

## English 2 (Environmental Ethics) Presentation Possibilities and Guidelines

-->Remember that to qualify for an A in the course, you must have A/A- grades on your papers, an A journal, sufficient volunteer time, and you must give a class presentation. (Presentations are optional for those not striving for an A course grade.)

The main purposes of presentations are the following:

- to get students' ideas and inquiries out on the floor for class discussion;
- to connect readings to the larger themes of the class;
- to practice engaging in academic argument.

Select a date on the class calendar (in instructor's possession) and sign up on your own or with one or two other class members. Choose one or more chapters or essays from *Next of Kin*, the *Environmental Ethics* text, or *Reason for Hope* on which to concoct a presentation. Make sure each presenter participates actively in the presentation. For your presentation, do the following:

- (1) Summarize the reading's main points for the class.
- (2) Connect these to the class's overall themes.
- (3) Show two or more different perspectives on the issues involved.
- (4) Engage the class in discussion about the reading. (See possibilities below.)
- (5) Offer your own evaluation and input: Connect the reading to your own experience or observations.
- (6) Formulate one or more concise take-home messages to the class about the reading.

For example, Roger Fouts in *Next of Kin*, Chapter 13, questions the scientific validity of using chimpanzees in medical and toxics research. You could review this chapter for the class, then hold a debate on the issue of testing on animals, perhaps distinguishing between medical, toxics, and cosmetics research.

As another example, you could develop a dialogue/debate between Tom Regan and Aldo Leopold: the former promotes individual rights, while the latter promotes ecocentrism: the rights of the land. Tom Regan in his essay, "The Case for Animal Rights," has implied that Aldo Leopold's philosophy in "The Land Ethic" is "environmental fascism." What would these two say to one another?

Or consider Eugene C. Hargrove's "Anglo-American Land Use Attitudes," in which he discusses Thomas Jefferson's idealized view of the American farmer. Contrast this with Garrett Hardin's more jaded view of the farmer in "Tragedy of the Commons."

You are the expert(s) on whichever chapter or essay you choose. This means that you should read and re-read it and know what its major points are as well as your responses to them.

If you are shy or nervous about commandeering a class discussion, all the better reason to have the reading — not you — be the center of attention. You can be more of a facilitator. Your presentation is not graded per se; only the absence of it counts against your course grade.

To make the presentation engaging and meaningful to the class, you need to think of ways of conveying the material that will stimulate discussion. There is a wealth of possibilities. Here are some: --->

1. Bring in information about the topic from other sources (interviews, internet, print, etc.) to connect to the reading and present to the class.

2. Pose questions related to the reading to the class for freewriting in their journals and subsequent discussion.

3. Actively debate different perspectives on the topic. The presenters can do this themselves first, then ask the class's viewpoints. Or, if it is a topic that class members may know something about already, break the class into two or more groups, and facilitate their debate of the issues. What is also interesting is then to require the groups to switch viewpoints.

4. Create another exercise for the class that will spark discussion. For example, break the class into small groups, giving each a different question. Or ask class members ahead of time to bring in items relevant to your topic. Or get the class to brainstorm ideas and associations from words connected to your reading, writing it all on the board. Think of role-plays that could illustrate your reading's major points.

5. Bring in a DVD/video clip or another relevant media piece that would enhance discussion.

Plan to spend at least 30 minutes of class time--or certainly more than that if you'd like.