

3MT: 3 minutes, 1 slide, ~450 words



The Three Minute Thesis



This is a combination slide deck from Queen's Student Academic Success Services and the University of Waterloo

What is the purpose of a 3 minute thesis talk?

- To develop your communication skills
- To showcase your research to an audience outside your field of study
- To think how to communicate beyond your usual opportunities (conferences, lectures, tutorials)
- To help you talk about your research to anyone and make it interesting

Think differently

<https://cags.ca/3mt/>

3-Minute Thesis 2016 National Winner

Gah Jone Won (Waterloo)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fn94F0ofwig&list=PLFLt7C4TyD_fSY5RBsB3w5VyJ4NCSGTYZ&index=8

Let's Break it Down

What Makes a Winning Presentation:

- 1. Understand who your audiences are**
- 2. Understand the task/purpose**
- 3. Use your title to pique interest**
- 4. Use your slide to help convey your message**
- 5. Practice, practice, practice**

1. Understand your audiences

- Purpose
 - To engage an educated but non specialist audience
 - To make the audience excited about your research

- General Audience
 - Curious about your research
 - Want to understand WHY you are doing this research

- Judges
 - To see clear thinking & communication
 - Have a respect for complex research
 - Want to understand the implications of your research

2. Understand the Task/Purpose

3MT	Lecture, talk, paper
<p>Core idea Significance “Why?”</p> <p><i>Also ...</i></p> <p>Lay language Little/no data Schema in mind</p>	<p>Breadth, depth Method Results</p> <p><i>Also ...</i></p> <p>Scientific jargon Analysis, data Organize in ppt</p>

3. Using Your Title

- Short and snappy
- Attention grabbing
- Jargon-free
- NOT the title of your actual thesis/dissertation

Does your title pique the audiences interest even before they hear the presentation?

4. Make your slide help

- Use of text on the slide
- Use of images: photos, diagrams, graphs
- Use of symbolism and metaphor

Does this slide help my audience understand!

5. Practice, practice, practice

- Logical flow
- Are you trying to do too much/too little?
- Get feedback
 - Video tape, friend, mirror...
- TIME YOURSELF

