

## **Science Communication for Plant Breeding Tips**

### **How to write a blog on your research?**

1. Keep things short. A good length for a blog post is 500 to 800 words.
  2. The primary audience for this blog is the general public. So:
    - Start with the question (the one assigned), and make sure your conclusion addresses the question again
    - Keep your explanations simple
    - Don't worry about being an absolute subject-matter expert. Being relatable is the most important factor in blogging
    - Avoid technical terms and jargon
    - Use a conversational, informal tone
    - Write with examples for your points whenever you can
    - Use concrete, specific language in your post
    - The goal is for the post to read at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level
  3. Identify photos to go along with your post, whenever possible, these are more memorable than the text
  4. A good way to check the reading level is the hemingway application <http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>
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### **How to message your research?**

1. Keep things short.
  2. Follow the message triangle:
    - Key point one (Broad), with up to three supporting sub-points
    - Key point two (Narrow), with up to three supporting sub-points
    - Key point three is the call to action
  3. The primary audience is the general public
    - a. Start with the question and make sure your key point answers this question
    - b. Keep your explanations simple
    - c. Avoid technical terms and jargon
    - d. Use a conversational, informal tone
    - e. Make sure your examples relate to your key points
    - f. Avoid tangents that are scientifically interesting but not related to your key point
    - g. Use concrete, specific language
  4. Use data and facts woven into stories to make your message more relatable
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### **Tips for speaking to non-scientific audiences**

1. You are more interesting than your science
  - How is science part of your everyday life?
  - How did you come up with the question you were asking?
  - What were the problems associated with doing the experiments?
2. Body Language
  - Speak clearly (usually this means slowing down)

- It is okay to use your hands but don't flail
  - It is okay to move about, but don't constantly pace
3. Voice
    - Changing volume helps you make a point
    - Talking speed can help you make a point
    - Silence is your friend
    - Tone (high or low) can help you make a point
  4. The primary audience is the general public.
    - Keep your explanations simple.
    - Don't worry about being an absolute subject-matter expert, be able to explain the general concepts
    - Avoid technical terms and jargon
    - Use a conversational, informal tone
    - Have examples for your points whenever you can
    - Use concrete, specific language
    - The goal is for the post to read at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level
  5. Identify photos/figures that are general and help tell your story, do not use the figures you would for a science talk or article.
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### **The Audience Factor: Tips to remove tension**

*As a speaker everyone desires listeners but also fears the audience. It important to understand that what one perceives to be the audience and what the audience actually is will change a speaker's stress level*

1. Audience factors to consider
  - Size
    - Think of the talk as an enlarged conversation, there is no magic number of people that transfer it to "speech land"
  - Familiarity with the speaker
    - Finding connecting points with your audience is a good way to remove tension from the experience, most people feel better in a room of their peers
  - Degree of agreement with the speaker
    - Tension is increased when the audience is hostile to your position, DON'T PANIC, try and find legitimate common ground, have a conversation
  - Degree of perceived power over the speaker
    - Be aware that if you perceive power differences this will impact your tensions, this is normal, remember that the talk is a conversation and you are the expert on the material you are presenting
  - The audiences evaluative function
    - Remember that you receive positive as well as negative from the audience, try to avoid focusing only on negative feedback
2. The Speaker needs to understand
  - The observational ability of the listeners
    - People do not see your inner turmoil, most listeners observe only your outward positive persona
  - How to accurately evaluate audience reactions
    - Often speakers misinterpret audience reactions, do not become overly concerned with a few audience members thus increasing your tension
  - What the audience desires
    - Most audiences want you to succeed, they want to relax and enjoy their experience, do not assume that your audience is out to get you