

Test Your Speaking & Listening Skills

How to Give a Small Group or Individual Presentation (example and notes)

Disclaimer: we at PurlandTraining.com neither endorse nor support the death penalty in any country for any crime. We have used this question as an example to show how it is possible to build an argument when preparing a short presentation. It's a lively subject for a classroom debate because you can almost guarantee that the whole class will have an opinion about it.

Question: Do you think that the death penalty is justified for some crimes?

Introduction: "We agree with the question..."

Short summary of your entire presentation, i.e. your main points with examples, your drawbacks (what critics of your argument would say) and how you would answer your critics.

"We agree with the question because..."

"We will argue that..."

"We will show that..."

"We will discuss..."

Main Point 1: "We want to discourage serious violent crime."

Examples:

1. Terrorism.

2. Serial killers.

Both are examples of serious violent crime for which the threat of the death penalty could be used as a deterrent.

Main Point 2: "It will lead to a reduction in crime, so our streets will be safer."

Examples:

1. Statistical evidence, e.g. from the internet, library, etc.

2. "People have the right to live their lives without the fear of crime." Give examples using "real" people and situations, e.g. a 76 year-old grandmother, a single mum who lives on a council estate, an asylum seeker, etc.

Main Point 3: "It makes economic sense. Less people in prisons = money saved."

Examples:

1. "Tax money can be used for other more constructive things, e.g. schools and hospitals."

2. Statistical evidence, e.g. "More and more money is being wasted on building prisons." Describe how the money could be spent more effectively on other public services.

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Drawback 1: "Some would say that..." e.g. "The state has no moral right to kill."

Your answer to this:

1. e.g. "Judges have wisdom to decide which serious offenders should be killed."
2. e.g. "The state is responsible for protecting its citizens from serious violent crime."
3. e.g. "We have to do *something* about serious violent crime. The reintroduction of the death penalty would send a powerful message to criminals."

Drawback 2: "Others would argue..." e.g. "Prison must rehabilitate as well as punish."

Your answer to this:

1. e.g. "Some serious criminals do not want to change and cannot be rehabilitated..." Show evidence, e.g. statistics showing repeat offender rates, etc.
2. e.g. Briefly restate your main points again: discourage serious violent crime, make streets safer, redistribute tax money more effectively, and so on.

Note: the "drawbacks" section means drawbacks to your argument, i.e. the case against your argument. It should be included to show that you are one step ahead of your opponents in the debate because you have thought about their side of the argument from the outset. However, although in this section you are stating the other side of the argument, you should use this time to expose the weaknesses in their argument and to restate your main points to show that, by comparison, your argument is by far the most sensible one. In fact, your argument is the only rational choice! If both sides do this you should have a really excellent debate!

Conclusion: "We agree with the question..."

Repeat the short summary of your entire presentation that you used for the introduction, i.e. your main points with examples, your drawbacks (what critics of your argument would say) and how you would answer your critics. The deliberate repetition of your main points with examples during the presentation as well as at the end should ensure that your carefully thought out message will be recalled by your opponents in the debate and your audience.

"We agree with the question because..."

"As you have heard..." "We have argued that..." "We have demonstrated that..."

Finish with a memorable quote or statistic that will reinforce your main points.