

Preparing for the oral presentation – a practice

Choose either an extract from the novel you are interested in, or choose one poem by the poet you are interested in or a related text to the one you are considering. You are going to prepare and present a short presentation to the class about your chosen extract or poem in order to help you develop your presentational skills and see where you need improvement.

Once you have decided on your extract or poem, brainstorm your initial ideas – that is, write down everything you can think of about the piece.

Now sort your ideas into a coherent structure:

What is the best way to start your presentation?

Do you need to read out your poem or extract?

What is your focus for the presentation: a theme; a close reading; a critical interpretation (such as feminism); contextualising the piece ... what is it that interests you about the piece?

Now think about the actual business of presenting your ideas:

How can you engage your audience?

What is the best way to present a speech?

How many notes should you have?

How should you finish your presentation?

Should you practise? (This is a no-brainer!)

Consider the response:

What might your audience ask you?

How can you respond to questions?

What should you do about questions you don't know the answer to?

Remember: you should be reading the text you are interested in and reading widely around the text too. If you are doing *Jane Eyre* for example, it is worth trying *Shirley* or *Villette*. If you are looking at the poetry of Robert Frost or Emily Dickinson read as much of their poetry as you can lay your hands on. Find out who else was writing at the time of the novelist or poet and compare their style and language. Consider where the author was from and their background. Look into national and world events at the time of the writing.