Effective Oral Presentations
11.225
Fall 2006

Cherie Miot Abbanat
Department of Urban Studies and Planning

The Tasks….

Structure

Content

Delivery
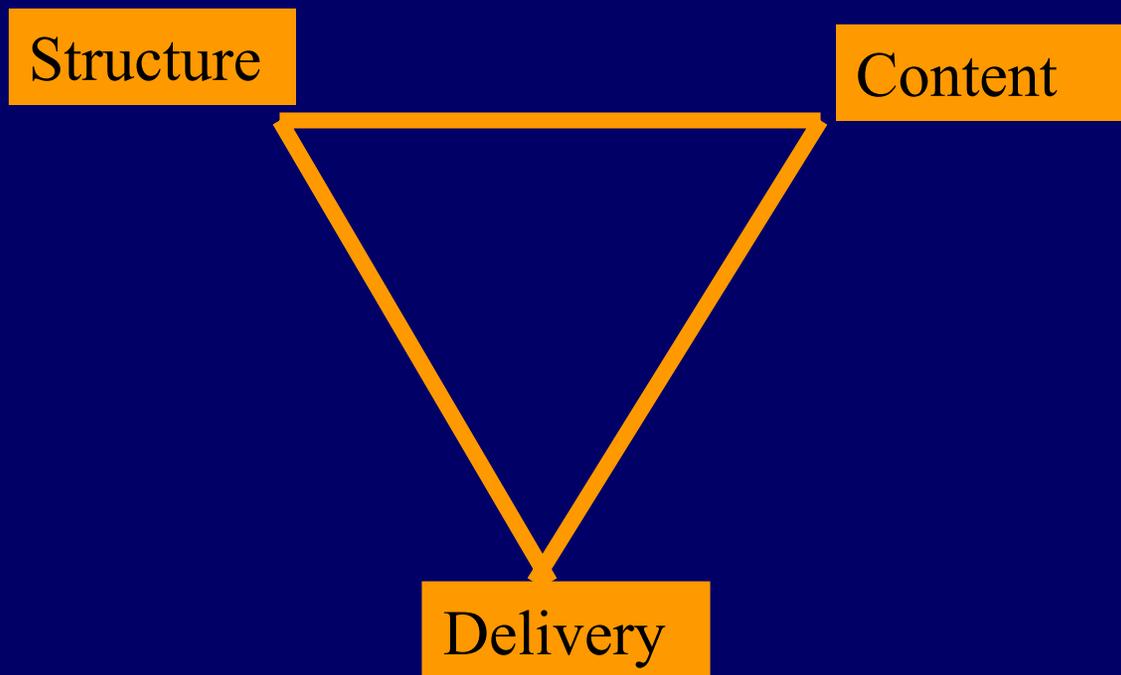
Unmask your Audience

- **Race**
- **Gender**
- **Generation**
- **Affiliation**
- **Size**
- **Attitude**
- **Education**
- **Economic status**

Structure the Presentation

- **Beginning** →
  - **State the Issue**
  - **Tell us why it is interesting**

- **Middle** →
  - **Choose a framework**
  - **Analyze the parts of the issue**
  - **Show how the parts fit with the whole**

- **End** →
  - **Recap/Synthesis/ Next Steps**

Begin with the End

- **What is the Purpose of the Presentation?**

- **What Problem are you working on?**

- **Roadmap – what structure do you use?**

Middle -- Choose a Framework

- **Cause/Effect**

- **Problem/Solution**

- **Categories or elements of the problem**

- **Questions/Answers**

- **Chronological – historical background**

End With Your Message

- **Highlight Major Points**

- **Summarize Recommendations**

- **Synthesize in light of problem/purpose**

- **Outline next steps!**
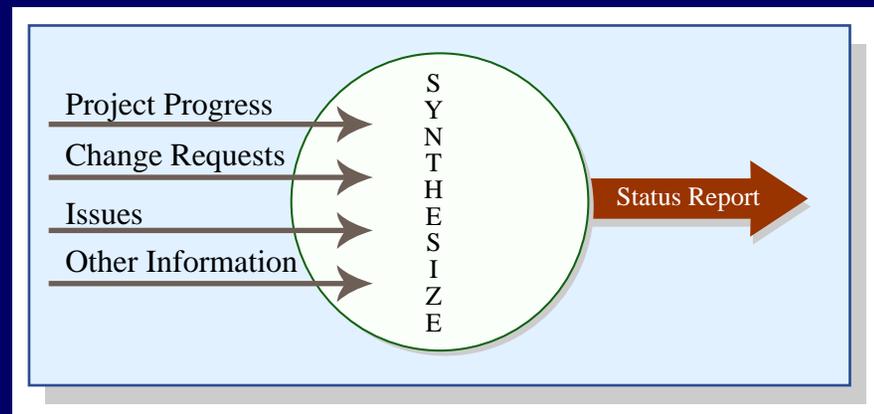
Figure by MIT OCW.

