

3 Minute Thesis – 3MT

Tips for success



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

Preparation

Even the world's best presenters prepare before important presentations. To assist your competitors with their preparations, please find below suggestions that will help them in writing their presentation, creating their slide, as well as practising, recording and submitting their presentation.

3MT Writing

Write for your audience

One of the judging criteria looks for evidence that you can explain your research to a non-specialist audience. To do this you may like to:

- Avoid jargon and academic 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 impact it will have
- Imagine that you are explaining your research to a close friend or fellow student from another field; and
- Do not dumb down or devalue your research, what you are doing is exciting and you should convey enthusiasm for your subject.

Tell a story

You may like to present your 3MT like a story, with a beginning, middle and an end. It's not easy to condense your research into three minutes, so you may find it easier to break your presentation down into smaller sections. Try writing an opener to catch their attention, then highlight your different points, and finally have a summary to restate the importance of your work.

Have a clear outcome in mind

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

What not to do

Do not write your presentation like an academic paper. Try to use shorter words, shorter sentences and shorter paragraphs. You can use humour, however be careful not to dumb down your presentation.

Revise

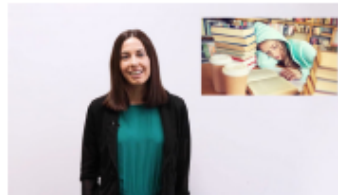
Proof your 3MT presentation by reading it aloud, to yourself and to an audience of friends and family. This allows you to not only check your style, but it will allow you to receive critical feedback. Ask your audience if your presentation clearly highlights what your research is and why it is important.

3MT Slide

Before you start work on your slide, you should take the following rules into account:



- a single static PowerPoint slide is permitted;
- no slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description are permitted;
- 3MT PowerPoint slide location in recording (top right corner/right side/cut to). The slide can be visible continuously, or 'cut to' (as many times as you like) for a maximum of 1 minute or submitted via email if not included in the presentation.
- no additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted.



Consider the following:

Less is more

Text and complicated graphics can distract your audience – you don't want them to read your slide rather than listen to your 3MT.

Suspects, Science and CSI
Slide: Matthew Thompson, 2011



Personal touches

Personal touches can allow your audience to understand the impact of your research.

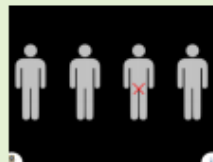
Ocker or Oriental? Asian Australians and the Denial of National Identity
Slide: Michael Thai, 2013



Creativity drives interest

You do not have to have a slide, so do not rely on your slide to convey your message – it should simply complement your spoken oration.

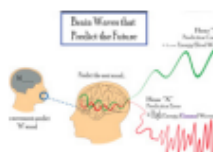
The Fourth Man
Slide: Ryan Stafford, 2011



Work your message

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?

Brain Waves that Predict the Future
Slide: Tim Paris, 2012





Tips for success

Writing your script

When planning what to include in your 3MT, remember it is a summary of your research: you won't be able to include a lot of detail. It should focus more on the 'big picture' and the impact and importance of your research. Your presentation will be more effective if you can tell it as a story, and you may want to consider the following structure:

Beginning - Here you set up the background of your research and communicate the 'big picture'. Why are you doing what you're doing? What is the problem you are trying to solve? It will help if you can relate this to your audience. How does the problem affect the general public? You may consider making it topical, using a case study or telling a story in order to relate to the audience. Is there an emotional angle or any humour you can introduce? Evoking feelings/laughter is an effective way to engage the audience.

Middle - Provide some information about your methodology and results. What are you doing? How are you solving the problem? Don't dumb down or devalue your research, assume the audience are just as intelligent as you are, but haven't had the time or opportunity to do the research yet. Provide enough detail but avoid technical terms, or if really necessary, define them first. Analogies can be useful here to help explain any technical methodology.

End - Finish your presentation by describing your results. What have you achieved? What is the impact of your research? How will your findings impact the world, the public, your audience? Consider creating a circular structure by referencing aspects of the story you told at the beginning of the presentation.

What NOT to do

- Introduce yourself, acknowledge other group members or acknowledge funding sources (this is not a conference talk)
- Use your thesis title as your 3MT title. Like the presentation, the 3MT title should be in plain language. It needs to be catchy but still informative, like a newspaper headline.
- Include too much. Aim for 250-350 words for your first draft, then refine once you have timed it.
- Present any confidential information. Check with your supervisor if you're unsure about what information you're allowed to present to the public.

Preparing your slide

You are allowed a single PowerPoint slide during your presentation, however no animations, sound or movement are permitted. Your slide should be simple and support, not distract from, your presentation. Consider these tips:

- Don't have too much detail – you shouldn't need to point to any part of your slide
- Limit any text to reduce audience distraction.
- Less is more: don't crowd your slide
- Ensure any images are of high quality
- Carefully check spelling and grammar



Rehearsing and presentation

Practice, practice, practice! Feeling nervous before you present is natural, and a little nervousness can even be beneficial to your overall speech.

Nonetheless, it is important to practice so you can present with confidence and clarity.

Vocal range

- Speak clearly and use variety in your voice (fast/slow, loud/soft).
- Do not rush – find your rhythm.
- Remember to pause at key points as it gives the audience time to think about what you are saying.

Body language

- Stand straight and confidently.
- Hold your head up and make eye contact.
- Never turn your back to the audience.
- Practise how you will use your hands and move around the stage. It is okay to move around energetically if that is your personality, however it is also appropriate for a 3MT presentation to be delivered from a single spot on stage.
- Do not make the common mistakes of rolling back and forth on your heels, pacing for no reason or playing with your hair as these habits are distracting for the audience.

Record yourself

Record and listen to your presentation to hear where you pause, speak too quickly or get it just right. Then work on your weaknesses and exploit your strengths.

Look to the stars!

Watch your role models such as academics, politicians and journalists, and break down their strengths and weaknesses. Analyse how they engage with their audience. Visit the 3MT website to view presentations by previous 3MT finalists.

Dress

While there is no dress code, if you are unsure of how to dress you may like to dress for a job interview or an important meeting. No costumes or props!

Practice using a microphone

While each Faculty competition may vary, at the Final you will have a lapel microphone. If you haven't used a mic before, instructions will be provided.