

American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science presents

MEDLABtalks



SPEAKER GUIDE

Congratulations on your decision to give a MEDLABtalk!

This MEDLABtalks Speaker Guide will help you develop and deliver a successful talk.



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Step 1: Get familiar with this form

What are MEDLABtalks?

MEDLABtalks is a structured speaker series where a speaker presents medical laboratory science (MLS)-related information in less than 18 minutes. These talks could be presented at schools, local ASCLS chapters, or even the National Meeting.

Why does a MEDLABtalk have a time limit of 18 minutes?

18 minutes is the perfect length of time to hold your audience's attention and share your ideas.

What if I decide to go over 18 minutes?

One of the main features of a MEDLABtalk is its short length. We all know being succinct is one of the most important qualities in healthcare and science. It may only take 7 minutes to plant a memorable idea in the minds of your audience.

If you want an example of a talk that is super succinct, watch this TED talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/matt_cutts_try_something_new_for_30_days (03:20)



Step 2: Develop an idea

What should I talk about?

Your idea should be new or surprising. Your idea could challenge a belief that is widely held in the medical laboratory science community. It could also be a traditional idea with a compelling new argument that you just can't wait to share with others.

Your idea should be related to the field of medical laboratory science. Do not feel like you have to stick to talking about potassium or lymphocytes explicitly, but keep in mind these are MEDLABtalks.

A great idea takes multiple components and draws a larger conclusion. It is not just a personal story or a Top Ten List.

A great example of a TED talk that captures this perfectly: http://www.ted.com/talks/melissa_marshall_talk_nerdy_to_me (04:27)

Do I need to be an expert on my topic?

You don't have to have a Doctorate in Clinical Laboratory Science to give a MEDLABtalk, but you do have to be knowledgeable on your topic. Your audience is relying on you to give accurate information, so be sure you complete appropriate fact checking. Use widely accepted and peer reviewed sources, or consult with experts directly. The audience of MEDLABtalks are laboratory professionals as well as individuals

unfamiliar with the field. Therefore, be sure your presentation doesn't go over the audience's head. Be accurate but approachable.

Is my idea ready?

Write your idea down in a couple of sentences, and then ask yourself a few questions:

1. **Is my idea new?** Are you pretty sure the audience has not heard it before?
2. **Is my idea interesting?** Think about your target audience. How would your idea apply to a group of college students, MLS professionals, or healthcare professionals? Would they be interested in what you have to say?
3. **Is my idea factual and realistic?** If you are presenting new research, make sure it is backed by sound data and it is peer-reviewed. If you are presenting a call to action, make sure it is something your audience could actually do.

If you answered "no" to some of these questions, don't give up. Refine your idea. Ask people you respect who don't know about your topic. If they answer "no" to some of these questions, refine your idea. If the event organizing team answers "no" to some of these questions, refine your idea.

For an example of a strong idea that was well-refined check out this TED talk:
https://www.ted.com/talks/thomas_goetz_it_s_time_to_re_design_medical_data?utm_source=tedcomshare&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=tedspread (16:22)



Step 3: Make an outline and a script

There are multiple structures that can result in a great presentation—the following is a suggestion of one style.

- Start by using a relatable example or an intriguing idea
- Explain your idea clearly and with conviction
- Describe how and why your idea could be implemented
- End by addressing how your idea could affect your audience

View the following TED talk to help with this step.
https://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_duarte_the_secret_structure_of_great_talks

Regardless of structure—remember:

- The primary goal of your talk is to communicate an idea effectively—not to just tell a story or evoke emotions.
- Your structure should be invisible to the audience. Don't talk about how you're going to talk about your topic—just talk about it. Remember, you are on an 18 minute clock. Use your time well.