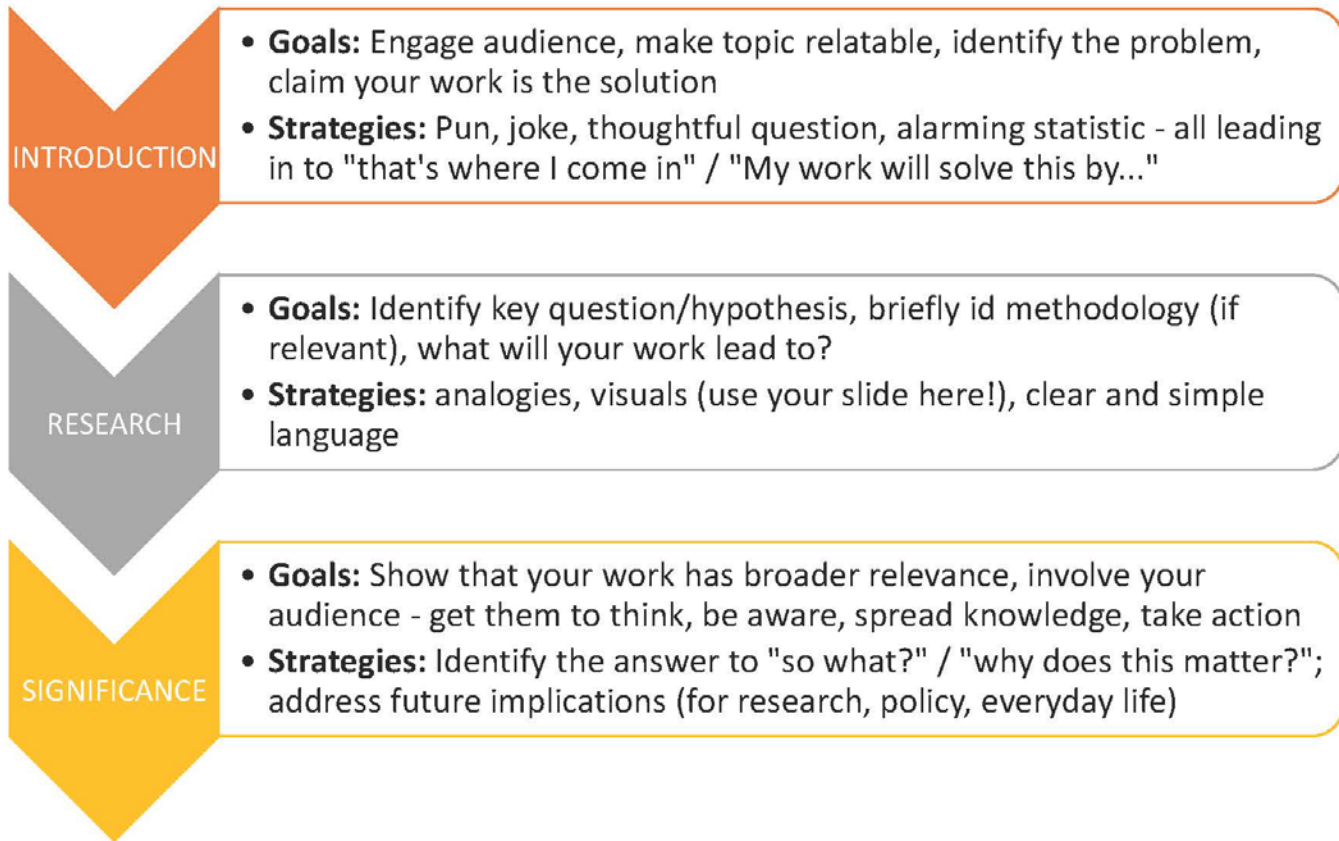
Building your 3MT Presentation

Exercises to tell your story

- 1. Narrative structure**
- 2. What's the purpose of your research**
- 3. What's your story?**
- 4. What's the connection and importance?**

