

3 MINUTE THESIS

PRESENTER'S GUIDEBOOK

- BUILD SKILLS.
- PROMOTE YOUR RESEARCH.
- NETWORK.

The 3MT/MT180 is a University-wide competition that challenges graduate students to showcase their leading-edge research to a non-specialist audience in **just three minutes**.

- Your Talk
- Your Slide
- Your Presentation Skills
- Your Reflection
- Video Resources



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MINUTE THESIS

Your talk.

Content

- Less is more! Focus on three key messages at most.
- Separate content into small sections using signposts (e.g., First, And then, Now, On to my next point, in other words, etc.). These help the audience follow along.
- Use short sentences (25 words max).
- Use pauses and chunking (put emphasis on the last content word of a phrase).
 - **E.g.**, "Why would you go to school / when you could stay home / and stay in bed?"
- Use active voice.
 - **E.g.**, "I wanted to find out...; we created a tool to fix..." instead of "a tool was created"
- Avoid jargon and explain key terms in non-specialist language.
- Explain concepts and people important to your research - you may know all about Professor Smith's theories but your audience may not.
- Highlight the outcomes of your research, and the desired outcome.
- Imagine that you are explaining your research to a close friend or fellow student from another field.
- Convey your excitement and enthusiasm for your subject.
- Consider presenting your 3MT as a narrative, with a beginning, middle and end.
- Break your presentation down into smaller sections to make it easier to follow

Structure

1. Introduction

- a. Capture the audience's attention at the start with a hook (e.g. ask a question, tell a story, give a contemporary example).
- b. Introduce yourself briefly after your hook.

2. Body (your research)

- a. Provide context/background of your research.
- b. Keep the messages simple.
- c. Articulate the significance of your research for society.
- d. Use examples that the audience will relate to.

3. Conclusion

- a. Return to your introduction to close your talk.
- b. End on a high note.
- c. Thank the audience!
- d. Remember to keep it under 3 minutes or you will be eliminated from the competition – practice!



3 MINUTE THESIS

Your slide.

Background

- Leave white/light space
- Use colours that work well on a screen
- Don't overcrowd your slide
- Be creative
- Make sure your slide is legible, clear and concise.

Imagines & Figures

- Use high quality images
- Re-size and compress images before inserting them on the slide
- Use simple graphics to convey important information

Text

- Use min. 24-point font size and a sans serif font type
- Make sure all your text is in your language of presentation

Content

- Only include relevant content that you actually refer to in your presentation
- Use minimal, if any, text.
- Include your name in a bottom corner
- Do not rely on your slide to convey your message – it should simply complement your oration.
- Think about how your slide might be able to assist with the format and delivery of your presentation – is there a metaphor that helps explain your research?
- Personal touches can allow your audience to understand the impact of your research.



3 MINUTE THESIS

Your presentation.

Pacing

- Speak at a reasonable pace (average roughly 150 words/minute)
- Avoid “ums”, “ahs” and “ers”

Silent Pauses

- Why you should use them:
 - To collect your thoughts
 - You appear in control and confident
 - To give the audience time to process your message
- How to use them:
 - Before starting your talk
 - When you transition from one point to the next
 - After an important point, for emphasis
 - After posing a rhetorical question

Body Language

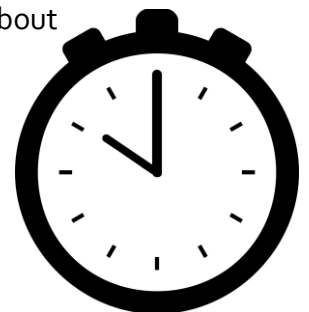
- Have a confident stance
- Don't fidget or have your hands in your pockets
- Be expressive with your body
- Smile and make eye contact with the whole audience
- Be enthusiastic and show your passion
- Dress professionally

Have a clear outcome in mind

- Know what you want your audience to take away from your presentation.
- Try to leave the audience with an understanding of what you're doing, why it is important, and what you hope to achieve.

Revise

- Proof your 3MT presentation by reading it aloud, to yourself and to an audience of friends and family.
- Ask for feedback.
- Ask your audience if your presentation clearly highlights what your research is about and why it is important.



3 MINUTE THESIS

Your reflection.

Checklist

- Did you introduce yourself?
- Were you explicit about your take-away message?
- Did you speak in short sentences so that the audience can follow the ideas easily?
- Did you use vocabulary that your audience can understand, i.e., limited use of field-specific jargon?
- Did you use discourse markers/signposts to guide the audience through the talk?
- Did you support your claim with examples and/or evidence?
- Did you face the audience?
- Did you scan the audience to establish eye contact?
- Did you speak fluently without making hesitation sounds?
- Did you speak at a pace that allows the audience to digest the ideas? (aim for 150 words per minute)
- Did you speak loudly enough for people at the back of the room to hear? (n/a if speakers have microphones)
- Did you exhibit nervous behaviours?
- Did you use visual to support your words?
- Did you thank the audience for listening/for their attention?
- Did you appear prepared?

Video Resources

- In Jay Olson's *Three Minutes to Change the World* talk, he pulls the audience in with an interactive hook. [Link](#)
- Using humour, like in Jeremie Abitbol's talk is a great way to hook your audience. Remember, you may have to repeat the joke several times as you practise. [Link](#)
- Practise out loud and make sure you don't go over 3 minutes. Aim for 2 minutes and 50 seconds, like Danielle Dobney has. [Link](#)
- Speak slowly; plan your pauses, your hand gestures and your body language, as demonstrated in Lauren Godfrey-Smith's talk. [Link](#)
- Make it personal and relevant to yourself and your audience, as 3MT competitor, Marzieh Ghiasi, has done. [Link](#)
- Have fun and be passionate like past competitor, Pierre Lubin! If you are enjoying doing the presentation, the audience will enjoy hearing you talk. [Link](#)

