



Types of Presentation Aids

key concepts:

- I. Presentation aids
- II. Three-dimensional aids
- III. Two-dimensional aids
- IV. Sensory aids

What type of presentation aid should you use?

I. Presentation aids

- A. There are three main categories of aids: three-dimensional, two-dimensional, and sensory.
- B. Presentation aids should be appropriate for your topic, purpose, speaking occasion, and audience.

II. Three-dimensional aids

- A. Physical objects are useful for demonstrating a subject or explaining a process.
 - 1. Objects include models (reproductions of very large or very small objects) and artifacts (actual items).
 - 2. Animals are a three-dimensional aid, but few are appropriate for the classroom.
 - 3. People—another type of three-dimensional aid—can help demonstrate skills or processes.
- B. Consider using three-dimensional aids that are appropriate for your speech topic.

III. Two-dimensional aids

- A. Pictures: drawings, sketches, and diagrams
- B. Transparencies: clear plastic pages shown on an overhead projector
- C. Slides: photographs shown using a slide projector (and possibly a computer)
 - 1. Very professional looking
 - 2. Best for large audiences
- D. Posters: large sheets of cardboard with words or images
- E. Flip charts: newsprint pads that can be written on before or during a presentation
- F. Graphs: pictorial representations of data
 - Note:* Choose the type of graph appropriate for your data.
 - 1. Line graphs show statistical trends over time for one or more subjects.
 - 2. Pie graphs represent distribution patterns through sectors (“pie slices”) of the graph.
 - 3. Bar graphs (vertical or horizontal) show comparisons in one area over one or more periods of time.
 - 4. Pictographs are icons or symbols that represent a type of data.
 - Example:* Using an image of an ear of corn to represent a million bushels of corn harvested.
- H. Charts and tables: summaries of information, usually in grid form.
- I. Maps: visual representations of space, such as blueprints or geographical maps
- J. Videotapes, films, and computerized presentation methods (such as PowerPoint™)
- K. Boards: large erasable surfaces such as chalkboards and white boards
- L. Handouts: any materials you distribute to the audience

IV. Sensory aids

- A. These appeal the audience’s sense of taste, smell, hearing, or touch.
- B. However, they may distract the audience from the rest of your speech.

Conclusion: Select the presentation aid that is most appropriate for your audience and for the information you are trying to convey. Remember that *you* are your most important presentation aid.