Physics 1 Oral Presentations

In the past, I had Physics 1 students do both written papers and presentations. You have done enough papers in your life, and you will do many more. You undoubtedly need to polish your presentation skills. Thus, this year you need only make an oral presentation to the class.

Physics 1 oral presentations will begin near the end of November. Each of you will make a 5-10 minute presentation to the class using Power Point or Corel Presentations on any topic of interest to you, although a Physics-related topic would be “nice.” Naturally, you will use the computer skills you are practicing this semester to make it “look good; i.e., professional. Your presentation should be attractively-formatted, with appropriate use of fonts, along with tables, graphics, and references. The best way to see what constitutes an acceptable presentation is to review the presentations submitted by past Physics 1 students.

There are typically 10 students in our class, so 10 minutes per presentation uses all of the 100 minutes of the two class periods available. “Overhead” (moving from your seat to the front of the room, questions and answers) will easily consume any extra time of the time.

Ten minutes is not a lot of time! You will feel like you barely have time to blink. (If your presentation is boring, your fellow students will insist that it lasted for hours.) Your biggest challenge will be to tell an interesting story in ten minutes. This is excellent practice for the future, when you will be given 8 minutes at an American Physical Society meeting to convince your peers that your research is the most interesting ever and that you are the most brilliant physicist ever.

A good rule of thumb is to plan on a minute per “slide.” Much more than that and your audience will get lost; much fewer runs the risk of boring them. You may have already explored the use of Powerpoint to create a graphic. I will be glad to offer assistance with your presentation.

Electronic copies of your presentation will available on the Web for future Physics 1 students to enjoy.

On the next page are some actual term paper titles from past years.
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- Physics with Legos
- There’s Nothing Like a Good Cosmology
- Rush
- The Development of Atomic Weapons as an Example of Physics Problem Solving
- Butterflies and Snowmen
- Ion-Atom Collisions
- Ending with a Singularity
- Theory of Insanity
- Lasers
- The African Elephant and its Representation of Physics
- The Utility of Conductivity Paper in Potential Experiments
- Lissajous Patterns and You!
- Fuel Cells: The Future
- Kaine’s Theorem
- Battles of Religion
- Baja California
- Santa Claus: Examination of Claims of Existence
- Genetic Engineering: When Fiction Becomes Reality
- An Argument for the Addition of Duct Tape Engineering as a Major at UMR
- Computer NetGames
- The Midgets
- Truth is Stranger than Science Fiction: Far-Reaching Feats of Theoretical Physics
- Nuclear Energy
- From Chemicals to Cells
- Bose-Einstein Condensate
- What is Dark Matter?
- What the Hell is Wrong With My Monitor?
- Cookies
- All About Oreo Chocolate Sandwich Cookies
- Wider is Better
- The Ultimate Garbage Disposal
- Searching for an Answer
- The King of Chemicals
- Black Holes, Worm Holes, and Time Travel
- Fermilab and CERN: Quantum Competition
- Counter-Terrorist and Hostage Rescue Units
- What Does Physics Do for You?