Non Linear Structure -- Hub and Spoke Model
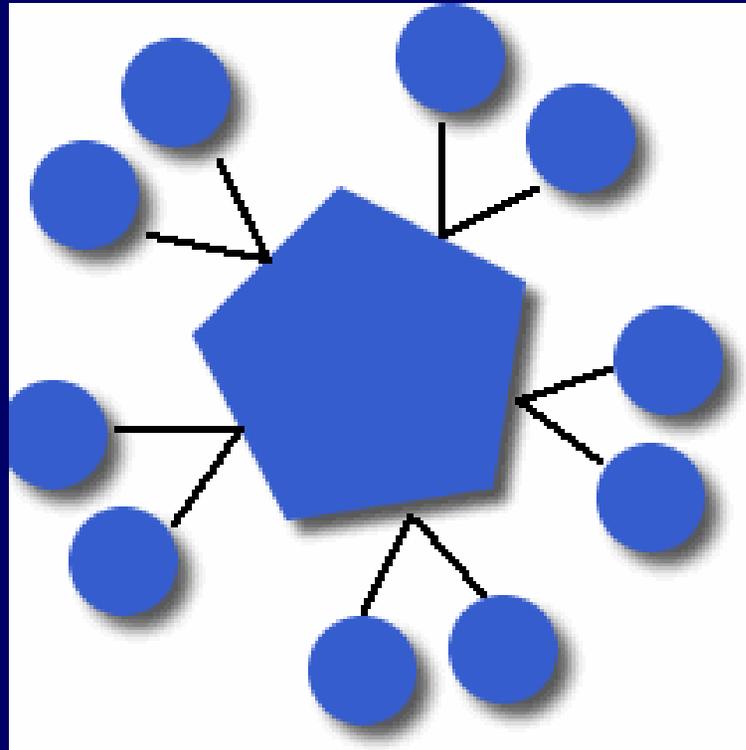
Image courtesy of the US Department of Transportation <http://ostpxweb.dot.gov>

Content is Key!!

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Content is Key….

- **Know your project**

- **Collect *more* information than you will use**

- **Focus on graphs and charts**

- **Anticipate problem areas**

Content and Visual Aids

- ## Keep them simple
  - Average attention span per slide is 8 seconds

- ## Use examples and metaphor
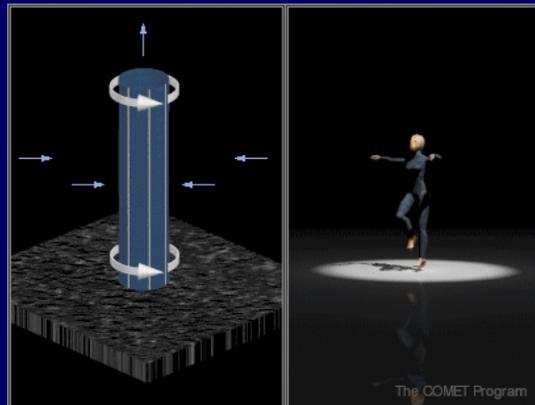
The stretching of vorticity is a difficult physical concept, but comparing it to a skater's conservation of momentum helps to clarify what we mean

Visual Arguments Need Evidence

- **Present evidence**

- **Teach with evidence**

- **Convince with evidence**

What does the Audience Expect?

t (time)= 15', T (temperature)=32°; t=0', T=25°; t=6', T=29°; t=3', T=27°; t=12', T=32°;t=9', T=31°

What does the Audience Expect?

| Time (min)	Temperature (°C)
0	25
3	27
6	29
9	31
12	32
15	32

What does the Audience Expect?

Temperature (C)	Time (min)
25	0
27	3
29	6
31	9
32	12
32	15

What about Context?

Nearly all the important questions are left unanswered by this display:

325 — Before Stricter Enforcement

Connecticut traffic deaths, Before (1955) and after (1956) stricter enforcement by the police against cars exceeding speed limit.

300 —

After Stricter Enforcement

275 —

1955   1956
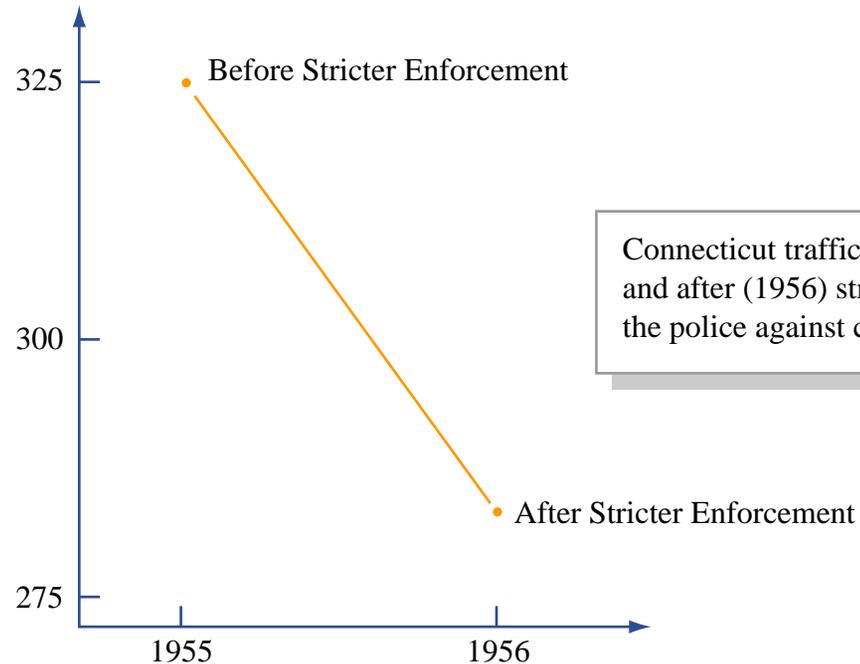
Graphics Must not Quote Data Out of Context

What about Context?

