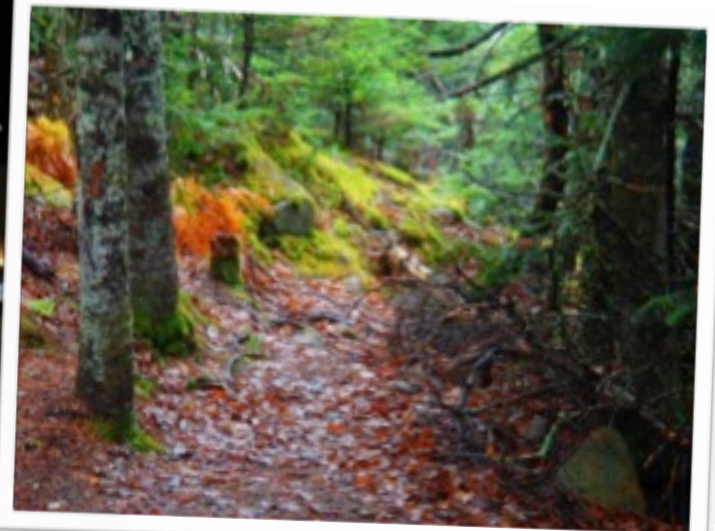




Bringing the
learning *home*

Communication



A *resource* for studying abroad

Australian Learning & Teaching Council

Produced by Greg Downey,
Jan Gothard, & Tonia Gray

2012
Resources



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Communication

Instructions

The resources in this document are intended to accompany the Instructor's Guide provided for the module, Communication. These materials should be easier to photocopy for students to support the re-entry workshop outlined in that guide.

The documents should be distributed prior to the meeting for the workshop.



Resources

Guidelines for blogging

Although your instructor may add other guidelines, we suggest that you consider the following:

Don't blog under your full name. Using your first name is sufficient to be able to refer to your posts later as part of your professional portfolio, while still protecting your privacy to a significant degree. In addition, we strongly encourage students not to reveal personal details. Students will need to inform program administrators of their screen names, however, if credit is being granted for participation on a blog (on a team blog, some students will have given the full name when they registered to join the blog, but it is possible to register without providing all this information in some cases).

Don't blog anyone else's full name. Especially if you are talking about children or people who do not know you are writing about them, even consider using pseudonyms. The use of pseudonyms is accepted practice in social research, and will do nothing to detract from your stories.

Avoid obscenities. Although Australians may be comfortable with colourful language, a student's host culture may not be. An innocuous curse may translate into something much more serious.

Avoid 'text-speak' or SMS abbreviations. Blog writing is formal writing, even though it's conversational, engaging, and – we hope – fun. Texting abbreviations are inappropriate for formal writing. In addition, the audience for a blog post includes, not only people from different generations, but also individuals who may not speak English as a first language. Too many abbreviations or too much slang can exclude members of the potential audience for the post.

Imagine that your grandparents or potential employers are likely to read your posts (which might be accurate). Students shouldn't write anything that they wouldn't want to say during Christmas dinner.

Don't vent on your blog. Blog posts are not a good forum for 'venting' if a student is frustrated or upset. We liken the situation to having a fight with a friend; a person wouldn't want to preserve a tirade online, for everyone to see, archived forever. The same is true for a blog post.

If a student writes something extremely emotionally charged, we strongly recommend to instructors or moderators that they impose a 'cooling off period.' Your instructor may ask you

to wait 24-hours before posting, as once something is posted, it will be quickly cached and unable to delete. If you are writing a post and you think you're getting intense, we suggest that you leave the draft temporarily 'unpublished'; you might be glad later that you had a chance to reconsider. You can 'de-publish' without deleting your post, hanging on to it until you've had more time to think about it. We can't emphasise this enough: publishing online is terribly permanent.

Think carefully before posting identifying photos. Photos pose less of a problem for personal identity, ironically, because they are not able to be searched for online without an accompanying text or tag. However, we would suggest that you get photos for their blog that capture the scene, distinctive elements from the environment, and other aspects of life overseas without necessarily always posing in front of whatever is being photographed.

