, but always interesting)

Written Report

1. **Report MUST be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times or similar font, 1 inch margins**
2. Report must include a reference list (bibliography) including web site citations in correct format (see above). References listed in your bibliography should be cited where appropriate in the body of your paper.
3. Minimum 5 pages in length.
4. Text must be your own wording. Do not copy and paste from web sites or other sources! This is plagiarism! Your report may be checked for plagiarism using web-based search engines. All students are expected to follow Hofstra's policy on Academic Honesty, as outlined in *The Guide to Pride*. If you are uncertain if your work is in violation of this policy, don't hesitate to ask your professor for advice and guidance.

Introductory Geology Suggested Topics

The Geology faculty suggests that you chose a topic that you are interested in – for example the geology of a place you have visited or a geological or meteorological event that you have personal experience with. Other possible suggestions are listed below:

Famous Hurricanes

1938 “Long Island Express”; 2004 season: Charley, Frances, Ivan (magically reappearing as a hurricane *after* devolving to a tropical depression); Andrew, Gloria; Pacific Ocean Typhoons; Indian Ocean Cyclones; How Hurricanes Form; Hurricanes and the North Atlantic Oscillation; Hurricanes and El Nino; Hurricane/Earthquake Prediction and Preparedness; etc.

Famous Earthquakes

1906 San Francisco; 1811-12 New Madrid; 1964 Alaska; 1884 New York, NY; 1999 Northridge, CA; 1995 Kobe, Japan; 1999 Izmit, Turkey; 1886 Charleston, SC; 1960 Chile; 1986 Loma Prieta, CA; 1976 Tangshan, China; 1997 Iran; 1990 Philippines; San Andreas fault; Ramapo fault; Earthquake Prediction and Preparedness; etc.

Igneous Geology - Some Famous Volcanic Eruptions

1886 Krakatoa; 1960 Surtsey, Iceland; 1980 Mt. St. Helens; 1981 El Chichon, Mexico; 1942-43 Paricutin, Mexico; 1993 Pinatubo; 1991 Mt. Unzen, Japan; 1912 Mt. Lassen, CA; 1968 Cerro Negro, Nicaragua; 1985 Nevado del Ruiz, Colombia, etc.

Igneous Forms and Features

Palisades Intrusive Sheet, NJ; Columbia River Basalts, WA and OR; Deccan Traps, India; Iceland; Hawaii; Mt. Fuji, Japan; Shiprock, NM; Sierra Nevada batholith; Henry Mountains, UT; Crater Lake, OR (Mt. Mazama); Yellowstone Caldera, WY; Mono Craters, CA; etc.

Regional Geology - Geology of Long Island

Coastal features; LI beach formation; Montauk Point; Fire Island; Hither Hills State Park; LI hydrology; LI glaciation; etc.

Geology of NYC and Vicinity

Bear Mountain; Bedrock Geology of NYC; Central Park; Prospect Park; Riverside Park; Glacial Geology; NYC Water Tunnels; Hudson River; Palisades; Influence of Geology on Engineering Construction; Hudson Submarine Canyon; 125th Street “Manhattanville” fault; etc.

Climate and Oceanography

Longshore drift on Long Island’s Barrier Beaches; Impact of Hurricanes on Long Island (or any other geographical location of interest); Why Glacial Periods Happen; How El Nino works; Trends in Hurricane Intensity and Frequency Over the Last 50 Years; Black Smokers and Sulphur-based Life Forms; Location of the World’s Deserts; The

Greenhouse Effect and Global Warming; The Dust Bowl; Recent Droughts in the NY area; Drought and Decline of Ancient Civilizations; Climate Change and Human Evolution

Planetary Geology

Comparative Planetology (Mars vs. Earth; Earth's Moon vs. Mercury, etc.); Crater Morphology; History of Space Travel; Lunar Missions; Lunar vs. Martian, vs. Venusian vs. Mercurian Impact Craters; Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo Missions; Mineralogy and Origin of Meteorites; Mineralogy of the Moon; Multi-ringed Basins; Planetary Orbits; Planetary Ring Systems; Post-WWII Rocketry; Russian Space Missions; Space Exploration - Mariner, Pioneer, Voyager, Mars Global Surveyor, Galileo, Deep Impact, Mars Express, Future Missions, etc.; Terrestrial Impact Craters (Panther Mtn., Meteor Crater, etc.); WW-II Rocketry.

Places

Geology of your hometown, favorite vacation spot, National Park, any Caribbean Island, etc.

Sources for Articles on Current Research / News in the Geosciences

Nature (Journal - access through the Hofstra Library Research Databases (Math / Science) link)

Science News (<http://www.sciencenews.org/>)

Science Daily (<http://www.sciencedaily.com/news/>)

Geology.com (<http://geology.com/news/>)

Earth Magazine (<http://www.earthmagazine.org/>)

Phys.org (<http://phys.org/space-news/earth-sciences/>)