A few more data points add immensely to the account:

Connecticut Traffic Deaths, 1951-1959
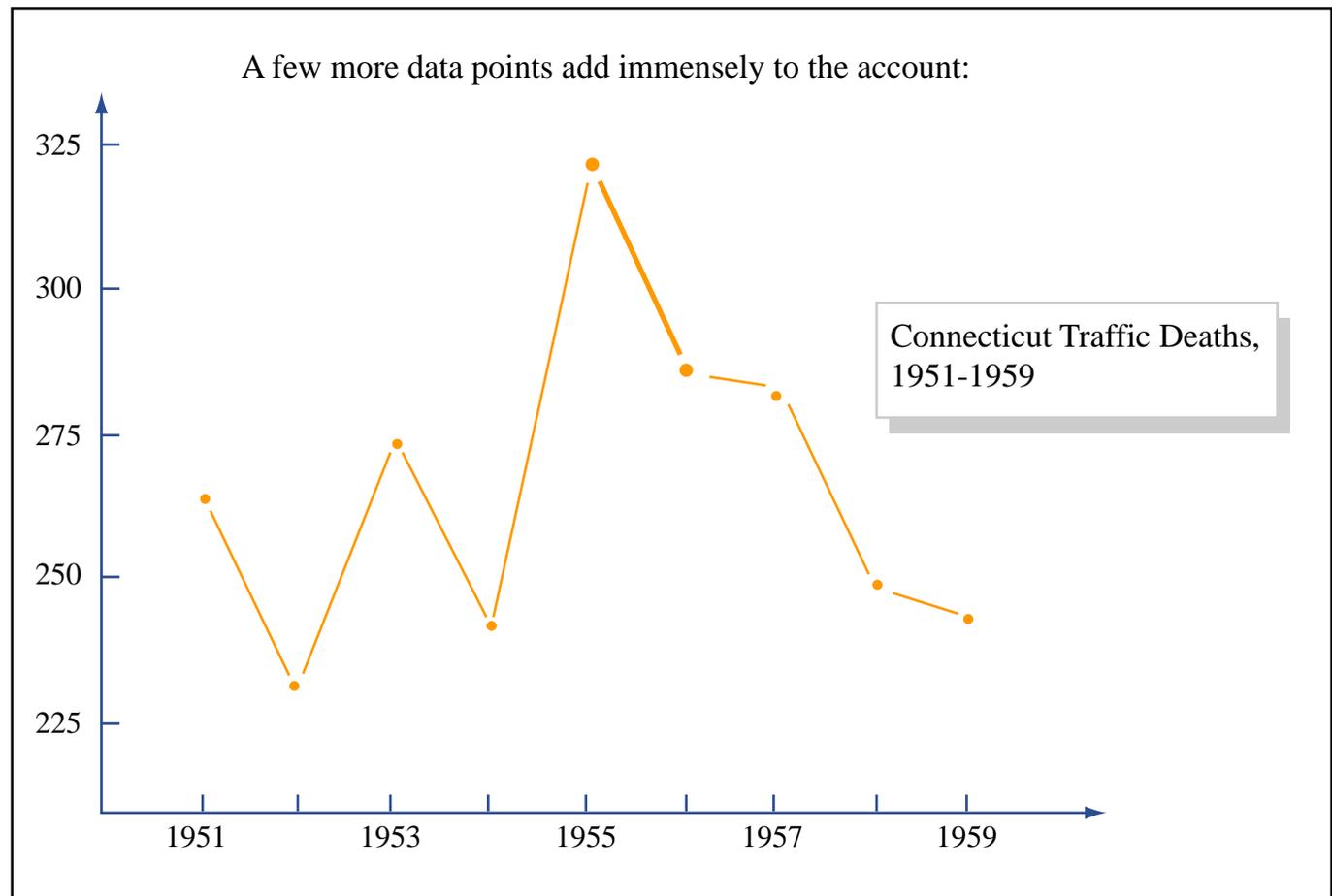
Figure by MIT OCW.