You're representing 'your people' as well as your host country. Students should also remember to put their best foot forward as they are representing both themselves and their home country. If a visitor came to Australia and did nothing but whinge about Australians, complain that everything wasn't the same as home, or focus only on problems and not the great strengths of the country, their Australian hosts would quite rightly feel that the visitor was being unfair. Students may regret later being ungracious, especially if a temporary frustration gives way to a greater sense of satisfaction and belonging. Again, it's hard to take back things once they're online.

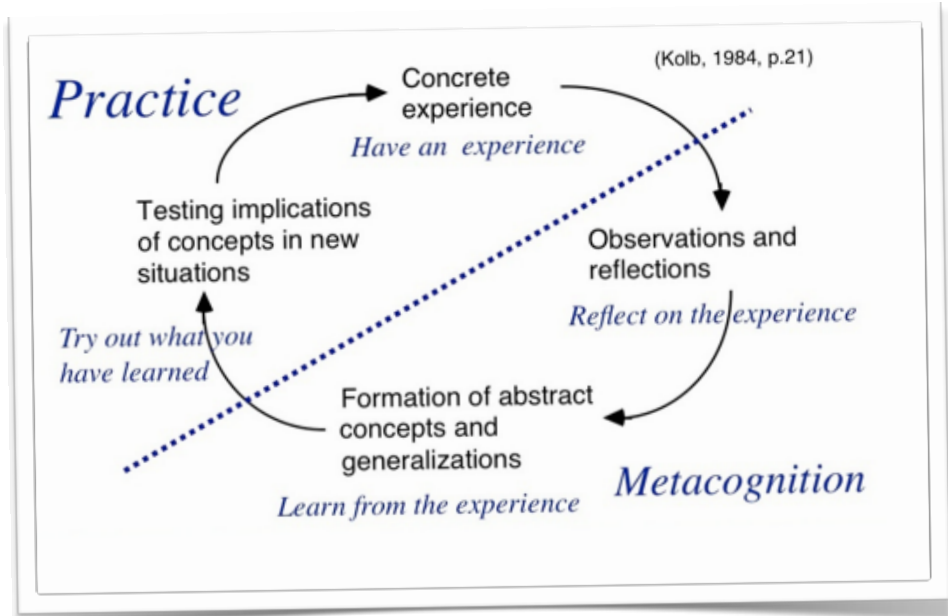


What makes a good blog entry?

Think about Kolb's key tenets of experiential learning when writing a reflective journal entry (see the Reflection module for much more discussion of the cycle of reflection):

Content

In your writing, start with concrete examples and catalogue the things you have done, the people met, the places visited, the new environment. But give details, too – who, what, where, why, when, how ... and in what ways does it compare with alternatives that might seem more familiar back home? That is, serious reflective journaling focuses on details, not just general impressions; on the sources of our opinions, not just our final assessment. What is it specifically about a person or an encounter that seemed odd or exciting or uncomfortable?



Attitudes and feelings

Write about how you are feeling about your new environment, your excitement and anticipation, but also any fears and reservations. Then ask yourself, why am I feeling this way? Our feelings are an important part of our impressions of a place, and by examining them, we might be able to see when feelings are bleeding over from one part of our experience into another or indicative of some deeper issue. For example, frustration or shame with myself for not being able to speak the local language might be stopping me from appreciating other dimensions of daily life. Or I might be getting angry with people because they have very different beliefs about the proper conduct of men and women.

Learning or coping strategies

Write about how you are learning and adapting, about things which perhaps you didn't understand at first, but then came to understand, and the strategies you developed in order to manage. The learning process is part of the adventure, not just your final point of arrival. And write about things you don't 'get', especially as you first arrive. You won't have all the learning strategies worked out when you first touch down, and even after you have been

away for a while, moments or incidents will remind you that you are still a long way from home. Those first impressions, when you see a place with fresh eyes, are valuable and may record details that later become so commonplace to you that you stop seeing them.

Connections and extensions

Think and write about how the experiences you are accumulating might influence your life when you return home. Think about how home looks from a distance. Do you see it any differently now? How are your habits and customs, ways of dressing, news from back home, and other things you brought with you, interpreted by the people you meet? This kind of reverse reflection ('How do I look to the people I meet?') is a good opportunity to think about some of the issues that may have been raised in pre-departure sessions, for example, about how Australians are seen as stereotypes from abroad, how others may misinterpret our forms of communication, and how we can adapt to new contexts.

