

# Tips for Engaging, Effective Talks

People learn best when they are **invested** in the topic, **stimulated** by discussion, and **reflect and apply** information. Here are a few tips to accomplish that in a 60-minute talk!

- **Be realistic**
  - Plan 3-5 take-homes to improve retention
  - Leave 5-10 minutes for questions at end
- **Polish your presentation style**
  - Make eye contact with audience members
  - Authentic, conversational . . . and comfortably paced!
  - Make case-based when feasible
  - Repeat key points at least 3 times
- **Make your slides shine**
  - Use bullet points; avoid paragraphs
  - Combine interesting/informative graphics and words
  - Repeat key points at least 3 times
  - Avoid hard-to-read fonts, colors (like red)
- **Start strong**
  - Pose a question or problem that emphasizes relevance of topic
- **Level the playing field**
  - Consider assessing prior knowledge
  - Briefly review background – tailor to your audience
- **Create a back-and-forth, conversational atmosphere**
  - Make space for questions, discussion or application during talk
  - Invite chances to disagree, to contribute to overall learning
- **Repeat key points at least 3 times**
- **Check for understanding**
  - Elicit audience response using electronic system (e.g., Capterra, Slido, Mentimeter, Poll Everywhere) or thumbs up/thumbs down
- **End with application of knowledge**, like a quiz question



Compiled by Heather Laird-Fick, MD, MPH, Professor of Medicine



College of Human Medicine  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)