What about Context?
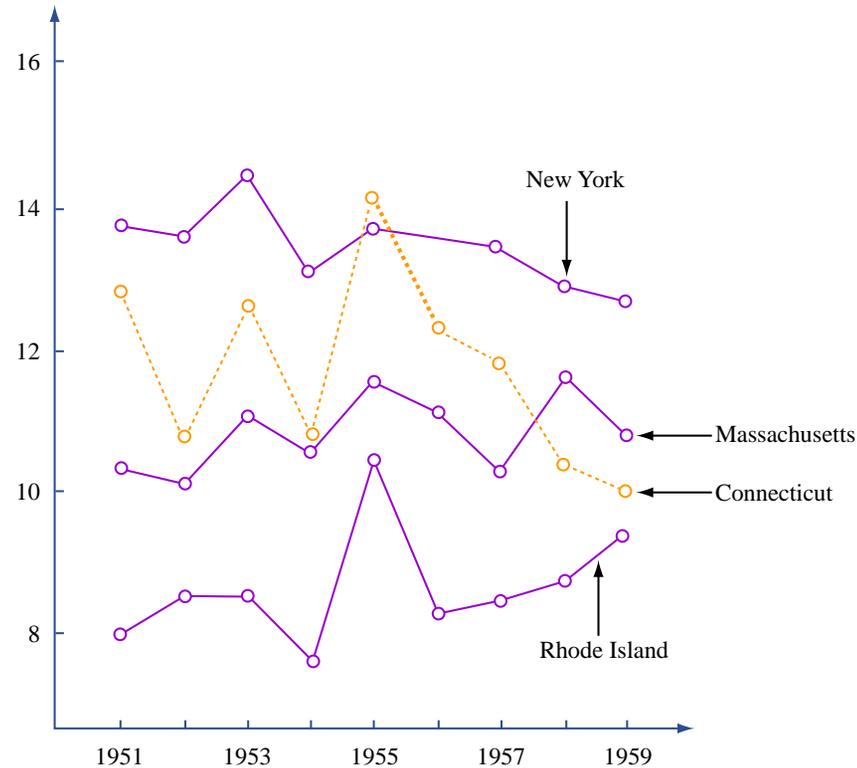
Traffic Deaths per 100,000 Person in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York, 1951-1959

Does Image Quality Matter?

- **Consider size**

- **Choose colors with care**

- **Make data accessible**

What about Size?

Figure by MIT OCW.
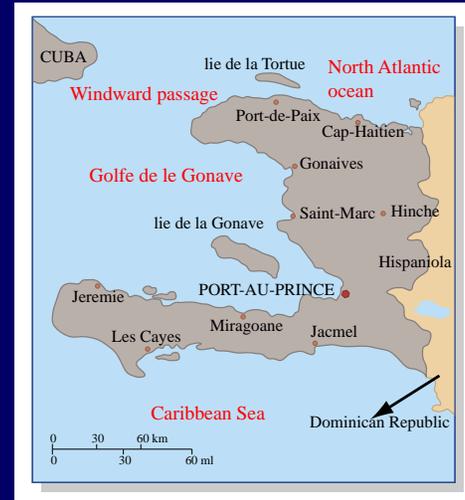
Figure by MIT OCW.

Image courtesy of the CIA <http://www.cia.gov>

What about Colors?

Figure by MIT OCW.

What about Colors?

Figure by MIT OCW.

What about Colors?

Pie chart showing color distribution:
- 45%
- 13%
- 11%
- 7%
- 3%
- 3%
- 3%
- 3%
- 2%
- 2%
- 2%
- 2%
- 2%