Building your 3MT Presentation

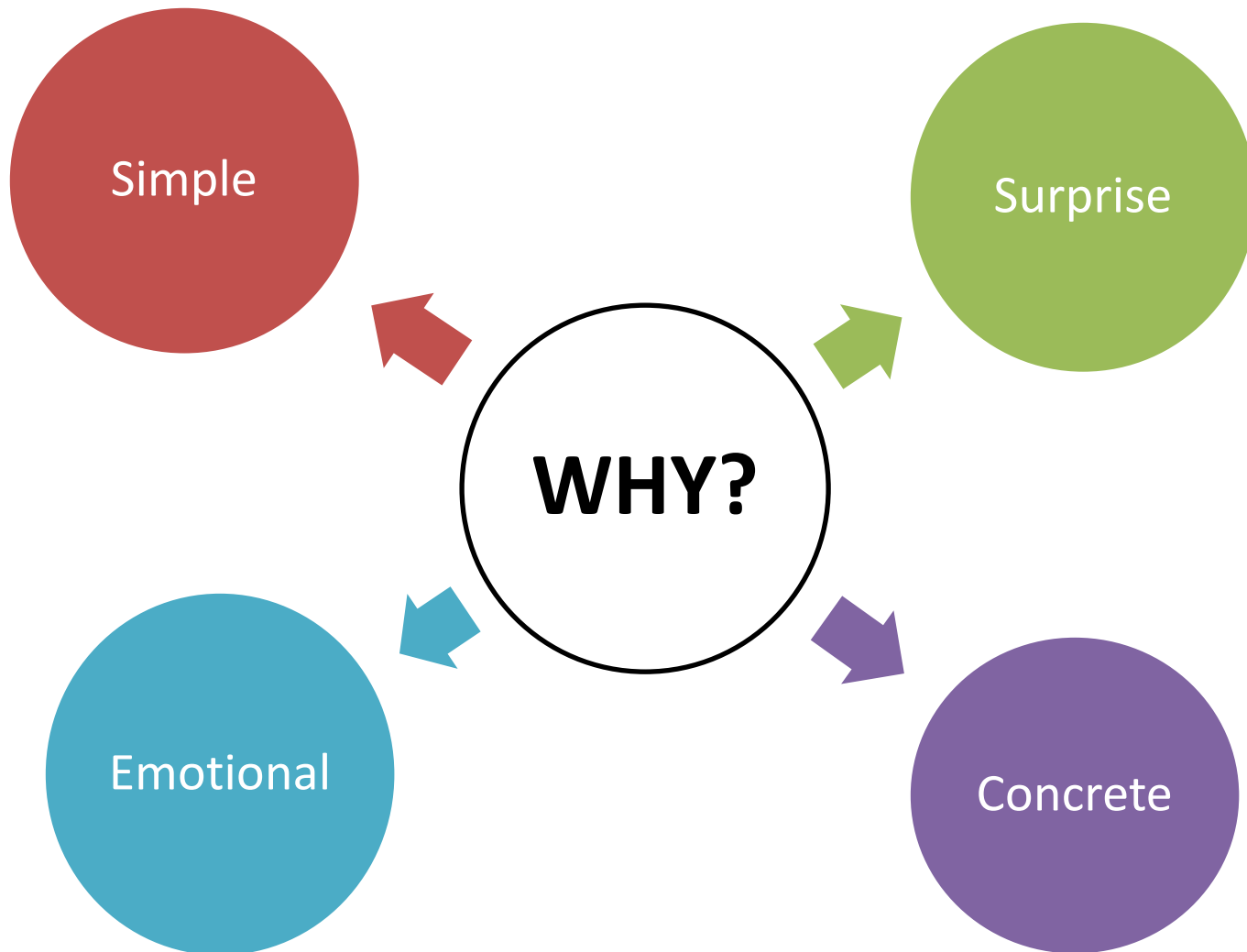
Sample Narrative Structure – 3MT



Building your 3MT Presentation

- Let's look at our examples:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fn94F0ofwig&list=PLFLt7C4TyD_fSY5RBsB3w5VyJ4NCSGTYZ&index=8
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyH3FLo7-0Y&list=PLoDT3ZU3FLTm0dGIRsxtPQ4U9kmICukDr&index=3>

Think “brief but bright”



Simplicity

Why did I start this research?

Exercise #1

What motivated you to pursue this work?

- Write 50 words
- Share with partner
- Debrief:
 - Did the Listener fully understand the intention behind the research?

Engage emotion

Why should your audience care?

Exercise #2a & 2b

What is the connection between your research and the world? Why is it important?

- Write two sentences
- Share with partner
- Debrief:
 - What made the Listener “care” about the research?

Surprise!



Engage the audience – **Exercise 2b**

- Does my research break a pattern?
- Does it go against common sense or common understandings?
- Does it do something counter-intuitive?
- Does it force us to rethink something fundamental?

Story-telling

What do you want the audience to remember?

