
THE REGIONAL STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION:

Possible Wise Advice for Preparing Your
Paper and Presentation

Remember, this is a paper competition

- It is not life or death, but
- In your paper and your presentation, you want to do the best you can, so
- Here are a few hints from previous paper judges

Basic Hints:

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- Just try to bring out the key point or points

Check very carefully to be
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- It is very easy to get wrapped up in what you are trying to present, and forget how much content; i.e., how many total words you are putting on a single slide. If there is too much content, your audience will not have time to read the entire slide while trying to concentrate on what you are saying, verbally. You don't want to do that. Instead, it may very well be better to try to do a summary slide where you take the content of the slide you deem to be the most pertinent and present it in larger type on a separate slide. That is, if necessary, make a slide that has the pertinent content in larger, more readable type than the entire slide.

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- if necessary, make a supporting slide that has the pertinent content in larger, more readable type than used for the entire slide.

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- The audience can read. Your time can be better spent by paraphrasing or verbal augmentation of the slide's verbiage

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- **The reader of the printed paper, and the reader of the presentation's slides, should be able to see and read the content without struggling.**

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 - The audience cannot possibly scan the whole page and pick out the important results while you are talking

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- **The rules say one speaker per paper**

- **Don't switch back and forth between speakers.**

Selecting your speaker is no place for egos

- You want to win
- Select your speaker for content expertise and presentation skill.

In speaker selection, don't agonize over fairness

- Each author will be recognized on the title slide, and the presenter can acknowledge all authors briefly, if need be.
- Select the best presenter and go with it.

Read the directions and rules very carefully and comply with them.


- It is unwise to assume your content is so good the judges will bypass the rules for you.
 - If the rule says “20 pages, max., including all figures,” make your paper a maximum of 20 pages, including figures.

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 - If the rule says “Title and Table of Content Pages,” have a title page and table of contents page.

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- It is unwise to assume your content is so good the judges will bypass the rules for you.
 - If the rule says “20 pages, max., including all figures,” make it a maximum of 20 pages, including figures.
 - If the rule says “Title and Table of Content Pages,” have a title page and table of contents page.
- **Don't put the judges in the position of having to make a judgment call on an exception to the rules.**



Use foreground and background colors that work, and won't make the reader go snow blind.

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- Don't assume if it is readable on your computer, it will be equally readable on the presentation computer.

If at all possible, do a quick run-through,

In the room in which you will present,

Using the equipment that will be used in the competition

Do

- Act as if you are at the competition because you want to be, and not because of threat of death

Do

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- A smile or two wouldn't hurt

Do

- Check the time limit in advance, and practice the content you can put in that time limit

Do

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- Speak at your normal conversational speed, rather than speeding up to get in more content

As your last act before submission or presentation,

- Do a spell check, and
- Do a grammar check
 - Often, your last minute change will introduce one or more errors
 - Errors will literally jump out at a judge reading the content for the first time

As your next-to-last act before presentation or submission

- Have someone unfamiliar with the content read it for flow, continuity, and strange wording
 - When we write something, the more we read it, the more correct it gets (in our mind); i.e., we lose all objectivity

Have someone do a basic check of your math

- Sometimes in the heat of battle, or at the last minute, we inadvertently use some really bad calculations.
 - Again, this is something that will leap out at a person reading your paper or slide for the first time.

Check your placement of explanation of terms and acronyms

- If you use terms and/or acronyms that may be unfamiliar to some of the reading and viewing audience, be careful to explain them at their **first** appearance
 - Readers/ viewers lose their concentration if they have to look for definitions

Check to be sure you have given proper credit to your sources

- If you use anyone's ideas, thoughts, or words, give the proper citation
 - In the paper, give the full citation according to the rules
 - In the presentation, include at least the author's surname and the date

Check to be sure you have given proper credit to sources

- **If you use anyone's ideas, thoughts, or words, give the proper citation**
- **As your career moves forward, you will expect no less for your publications**

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- Be sure your title matches your paper's content
 - Be sure your title is in sync with your **Conclusions**

- Be sure the content of your paper supports your conclusions

- The CONCLUSIONS section is no place to plow new ground not mentioned before in the paper.

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 - The CONCLUSIONS section is no place to plow new ground not mentioned before in the paper.
 - If, by chance, you had to cut content to adhere to the length rule, be sure the remaining content supports your conclusions.

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- Don't select a new slide design at the last minute, apply it, then assume everything will fit just as it did in the previous design.

- **It won't !**

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- Don't select a new slide design at the last minute, apply it, then assume everything will fit just as it did in the previous design.
 - **ALWAYS** do a quick visual run-through of your slides with the new design to be sure they fit.

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- If you make an error, the alligator pit will not open up.
- Acknowledge it, correct it, and go about your business.
- The audience is for you, not against you.
 - Most would rather die than speak in front of a group.

ALWAYS Wise Advice:

- **Read the directions (rules)**
- **If something seems unclear, ask!**
- **Don't get booted because you made an assumption**

Finally, ENJOY !

- You are going to be presenting material orally to groups on the job for the rest of your working life.
- This is excellent practice