Tips for Talks
Help for giving a talk or lab meeting

1. **Prepare ahead of time.**
   Give yourself a week at least.
   Talks evolve and improve with practice.
   Slide-making is very time-consuming!

2. **Start with an outline.**
   Plan an introduction that should take 1/4 - 1/3 of your talk.
   Plan a discussion of the specific research you have done.

3. **Know your audience.**
   Be aware of their level of expertise.
   Plan your talk accordingly.
   Your audience generally knows far less than you think!

4. **Give a broad introduction.**
   State the general big question.
   Relate this to your specific smaller question.
   Show relevant background information.
   Do not assume your audience is informed.

5. **Discuss your research.**
   State your specific question and
        try to break it into sub-questions.
   Make a slide that lists the topics you'll cover,
        keep coming back to this,
        highlight relevant lines to indicate where you are.
   Put in one or more summary slides.
        It can be helpful to keep showing the same summary slide,
        building it up along the way.
   It can be interesting to pose questions.

6. **If this is a lab meeting…**
   Present the hypothesis you are testing.
   Then present the experiment you preformed to address this hypothesis.
   Show the data- show original data, even if (or especially if) the experiment has not worked- this allows you to get useful input.
   Label all your pieces of data clearly (see #7 below).
   Give the conclusion, show a summary or model if relevant.
   Discuss the next experiment.
   At the end of your lab meeting, show a list of "what to do next".
   Some labs like you to make a powerpoint presentation, others may allow you to use overheads. The former allows a better presentation.

7. **Make clear slides.**
   Use Powerpoint.
   Talk for 1 minute AT MOST about 1 slide.
   No more than 15 slides for a 10 minute talk!
   Have a slide for every point, and
          don't talk about anything that is not on a slide.
   Have a heading on every slide that explains the point of the slide.
   Label information on slides.
   Fill the frame with your data (very important!).
   The heading should be no wider than your data.
   Fonts should be no smaller than 24 point throughout.
   Be careful about color combinations:
          what looks good on your computer screen may be invisible when
          projected (for example, red on blue), and in general,
          use light colors contrasted on dark backgrounds.
   Try to vary your slides for interest-
          for example, have the same background on all your data slides <u>but</u>
          intersperse these with topic slides with a different background.

8. **Stick to the time limit!**
   Going over time is the cardinal sin.
   Time your talk.
   Plan for a talk that is shorter than the time limit to allow a question time.

9. **Get input.**
   Give practice talks. Start with your plants, then
          ask your mentor or lab mates to listen.
   Try not to take criticism personally-
          it is not given in that spirit and will vastly improve your talk.

10. **Work on your presentation style.**
    The goal is to keep your audience with you throughout the talk.
    Talk slowly and clearly.
    Look at your audience, look only at the screen when you are pointing to it.
    Try not to ummmm.
    Be enthusiastic!
    Do not to say " I <u>just</u> want to show this…",
           if it's worth showing, show it without apology.

11. **Practice, practice, practice!**
    Practice with your slides, talking out loud and standing up.
    TIME YOUR TALK!!!!
    Think about the logic of your talk-
           you may change the order of slides after practice.

Best of luck!!