

Presentation Skills — Workbook

This workbook is your hands-on companion to the Presentation Skills course. Complete each section immediately after the corresponding module to lock in the frameworks before your next live presentation. Every exercise is designed to produce a reusable artifact — an audience map, a slide draft, or a feedback log — not just a reflection.

Audience, Purpose, and Story Architecture

Map your audience, structure your recommendation using the Minto Pyramid, and draft the opening hook and three-act arc for a real upcoming presentation.

Exercise: Audience Audit for Your Next Presentation

Choose a real presentation you will deliver in the next 30 days. Answer each prompt below for the primary decision-maker in the room. If you have multiple stakeholders, complete a separate set for each with authority to say yes or no.

- Who is the primary decision-maker and what is their role? What do they already know about this topic and what will be new to them?

- What specific decision or action do you need from them by the end of the presentation? State it as a single verb-led sentence.

- What is their most likely objection or hesitation? What evidence would directly address it?

- Which stakeholders have secondary influence? What one piece of content would you add to an appendix to satisfy their needs without bloating the main deck?

Worksheet: Minto Pyramid Planner

Fill in each row to build the SCQA backbone of your presentation. Complete this before opening PowerPoint or Keynote. Your Recommendation row becomes slide 1 or 2.

Situation (what we both agree is true — 1 sentence, 15 words max)

Complication (the problem, change, or tension that makes action necessary — 1 sentence)

Question (what the audience is now implicitly asking)

Recommendation / Answer (your direct response — the opening of your deck)

Key Line 1 (first supporting argument as a complete sentence)

Key Line 2 (second supporting argument as a complete sentence)

Key Line 3 (third supporting argument as a complete sentence)

Primary evidence under Key Line 1 (data point or example)

Primary evidence under Key Line 2 (data point or example)

Primary evidence under Key Line 3 (data point or example)

Checklist: Opening Hook Quality Check

- The opening does NOT start with an agenda slide, a company history slide, or 'Thank you for having me'
- The hook is one of: provocative statistic (with source), brief customer story (under 60 seconds), rhetorical question, or contrast statement
- The hook is directly connected to the audience's specific context, not a generic industry fact
- The Act 1 current reality is established within the first 2 minutes
- The gap between 'world as it is' and 'world as it could be' is named explicitly before slide 5
- The closing slide lands in Act 3 (future state), not a restatement of the problem

Slide Design Principles

Convert an existing slide deck (or build a new one) using Assertion-Evidence structure, correct chart selection, and the 60-30-10 color rule.

Exercise: Bullet Slide Conversion Sprint

Choose 5 slides from an existing presentation that currently use a noun-phrase title and bullet points. For each slide, follow the 4-step Assertion-Evidence conversion below and note what you changed.

- Slide 1: Write the original noun-phrase title, then rewrite it as a complete declarative assertion sentence (10 words or fewer). What visual replaces the bullets?
- Slide 2 and 3: Repeat the same conversion. For each, note whether the body visual is a chart, diagram, table, or photograph — and confirm it directly proves the assertion sentence.
- Slide 4 and 5: After converting, apply the 3-second test with a colleague. What did they take away after 3 seconds? Does it match your assertion? If not, what needs to change?

Worksheet: Chart Selection Log

For each data-heavy slide in your presentation, complete this log before designing the visual. Reference Abela's Chart Chooser (Comparison / Composition / Distribution / Relationship) to select the chart type. Slide number and assertion sentence

Data relationship type (Comparison / Composition / Distribution / Relationship)

Chart type selected and reason

Highlighted element (which bar, line, or data point gets the accent color)

Text callout (3–5 words placed directly on the highlighted element)

Chartjunk removed (list: 3-D effects / legend / gridlines / background fill / excess decimal places)

Checklist: Slide Design Quality Checklist

- Every slide title is a complete declarative sentence stating the main point
- Slide body contains one visual (chart, diagram, table, or photo) — no bullet lists in the body
- Three-color rule applied: one neutral background, one secondary structural color, one accent
- Accent color appears on exactly one element per slide
- Font hierarchy maintained: title 28–36 pt bold, labels 14–18 pt, sources 10–12 pt muted
- All elements aligned to a grid — no manually eyeballed positioning
- All 3-D chart effects removed
- Slide passes the 3-second test (verified with at least one colleague for key slides)
- Appendix slides are clearly labeled and linked from the relevant main slide

Delivery: Voice, Body, and Room Dynamics

Run structured delivery rehearsals using the read-aloud test, zone-coverage drill, and the setup protocol before a live presentation.

Exercise: Filler Word Reduction Drill

Record yourself delivering the first 2 minutes of your current presentation. Play it back and complete the log below. Repeat this exercise once per week for 4 weeks, tracking the filler count each time.

