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## Step 5: Create a Presentation

After all your hard work, you’ve reached the final step. Now it’s time to do one last check of your outline and research. Once you’ve completed this step, you’re ready to start creating your final product—a written, an oral, or a multimedia presentation.

### Evaluate Your Outline and Information

You’ll need a work area large enough to spread out your note cards, outline, and bibliography. This will give you a chance to compare the information in your notes with the information in your outline, look over your outline again, and compare your notes with your bibliography.

The checklist on the next page should help you with this step.

- Put a check mark by the steps you have completed.
- For those steps you haven’t finished, write what you still need to do.

This list will help you complete your project.

Take your time with this step. You’ll write your presentation more quickly if you don’t have to stop to fill in missing data or find a resource you forgot to cite correctly.

Finally, check with your teacher to be sure you have everything required for the final project.

**ACTIVITY**

**Note Cards and Outline**

- \_\_\_ All facts, dates, names, and ideas have been copied accurately from the notes to the outline.
- \_\_\_ I have at least two resources for each main topic idea along with its supporting subtopics and details.
- \_\_\_ I've put note-card numbers next to important facts, details, or ideas so I know what resources to use for footnotes or endnotes.
- \_\_\_ I've indicated where graphics and images might be used and included note-card numbers for their resources.
- \_\_\_ I've indicated where primary material might go and included note-card numbers for the resources.
- \_\_\_ I have avoided plagiarizing anyone's ideas or words.

**My Outline**

- \_\_\_ The outline reflects the purpose of my project: to inform, to persuade, or to entertain.
- \_\_\_ The first main topic idea introduces the subject of the presentation and the question or issue I am exploring.
- \_\_\_ The other main topic ideas are arranged in logical order to develop the presentation.
- \_\_\_ There are at least two subtopics under each main topic idea. If I have supporting details, there are at least two details under each subtopic.
- \_\_\_ The last main topic idea and subtopics present conclusions about the subject.
- \_\_\_ The conclusions are supported by information in the rest of the outline.
- \_\_\_ I have enough material to meet the page requirements of the project.

**Notes and Bibliography**

- \_\_\_ Each note card has the number of a resource along with the number of the note card.
- \_\_\_ The bibliography contains all the resources I used for taking notes.
- \_\_\_ If I discarded the note cards from a resource, I took that resource off the bibliography as well.
- \_\_\_ Each resource in the bibliography has the correct citation.
- \_\_\_ All the resources are listed alphabetically by author or (if no author is listed) by title.

### Consider Your Conclusions

Before you start writing, think over all you have learned about your topic since you started this project. You analyzed the information you gathered. Are there conclusions you can draw from your research? These conclusions will depend partly on the purpose for your project.

#### To inform

In this type of presentation, you are describing a topic for your readers. For example, if you're researching the environment of Mars, your final paragraph will be partly a summary of the facts you've found. For instance:

- Mars has little atmosphere to protect the planet from the Sun's deadly ultraviolet radiation.
- The planet has no surface water and only trace amounts of oxygen.
- The average surface temperature is about  $-82^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-63^{\circ}\text{C}$ ).
- Dust storms occur frequently on Mars; every two or three years the entire planet is engulfed in a global dust storm.
- Its cold, arid surface and the lack of oxygen mean nothing can grow on Mars.

After evaluating these facts you might conclude that the most important thing to know about the Martian environment is that it is hostile to nearly all forms of life. Another conclusion might be: If humans ever want to establish colonies on Mars, they are going to have to find ways to make water and oxygen, grow food indoors, and build shelters that protect people from dangerous dust storms and from deadly cold and radiation.

## Ready for Research

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### To persuade

For this type of presentation, you will end your final paragraph with an opinion or conclusion supported by the facts you have gathered. For instance, if you're researching whether King Tut was murdered, you must base your conclusions on the evidence. For example:

- A hole at the base of the skull, revealed by X-rays of the mummy, is consistent with a heavy blow dealt to the back of the head.
- The blow is in a place that would not ordinarily suffer injury in a fall.
- Someone went to a lot of trouble to erase King Tut's name from all records, decorations, and buildings.
- King Tut's furnishings and other burial objects seem to have been hastily piled into the tomb rather than carefully arranged as in other tombs.
- Someone also built another tomb on top of King Tut's and covered his tomb's entrance with rubble.

