

Should you be talking at all? Checklist

Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than open your mouth and prove it beyond all doubt.

If you've put in an abstract for a conference and been accepted, then we can assume you want to present and you've got some idea of the topic. However there will many other times where you are asked to present, for example department seminars, guest lectures, community groups. To increase your chances of success there are some questions you should ask right at the start. Use the following checklist to help decide if you should be talking at all.

Checklist

- Is this the right topic?
Just because someone has suggested a topic for you doesn't mean you can't change it or negotiate parts of it.
- Do I know anything about this topic?
- Can I change/select the topic?
You may be able to suggest a better topic or one you are more comfortable with.
- Is the length appropriate?
You might want longer or shorter.
- Do I have the time to prepare for this?
To do it properly will take time. Have I got the time?

Once you've answered these questions then make a rational decision about whether to accept, to negotiate something different or to decline.