

Speak Your Truth: Mastering Hot Topic Presentations

Materials You'll Need:

- Computer or tablet with internet access
- Notebook and pen/pencil
- Access to age-appropriate news sources or topic suggestion lists (e.g., ProCon.org, student news sites)
- Optional: Timer, recording device (like a phone camera), materials for visual aids (poster board, markers, digital presentation software like Google Slides or Canva)
- "Persuasion Toolkit" ideas (we'll discuss these!)
- A curious mind and your unique voice!

Lesson Steps:

Warm-up: Ignite Your Voice! (5-10 minutes)

Hi Aria! Ready to explore the power of your voice? Let's start with a quick chat:

- What makes a speech super engaging or really boring?
- Have you seen any awesome (or hilariously bad) speeches lately? What made them stick in your mind?
- Let's play "Two Truths and a Hot Take": Tell me two true things about yourself, and one opinion you have that might be a little controversial (but still respectful!). Try to deliver your 'hot take' with a bit of flair!

Activity 1: Finding Your Fire - Choosing Your Hot Topic (15-20 minutes)

A 'hot topic' is something current that people have strong opinions about and love to debate. It's your chance to explore something you care about!

1. **Brainstorm:** Let's jot down some topics that you find interesting or that you've heard people talking about. Think about things like: environmental issues, technology's impact, social media trends, school-related debates, animal welfare, artificial intelligence, or even controversies in gaming or entertainment.
2. **Pick Your Passion:** From our brainstormed list, choose ONE topic that:
 - You feel genuinely interested in or passionate about.
 - Has different sides or viewpoints (it's debatable!).
 - You can find some information about.
 - Feels right for a 3-5 minute presentation.
3. **Define Your Angle:** What's your specific stance or main message about this topic? You don't have to solve the world's problems, just present a clear viewpoint.

Activity 2: Digging Deeper - Uncovering the Arguments (30-45 minutes)

A great speaker knows their stuff! It's time to become a mini-expert on your chosen topic.

1. **Research Time:** Using your computer, explore your topic. Look for reliable, age-appropriate

sources (we can check these together!). Aim to find:

- At least **three strong arguments** or key points that support YOUR stance. Look for facts, examples, or expert opinions.
- At least **one common counter-argument** (what someone on the other side might say). Understanding this helps you make your own argument stronger!

2. **Persuasion Toolkit Introduction:** Let's talk about how to convince an audience! Have you heard of:

- **Ethos (Credibility):** Showing you're knowledgeable and trustworthy.
- **Pathos (Emotion):** Connecting with your audience's feelings.
- **Logos (Logic):** Using facts, reason, and evidence.
- Other cool tools: Rhetorical questions (questions that make the audience think), storytelling, using surprising statistics, or a powerful quote.

As you research, think about which of these tools could make your arguments more powerful.

Activity 3: Structuring Your Speech - The Presentation Blueprint (20-30 minutes)

Every great presentation has a roadmap. Let's build yours for a 3-5 minute talk!

- **The Hook (First 30 seconds):** How will you grab your audience's attention right away? Think about:
 - A surprising fact or statistic.
 - A thought-provoking question.
 - A very short story or anecdote related to your topic.
- **The Introduction (Tells them what you'll tell them):**
 - Briefly introduce your hot topic.
 - Clearly state your main point or stance (your thesis).
- **The Body (Tells them! This is the main part):**
 - Present your 2-3 key arguments, one by one.
 - Support each argument with the evidence or examples you found.
 - Briefly acknowledge and address the counter-argument you identified. (e.g., "Some people might say X, however, Y...")
- **The Conclusion (Tells them what you told them and leaves an impact):**
 - Quickly summarize your main points.
 - End with a strong final statement. This could be a call to action (what you want your audience to think or do), a memorable thought, or a link back to your hook.

Your Task: Create an outline for your presentation based on this structure. Jot down bullet points for each section.

Activity 4: Adding Sparkle - Creative Elements (15-20 minutes)

Let's make your presentation more than just words! How can you make it pop and engage your audience visually or interactively?

Brainstorm some ideas (you only need to pick one or two to develop):

- **Simple Visual Aid:** A clear poster with a key phrase or image, a single impactful slide on a screen (if using tech), or even a relevant object you can show.
- **Interactive Moment:** A quick poll (e.g., "Raise your hand if you've ever..."), a 'what if' question

for the audience, or a very short, relevant video clip (under 30 seconds).

- **A Prop:** Something physical that helps illustrate your point.

Your Task: Decide on one creative element you'll incorporate and plan how you'll use it.

Activity 5: Practice & Polish - Rehearsal Time (20-30 minutes)

Practice is where the magic happens! It helps you feel more confident and smooth.

Tips for great delivery:

- **Vocal Variety:** Don't be a monotone robot! Vary your tone, pace (speed), and volume to keep things interesting. Emphasize key words.
- **Body Language:** Stand tall (or sit with good posture). Use natural gestures. Make eye contact (even if your audience is just one person!).
- **Pacing:** Don't rush! Pause briefly between points to let your ideas sink in.
- **Notes:** It's okay to use notes, but try not to read them word-for-word. Use bullet points to remind you of your key ideas.

Your Task: Practice your speech a few times. If you're brave, try recording yourself on a phone – it's a great way to see what your audience sees! Time yourself to make sure you're in the 3-5 minute range.

Activity 6: Showtime! - Your Presentation (5-10 minutes)

This is it! Take a deep breath. Remember your preparation and your passion for the topic. Deliver your presentation to your designated audience (me, another family member, or even your favorite stuffed animals!).

Enjoy the moment and share your truth!

Activity 7: Applause and Awesome Feedback! (10-15 minutes)

Great job, Aria! That took courage and hard work.

1. **Self-Reflection:**
 - What do you think went really well in your presentation? What are you proud of?
 - What was the trickiest part for you?
 - If you were to do it again, what's one thing you might change or try differently?
2. **Constructive Feedback:** I'll share what I thought was fantastic and offer one or two helpful suggestions for next time, focusing on things like clarity, engagement, use of your creative element, and delivery. We're celebrating your effort and looking for ways to grow!
3. **Connecting the Dots:** How can the skills you practiced today (researching, organizing thoughts, speaking clearly, persuading) be useful in other areas of your life, not just formal presentations?

Wrap-up & What's Next?

You've successfully navigated a hot topic and presented your views effectively – that's a huge accomplishment! You're well on your way to becoming a confident and persuasive communicator.

Possible Extension Ideas (if you're feeling inspired!):

- Research and prepare a short presentation arguing the *opposite* side of your chosen topic. (A real challenge in critical thinking!)

- Organize a mini-debate with a family member or friend on another hot topic.
- Turn your presentation into a short, engaging video.

Keep speaking your truth!