After studying the facts, you might conclude that the evidence, although circumstantial, still strongly suggests that someone may have killed the young pharaoh and then tried to cover up the crime. The hole at the base of the skull, the efforts to erase all memory of the pharaoh, the hurried way he was buried, and the efforts to hide his burial site all seem to support your opinion that King Tut may have been murdered.

### To entertain

In this type of presentation, you might give information in the form of a play, a dramatic reading, a PowerPoint show, or some other medium. Even though you are not describing a topic or persuading your audience, you can still draw conclusions from the material you present. You might have one of the characters say the conclusions for you or have a narrator say them.

For example, suppose you have written a one-act play based on a scene from Maya Angelou's life where she starts to speak again after nearly five years of being silent. A teacher and family friend, Mrs. Bertha Flowers, had Maya read books by famous authors and then talk about the stories. You might conclude that the power of story can help someone recover their own voice. Either Mrs. Flowers or Maya might say this concluding statement in the play.

Remember, when you draw conclusions, you're not just giving your audience information about your topic. You're helping them understand what the information means.

## Ready for Research

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### ACTIVITY

List some of the key facts you have researched about your topic. Think about the purpose of your project. Then write down two or three conclusions you can draw from these facts. As you work on your conclusions, keep these questions in mind:

- What is the most important thing to know about your topic based on the information?
- What do you want people to remember about the topic?
- What conclusion(s) do the facts or evidence seem to point to?
- How would you summarize the meaning of what you have learned?

If you have trouble with this step, ask your teacher, a parent, or a friend to help you.

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### Written Presentation

If the assignment calls for a written report, your outline is the starting point, along with your notes and bibliography. You can divide your paper into three basic parts: introductory paragraph, middle paragraphs, and concluding paragraph.

#### Introductory paragraph

Your introductory paragraph covers the topics under Roman numeral I in your outline. This paragraph has three purposes:

- Introduce your topic to the reader
- Preview what the report will cover
- In a persuasive paper, state your position

#### EXAMPLE

If you are writing a persuasive paper about colonizing Mars, your introductory paragraph might look like the following:

Our exploration of space has already given us new materials, communication devices, and even entire industries. Now we are getting ready to go to Mars. Many critics say it's too dangerous and costly to go and that problems here on Earth are more important. I believe the discoveries and inventions needed for a Mars expedition could help us solve the problems we face here on Earth.

Middle paragraphs

Middle paragraphs are where you develop your ideas, give evidence, build your case for your opinion, or present your creative work. To present your information effectively, use the following order for your paragraphs:

- To inform: Start with minor points and end with major points.
- To persuade: Provide opponents' viewpoints before giving your own viewpoint, or describe problems and then solutions.

EXAMPLE

For your persuasive paper, the middle paragraph topics might look like the following:

Opponents' viewpoints

Critics have three main objections to colonizing Mars. First, they say it is much more important to feed and house people here on Earth than it is to send an expedition to Mars. Second, the money should be used to fund more jobs here instead of sending a few people to work on Mars. Third, a Mars expedition is not likely to succeed because the planet is so hostile to life.

Your first viewpoint

While it's true that hunger and homelessness are major problems here on Earth, space exploration has always helped us solve problems on this planet. NASA and its partners are developing ways to grow food without soil and to build housing with new materials that can withstand the harshest climate. Such breakthroughs would help feed and house people in poor nations or in harsh climates all over the world.

## Ready for Research

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### Concluding paragraph

The final paragraph covers the topics in the last Roman numeral of your outline. This paragraph has two goals:

- Summarize the main ideas or facts about your topic
- Present your own conclusion(s) about what you learned, or present your own opinion on the topic

#### EXAMPLE

Your concluding paragraph would summarize the critics' main points and end with a statement of your own position.

#### Final concluding statement

Critics point to the issues of hunger, homelessness, and lack of jobs among Earth's people and to the harsh Martian climate as reasons not to spend money and resources on trying to colonize Mars. Yet a Mars expedition could have major benefits for people on Earth. Discoveries in growing food, inventing new building materials, and devising ways to survive in a hostile world can help us feed, house, and create jobs for the people of Earth. **In learning how to live on Mars, we may actually make life better on our own planet.**

### ACTIVITY

Try your hand at writing the draft of an introductory, middle, or concluding paragraph for your topic. Review the purposes of each type of paragraph before you start writing.