In general, try to step back from snap judgment and, even though you will inevitably compare home to host countries, try to have understanding for both. Remember, each culture looks completely natural to its own members. If you can see from both sides, you have developed a powerful analytical ability, being able to switch perspectives.

An example: moving from judgment to reflection

With the right kinds of rethinking and re-examination, even a snap judgment or critical point can be transformed into a much deeper reflection. An example from an Australian student in Europe shows critical comparison being used on the student's home culture, how cultural comparison can lead to reverse criticism:

I love not having to wear bike helmets here! Australia is such a nanny state - they really treat us like babies. People here make their own decision and are given credit for taking responsibility for themselves.

Certainly, the student is recognising a cultural difference; but is the judgment the whole story? Is the difference between Australia and some of the more bicycle-friendly urban areas of northern Europe, such as the Netherlands and Denmark, simply that the Australian state is too protective?

A more balanced and careful reflection might come to a different conclusion, realising that a whole context is different, not just one dimension of a situation:

I love not having to wear bike helmets here! But I guess at home, the situation is so different: in Australian cities we don't have the terrific cycle paths they have here, and everyone here seems to be so much more bike conscious. It kind of makes sense that we have to wear helmets in Australia – though I don't miss them.

Reflection questions

If you're having a bit of difficulty getting started blogging, here's a whole range of questions, divided up into the stages of going abroad, that might help you to think about your reflections. There's a lot of questions: don't worry, no one thinks you're going to answer them all. Pick the ones that jump out as you as most relevant to your experience, or try to answer the ones that your instructor highlights.

Pre-departure

- What are you hoping to gain from undertaking study abroad?
- What differences are you expecting to encounter in your host country?
- How do you think you will cope or deal with these differences?
- How prepared do you feel for your sojourn?
- What do you expect to miss most?
- What impact do you think your time abroad might have eventually on your career or future professional choices?

In country

On arrival/first two or three weeks

- What differences have you noticed since your arrival? Consider food, housing, transport, architecture, pace of living; but think also about aspects like smells and taste, climate; clothing.
- Have you faced any particular challenges? Give some examples.
- Have you had to deal with any ambiguous situations, or situations where you felt unsure about how to respond? How did you deal with this ambiguity? What strategies do you find helpful in coping with unfamiliar situations?
- How have these differences affected your understanding of yourself and of this new culture?

Questions for the main part of sojourn

- The experience of 'culture shock' is sometimes seen as a journey from a state of euphoria (the 'honeymoon stage') to a place of uncertainty, as differences become more apparent and one's capacity to cope is more obviously challenged. Ultimately, the process is believed to lead to a renewed state of confidence as one acquires new skills and attains greater competence in the new culture. Does this trajectory fit in with your experiences so far? If so, where would you locate yourself on this path?

If you're having technical problems blogging...

Many basic and advanced tutorials on different dimensions of working on WordPress can be found online, and WordPress does have its own technical support. If you have specialised questions about either Blogger or WordPress, online searching will likely turn up a forum where that question has already been asked.

Video tutorial: WordPress.com - Step-by-Step Tutorial on How to Blog by Chris Abraham of Appliedblogging.com

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEWPnHY8D3E>

100+ WordPress Video Tutorials, from Basic to Advanced at Speckyboy.com, design magazine

<http://speckyboy.com/2008/11/17/100-wordpress-video-tutorials-from-basic-to-advanced/>

WP Apprentice also offers instructional material.

<http://wordpresstraining.com/training-index/>

110+ Massive WordPress Video Tutorial Collection at the blog, 1stwebdesigner.

<http://www.1stwebdesigner.com/tutorials/110-massive-wordpress-video-tutorial-collection/>

- How are you going about communicating with friends and family at home? Are there any issues? How easy is it to communicate your experiences to people at home? Do you feel you are keeping up with what's going on at home? Do you feel you need to?
- If you use Facebook, Skype, email, texting, letter writing, or other types of communication, how much time do you think you spend on this daily? How do you think this impacts on acclimatisation in your host country?
- Did you have a 'bucket list' of things you wanted to do in our host country? How many things have you ticked off? Has it changed since your arrival here and if so why?
- What are you learning about the country you are living in? Do you think you could speak with authority about its politics? Economy? Culture? Society? How does it compare with Australia in these areas?
- Have you had any particular experience which have really brought home to you the fact that you are in a different country? Give some examples and explain what you learned from those moments, and how you coped.
- Do you feel like a foreigner? What is that experience like? Why? What do you think it feels like to be a foreigner in Australia?
- Have your experiences to date caused you to view other people and cultures differently? How?

