

Presentation Tips for Speakers

The AAAS Annual Meeting draws an **interdisciplinary science audience**. While you are likely to have experts in your field attend your talk, you will also have scientists and students from other fields, as well as journalists and science communicators. This meeting presents opportunities to expand the reach of your work. Consider these pointers to help ensure your talk is a success.

- **Focus** on a few key points you want your audience to remember and build the rest of your information around those. Include the “big picture” of your topic, why it matters, and an appropriate level of detail to emphasize your points.
- **Verbal tools** such as examples, stories, and analogies can illustrate key messages more clearly than overly technical information. Consider what will resonate with this interdisciplinary audience.
- **Choose your words.** Explain concepts so that attendees outside your immediate field can understand. Define technical terms, and remember that some terms have different meanings in other fields.
- **Slides** can be a useful tool or a distraction. Your slides should be able to be seen and read from the back of the room. Text may help attendees understand, but not if there’s too much of it. Tailor your slides to a general scientific audience and use compelling visuals if possible.
- **Non-verbal communication** is important for conveying concepts and establishing credibility. Gesture purposefully for emphasis; this can also help you speak more smoothly. Make eye contact and be yourself.
- **Avoid speaking in a monotone** or speaking too quickly; give yourself appropriate pauses.
- **Engage your audience.** Consider asking questions of the audience or using an online poll during your presentation. It gets people involved, and helps you understand more about who is in the room. Leaving sufficient time for questions from the audience is strongly encouraged.

AAAS is offering speakers advance Skype consultations with communication experts. Strengthen your presentation style, organization, graphics, and delivery.

Contact public_engagement@aaas.org by January 12, 2018 to register. Calls will be scheduled between January 16 – February 7, 2018. Space is limited.

The AAAS Center for Public Engagement with Science and Technology also offers additional resources for scientist communication:

www.aaas.org/pes/communicatingscience.