## Ready for Research

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### Writing Tips

As you are writing your presentation, keep some of these tips in mind to help your readers understand what you are saying.

- Define new terms, or terms with special meanings, when you first mention them. For example, if you use the term hydroponics, explain that it means “growing plants in water without using soil.”
- Compare a new idea or object with a more familiar one. For instance, if you are trying to describe the problems people face on the surface of Mars, you might compare it to extremely high altitudes on Earth where there is little oxygen, severe cold, and no liquid water.
- Use transition words and phrases between middle paragraphs and for the concluding paragraph to help your readers follow the logical flow of your ideas. Familiar transition words and phrases include:

- |                        |                     |                 |             |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| • first, second, third | • on the other hand | • as a result   | • in fact   |
| • however              | • although          | • in addition   | • therefore |
| • finally              | • furthermore       | • in conclusion | • while     |

- Use the active voice rather than the passive voice for your paper. Rather than say, “Maya Angelou **was given** books to read by Mrs. Flowers,” change the sentence to the active voice. “Mrs. Flowers **gave** Maya Angelou several books to read.” Active voice makes your writing stronger.
- Avoid using clichés or slang. Clichés are overused phrases like “flat as a pancake” or “white as a ghost.” Slang includes words or phrases that are currently popular, such as “loser,” instead of “failure.” Both clichés and slang are easy to use but lack originality and weaken your writing.

### Proofreading

Once you have written your final copy, remember to proofread it for errors in capitalization, spelling, and grammar. Read it from beginning to end, checking to be sure your ideas make sense and that your paper flows logically from one paragraph to another.

When you have corrected any mistakes, read the work over again. No one catches everything the first time through. You can also have a parent or friend read it for you. Sometimes you can be too close to your own work to see the mistakes. You have only one chance to present your project—make it count!

ACTIVITY

Here's a way to practice proofreading, or reading through a written report to make sure everything is correct. We've made 10 mistakes in this report about the United Nations. Can you find the mistakes? Hint: Look for spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and facts.

**The United Nations**

The United Nations (UN) is an association of independent countries that have agreed to work together to prevent and end wars. The UN also attempts to improve social conditions by promoting international cooperation, economic development, public health, environmental conservation, and human rights. Members of the UN is supposed to cooperate peacefully and resolve differences diplomatically rather than rely on force; however, this ideal has not always been met. The UN does not make laws or act as a world government, but it does provide opportunities for discussion, cooperation, and actions that serve the interests of its members. The UN was founded by 51 nations in 1945. Membership was eventually extended to almost every country on Earth, growing to 291 member nations (also called member states) by 2002

After World War II it was expected that the great powers would work together to keep the peace. Instead disagreements arose in the late 1940s between the soviet Union and the West that led to decades of conflict and international tension known as the Cold War (see Cold War). The two emergent superpowers—the Soviet Union and the United States—and their respective allies built up enormous arsenals of conventional and unconventional weapons, including nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction. The UN attempted to act as peacemaker between the superpowers, but the two states often rendered the organization ineffective in regard to Colder War conflicts. After the Cold War ended in the early 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.N. continued to promote peace in many troubled areas of the world, adapting to circumstances that were not dreamed of by its founders. The UN has faced numerous humanitarian crises and civil wars. It has struggle to assist large numbers of refugees and to deal with the spread of AIDS, international terrorism, and the vast differences in wealth and opportunity between the world's richest and poorest peoples.

## Oral Presentation

If the assignment requires you to give an oral presentation to the class, you will need to prepare a written version first. Again, your outline is the starting point, along with your notes and bibliography. In some cases, your teacher may require you to turn in a written draft, outline, or notes cards of your presentation.

### Think about your audience

How much do they know about your topic? What is likely to interest them the most? Will you need visual aids to help the audience understand your topic?

### ACTIVITY

Draw up an audience profile of your class. After each category, jot down what you know about your audience.

#### Audience Profile

1. Number of people in class

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2. Knowledge of topic

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3. What might interest them the most?

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4. Other considerations  
(diversity of group—all girls, all boys, etc.)