Legend:
- Dark Green
- Dark Red
- Bright Red
- Gray
- Slate
- Brilliant Green
- Yale Blue
- Maroon
- Brilliant Red
- Auto Gray
- Light Green
- White
- Natural
- 30 Others (<2% each)
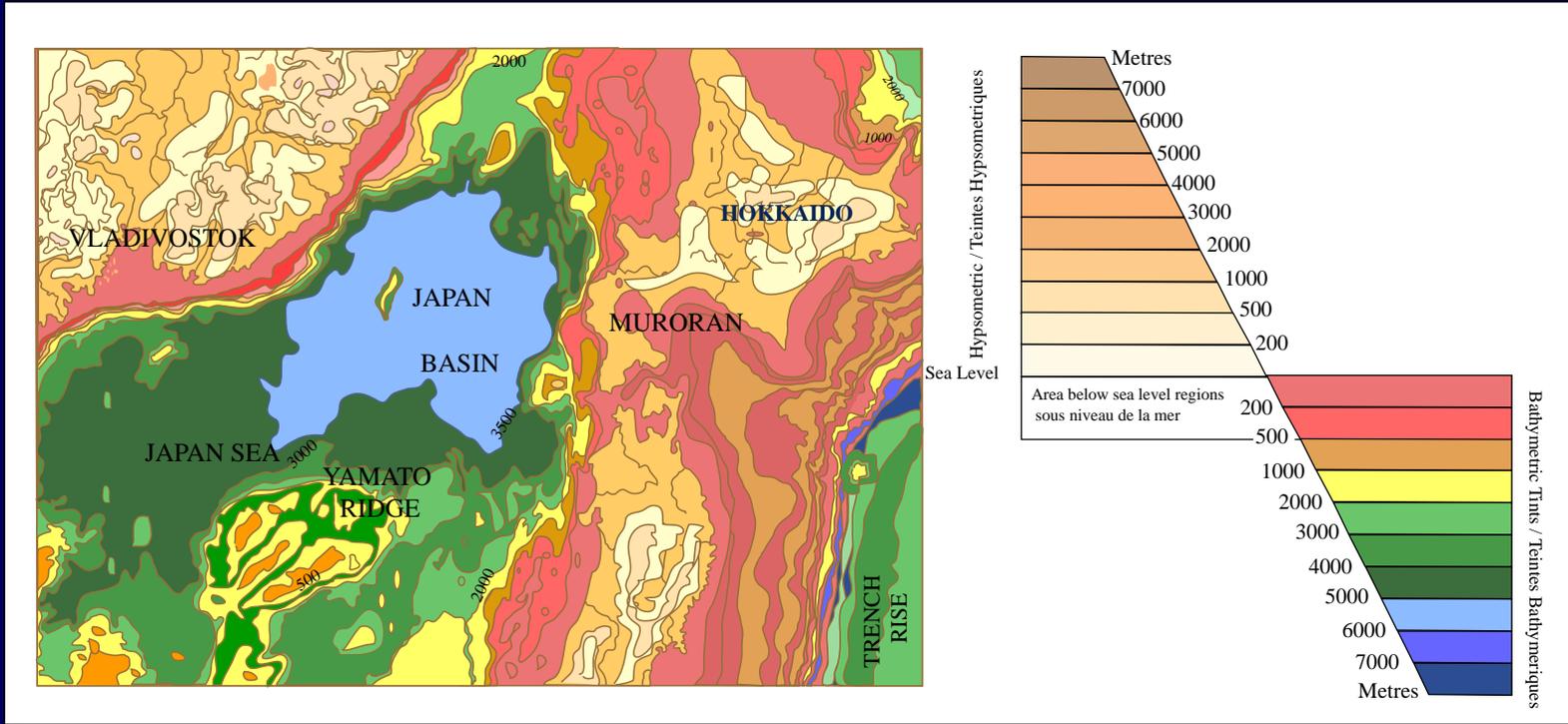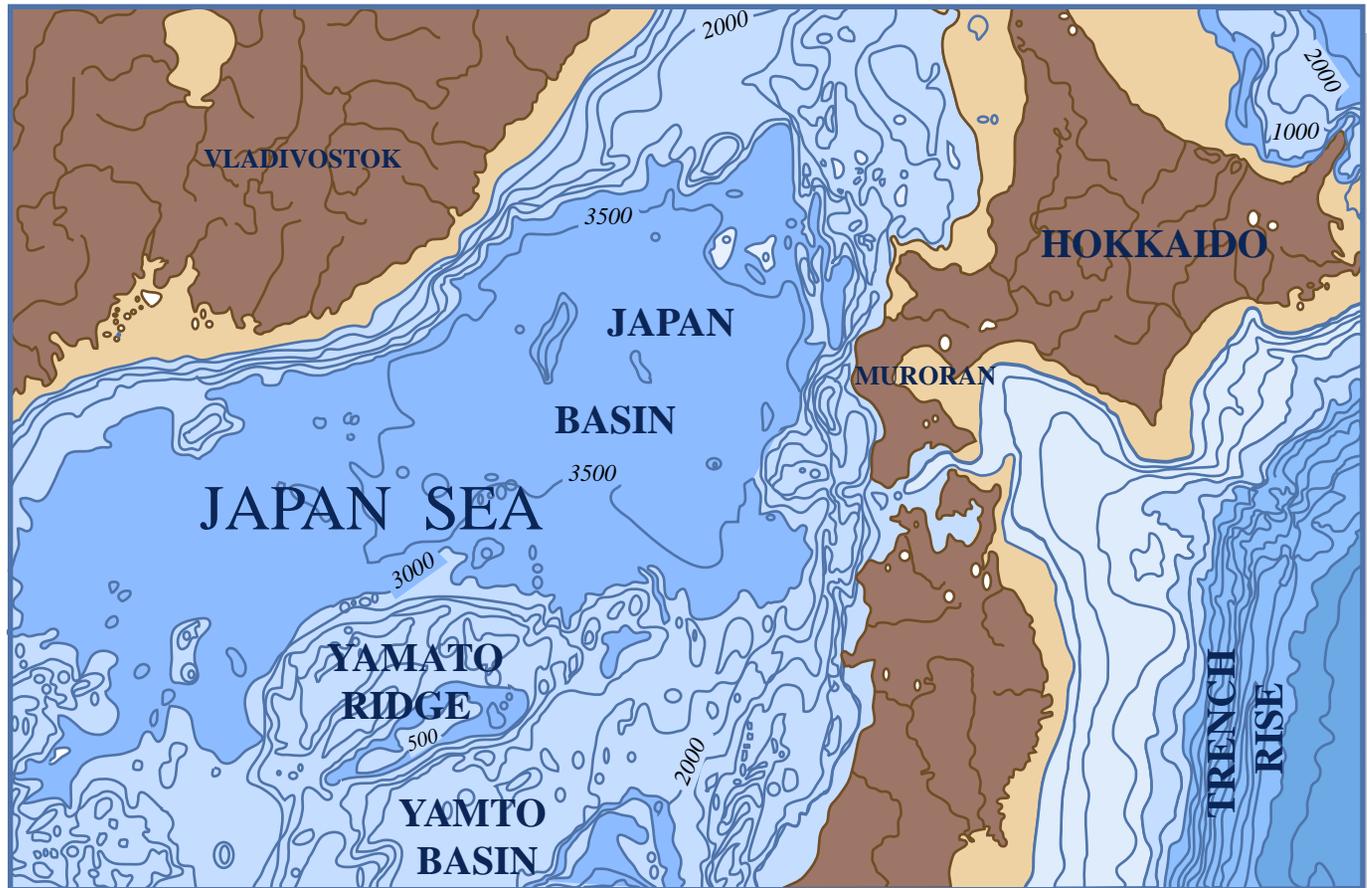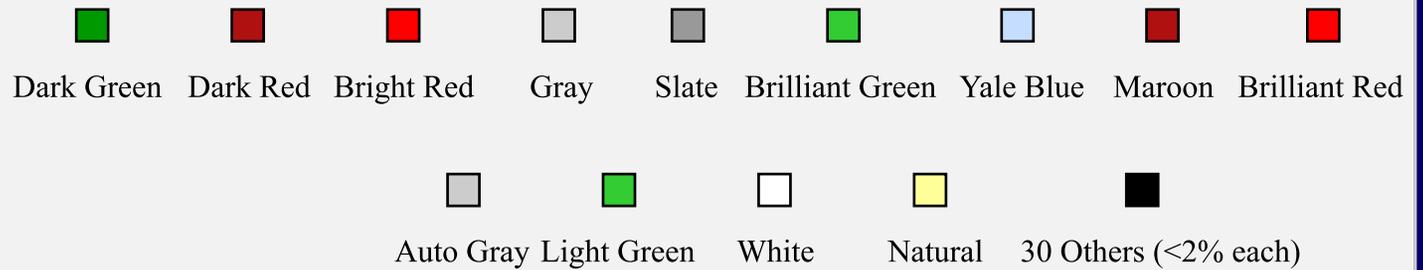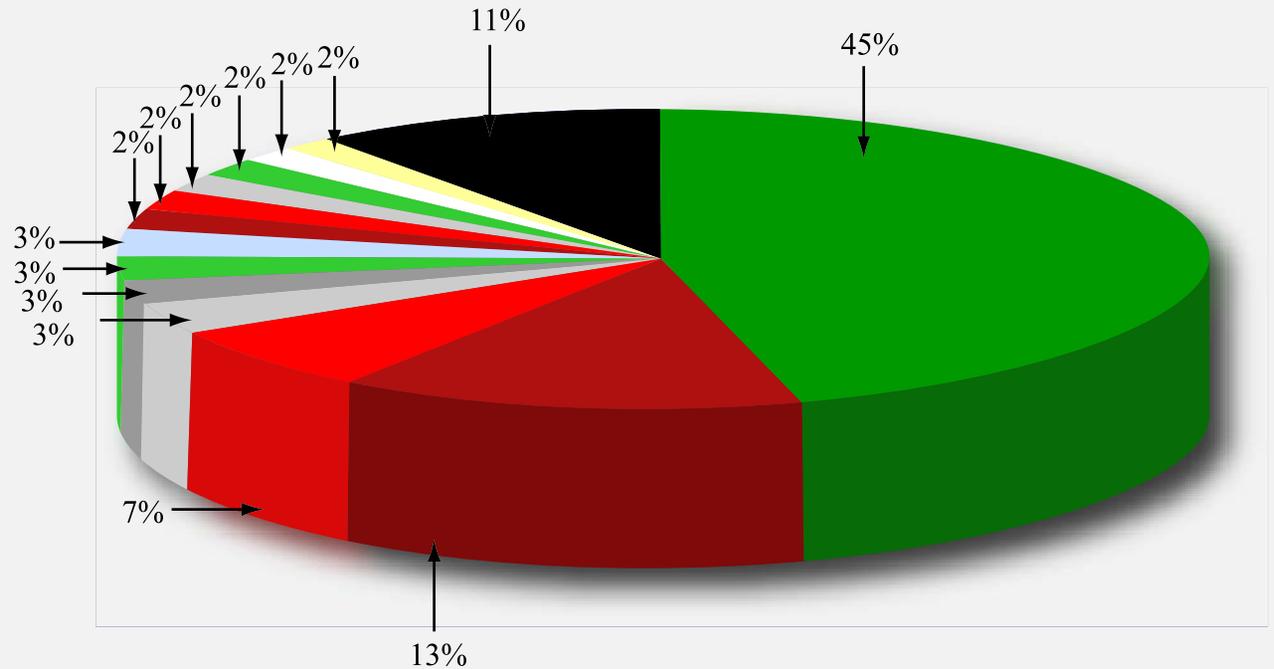
Make Data Accessible