Exercise #3

Can you use a story to build curiosity about your research

- Write main message of your “story”
- Share with partner
- Respond

Concrete

How can I convey

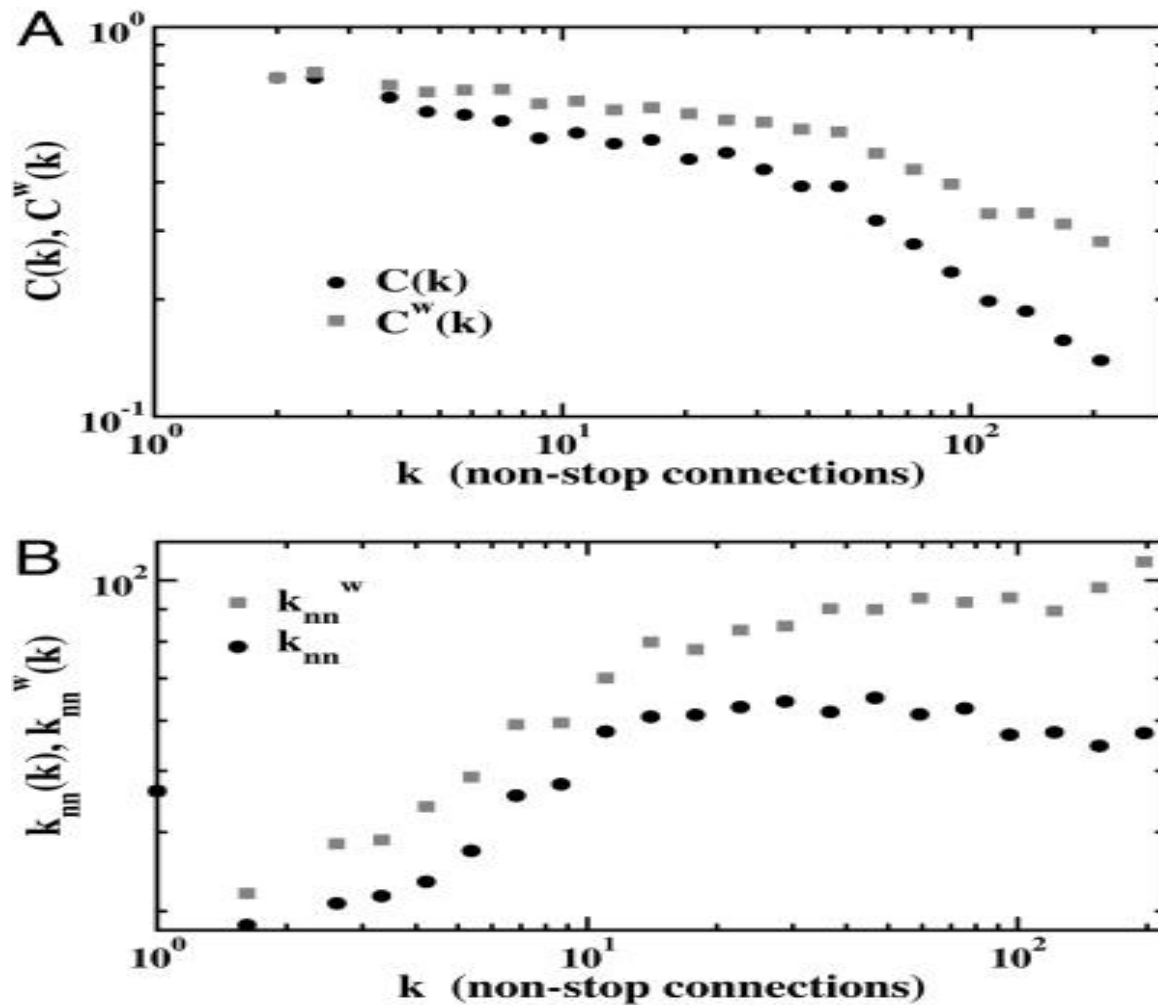
“WHY is this IMPORTANT?”

on one slide?

For example ...



Versus ...



From:

[Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2004 March 16; 101\(11\): 3747–3752.](#)

Published online 2004 March 8. doi: 10.1073/pnas.0400087101 [Fig. 7.](#)

Asleep at the switch: Effects of impaired vigilance on psychomotor reaction times



How will your slide support your key message?

Exercise #4

- Is there a visual metaphor or image to capture the significance of your presentation?
- Draft a slide!

Constructing the talk

In summary:

- Introduction: Initial WHY's
- Main Body: WHAT- context + details of your research
- Closing
 - Always circle back to initial WHY's
 - challenge the audience to think

What made this 3MT a winner?

Simple

Emotional

Unexpected

Concrete

Story

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fn94F0ofwig&list=PLFLt7C4TyD_fSY5RBsB3w5VyJ4NCSGTYZ&index=8
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuRw_4VSp44

Winning 3MT presentations

4. Presentation style

- Voice
 - tone
 - pace
 - projection
- Body
 - eye contact
 - gesture and move intentionally

Troubleshooting

Going blank

- Over-practice
- Prepare a clear, visual schema or map
- No expectation of word-for-word memorization

- BREATHE in the moment, take a pause
- Return to last point, repeat for emphasis (and to buy time)
- Remind yourself: This is just for fun!

Troubleshooting

Accent or English as a second language

- Accent tends to increase when you're anxious
- Anticipate this and practice pronunciation
- Slow down
- Look for friendly face and speak to them
- Consider slide content: more key ideas than emotion?

Troubleshooting

Speaking too fast

- Honour the periods at the end of each sentence
- Breathe between 'paragraphs' or sections
- Include pauses and breath marks into your script and practice them

- You may have to cut information!

Your action plan

What do you want the take home message to be?

Will your presentation leave the audience wanting to know more?

Have you practiced enough?

Have FUN 😊