



# Group Projects and Presentations

Following these steps with your group members can help you create an ordered, well-thought out final presentation and make the group work itself less stressful.

## Step #1: Orientation

Group members need to learn who everyone is - exchange names, phone numbers, emails, etc. and keep a record of this information.

Discuss what the group is expected to do. Don't assume that the requirements of the group project are clear to everyone. More often than not, people are not always sure about what the group is expected to do.

## Step #2: Division of Labor

Divide the project up into a series of smaller steps or parts. Put the parts of the project into a time sequence. In what order must each step or part of the project be done?

Agree on a timetable - when each part must be finished.

Agree on who is responsible for each part of the project, and agree on what each person must produce for their part. Be specific - everyone in the group must agree to turn in something tangible at a stated time.

Agree on a schedule of meetings. Most groups think all they need to do is divide up the work, meet five minutes before the presentation, and "whip it together." You can do it this way, but the approach rarely works!

Agree about what to do if people in the group "get behind" and won't be able to meet a deadline.

## Step #3: Assessment

Use some of your group meetings to review what members have accomplished up to that point.

Have group members provide feedback about each other's work. Is the material provided by the member what the group needs? Is something missing? What else needs to be done?

Set new expectations and deadlines as appropriate. Groups usually discover as the project moves along that the original timetable and division of group member responsibilities needs to be modified. Take the time to do that so that the work doesn't all pile up at the end.

Pay attention to possible gaps in the group's work. Are there important topics or tasks that the group is overlooking?

## **Step #4: Presentation Planning**

Once the research on the project is fairly far along, the group needs to turn its attention to the question of *how* to orally present the material the group gathered. Many groups make the mistake of wanting to talk about the plan for the presentation too soon. Wait until the group has a pretty good idea of what they'll be talking about.

- Decide on a specific presentation topic or thesis.
- Determine who will serve as the presentation moderator.
- Decide on audio and/or visual aids for the presentation, and make decisions about any physical arrangements.

**PRACTICE** and work to improve the delivery skills of the group members. Set up an appointment with the Speaking Center to practice together and receive constructive feedback, tips, and advice.

## **Step #5: The Presentation**

The moderator or primary speaker should begin with an overview of the presentation.

Smooth transitions from speaker to speaker are key.

Each speaker within the group should preview his or her own portion of the presentation.

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If you want more information, check out the following  
UMW Speaking Center Handouts:

[Group Projects and Presentations](#)  
[Group Communication Roles](#)