- Week 1: Count total filler words (um, uh, so, like, you know) in the 2-minute recording. Write the count and the top 2 filler types you used most. Mark the exact timestamps where each filler occurred.
- Week 2: Rehearse the same 2 minutes replacing every filler with a closed-mouth 2-second pause. Record again and log the new filler count. What is the percentage reduction?
- Week 3 and 4: Continue the drill. At what filler count per minute does the delivery feel natural? Note any new substitution habits forming (e.g., trailing sentence particles like 'right?' replacing 'um').

Worksheet: Eye-Contact Zone Coverage Map

Draw or label the seating layout for your next presentation room. Divide the room into 5 zones (front-left, front-right, center, back-left, back-right). During one rehearsal, have an observer tally which zone receives each gaze shift. Fill in the coverage log after.

Room type (boardroom table / theatre rows / classroom / conference stage)

Estimated audience size

Zone coverage count: Front-Left

Zone coverage count: Front-Right

Zone coverage count: Center

Zone coverage count: Back-Left

Zone coverage count: Back-Right

Underrepresented zone(s) identified

Adjustment plan for next rehearsal

Checklist: 15-Minute Pre-Presentation Setup Checklist

- Arrived at least 15 minutes before first audience member
- Advanced through every slide to confirm fonts, images, and video embeds load on the venue display
- Tested clicker: forward, back, and black-screen (B key) buttons confirmed working
- Presenter view active on laptop — notes and next-slide preview visible
- Room lighting checked — ambient lights behind screen dimmed if possible
- Microphone volume control location identified and confirmed working
- 5 printed handout copies available as backup
- Water glass or bottle placed within reach but off-camera if recording
- Phone set to Do Not Disturb and positioned out of sight

Q&A, Feedback, and Continuous Improvement

Practice PREP-structured answers, design your post-presentation feedback card, and set up the 90-day deliberate practice cycle.

Exercise: PREP Answer Rehearsal

Anticipate 5 questions you are likely to receive during the Q&A of your upcoming presentation, including at least one hostile or skeptical question. Draft a PREP response for each below, then time yourself delivering each one — target 30–45 seconds per answer.

- Write the anticipated question. Draft the Point sentence (your answer in 1 sentence, stated immediately). Draft the Reason (primary reason your point is correct — 1 sentence). Draft the Example (specific data point, case, or illustration). Restate the Point in slightly different words.

• Repeat for 2 more anticipated questions. For the skeptical question, add a 'Bridge' phrase you would use if the question takes the conversation off your main message.

- Record yourself delivering all 5 PREP responses in sequence. Where did you exceed 45 seconds? What did you cut to bring it back to time?

Worksheet: Post-Presentation Feedback Tracker

After each presentation, collect responses to your 3-question feedback card and log the patterns below. Complete one row per presentation over the next 60 days.

Presentation date and audience

Response count (number of feedback cards returned)

Most common 'clearest point' answer (what message actually landed)

Most common 'attention dip' moment identified (slide number or segment)

Most common single-change suggestion

One specific delivery change you will make before the next presentation

Trusted observer name (if applicable) and their top observation

Checklist: 90-Day Practice Cycle Setup

- Identified the one vocal skill to target in Days 1–30 (filler reduction / pace control / pitch variation — pick one)
- Identified the one visual skill to target in Days 31–60 (eye contact zones / posture baseline / purposeful movement — pick one)
- Identified the one structural skill to target in Days 61–90 (Assertion-Evidence conversion / opening hook / PREP Q&A — pick one)
- Scheduled 30-minute weekly practice sessions in calendar for the next 90 days
- Identified a trusted observer for at least 2 of the next 5 presentations
- Set up feedback card distribution method (printed cards or digital form link)
- Located a local Toastmasters chapter or structured speaking group to join within 30 days
- Submitted or scheduled submission of one conference or meetup talk proposal within the 90-day window

Your Action Plan

1. Complete the Audience Audit worksheet for your next real presentation before opening any slide software
2. Build the Minto Pyramid planner for that presentation — write the SCQA and Key Lines before designing a single slide
3. Convert every bullet slide in your current deck to Assertion-Evidence format using the 4-step process
4. Run the filler word drill on a 2-minute recording this week and log your baseline count
5. Conduct a 15-minute full-standing rehearsal with your slides running, record it, and review only the first 2 minutes
6. Distribute the 3-question feedback card immediately after your next live presentation
7. Complete the Zone Coverage Map drill with an observer before a high-stakes presentation
8. Draft PREP responses for the 5 most likely Q&A questions and rehearse them out loud to a timer
9. Set your 90-day target skill sequence and block weekly 30-minute practice sessions in your calendar
10. Join a Toastmasters chapter or structured speaking group within 30 days for weekly feedback reps

