­Example 1: A Bad Presentation

Let’s start with the bad presentation. What makes this presentation so bad? Well, the list is quite long. However, the big problem here is that the speaker seems underprepared and the argument is difficult to follow.

**SLIDE 1: Title and introduction**

Finding your Way: Think of this first slide as setting up the foundation for all those to follow. Let the audience know what to expect and try to get them interested by asking yourself ‘so what?’…why should your audience care about this? If you think you have achieved that, you are off to a good start!

Presentation

* There is a lack of clarity in terms of what the dissertation is covering; relying on the audience to read the slide and figure out what the dissertation was about independently.
* It lacks clarity on what the presentation will cover. The presenter needs to be more assertive and transparent about the direction of the presentation.
* The style is very informal and whilst being relaxed can be good, here is seems that the presenter is not particularly interested or engaged in the task
* There is no academic context or clear justification for the project.

Slides

* The slide provides minimal information. It is missing the degree title, date, student name, etc. So ensure that the key information is clear and accessible.
* The inclusion of exclamation marks is not appropriate; remember that this should be treated as a professional presentation.

**SLIDE 2: Background**

Presentation

* The presenter is too reliant upon notes and positions the notes in front of the face which blocks sound and visibility.
* Again, the focus upon the notes indicates lack of preparation, making the narrative hard for the audience to follow.
* It is vague in the direction and justification of the project. For example, they state that the discussion will begin by talking about ‘lads’ but do not state why this is important or logical in terms of the overall argument.
* There is lots of repetition here, saying the same thing multiple times in this way weakens the argument.
* There is limited academic support for the arguments being made. There needs to be stronger connections to literature and more specificity where possible.
* The presenter has their back to the audience and is reading from the slides,   
  which should be avoided.

Slides

* Though the points are organized in a list, the bullet points appear unfinished   
  (with the extra one at the end).
* The writing and language used on the slides is not particularly academic and is vague.
* If you say ‘writers suggest’ then there should be references of who has said this at the end of the sentence as references.
* The bullet points are slightly repetitive, make sure that each one counts and tells the audience something different.

**SLIDE 3: What I did**

Presentation

* This is vague ague in terms of the details surrounding the methods of the research. It needs to be more specific with the amount of time spent in the field site etc.
* Further justification for the research site was needed, for example, what ‘lad’ environments do you mean?
* The description of the analysis process is not convincing and remains vague.
* Avoid inserting words which are not needed or adding to the discussion as this is distracting for the audience. For example, the word ‘like’ here is repeated and is unnecessary.

Slides

* The title needs improvement. This is currently overly colloquial. The title of ‘methods’ or ‘methodology’ would be better here. Try to ensure that you use the same technical language as you did within the dissertation.
* The style of the slide is not consistent with the one before, for example, these ideas could be displayed in bullet points to match those on the previous slides.
* The image is unnecessary and does not add to the argument. Try to include images only when they add to your point, or are directly relevant to your argument.
* There is a lot of empty space on the slide, whilst you do not want to overfill slides, think about if you are optimizing the space and displaying all the significant points.

**SLIDE 4: My findings**

Presentation

* The initial information given here seems irrelevant, whilst rapport with participants might be an interesting point to discuss elsewhere; this information was not particularly useful for this specific argument. Try to ensure that you remain focussed on your key point and avoid tangents which distract the audience.
* The style is overly informal and the discussion is not analysis, rather a description   
  of the presenters’ thoughts. Instead, you need to ensure that your analysis   
  and thinking is being situated alongside existing literature and knowledge in this area.
* The attempt to connect to previous work as evidence to support the point was very vague. You could try to name drop noting key thinkers where appropriate and be specific about the research that you are making a connection to, as this will strengthen your argument and begin to show why your data is exciting   
  and important.
* Avoid fiddling with props whilst presenting as this is distracting for the audience. For example, here the presenter was playing with the paper whilst talking and this was detracting from the narrative.

Slides

* The slides are repetitive in terms of starting the bullet points in the same way. Try to make your sentences varied and interesting.
* The use of bold can be good; however the reason for this is not clear here.
* There are no academic references on the slide and so the slide is only descriptive of the data, rather than beginning to hint towards how the findings and data connect to previous writing/research in this area.

**SLIDE 4: More findings**

Presentation

* The discussion is very vague. This section of the presentation is arguably the most important, where the original contribution to knowledge is outlined, yet discussion is not clear enough.
* The connection to academic work in order to support the points is lacking.
* The body language and the folding/unfolding of notes is distracting.
* The presenter is looking down at the screen for the majority of the time.
* The presenter assumes knowledge and expects the audience to know the background context, or be aware of their train of thought; this is problematic as the audience might not understand the point.

Slides

* The title of the slide though telling the reader what it does, could perhaps be a bit more professional. For example, slides titled ‘findings 1.’ and ‘findings 2.’ make the connection between the slides clearer and maintains consistency.
* There are no clear bullet points here and some of the points are very brief making the argument harder to follow.
* Use of abbreviations is not explained. For example, ‘MM’ is not defined here; this should be done in the first instance, so that the audience can follow the argument.
* The language and wording on the slides is vague. Try to ensure that your writing is accessible, yet maintains academic standards.

**SLIDE 5: To Conclude**

Presentation

* There is a lot of unnecessary ‘waffle’ here, the first few sentences are not really telling the reader anything specific. Try to ensure that you do not waste time and be as concise as possible when talking.
* The presenter does not seem clear on the main point they want to convey, with the reliance upon notes and looking up at the screen detracting from the argument.
* There seems to be a lack of understanding and preparation. Try to give the impression that you know what you are talking about.
* The presenter is again vague in relation to their findings and the significance of these to the discipline or study area. Try to be clear in the conclusion about what you believe your contribution to be (this can be small; it does not need to be ground breaking at UG level!).
* The presentation does not end well. Try to ensure that there is a clear ending and that you invite the audience to ask questions.

Slides

* Whilst the format of the points and presentation is clear, the content is weak. The points are vague, or are big statements that need some support. For example, the point ‘men are complicated’ does not really tell the audience anything specific. So more detail is required to make the points clearer and the argument stronger.
* These points would benefit from support of references; this would help the audience to see how your work connects to existing research in the field.
* Noting the potential and direction for future research is a good idea; however, ensure that you briefly indicate what this might entail.

Finding your Way: Again here ask yourself the ‘so what?’ point and ensure that the audience goes away knowing why your research is relevant and important.

Other aspects of this presentation you should avoid:

* The presenter assumes knowledge on many occasions, whilst you are not able to explain all points or background context in detail, **key points or key terms should always be made clear**.
* The presentation was only 6 minutes long. The brief asked the student to do a presentation between 8–10 minutes. **So ensure that you follow the requirements of the task and optimize the time given** (planning will help with this).
* Though the speaker seems confident, they are perhaps overly relaxed and need to exude a more professional demeanour. This can be achieved by **thinking about the style of presentation, including language and wording of ideas**.
* **Body language is important**. Looking at the notes for prolonged periods of time, or making bodily gestures which take the attention away from the narrative should be avoided.