

WHAT MAKES A GREAT NERD NITE TALK

A great Nerd Nite talk is grounded in this super nerdy, highly engaging, fun and funky approach to learning. A Nerd Nite talk isn't a lecture, a symposium, or a conference preso — it's the slightly tipsy second cousin to those.

A beginning, a middle, and an end. Each of these is key to a good story- and a good Nerd Nite talk. You are basically telling the story of whatever you are nerdy about.

The beginning - This could be a little about how you got interested in your topic. Or maybe a hilarious anecdote about doing research in your field. Or perhaps mind-blowing facts about your area of nerdiness. However you do it, a great Nerd Nite talk starts by orienting the audience to, piquing their interest in your subject, and setting the stage for your talk.

The middle - This is the meat of your talk. The story itself. In the course of 10-15 minutes (leaving room for that beginning and the end) you will engage the audience about your subject. Time will fly. Own your subject, but don't take yourself too seriously. Fill it with quantitative factoids and stats and graphs and such if needed - and add plenty of qualitative stories and sidebars, too. Importantly, everything on screen should matter and be spoken too. Ditch erroneous images/graphics/graphs.

The end - We hate calling time, so design your talk so that we don't have to. A good closing is as important as a good opening. Rather than just summarize what you've said, consider somehow circling back to your opening remarks, or telling another anecdote, or talk about where your research/passion/hobby is taking you next, or pose a question back to the audience. Abrupt endings caused by you reaching the twenty-minute mark are less than optimal.

A narrow focus. Don't generalize, be specific. The mating rituals of the Eastern double-billed tern instead of mating habits of birds. Love and death in Stanley Kubrick's later films instead of Kubrick films generally. A spring trip through the lesser Azores on unicycle rather than the Azores. Or unicycles. *A great Nerd Nite talk serves up a thin slice rather than an entire nerdy pie.*

Practice! A lot or a little, it's up to you. In whatever amount, we know from experience that running through your talk a few times really helps. You'll be more comfortable, the timing will be right, and the audience will appreciate it.

Talk rather than read. If you have notes, it's best to use them as a support to guide you, rather than a script to read from.

Embracing the Nerd Nite concept.

"Learning is more fun when you're drinking with friends and colleagues."

"Like the Discovery Channel, but with beer."

"Be there and be square."

NERD NITE PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

	YES
<p>Is my presentation in 16:9 (widescreen) aspect ratio? <i>(Powerpoint > Design tab > Slide Size > Widescreen)</i></p>	
<p>Does my presentation contain less than 100 words? <i>(if not, consider cutting back. People are there to hear you speak)</i></p>	
<p>Have I used images/charts/graphs to clearly communicate my message? <i>(pro-tip, audiences tend to respond well to memes and/or references to popular culture)</i></p>	
<p>Have I included graphs/charts that enhance understanding and that I'll definitely talk to? <i>(each element on your slide should be addressed)</i></p>	
<p>Have I embedded all videos (rather than relying in WIFI) in the presentation? <i>(there are several sites that can help you with youtube videos, for example, https://y2mate.com. Remember, videos should be short. They came to see you)</i></p>	
<p>Can people read everything on all my slides from the back for the room? <i>(go big!)</i></p>	
<p>Have I integrated audience interaction/questions at some point in the presentation? <i>(people love to feel included. Asking questions or having the audience volunteer information keeps them tuned in)</i></p>	
<p>Have I told a story and communicated to the audience why the topic matters to me?</p>	
<p>Have I practiced? <i>(a quick run-through out loud does amazing things)</i></p>	
<p>Is my talk 18 minutes or under? <i>(remember, talks are scheduled to be no more than 20 minutes)</i></p>	