| I | | II | | III | | IV | |
X	Y	X	Y	X	Y	X	Y
10.0	8.04	10.0	9.14	10.0	7.46	8.0	6.58
8.0	6.95	8.0	8.14	8.0	6.77	8.0	5.76
13.0	7.58	13.0	8.74	13.0	12.74	8.0	7.71
9.0	8.81	9.0	8.77	9.0	7.11	8.0	8.84
11.0	8.33	11.0	9.26	11.0	7.81	8.0	8.47
14.0	9.96	14.0	8.10	14.0	8.84	8.0	7.04
6.0	7.24	6.0	6.13	6.0	6.08	8.0	5.25
4.0	4.26	4.0	3.10	4.0	5.39	19.0	12.50
12.0	10.84	12.0	9.13	12.0	8.15	8.0	5.56
7.0	4.82	7.0	7.26	7.0	6.42	8.0	7.91
5.0	5.68	5.0	4.74	5.0	5.73	8.0	6.89
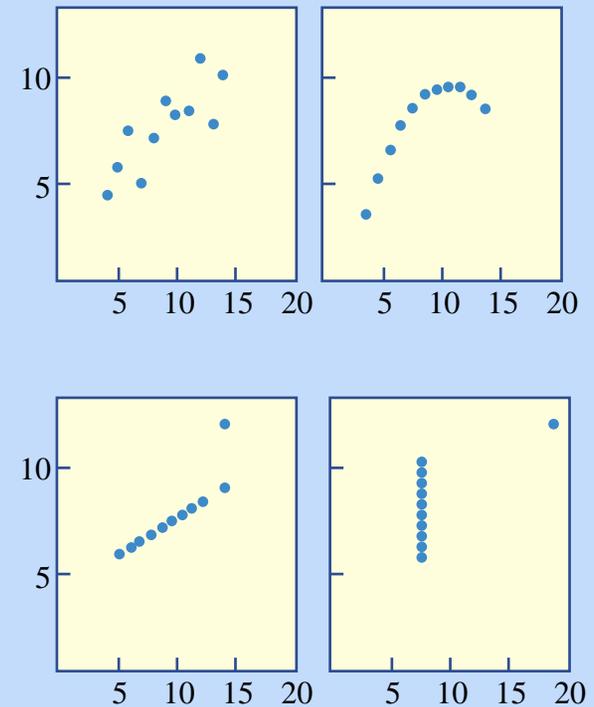
Figure by MIT OCW.