- Have your experiences to date caused you to think about Australia any differently? How and why?
- Describe some of the local practices that surprised you most at first.
- What events or places have you been to that you would use to tell someone back home what your destination is like, especially how it is different to your home?
- How are similar institutions different to the same institutions back home? For example, how are global franchises (McDonald's, Starbuck's, H&M) different to what you expect? Are any basic institutions – pubs, banks, post offices, trains, student unions, police – different to what you expect?
- Where are locally sold clothes, manufactured goods, food, or other items produced in your host country? What sort of industries seem to dominate the local economy? How do these compare with Australia?
- Why do people do things differently? How do you understand this particular local practice, place, or phenomenon?
- Is the case of cultural difference that you've described part of a pattern? Do you see the same forces or considerations that produce this particular phenomenon causing any other differences?
- What do local people say about the cultural phenomenon when you ask about it?
- Now that you've seen a pattern or verified your interpretation, why do you think this difference might exist? Is there some broader pattern of difference – history, social relations, religion, economic considerations – that might support this difference? Is there some smaller pattern – the school system, how families interact, social life – that the cultural difference either supports or might be caused by?
- Do you feel confident that your explanation is not simply a stereotype but might be accepted by your hosts?

In preparation for re-entry

- How do you feel about going home and why?
- Do you think you have changed? How and why?
- What sort of changes do you anticipate at home, if any?

Re-entry

- Was your return home the way you expected? Had things changed or were they still the same? How and why? How did you feel about those external changes?
- Had you changed or were you still the same? Give examples and explain how you felt about this or dealt with this.
- How have your attitudes to Australia changed, if at all?
- In what ways do you think your time overseas has helped you to understand different cultures and people, both overseas and at home? Give some examples.

- What sorts of skills do you think you have developed while on exchange? Give examples. How do you think these might be relevant to your future professional or career life?

Final questions

- Review your original answer to the question you responded to before you left: 'What are you hoping to gain from undertaking study abroad?' Were you successful in gaining what you hoped to gain? If not, why not?
- What else did you gain that you were not expecting?
- Have you lost anything?

If this is difficult at first, don't worry. Reflective writing is a learned skill; you may not be in the habit of analysing cultural differences or examining the changes that you are going through. There's a lot going on in your lives, we realise.

Your time abroad is an unusual opportunity to reinvent yourself, think about how you normally do things, and decide how you want things to be in the future. For these reasons, reflection and greater analysis of what you observe and do can give you greater control over that transformation and help consolidate any changes. A key principle of experience-based learning is that powerful experiences create opportunities for you to reassess yourself, discover new abilities, and change your view of the world. Reflective writing can be a rewarding part of this process.



Reflecting

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COMMUNICATION

Advice on writing

Improve your writing without sweating the details

We could give you a lot of advice about the techniques of writing, but students' eyes tend to glaze over if we start talking about grammar and overly specific tips. So we suggest the following as very basic ways to improve writing without worrying too much (more on how to write good description follows).

Write quickly. Save your time for rereading and revising your own work. If you exhaust yourself on the first draft or make it an excruciating process, you won't want to revise or write another post. Also, remind yourself that if your fingers are not on the keyboard or the pen in your hand, you're not writing. Don't let the task intimidate you so much that you don't start. Just dive in and start writing. You'll clean it up later. Blog writing can be informal; if you get



something really good, and the feedback is great, you may want to revise a piece and submit it for publication.

Get to the point. Your reader can stop reading at any time, so don't waste their time. Students sometimes think that dramatic writing needs cliffhangers, sentences that don't really tell the reader what they're about but rather postpone, tease and promise that the reader will eventually be told something. Better to simply get to the point and then discuss it.

