# Frenchie's Visual Aide Requirements

**Questions and Answers:**

**Q: Do I have to have a visual aide to have a good speech??**
A: No, but they help

**Q: Why should I use Visual Aides in my speech?**
A: While effective speaking does not require visual aides, a few well-placed visuals can add a significant amount of clarity and impact to a speech.  More importantly, they can also help your audience stay focused and have a greater retention of information.

**Q: Will a Visual Aides improve my speech?**
A: While not 100% necessary to the success of your speech, visual aides can often be the difference between a good and a great speech.  However, visuals can't save a poorly developed or delivered speech – they can only add to a speech that is already well developed and practiced.

**Q: How do I know what type of Visual aide to use?**
A: You should consider the time available, physical location, and transportation requirements when you are preparing your visual aide.  Only you will be able to decide if it is in deed appropriate for your speech.


**The Two Major Types of Visual Aides:**

1. **Static Visual Aides:** these do not change during the presentation
   - Posters
   - Overheads
   - Slides
   - Non-animated computer graphics
   - Pictures
   - Brochures

2. **Dynamic Visual Aides:** these change in some way during the presentation
   - Video clip
   - Audio
   - Animated computer graphics
   - Actual objects
   - Power Point presentations

<u>**Selecting Which Type of Visual Aide to Use:**</u>

In general, dynamic visual aides will hold an audience's attention more, but are usually more time consuming to prepare.  Dynamic visual aides also offer a greater chance for mechanical failure (jammed videos, computer crash…).

Although static visual aides may not have quite the attention getting potential as dynamic ones, they can still be very effective.  Static visual aides are also usually easier to prepare and use, but can look lower in quality.

Your choice of visual aide should depend on the requirements of the assignment, the time you have available to create and practice with them and the speaking environment.

Always remember that a simple visual aide that is used well is MUCH MORE effective than a complex one used poorly.  You should also consider the fact that you will have to transport them and store them on your speaking day.

<u>**General Rules for Visual Aides**</u>

1. **Visuals should add to the presentation, not distract from it**
   Make sure that your speech has enough substance to equal your visuals so that the audience focuses on your MESSAGE.  If your audience only remembers your visual aides, then your speech has NOT been effective.

2. **Your Visual Aides must be clearly visible and understandable by the entire audience…. <u>Aim for back row comprehension</u>.**
   **A great visual aide is useless if the audience can't see it.**
   Make sure that every member of the audience can see, read, and understand each visual.  If somebody has to squint to see, then it is too small.

3. **Use simple fonts and colors**
   Lettering styles (fonts) that are very ornamental may look cool, but some are VERY DIFFICULT to read.  If you are using a dark font, you need to have a light background… if you are using a light background, you need a dark font.

4. **The rule of 36**
   On all computer-generated items (Power Point), the SMALLEST font you should have is size 36… anything smaller than that is too hard to read.

5. **Text**
   You should NEVER have your speech word for word on your visuals!  You should also <u>not</u> use complete sentences.  Use lists or bullets to jog the memory of the audience, but do not have the audience reading your speech while you are giving it.

6. **Try to have only one piece of information on a poster/overhead/power point slide.**

   > Do not overload your visuals with too much information because they become messy and difficult to understand. Statistical information is easier for your audience to understand when presented with charts or graphs… just make sure that you follow the rule of 36.

7. **Do not distribute objects to the audience while you are speaking.**

   > A common temptation is to have the audience pass around items while you are speaking, or to distribute handouts at the beginning of your speech. Unfortunately, this distracts the audience and significantly reduces the effectiveness of your speech.

   > Distribute handouts at the end of your speech, and don't use visuals that the audience can't see from their seats. Use overhead transparencies for photographs, small objects or pamphlets, or simply scan these into the computer and put them on a power point slide.

8. **Practice your speech with your visuals**

   > Do this well ahead of time so that you can smoothly integrate them into your performance. Nothing can ruin your credibility (Ethos) faster than fumbling around with your visual aides. ALWAYS practice with your visuals so you can use them with confidence.

9. **Be prepared for disaster.**

   > Overhead projector bulbs burn out unexpectedly, posters sometimes fall down, videotapes can jam, and computers for power point can break. Always prepare an alternate plan for your presentation so that you do not have to depend on your visual aides to carry your speech.

10. **Visual aides can only add to a good speech, they CANNOT rescue a poorly developed speech**

11. **Do not put all your time and effort into your visuals at the risk of ignoring developing and practicing your speech.**

12. **Speak to your audience, not your visual aide.**

    > The audience should never see the back of your head, or your back. Keep your eye contact on the audience, and avoid the temptation to constantly look at or read from your visuals. In the case of power point, you should print out the slides and put them on note cards.

**13**.  **<span style="color:red">Keep video and audio presentations short and to the point.</span>**
Do not make the audience wait for the important part – start with the tape cued up to the right spot and make sure the tape is high quality.  Push play, and then turn on the TV.  There is nothing worse than having the TV loud static come on, or having to wait for you to get things prepared.  Get it set up before you start your speech.  You need to have the tape cued up BEFORE you walk in the room.  Your clip should not exceed 15 seconds.

**14**.  **<span style="color:red">Make sure your visuals are set up and ready to go BEFORE you start</span>**
You need to be ready to go as soon as you open your mouth… even if that means coming in before your class and setting things up.