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5. Visual aids that might be needed

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Organize your speech

In an oral presentation, you start with the strongest point, such as a question or statement, to catch your listeners’ interest. For example, “When Howard Carter opened King Tut’s tomb in 1922, he may have opened a 3,300-year-old murder case.”

After your opening statement, give your audience background information about your topic, then present your supporting points and evidence, and end with your conclusion.

Some teachers may allow you to read your speech word for word from a written text. However, most teachers will direct you to give your talk from an outline or from note cards.

1. Outline

You can use an outline written with complete sentences or with simple phrases to remind you of what you want to talk about.

2. Note cards

You can use a sentence or phrase structure for your note cards as well. Remember to number the cards and to include only one to three ideas on each card.

EXAMPLE

Sentence Outline

- King Tut: Was He Murdered?
- I. King Tut’s death is a 3,300-year-old mystery
    - A. What happened that a pharaoh died so young?
    - B. Why would anyone go to the trouble of erasing his name from all records?
    - C. We’ll examine the evidence to determine if his death was an accident or murder.

Phrase Outline

- King Tut: Was He Murdered?
- I. Death a 3,300-year-old mystery
    - A. Died young—why?
    - B. Name erased from records—why?
    - C. Examine evidence: accident or murder?

EXAMPLE

Sentence note card

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Who was King Tut?  | 1 |
| He reigned in ancient Egypt from 1333 to 1323 BC.                              |   |
| He took the throne after the death of Akhenaton, who may have been his father. |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |

Phrase note card

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| King Tut biography                               | 2 |
| Reigned: 1333–23 BC                              |   |
| Pharaoh after death of Akhenaton—father of Tut?? |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |

A **sentence structure** is helpful when you feel insecure about giving a talk. If you lose your train of thought, you can always look at the sentences and pick up your thoughts more easily. A **phrase structure** is good when you know a topic well and need only key words or phrases to keep you on track.

## Ready for Research

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### ACTIVITY

Practice writing sentence or phrase note cards for the oral presentation of your topic. Use your outline as a guide and remember to number your cards. As you develop your note cards, think about the following questions:

What important idea, question, or fact might make a good opening to catch your listeners' attention? What are the main facts you want them to know? What conclusions can you draw or what ideas about your topic do you want people to remember the most?







## Ready for Research

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### Guidelines for giving a speech

Preparation is key to a good talk. These guidelines will help you prepare for your presentation.

- Focus on what you like about your topic. The more interested you are in what you have to say, the more interested your audience is likely to be.
- Think about any visuals you might want to use and prepare them ahead of time. Make sure they are large enough and clear enough for your audience to see.
- Practice your talk with friends or family members before you give it. Make sure your talk fits the required time—not too long and not too short.
- Get feedback on your practice talk to make sure you speak loudly and clearly enough and avoid distracting habits, such as tugging at your hair, saying “um” or “ah” or “you know” between sentences, or failing to make eye contact.
- Think about what equipment you will need for your talk, such as a computer, screen, monitor or screen, whiteboard, microphone, podium, or visual and audio aids. Arrange with your teacher to have these things available on the day you give your presentation.
- Dress comfortably and avoid wearing anything that will distract your audience, such as noisy bracelets.

### Manage your fear

You may be fully prepared and still terrified of speaking in front of others. If so, you're in good company.

Early in his career the British World War II leader Winston Churchill memorized a speech he was to give as a member of Parliament. He was so nervous that when he stood up, his mind went completely blank. Red-faced, he sat down again without uttering a word. The famous Indian civil rights leader, Mahatma Gandhi, had an even worse start. As a young lawyer, he froze during his first case before a judge and ran from the courtroom in humiliation. Eventually, both men overcame their fear and went on to become powerful public speakers.

The secret to managing your fear of public speaking lies in a simple fact:

**It is impossible to be physically relaxed and emotionally terrified at the same time.**

Before giving a speech you can relax yourself in three ways:

- **Breathe**—When you're frightened, you breathe more rapidly and shallowly. To begin to relax, take deeper, slower breaths. This signals your body that you are not in a life-threatening situation.
- **Move**—Your body produces adrenaline when under serious stress. To burn up the adrenaline, walk around or do exercises. While you are waiting in class to give your presentation, deliberately tense and then relax your legs, arms, and hands. Give your body something to do that helps calm you down.
- **Get support**—You want to feel supported when you're in front of the class. You may ask to have a podium or lectern to stand behind. Adjust the microphone, podium, or other aid so you are comfortable. Arrange with friends in class to make eye contact before and during your speech so you feel friendly support.