Use active verbs and real nouns. Run a search for the phrases, 'It is...,' 'There are...' and 'This is...' Get rid of them where possible, replace them with actual subjects (that's a thing) and a real verb (that's an action). Especially get rid of 'It is _____ that...' where the blank is some adjective like 'interesting,' 'crucial,' or 'critical.' The real sentence starts after the word 'that.' Let the reader decide that something is interesting after you tell them something really interesting.

Don't write from a feeling of fear or inadequacy. Don't try to impress the reader. Write from your own sense of excitement, your passions, and interests. Just try to share with the reader what you care about. If you try to impress, you'll use pretentious, stuffy language and overly stiff, complicated structure. Focus instead on what you want to share – like an unforgettable experience while traveling overseas – and on being generous to your readers, giving them the juicy details up front so that they can savour the story.

Edit your own work. For some students, this sounds really difficult. The best way to improve your editing, however, is simply to read what you've written out loud. Most students are not really in the habit of reading carefully what they write; reading out loud forces the writer to hear what the prose sounds like. If writing sounds good when you read it out loud, it's probably well on its way to being better edited.

Challenge yourself to cut your draft down. Most first drafts are wordy. Elegant writing is direct, uncluttered, and economical. Forcing yourself to cut 20% will generally improve your writing as you'll take out repetitions, weaker ideas, and unnecessary details.

Tips for better description:

Because blogging about life overseas will require good description, we have special, additional advice on capturing experiences vividly. The over-arching thrust of our suggestions is to try to get description so that people feel like they have shared a part of the experience rather than just the author's interpretation or feelings about the experience. You don't need to do things that are fake or artificial; for example, writing in the second person, as if the reader actually had the experience ('You go to the subway station...' or 'You see a woman...'), is weird and off-putting. If anything, authors will find that the closer they get to the original experience, the more that they strip away unnecessary elements, the more immediate the description will be.

- **Close your eyes and try to describe the scene to yourself.** Observation and description live from each other, but they are often difficult to do simultaneously.
- **Use all your senses, not just your eyes.** When Ray describes the fur as 'like chocolate' in the description of the Bau Haus in the Cultural Relativism and Analysis Module, he's doing more than telling us it's 'brown.'
- **If you're taking photos, take them of details,** of commonplace objects, of gestures, and of other people, not just yourself, or the landmark scenes you can find on postcards. Think of your photographs as capturing moments, objects, and events, not just posed scenes. Little details that are different between home and the place you are staying will help to convey the texture of everyday life. (See our photo advice below, as well.)
- **Events and actions are often better descriptions than adjectives and adverbs.** Don't tell us a street was 'busy', describe the cars stopping and starting, the drivers grinding their teeth, and the people trying to cross, and we'll get a clear picture. Henry David Thoreau wrote: 'As to adjective: when in doubt, strike it out.' Similarly, for adverbs, instead of say something was 'very,' pick a better and more vivid adjective, and you won't need 'very.' To say that a dog 'needed a saddle in addition to a leash,' is much more evocative than saying it was 'very big.'
- **Description works better when it's sensory rather than evaluative.** Tell us about the deep, almost-ocean blues and gold leaf dulled by generations of candle smoke of the cathedral ceiling, not that it was 'pretty' or 'ornate.' Tell us that your heart pounded when the bulls were let into the arena and that you worried the walls wouldn't hold them, not that it was 'exciting.' NEVER say something is 'interesting,' the least interesting adjective in the English language.
- **Describe things that matter to your stories;** description can bog down the action of a story, if it's tangential. Important details, vivid details, not random details, are crucial.
- **Long words, long phrases, and complicated sentences are seldom better than precise, clear, fast-moving writing.** In description, fight the tendency to get overly

wordy; three sort-of good words are not nearly as good as a single, perfectly-chosen word.