Outline

Introduction: A strong one is crucial

- Draw in your audience with something they care about
 - If your topic is something your audience thinks about a lot, start with a clear statement explaining your idea
 - If your topic is about a field they never think about, start off by invoking something they do think about a lot and relate that concept to your idea
 - If the idea is something fun but not something the audience would ever think about, open with a surprising and cool fact or declaration of relevance (not a statistic!)
 - If your topic is a heavy topic find an understated and frank way to get off the ground
- Get your idea out as quickly as possible, don't focus too much on yourself, and don't open with a string of statistics

Body: Present your topic and evidence

- Make a list of all the evidence you want to use. Think about items that your audience already knows. Spend more time on new information
- Order all of the items in your list based on what a person needs to know before they can understand the next point, and from least to most exciting
- Now cut out everything you possibly can without losing the integrity of your argument

*Tip: Make this list with a trusted friend who isn't an expert in your field.
This can help you gain an alternate perspective.*

- Use empirical evidence, limit anecdotes, jargon, and explain any new terminology
- Respectfully address any controversies, legitimate counterarguments, reasons you might be wrong, or doubts your audience might have about your idea
- Don't let citations interrupt the flow of your explanation: Save them for after you've made your point, or place them in the fine print of your slides
- Slides: Note anything in your outline that is best expressed visually and plan accordingly in your script. (See Step 4)

Conclusion: Leave a lasting impression

- Find an end point that will leave your audience thinking about your idea
- Tell your audience how your idea might affect their lives
- Avoid ending with a pitch (soliciting funds, showing a book cover, corporate logos, etc.)
- If appropriate, give your audience a call to action

*Tip: Once you're settled on your outline, start writing a script.
Be concise but write in a way that feels natural to you.
Use present tense and strong, interesting verbs.*



Step 4: Create visuals

Should I use slides?

Slides can be helpful but they may not always be relevant to every talk. Ask these questions when deciding if you should use slides:

- Will my slides help and clarify information for the audience?
- Will my slides distract and confuse the audience?

TED talks with great examples of slides:
https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_phillips_creative_house

I've never made slides before. Where do I start?

Assess your own skill level. You can make great simple slides if you stick to photographic images, running edge-to-edge. If your slide ideas are more complex and involve type, consider utilizing a designer. Also be sure to reach out to your event organizer for help.

What goes on slides?

- Images and photos—use these to help the audience remember a person, place, or thing you mention
- You do not need to verbally describe the images onscreen
- Graphs and infographics: Keep graphs visually clear even if the content is complicated

What should the slides look like?

- Use minimum text—if your audience is reading they are likely not listening
- Avoid excessive bullet points
- Each visual should only make one point

How should the slides be formatted?

- 1920 x 1080 pixels at a 16:9 aspect ratio is most common but check with the event organizing team about specifics for resolution/aspect ratio before making slides
- Keep information centralized, avoid putting any information or visuals in the far corners of slides
- Choose a common sans serif font (Arial or Verdana) 42 points or larger as these are easy to read
- Any custom fonts may cause a problem if the presentation computer is not compatible

How should I find images for my MEDLABtalk?

- Only use images that you own or have permission to use
- Search engine images can be used, but care must be taken to avoid using copyrighted materials such as images from *Family Guy* or *The Simpsons*
- A reliable source for images follow this prompt: Google Image Search > Tools > Images Labeled for Reuse

Bottom line for using slides: Keep it simple.



Step 5: Rehearse

I've practiced my talk once, is that enough?

Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse! Rehearse until you are at the point of sounding natural. Practice in front of a variety of people (i.e. groups, one on one, strangers, etc.). Listen to the feedback and take the criticism constructively.

Timing

Time yourself. Practice first with a clock counting down. Track your talk length and practice until you achieve your desired time frame, or cut content.

An example of a well-rehearsed TED talk:
https://www.ted.com/talks/bill_gates_the_next_disaster_we_re_not_ready?utm_source=tedcomshere&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=tedspread (08:32)

Posture

Practice standing still on stage. Be mindful of pacing back and forth.

Stage time

Get as much practice time on stage with all the necessary tools. The closer to replicating the actual talk, the better.



Step 6: Give your talk

Take a deep breath and give your talk like you practiced.



Step 7: Savor the glory

Congratulations, you've delivered your MEDLABtalk! We hope this guide was useful for your preparation and helped your talk perpetuate great medical laboratory ideas.