Focus on the Overall Composition

- **What is the eye drawn to?**

- **Where does the reader want to focus?**

- **"Less is More"**

- **Avoiding chart junk**

What is the eye drawn to?

Image removed due
to copyright restrictions.

Where Does the Reader want to Focus?

Image removed due
to copyright restrictions.

What are Credible Visual Arguments?

- **The integrity of the graphic is key**

- **Include careful comparisons**

- **Document everything**

Lack of Graphical Integrity

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Faulty Comparisons

Image removed due
to copyright restrictions.

What are Emotional Arguments?

- **Have a single message**

- **Appeal to our hearts**

- **Stir us inside**

- **Move us to action**

- **Include evidence and examples**

Image removed due
to copyright restrictions.

What can you do to help a child in China stay in school?

Image removed due
to copyright restrictions.

Prepare the Delivery

- **Focus and center yourself**

- **Be excited about your subject**

- **Be yourself—don't imitate others' styles**

Did you rehearse?

- **Practice and time briefing at least 6 times**

- **Get feedback**
  - Is your content clear?
  - Do you rock, squirm, gesture too much?
  - Is there room for improvements/adjustments?

- **What 3 questions will your audience ask you?**

Rehearse non-verbal communication
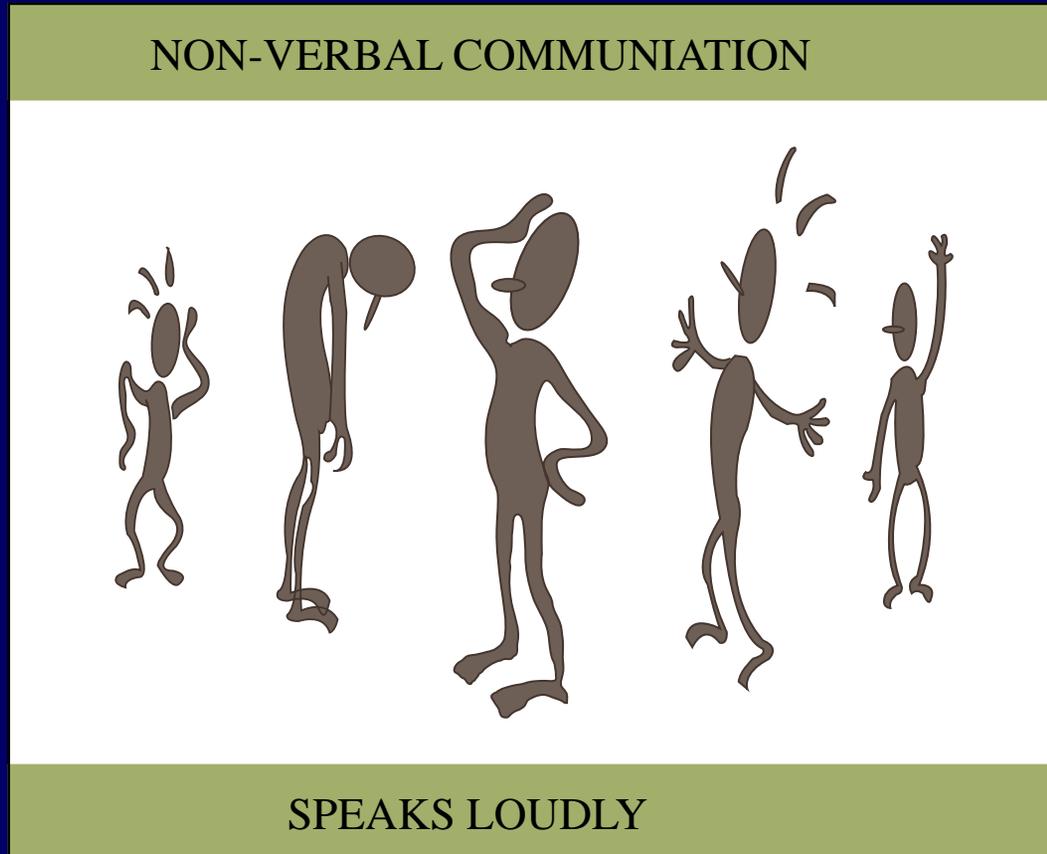
Figure by MIT OCW.

