

Visual Advocacy: Demonstrative Aids and Presentations

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“Education isn’t about filling a bucket, it’s about lighting a fire”

Simplicity:

“Complexity is your enemy. Any fool can make something complicated. It is hard to make something simple.” - *Richard Branson*

“If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.” - *Albert Einstein*

“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.” - *Leonardo da Vinci*

Why? Simplicity wins cases.

“Visual” advocacy simplifies. We retain about 20% of what we’re told, 60% of what we’re shown, and 80% of what we’re both told *and* shown. 21st-century humans (judges and jurors) are used to slick graphics, soundbites, YouTube videos, and Twitter. So: simplify!

How? To get from complexity to simplicity (a “baker’s dozen”):

1. **Do the work.** There is no shortcut, no way around — only through (think *Preparation*)
2. **Pay attention to detail.** Know the facts, the law (the elements you have to prove or disprove), your audience, your venue, and how to connect at your venue (gear up)
3. **Take time to think.** In the shower, on a walk, waiting in line — scrub it down
4. **Begin with the end in mind.** Start thinking about your closing argument from the *start*: What will you show and tell? What questions will you need to answer? Filter and refine
5. **Mindmap it.** Brainstorm on a whiteboard or using mindmap software; break it down: identify objectives, claims, defenses, themes, patterns, connections, weaknesses, options
6. **Make a timeline.** Start a chronology early and keep adding to it; things happen in sequence and cause other things: identify the key events and how they’re connected
7. **Think, find, and create visuals.** It’s never too early to think visually: how can you present a key idea or argument most simply in a visual way? Try visuals out on others
8. **Moot court it.** Scrub down your case: do “group chess”; even if you’re just presenting it to your spouse, kids, or cat, make it come out of your mouth and practice your visuals
9. **Relentlessly filter, scrub & polish.** Try: one page, one sentence, one excerpt, one visual
10. **Find hardware and software that work for you.** (Hardware:) laptop, tablet, projector, Apple TV; (Software:) Keynote, PowerPoint (linear); TrialPad (free form); iMovie, HandBrake (to convert video); Timeline 3D (timeline presentation software)
11. **Have a backup.** Because Murphy’s Law: think Apollo 13, Plan B, and extra sandbags...
12. **Observe others.** Steve Jobs, Apple Events, TED Talks, YouTube; a closing argument demo using Sanction software: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRUIZcPeSrl>
13. **Develop your own style.** Be yourself, be creative, practice (a lot) — give it a shot!