- **Try to tell us *how* you know things, not just *what* you know.** Give us the evidence, not your conclusion. For example, instead of saying someone ‘is nervous,’ describe her fidgeting, her darting eyes, the way she keeps licking her lips or shifting in her seat.
- **Consider your audience.** If you’re writing for your classmates, you can use lolcats or slang. But if you seek to write for a broader audience, consider their expectations. Imagine you are going to read your description to your typical audience member over the phone; most of us know instinctively how to change our language when talking to our mum or grandmother.
- **Write in the past tense if you’re describing events that have happened in the past.** Students sometimes think it’s more exciting to write in the present tense, but it can just get confusing. For the same reason, don’t do something confusing by narrating events that have happened to you using ‘you’ as the subject (the ‘second person’); although it may seem like a good idea, the reader can often find it really distracting and disorienting. Calling yourself ‘I’ (first person) is fine if events happened to you. For example, writing, ‘You were in Venice...’ when the reader may never had been in Venice can be really confusing. It’s okay to say, ‘I was in Venice...’
- **That said, students’ writing can often be excessively focused on themselves.** Give the other characters in your description some lines and actions. Shifting away from how you felt to description of what caused those feelings can make the reader feel much more empathetic to the author. For example, don’t tell us you were angry; tell us all the frustrating events that led up to that point, and we’ll feel angry for you.



Photography in study abroad

Photography can be an art form, so we don't hope to present all that can be said about getting good photos. But some basic advice can help you to take better pictures. The following list is based on our experience with student photo-reflections. Some people seem to get great travel photos, while others, no matter how often they push the button, find themselves dissatisfied with the results. The following tips may help.

1. **Tell stories with your pictures.** Don't just take a photo of the view from the lookout; rather, take photos along the way – the signs indicating the path, the bench you rested on, birds along the trail, smiling people coming down the opposite direction. Think of your photos as being in a sequence to accompany the story of the event. For example, a photo of crowds pouring off buses, another of a festival parade, then close-ups of individuals in costumes, night scenes, and even scenes of discarded masks or exhausted revellers resting on the curbs at the end of the night can pull together a memorable night.
2. **Combine wide shots and close-up shots.** Don't take all your pictures from the same distance. If you're in a particularly rich area, don't be afraid to take a shot of the whole space and then zoom in on some details. You'll give a really rich sense of the place.
3. **Don't always put the focus of the photo in the centre of the photo.** And get closer to the things you want to photo. Although you can crop photos later (especially with digital photos), nothing beats just taking a few steps closer to really get in and get a sense for an object, face, or scene. Photographers talk about 'the rule of thirds': a photo is more dramatic if the key focus is one-third of the way from one of the edges, not in the middle (one-half).
4. **Move around and snap again if you're not sure about a photo.** Take the same object or scene from a slightly different angle, and the light might be better. Don't be afraid to use your feet to get better photos. If you really like a subject, odds are you should take multiple photos, and not just from the same position with everyone in the same pose.
5. **Capture local details,** especially signage, signature objects, graffiti, and other elements of your immediate space. Details, such as the inside of a sleeper car, the colourful packaging on local products, torn posters in unusual scripts, street signs, and other elements of the daily world can really enhance our ability to communicate the texture of everyday life. Don't be afraid to get close-ups, or to photograph objects. There doesn't have to be a face in every photo, nor does it have to be a scenic shot of a landmark.
6. **Get local people in your photos,** not just yourself. Don't be invasive or sneaky, but also don't be afraid to sit in a public space and get a photo of a local man playing with his dog, fans heading for a soccer stadium, street vendors, or other people going about their lives. The human element in photos can invite all kinds of discussion.

7. **Be polite.** Don't take photos when you shouldn't be taking photos. If you feel like you need to be sneaky, don't take the photo. Sometimes a simple hand gesture and questioning face will clarify instantly whether someone will be annoyed if you try to take their picture. Smile when you ask, and even when they say, 'no.'



