

Marking of oral presentations and written reports

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I consider four aspects in my marking.

Oral presentation

- **Meets the specification**
Did the speaker succeed according to his/her presentation plan, presenting the main points in a way that is understandable to an audience with the assumed background?
- **Clear organization; length**
Is the talk clearly organized, with a good flow of topics? Length should be in the range 25-30 minutes, leaving time for questions afterward. Meeting this target length indicates adequate rehearsal of the presentation and appropriate planning for how much to attempt to present.
- **Presents a substantial amount of information**
Should make good use of the limited presentation time to convey a substantial amount of information in a way that is understandable for this audience. (The audience cannot understand details in complicated tables and equations. If the presentation is interesting and engaging, then motivated audience members can look up details in papers afterwards.) Well-chosen images are a big help in conveying information in an effective and memorable way in an oral presentation. Ideally, information is presented in a way that is (a) understandable at a general level by all audience members even if they have occasional attention lapses, and (b) interesting and informative for highly attentive audience members who already have background in the topic you are presenting. For example, it is ok to present a few equations that are directed at the subset of students who have background in the area, as long as the speaker is not relying on all audience members being able to understand those equations.
- **Style and effectiveness**
Is the presentation enjoyable to listen to? Did the speaker draw in and engage the audience, do he/she make them want to learn about the topic?

Written report

- **Meets the specification**
Does the report succeed according to the presentation plan, presenting the main points in a way that is understandable to a reader with the assumed background?
- **Clear organization; length**
Is the division into paragraphs sensible, and does each paragraph have a good topic sentence? The written report should make sense if I read only the first sentence in each paragraph.
- **Presents a substantial amount of information.**
Concise writing style should effectively convey a lot of information within the page limit, doing this in a convincing and engaging way. Ideally, information is presented in a way that is (a) understandable at a general level by any reader even if he/she is skimming instead of reading in detail, and (b) interesting and informative for a reader who already knows something about the topic.
- **Style and effectiveness**
Is the report enjoyable to read? (If you were to write the first few pages of your thesis like this, would I be looking forward to reading the rest of the thesis?)
Is the writing style appropriate, conveying information in a formal and precise way?
Is the report in the required format: 2-4 pages of text (not counting figures and references) that succinctly present the main points. Optionally, an appendix can be used present extra information, but my marking is mainly based on the 2-4 pages. The text should be easy to read without eye strain; I suggest using 12 point font and at least 15 point line spacing.

Informal description of marks

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| 70 | The lowest passing mark. Significant problems/weaknesses in several aspects of the work. |
| 75 | A good solid effort, but there is a significant problem/weakness in some aspect of the work. |
| 80 | Meets expectations. This is the default mark: I look for evidence to go lower or higher. |
| 85 | Well done, exceeds expectations in some way. |
| 90 | Impressive level of achievement, exceeds expectations in several ways. |
| 95 | <i>Very</i> impressive level of achievement. Almost perfect. Hard to suggest ways to improve. |
| 100 | Totally fantastic. Cannot suggest ways to improve. |