The idea is to reduce your fear to a manageable level. By breathing more deeply, moving your body in some way, and getting emotional support, you might even enjoy your public-speaking experience. You can write *breathe*, *move*, *get support* on your outline or note cards to remind you of these techniques.

Multimedia/Creative Presentation

In a multimedia or creative presentation, your talk will be given with any number of aids such as video, graphics, artwork, PowerPoint shows, music, voice recordings, and live performers to express and explain your topic.

For instance, your project may be the biography of an American author. If you chose Maya Angelou, you might include information about her plays and maybe show video excerpts of one of her plays from the Internet. If you are working with a small group, you might do a group reading of an author’s work, such as Langston Hughes’s poems, or act out scenes from the short stories of an author such as Sandra Cisneros or Jack London.

Organizing the presentation

As in an oral presentation, you can organize your talk using an outline or note cards. You will also need to organize the order in which you will show your graphics, videos, or performances. Think about the best places to use your multimedia or creative work. You want to give your audience enough information about your topic so they will understand what you are showing them.

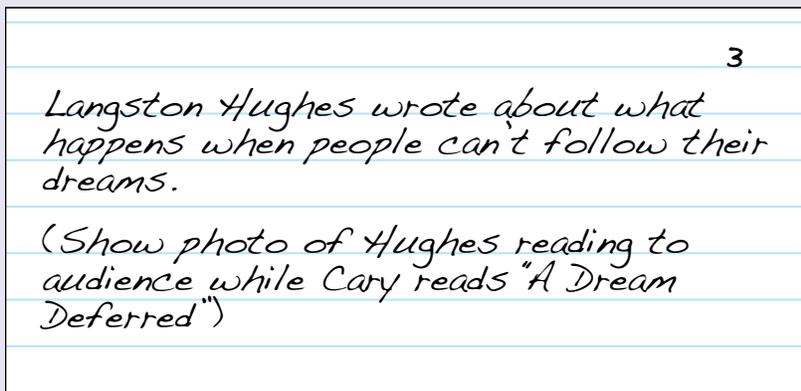
Once you have the order of your presentation, you can indicate on the outline or in the note cards where to show your visuals or when to start a performance.

EXAMPLE

Outline

- I. Introduction to Langston Hughes (show picture of Hughes as an adult)
  - A. One of America’s most important writers
  - B. Born in Joplin, Missouri, in 1902 (show pictures of the city of Joplin at that time and a picture of Hughes as a baby)
  - C. Raised in Midwestern towns (have a partner read mother’s letter about Hughes as a child)

Note card



### Tips for giving the presentation

A multimedia or creative project is likely to require more equipment and have more pieces to it than an oral presentation. The following guidelines can help you prepare in advance for your classroom presentation.

- Organize your talk so the information you present, such as for a biography, is in the correct order.
- Make sure all your visuals, videos, or performances support your talk and don't distract the audience or spend too much time on unimportant details.
- Make sure visuals, artwork, slides, or other aids are large enough for the entire class to see. If needed, put captions on pictures, charts, or artwork.
- Make sure any special equipment you need—computer, projector, screen, microphone, CD or DVD player, etc.—will be available the day of your talk.
- Practice using the equipment to be sure you know how to work it. If you need help, make sure you arrange for assistance ahead of time.
- Check ahead of time with your teacher to make sure there is enough room for your presentation in class.

### Suggestions for future projects

New technologies and new connections among people via the Internet offer new possibilities for research projects in the future. Some possible projects with which you might be involved include:

- Shared presentations on a topic with other with students from other countries via Skype, videoconferencing, or smartphone.
- Real-time connections for presentations with science projects around the world, such as volcano watching, Mars rovers, satellite viewing of cities at different times of the day or year, or skywatching.
- Using robotics, 3-D printing, artistic and music programming, and other inventions in a presentation.
- Mixing live and remote video performances so that students at different locations can all be involved in reading or performing a play, poetry, or other creative work.
- Linking laptops or smartphones so everyone in class can be involved in creating part of a presentation—a kind of “crowd creating.”

The possibilities for the future are increasing everyday—imagine what you might create!