# Developing your 3MT entry

Taking part in the 3 Minute Thesis Competition (3MT) is an excellent opportunity for you to develop your communication skills and share your research and passion for it with the broader research community. This document contains tips and suggestions for preparing your 3MT entry, which will be via video submission for 2024.

Further information about the 3MT competition including eligibility, timeline, rules and judging criteria can be found on the [3MT 2024 page of the doctoral school blog](https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/doctoralschool/training-and-development-2/3mt-three-minute-thesis-competition/3mt-competition-2024/)

## See what other people have done.

Watch a few examples of previous 3MT presentations from the Vitae 3MT competition archives <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/events/three-minute-thesis-competition>

* What do you think the presenter did well?
* What do you think could be improved?

## Condensing your research into 3 minutes

Deciding what content to include is one of the more difficult things. It needs to be something that will resonate with your audience and could be just a subset of your thesis or a particular angle on it. Make sure you are clear on the background to your research and why it is important and consider how much detail people really need. You need to emphasise what is unique about your thesis and focus on the impact on the audience.

## Think about how to structure your talk.

Academic writing typically takes the format of: Background > Methods > Results > Conclusions whereas journalistic writing starts with the summary and drills down to the detail: Headlines > So what? > What do others think? > How did you do it? An effective way to structure your 3MT could be a combination of the two e.g.

* Key message
* Why important? (to your audience)
* What is the background?
* What are you studying?
* How are you studying it?
* What are you finding?
* What does this mean in general?
* What does this mean to the audience?

## Designing your slide

You have a single slide which is there to support your presentation. Make sure it fits with what you are saying and the story you want to tell. Visuals are important but don’t overfill the slide or make it difficult for your audience to navigate. Think about how self-explanatory it is and how much time people need to understand it. A figure that you have prepared for your thesis or a publication is probably not the best to use in this context – it needs to be simpler.

## More top tips

In the examples below, bullet points have been used to indicate the main points. Please visit the pages and view the short videos for more tips on things you can do to prepare and common mistakes to avoid.

[University of Queensland 3MT competitor guide](https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au/resources/3mt-competitor-guide)

3MT drafting.

* Write for your audience.
* Tell a story.
* Have a clear outcome in mind.
* Revise.

3MT slide

* Less is more.
* Personal touches.
* Creativity drives interest.
* Work your message.
* Legible, clear and concise.

3MT presentation

* Practice, practice, practice.
* Vocal range.
* Body language.
* Record yourself.
* Look to the stars!
* Dress.

Top tips for communicating research in this useful guide to [presenting your research effectively and with confidence](https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/presenting-your-research-effectively-and-with-confidence/) Taylor & Francis. Advice from winners of the Vitae 3MT competition.

1. Seize the opportunity.
2. Engage the audience with a real-world example they can relate to.
3. Remember the bigger picture.
4. Tell a story.
5. Practice, practice, practice.
6. Have fun.

[3MT: three tips to help you prepare a winning presentation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9czKztZK1I) (Australian National University)

1. Think about your slide.
2. Change or save the world.
3. Let it go.

[Winning Tips for Preparing a Successful Three-Minute Thesis 3MT® Presentation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_1MK3Ub9QM) (Ohio University)

1. Speech layout (big picture, smaller picture, your research question).
2. Slide layout (images and text).
3. Word/Phrase Choice (words I say/what I mean).

[How to do a Three Minute Thesis (3MT) or Famelab | Don't make these mistakes!](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pv_6TNLO0ik) (Stemventurist)

1. Lack of preparation.
2. No hook.
3. Uneven structure.
4. Too much content.
5. And, and, and.
6. Not seeking feedback.
7. Too many analogies.
8. Bad props (note: you are not permitted to use props for 3MT).
9. Finishing weak.

[Presentation tips for PhD’s | Improve your Three Minute Thesis (3MT) or Famelab Performance](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC0mu1pI0PY) (Stemventurist)

1. What to wear
2. Dealing with nerves
3. Being on stage

[3MT: the three most common mistakes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nr9yRkqYNOs) (Australian National University)

1. Failing to connect with the bigger picture.
2. Not working hard enough to engage the audience with the research.
3. Neglecting the visual component.