

Creating publicity

The results of your historical research in your locality certainly will interest your families, your classmates and teachers, your neighbours and many other people. It is therefore worthwhile to present your work to a large public.

What can you do to inform more people about your research project? Your choice of presentation form reflects the degree to which you wish to publicize the results of your work. For example, if you design an historical sightseeing tour, you should in fact offer it to your school and your locality and conduct it before an audience. The same is true for a play, a film, an exhibition, etc.

Public relations work

A good way of informing the public about the results of your research is through articles in the press. You can also use the media to advertise an exhibition, a lecture or a press conference. City magazines and in-house journals, local weekly newspapers or free papers and regional radio stations are always interested in subjects with a local angle. Perhaps there is a category like "Pupils make newspaper/radio program" under which you can offer your own contribution.

Media

The press functions according to its own rules. On the radio, for example, the material that you have synthesized on many pages after intensive work has to be compressed into a short programme. Therefore, before contacting the press, you should ask yourselves the following questions:

- Why should anything be written or said about your research results?
- What interest and uses do the readers and listeners have in them?
- Is there a "hook"– for example, a current connection to the theme?
- What are the central messages of your historical project?
- What stood out or was especially surprising about the results?

When planning the public presentation of your results, your inventiveness can have free rein. But if you decide on a written contribution, two forms of public presentation are especially suitable: a press conference and a lecture. Here are some tips to make such events successful:



Press conference

Preparation

- A press conference should take place in a public room: a school auditorium, a city-hall meeting room, a library ...
- To invite the press, you must send out an announcement. This should not be longer than one letter-sized page and should include the following information:
 - A heading that grabs people's attention
 - Date, place and time of the press conference
 - The subject, a current hook and lead-off contents
 - Naturally, your contact information must also be included, in case questions are directed to you even before the press conference.
- It's best to send out this press announcement by fax or e-mail to the editorial staff two weeks before the event. Afterwards, you should enquire by phone as to whether your invitation arrived.

Press conference

Tips on conducting the press conference

- It makes sense to hand out so-called "press kits" with material on your project to journalists during the press conference. These contain information on the subject of your research, your most important results as well as a list of participants in the research project and your contact information.
- Be prepared to answer questions. Make sure your answers are short, rich in content, concrete and convincing. Speak without notes and in the first person ("I believe ...").
- It's not a tragedy if you don't know the answer to a question. You can always offer to provide the answer later, as soon as possible.

Lecture

Preparation

- Clarify the goal of the presentation and the target audience (who is invited, how many people, their previous knowledge on the subject).
- Contents
 1. Collect and select material.
 2. Visualise, e.g., use PowerPoint. This cannot replace the spoken word but serves to concentrate the listeners' attention on what is most important and to elucidate information.
- Organisation
 1. Clarify the place and room to be used.
 2. Select audio-visual material: for example, pin board, flip chart, overhead projector, video projector, video recorder, CD player – check before the event that the necessary technical aids are in place and working properly.
 3. Clarify the date and period of time.
 4. Write the invitation.
 5. Assemble the documents for the participants.

Lecture



Conducting the lecture

1. **Opening:** You begin by greeting your audience, introducing yourselves and naming the reason, subject and goal of your presentation.
Tip: It is advisable to present an adequate appearance; look your listeners in the eye and speak loudly and clearly.
2. **Main part:** Your material must be outlined comprehensibly, your statements understandable and your arguments structured logically. Variety in the use of audio-visual aids and an effective visualisation secure the attention of your audience.
Tip: Speak with the support of "cribbing notes" (e.g., DIN A5 cards, on which you write down key words for all your points), use your voice in a directed fashion, intensify your gestures if you want to win your audience's attention.
3. **Questions / Discussion:** Be ready for questions and a possible discussion.
4. **Conclusion:** Quickly sum up the main points of your lecture again; then, thank the audience for coming and for their attention.