Delivering Research Presentations

Learning the Skill

It takes planning to put together an effective research presentation. If you are called upon to create and deliver a research presentation, use the following techniques:

• Narrow the focus of your topic. Do not try to cover too much material. Ask questions that are related to your topic, and answer them completely and thoroughly in your presentation.

• Develop the topic with facts, details, examples, and explanations from several sources.

• Prepare notes and practice delivering the presentation in front of friends or family (or even a mirror).

Practicing the Skill

Directions: Berber is the name given to North Africa’s original inhabitants. Read the passage below about the Berbers, and then answer the questions that follow.

The word Berber comes from the Greek barbaros or barbarian, which means “foreigner.” Berbers may have descended from several different groups dating as far back as 50,000 years. Because Berbers have mixed with so many other ethnic groups throughout their long history, especially Arabs, they are usually identified today by their language, rather than by their ethnicity.

The Berber population around the world is about 22 million. Berbers make up about 40 percent of Morocco’s population, 30 percent of Algeria’s population, and about 1 percent of Tunisia’s population.

Most Berbers were Christians until their conquest by Muslim Arabs in the A.D. 600s. They lived along the North African coast until Arab armies drove many Berber tribes inland into the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and other areas. Many Berbers converted to Islam during this time, but they kept some of their native traditions.

In the centuries that followed, the Berbers, Arabs, Spanish, Portuguese, and Ottoman invaders all struggled for power in North Africa. Berbers in the mountainous regions fought to stay independent. These fierce Berbers battled against French and Spanish occupation of Morocco and Algeria in the 1800s and early 1900s. They also helped drive the French from Algeria in 1962.

Today relations between Arabs and Berbers, especially in Algeria, can be tense. Berbers rebelled against Arab rule from 1963 to 1965 and have continued to fight against Arab discrimination. Many native Berbers around the world have developed a movement to call themselves Imazighen (“free men”) in the Berber language, which is Tamazight.

In 2005 a National Geographic Magazine team visited the town of Tamalout, tucked away in Morocco’s rugged Atlas Mountains. The Berbers they met were friendly. Men in turbans and white smocks threshed grain, plowed
fields of wheat and alfalfa by mule, and reaped crops by hand. Barefoot boys prodded cattle with sticks, and women carried water on their backs.

Homes are squat houses, in which the ground floor serves as a stable for the family's animals—perhaps a mule, a cow, and a few chickens. Some remote villages are without running water or electricity. Berbers have lived this way—in tents and clay huts in rural areas or in stone houses in larger villages—for thousands of years. Today these rural Berbers are playing an important role by preserving traditions that are being eroded in other parts of North Africa, especially in cities.

Traditional Berber families are patrilineal, or headed by men, but today many of those men must often leave their rural villages to find work in cities. Women remain behind to teach the Tamazight language to the next generation, and to scratch out a living on the mountain farms.

1. **Formulating Questions** Based on the passage above, write three questions that you could use as the basis of research for a presentation about the Berbers.

   1. 
   2. 
   3. 

2. **Identifying** Which of the following sections of the library would be the best place to begin your research on this topic? Circle the letter of the correct answer.

   A. Literature
   B. Computer Science
   C. World History
   D. Biographies

3. **Specifying** Some topics are too broad to cover in short presentations. You must narrow the focus of your research in order to cover your topic more easily. One way to do this is to focus on a specific time or place, specific individuals or groups, or a particular feature of the topic. Here is an example of how to narrow a topic:

   - North Africa
   - Egypt
   - The Nile River in Egypt
   - Importance of the Nile River to farmers in Egypt
   - Irrigation techniques used by Egyptian farmers
Using this technique, narrow the focus of the topic "The Berbers" in four steps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Main idea</th>
<th>Details that support main idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Applying the Skill**

**Directions:** Prepare a five-minute research presentation on the Berber topic you narrowed above. Use the library or Internet to find at least three sources of information on your topic. Collect information and cite your sources on the lines below.

Your topic: ____________________________

Source 1: ____________________________
Main idea of source 1: ____________________________
Details that support main idea: ____________________________

Source 2: ____________________________
Main idea of source 2: ____________________________
Details that support main idea: ____________________________

Source 3: ____________________________
Main idea of source 3: ____________________________
Details that support main idea: ____________________________
Speaking and Listening Skills Activity
continued

After you have completed your research, use the space below to prepare notes for your presentation. Practice your delivery. Then deliver your presentation to your class.

Assessment Checklist
Assess your research presentation using the checklist below:

☐ Narrowed focus of my topic
☐ Asked questions and answered them completely
☐ Used facts, details, and examples from several sources
☐ Prepared notes
☐ Practiced ahead of time
☐ Spoke clearly and made eye contact during the presentation