How to speak about science to anyone!

A few simple steps for a lifetime of great talks

Let's break down a talk

No matter who's in your audience, an effective talk includes four must-haves:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Focus**
3. **Money Slide**
4. **Take-home message**

What should each part of the talk include?

#1: Introduction

*Thought-provoking topic. This seems like an important area of research!*

The introduction should set the premise and prime the audience for your talk.

Identify the common ground of your audience and find a way to share it at the beginning of your talk. Rather than "water down the science," tailor the content to what the audience would want to hear, while adjusting the simplicity of the talk.

**Job Talk?**

- Learn about your audience and their level of expertise
- Show how your work is going to address the institute's mission statement

**DO NOT** include vague background filled with heavy scientific jargon

**DO** include current problems in your field and what gap of knowledge or critical need your research project addresses

#2: Focus

*Interesting question. Can’t wait to see the results!*

Your “focus” slide(s) establish the specific goal of your study and pinpoint the question you will address.

Focus on a single question.

*But what if my talk addresses more than one question?*

1. Ask the first question
2. Answer the first question with a money slide
3. Ask the next question, and so on

#3: Money Slide

*That was a great approach. Fascinating data!*

This is the section where you give answers to the question you posed. Include relevant methodology and data, which should be clear and well-organized.

**Two cents for your money slide:**

- Place figures on the left and bullet points on the right
- Consider a slide with no text, only data, allowing for the audience to focus on what you are saying (instead of reading your slide while you are talking)

#4: Take-home message

*Excellent direction to take this investigation!*

This section summarizes your talk and should be in simple language.

Think of the take home message as the beginning of your exit strategy. Then transition into future directions, future challenges in the field, and even some proactive questions.

General tips

- Organize the talk with the duration in mind (20, 30, 60 minutes?)
- Plan an average of 2 minutes per slide
- Avoid preparing excess slides and skipping them due to a lack of time

A final rule of thumb: it's always good to end the talk early!