

## **Guide to Oral Presentation Introductions**

*When giving an oral presentation, the most important part of your entire presentation is the introduction. This is where you 1) capture your audience's interest, 2) give them a context for your work, 3) pose your central question, problem, or issue, and 4) offer the most concise answer or argument you can give. Remember, this is an introduction, not a summary. You do not want to get deep into secondary literature (other scholarship about this topic) or methodology (what steps you took), but really just to hit the four items above. Keep in mind that an introduction should constitute about 10% to 20% of the length of your presentation. So if you are presenting for 10 minutes, your introduction should be between 1 to 2 minutes, no more.*

### **1) Capture your audience's interest**

This is a sentence or two that you use to get people's attention and draw their interest. It could be a question or a statement that introduces the topic and its importance. Check out the sample hooks below:

*"Loyola University Chicago is one of the few places in the world with a microscope that can "see" individual atoms. I know, because I've used it."*

*"On an average night in Chicago, 5,000 people experiencing homelessness sleep outside, including many women who are particularly vulnerable to violence."*

### **2) Contextualize your work**

Next, it is crucial that you explain who you are (name, year, major), who you worked with (faculty mentor(s)? grad students? other undergrads? etc.), in what capacity you did this work (course? fellowship? internship? etc.), and *what your exact role was*, particularly if it was part of a bigger project. If you're presenting outside Loyola, make sure you mention Loyola. Check out these samples:

*"Hi, I'm Claire Huxtable, a senior chemistry major at Loyola, and I've worked under Dr. Dan Killelea as my mentor for the past two years as a volunteer researcher in his lab. Dr. Killelea's lab analyzes the surfaces of various metals using advanced microscopic equipment, and for the past year I have used this equipment to explore subsurface oxygen on silver surfaces while other students in the lab have explored different metal surfaces."*

*"I'm Frankie Rose and I'm a junior psychology major at Loyola. In the Spring of 2013 I took Social Work 254 with Dr. Jeannette Johnson, a class that focuses on counseling for at-risk adults. I became interested in the particular challenges faced by homeless women. This past fall, with Dr. Johnson as my mentor and the Peace Shelter as a community partner, I designed and carried out an interview-based research project to find out how women who experienced homelessness defined the challenges and opportunities of their experience for themselves."*

### **3) Pose center question/problem/issue**

After capturing their attention and introducing yourself, you want to quickly indicate (if you haven't already) why your issue is important and how your research fits a need, but mostly you want to set up your central research question or problem, hopefully sparking the audience to start asking you more questions. Here are some examples:

*"The surfaces of metal objects are crucial for medical equipment, electronics, and much more. And while Chemists know a good deal about "absorbed oxygen" and how it affects metals, we don't know much about "subsurface oxygen," which is also very important. By using this microscope, we hoped to address that problem, and ultimately predict how different surfaces will react differently to subsurface oxygen."*

“While researchers have long highlighted the challenges that women face, it’s important to get that perspective from those who experience homelessness directly so that the solutions we come up with fit that experience. In particular, as a psychology major, I was interested in exploring what the psychological challenges of homelessness were for women, and how they might be alleviated.”

#### **4) Deliver your answer/argument or hypothesis if research is ongoing**

Think of this as the “thesis” of your oral presentation. This is the most important sentence or two of your entire presentation.

“What we learned was that while absorbed and subsurface oxygen affected type B metals almost identically, in type C metals, subsurface oxygen doubled solubility compared to absorbed oxygen, an important finding for many metal-based industries.”

“What the study found was that concern about violence was by far the most immediate concern of homeless women, some of whom suffered from symptoms similar to PTSD, indicating that measures to prevent such violence and to counsel those who have survived it should be an essential facet to battling homelessness.”

#### **Practice**

*Ok, now try writing a draft of your introduction. Then rehearse it for your friends or in front of a mirror before your conference. And remember, it’s ok to gesture toward your poster during this one minute pitch, but you should primarily be looking at your audience as you start the conversation.*

#### **1) Capture your audience’s interest:**

#### **2) Contextualize your work:**

#### **3) Pose center question/problem/issue:**

#### **4) Deliver your answer/argument or hypothesis if research is ongoing**