3 QUICK TIPS FOR ASSIGNING PRESENTATIONS

Shorter might be better.

Delivering a five-minute, three-minute, or even a one-minute speech can be a significant challenge. Shorter presentations reward clarity and economical use of language. They also consume less class time, and tend to be more audience-friendly. A progression of two or three short presentations – rather than a single, longer one -- will offer students more room to improve.

If possible, make time to rehearse on the day.

On presentation day, allowing students to pair up and run through their speeches can lower their anxiety. Even if there’s only time to deliver the beginning and end, the boost in confidence can dramatically improve performance.

Consider using peer response forms.

Having classmates complete a response form not only gives the speaker useful feedback, it helps create a more attentive, and supportive audience. It also gives you a chance to accentuate the elements you consider most critical. (For examples of peer response forms, click here.)

Bonus tip! Classroom discussions are a speaking opportunity.

Occasional attention to how we speak in class can have a big impact. At the beginning of a discussion, you might simply decide to monitor the “likes and ums,” or agree to avoid disclaimers and prefices before getting to the point. You might ask students – either before a discussion or directly after – to compose a single sentence, asserting their position, and then deliver it from memory. These “oratory moments” can give shape to a discussion, deepening and democratizing it; they can also help create a speaking culture in your classroom.