How do you connect with the audience?

- **Use the terms that your audience knows**

- **Use examples to explain new ideas**

- **Engage the audience**
  - Establish eye contact; look at *people* not the screen
  - Use friendly hand gestures
  - Speak to specific individuals if you know them

How do you connect with your audience?

- **A presentation is *two-way* communication**
  - Pay attention to audience reaction

  - Modify your talk as needed (are they listening or reading email?)

  - Look for nods, smiles and strange looks to determine if your message is being received.

The Presentation Doesn't Live on the Screen

- **Say more than you show**

- **Hand-out more than you say**

- **Leave paper trail**

The Presentation Flows Through You

- **Weave a story**

- **Why is this interesting?**

- **Include stories, examples, evidence?**

Did you prepare for questions?

- **Listen actively (nod, make eye contact)**

- **Answer the question and move on**

- **Say you don't know, if you don't know**

- **State that you will supply answers later, if necessary**

Can you finish strong?

- **Structure – pick one**

- **Content is key! -- What was your primary message?**

- **Delivery -- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse**

The Tasks….

Structure

Content

Delivery
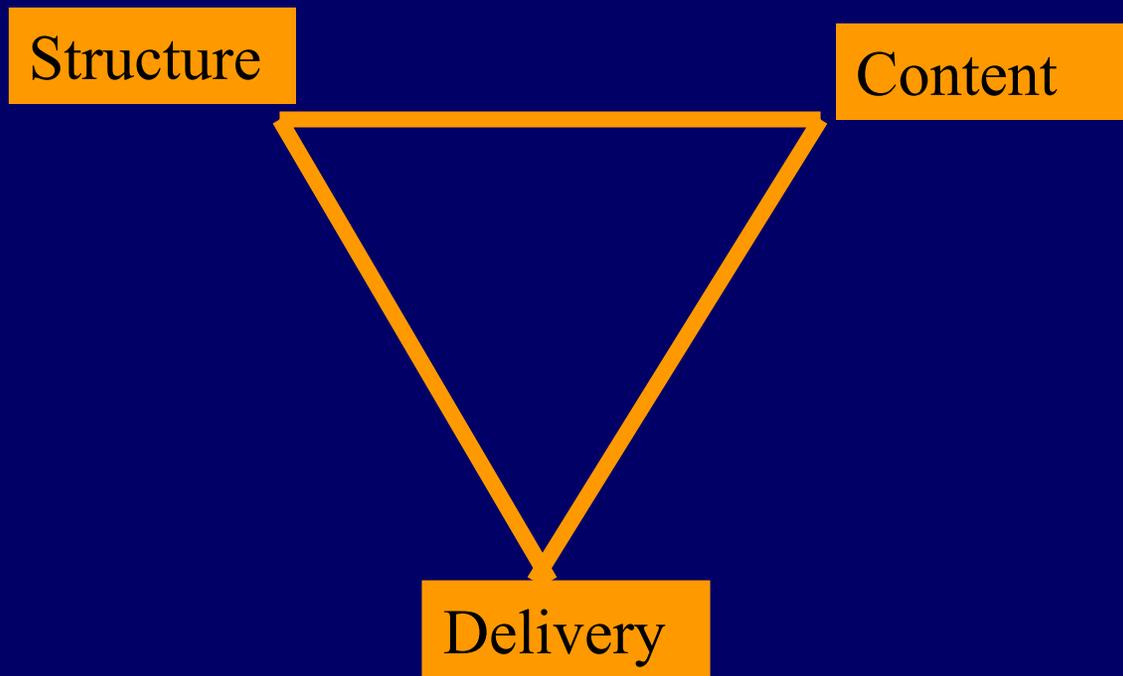
Sources

- **Purpose, Movement, Color:
  A Strategy for Effective Presentations**
  - Tom Mucciolo and Rich Mucciolo, MediaNet, Inc., 1994

- **The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking**
  - Dale Carnegie, Dale Carnegie Associates, Inc., 1962

- **The Visual Display of Quantitative Information**
  - Edward R. Tufte, Graphics Press, 1983