This guide is designed to remind you of some basic skills to enhance your presentation to the class. It is not concerned about preparation of the content of your presentation, which obviously should be well researched, introduced succinctly, organized logically, with clear transitions and conclusions.

You must be audible: **If the class can’t hear you, you have wasted everyone’s time.** When you practice, have a group member listen to you in a large room and have that person alert you if you cannot be heard easily.

**Make eye contact, or the semblance of it:** When you rehearse your presentation, practice scanning the room, even if you are looking just over the heads of the audience, or at people’s eyebrows. Take the whole room in.

The norm at Stern tends to be that presenters use PowerPoint slides as their notes. That’s OK as long as you **don’t turn your back on the audience**. To deal with this potential problem, some people use note cards to keep them facing front, on track, and as a back up in case of technology failure.

**Do not read your presentation.** Reading is the best way to lose your audience. Speak naturally so that you don’t sound as if you have memorized your talk.

**Many of us speak too fast.** If you are one of them, build into your presentation pauses and reminders to speak more slowly. Some people find it helpful to include in selected parts in their notes big red marks saying “BREATHE!” or “PAUSE” or “SCAN AUDIENCE” or “SLOW DOWN.”

**If English is not your first language** and you are worried people will have difficulty understanding you, or **if you speak with a strong American regionalism, speak more slowly and deliberately distinctly at the beginning** of your presentation to allow the audience get used to your speech patterns.

**Time yourself.** Cut appropriately. Include the crucial information. Save the interesting but non-crucial material for the question and answer period if you have extra time.

**Plant yourself:** Many people have trouble standing still when they give a talk. It helps some people to think of their feet rooted in the ground, as if they could not move. It gives them strength and keeps them literally more grounded. For some people, the choice of shoes is important as well.
Since you are presenting in a group format, try to **present a united front** when you make your presentation. For example, using “we” instead of “I” makes it sound as if you worked together. Showing that you are listening when others talk is good, too.

**Practice**, preferably in front of other people who can give you honest and useful feedback.

**Finally, try to enjoy yourself.**

_This guide was prepared by Stephanie Nickerson, an NYU teaching consultant who has worked extensively with Stern faculty and students._