



Let's get critical

We're all used to watching people, especially scientists, present their area of expertise, but what makes a presenter a good one, and would you do it differently? This activity develops the skills of giving and receiving constructive criticism on students' own presentations.

Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- identify the features of a good presentation
- give and receive constructive criticism.

Time required

Allow 10 minutes for each presentation, 5 minutes for questions, and 5 minutes to feed back comments. Spend the rest of the lesson on group discussions and feedback to the rest of the class.

Outline of the activity

This is a chance for everyone to get feedback on their presentation style and to learn how to give a better presentation.

Give all students a copy of the presentation evaluation sheet. They have a few minutes to prepare a short, ten-minute presentation (without Powerpoint) on an infectious disease. They then get into groups of four and each student takes it in turns to present to the rest of their group. If you allocate four diseases caused by different types of micro-organisms, the presentation groups could cover, for example, HIV, TB, Malaria, and Athlete's foot between them. After each presentation has finished all group members take a few minutes to fill in their evaluation. The group feeds back to the student who has given the presentation, while this student listens and accepts the comments.

At the very end, all members look at each other's presentation evaluations and discuss what they found. Did their feelings about their own presentation match those of their peers?

You could end by asking the class the following questions.

How do you communicate your 'tips for improvement'? Were you all polite when giving feedback?

Do you feel confident enough to tell someone that their presentation could be better?

Did you notice body language that distracted you from the presentation?

What did you learn through receiving criticism?

If there is time, some students can try out their presentations again, this time taking on the constructive criticism, and then ask the audience to say if they feel the presentations have improved.

Tips and strategies



Make sure students understand that giving constructive criticism and critiquing a presentation is very different from 'criticism' you may hear in day-to-day life. We should be extremely professional about criticising. Receiving a criticism is also a skill which needs to be developed. Criticism helps us to improve and develop, so should be valued.



Let's get critical: presentation evaluation sheet

In this activity you will develop the skills of giving and receiving constructive criticism.

Giving constructive criticism

You will be given time to prepare a ten-minute presentation on an infectious disease. In groups of four students, each of you will have the opportunity to give and receive constructive criticism on the presentations.

Fill in the table for each of the presentations in your group, the first column is for you to write down how you think you did.

	Your presentation:	Name:	Name:	Name:
Title of presentation				
Three good points about the presentation				
Three not-so-good points about the presentation				
What would you change about the presentation?				
Did the presenter have any particular habits (distracting or good ones)?				
If you had given the presentation what would you have done differently? (If it was your presentation, how would you improve it?)				

Once you have finished filling in the table, swap evaluations with the rest of your group and see what you have all written. Do you all agree? Discuss.



Let's get critical: briefing sheet

Receiving criticism

During this activity, listen to the criticism from your peers without responding. Thank them for their comments when they have finished. Make some brief notes below for your own reference.

Title of your presentation:

What I need to work on to improve my presentation skills: