

attending a briefing by a member of the Explainers program, who lays out their mission for the day. An aircraft carrying sensitive technology has gone down behind enemy lines. Players need to do reconnaissance and plan a recovery mission that will bring the tech back home.

After their briefing, players are released into the museum. Throughout their visit, they alternate between solving puzzles and meeting with other Explainers to take part in reconnaissance activities. Each activity is based around an artifact in the collection. Players learn to analyze aerial photos, read maps, and use other tools for gathering information. At the end of their quest, armed with the intelligence they've collected, they attend a final debriefing and put their recovery plan into action. Once they've succeeded, they receive a medal and a special code to access a "secret" part of Udvar-Hazy's website, where they can learn more about the artifacts they encountered during the game and hear stories from some of the people that used them.

I expect this trend of interpretive ARGs to continue. More than just a "gamification" of existing interpretation, they offer audiences new perspectives on the physical world around them. Some of the most positive and surprising feedback I received about Art Hunters had nothing to do with visual art at all. Players loved the exploration aspect of the game, the idea that there were new trails to blaze and mysteries to uncover in a city they thought they knew everything about. It seems that in a world swarmed with stories, what people want most is to be part of the telling.

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Bring the Message Home

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A good novel has a really exciting conclusion. A good presentation should have one too.

Unlike a novel though, your conclusion does not have to be a surprise or a cliffhanger—it should be predictable and your final words should hang in the air and stay in the mind of the listener.



A strong conclusion will:

- Bring your message home
- Tie together all your points
- Tell the audience what it is you want them to do
- Let the audience know you are through speaking

Most importantly, though, it demonstrates your competency as a speaker and shows that you are earnest about your subject.

While this is one of the most critical parts of your talk, many speakers give it inadequate attention. They reach the end of their talk and trail off into nothingness, losing the final *Wham!* the conclusion should deliver and hurting their credibility as a speaker.

As important as the conclusion is, it is generally the easiest to write. An effective and easy formula is to:

- Restate your theme
- Remind the audience of the three to five key points
- Tell them what you hope they will do next

Try plugging your details into this concluding statement:

"By now you can probably see why [your main point] is so important. We have discussed [three to five key points]. If this is of value to you then I encourage you to [action you want them to take]."

Think of it this way: Your audience is most likely to remember your final words, so choose those last thoughts carefully and deliver them with a punch!

The ending of your talk is critical; it is like the final chapter in a book, the punch line of joke, or the last chord of a song. To maximize your effectiveness as a speaker, take the time to create a well thought out, well rehearsed concluding statement.

Ethan Rotman is a presentation coach offering workshops and coaching in the San Francisco Bay area. For more information, call 415-342-7106 or visit www.iSpeakEASY.net.