8. **Don't go (always) for the same we've-seen-them-before shots of you in front of famous places,** or the same group of people standing in front of whatever scene. If you're at a famous place, sure, take the must-have photo, but then turn around and notice what else is happening, what other photos you can take. You may capture a detail that's really powerful, like the expressions on other tourists' faces or the bored guides waiting for work or the vendor with thousands of toy replicas of the landmark. Try to catch people doing what made the day memorable, or their immediate reaction. Better than a shot of your friend standing stiffly in front of the café is the expression on her face as she bites into the pastry for the first time.
9. **If you're going to shoot buildings, don't always take the same shots you can find on postcards at landmarks.** Aim for details: people in these buildings, textures, the way that the light was coming in. You can always buy the postcard, so you don't have to recreate the postcard shot; and your photos, capturing the way a famous place was when you visited it – the wall of buses in front of the museum, the sea of tourists taking photos of the same painting or all standing in front of the temple – will probably be more memorable.
10. **Learn to see visual effects, like colour, symmetry, line, and size.** Some photos capture simply an amazing green of lush foliage, or the symmetry of a reflected mountain in a still lake, or a dramatic slashing line from a fallen tree, or the immensity of a tower, looking up from below.
11. **Take photos of your meals.** Turn off the flash, and, especially if you want to tell someone about something you ate, get a photograph of it, even if it's half eaten. You'll get some dud photos, but you'll also get some brilliant ones.
12. **Get simple gear that you know how to use and won't be afraid to use.** And then wear it out. Even a simple camera in a mobile phone can take images that you will share over and over again. And the more you use it, the more you'll realise what works for you. You don't need a lot of expensive equipment.

Presenting publicly

If you're not accustomed to oral presentations, preparing for them can be stressful. Here's some basic advice that might help you succeed, even if you're nervous about presenting.

Tell a story. Ask us a question. Pose a problem. Get us engaged at the start. Your opening is probably strongest if you give us the story from the start, diving straight in. Don't start with a list of what you will eventually get to: an outline of your presentation is only appropriate for a long talk, and you can do it after you've drawn us in with your opening.

Respect the clock. If you have a time limit, you must obey the time limit. Going over time may annoy your audience, impinge upon another presenter, throw off the schedule, or even get you cut off. Leave the audience wanting more, not hoping you'll soon stop talking.

Don't be too strident or preachy. Although the audience will love your passion, no one wants to be harangued or scolded, so even if your topic is moral, political or passionate, leave some breathing room by keeping your tone calm. Often, we can inspire the most outrage or desire for change, not by yelling at people, but by presenting the facts or images that make us want change, and then letting our audience have its own reaction.

Do not prepare too much material – too many slides, too many pages of text – but do prepare enough. That is, write your presentation or prepare your slides, and then rehearse enough so that you're really comfortable with your presentation. Rehearse out loud so that you have an accurate sense of the time it takes to get through the material. If you can, get someone to listen to you give a run through; they may notice things that you simply cannot perceive.

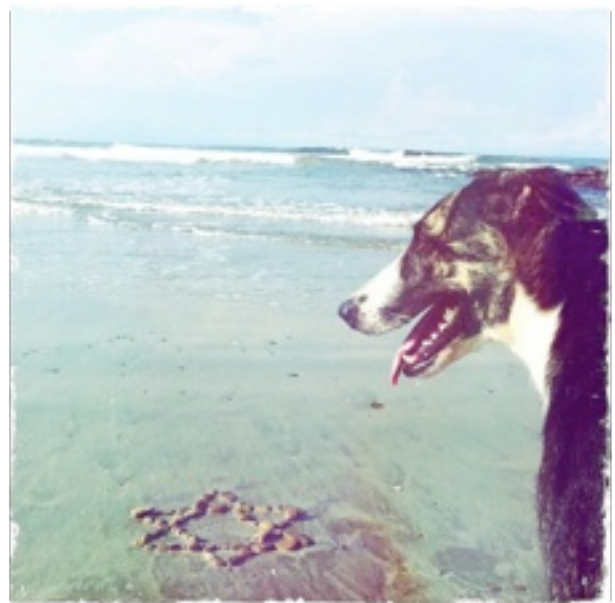
Don't let slides take control of your presentation. Simple slides with your images or a few words work best. Putting your whole script on the slides and then reading them off is dreadfully boring. Some presentation coaches advocate no more than 25 words on a slide; in some cases, even this can be too many.



Don't talk to your slides if you're using them. Talk to your audience. Slides are background or illustration so you don't need to face them and read them. Unless you're really confident that the technology will work, have a back-up plan. If your presentation matters to you, you want to be able to do it no matter what happens to the technology in the room.

Get in the habit of studying people's presentations, including your teachers, officers in clubs, politicians, ministers, and anyone else who presents publicly. What works for them, and what doesn't? Imitate the styles and techniques that you find effective, as long as they feel comfortable, and avoid doing things that annoy you. Surprisingly, many students who complain, for example, about other student presentations being 'too long,' will similarly not respect time limits when given the chance to present.

Finally, remember that **everyone who is a good presenter started out nervous and uncertain**. You'll get better every time you do it. Take a deep breath before you start, be glad that you have an audience for what you want to say, and let them see why you care about what you're saying. Never apologise for some inadequacy you think you have; just do the very best that you can, and the audience will generally appreciate what you've done.



Presenting

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Credits

Cover photos by Zhijia Lai (train station, China) and Bec (Mont Tremblant, Canada), available at <http://tiny.cc/q6kwew>.

Photo of sign in the snow by Luke B; available at <http://tiny.cc/smjgu>.

Photo of ivy-covered building in Germany by Betty; available at <http://tiny.cc/57ywew>.

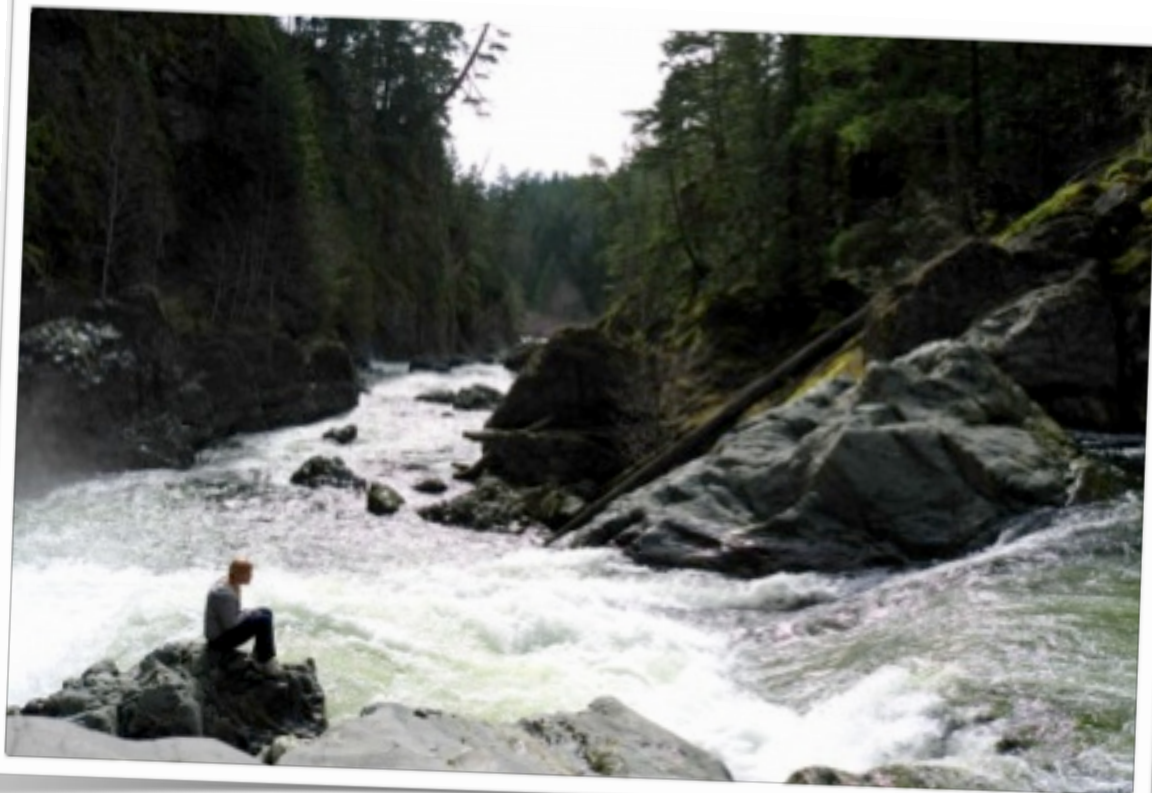
Swimming in Japan by Sarah.

Photo of biking in the snow in Sweden by Steve; available at <http://tiny.cc/k2zwew>.

Photo montages by Sophie W; from images available at <http://tiny.cc/y8lna>.

Photo of white water river in Canada by Lisa; available at <http://tiny.cc/cwzwew>.

Tokyo subway map showing closed train line following earthquake by Sarah.





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