

Necessities

1. Every effort is made to tailor the performances to be "age-appropriate." This is accomplished by adjusting the vocabulary and the depth of content, but not the slides or the volunteer-participation activities. (The performer is a former teacher who has taught K-12 and college level students for more than 20 years and has raised 3 children of his own.) If, however, the small size of your group or its budget requires that the audience encompass a wider than 3-year age span, the youngest audience members will need to grasp what they can, since the performer needs to gear most of the performance to the older students. Study of the vocabulary sheets before the show will help the youngest students, but the visual nature of the performance and the dynamic acting has always contributed greatly toward holding their attention.
2. If there is any question concerning the content of the performance as it relates to your audience, please request to preview the show at another school or to view an outline. These productions are not merely slide shows -- they are about the artist's life and times, not just their art. They are based on the actual words, quoted or written. The purpose is to give insight into why they created art the way they did and to inspire your students to become geniuses, no matter how challenging their own lives have been so far.
3. You must read the contract:
 - dates and times correct?
 - did you write up directions and/or draw a simple map?
 - are all the technical requirements do-able?
4. The length of the show (the running time) does NOT include the time necessary to bring the students from their classrooms to the performing area to be seated and back. Please budget time (usually 10 to 15 minutes) for these maneuvers.
5. Due to the nature of the performance (audience interaction, volunteers, and potential technical problems) not all shows run the same length. If the performance is running long and there's no way to adjust for it, just have someone step up to the side of the performing area to get my attention and I'll wrap it up within 5 minutes. Simply turning on the lights is disrespectful and models disrespect in front of the students. If a shorter show than normal is requested from the beginning, someone in charge will need to review an outline of the show to suggest which portions you wish to cut in order to shorten the normal running time.
6. You must measure the performance space with a tape measure or with an accurate count of floor tiles (12 inch or 9 inch squares) and/or cinder blocks (8 inches tall and 16 inches wide) -- inaccurate estimates have spoiled many a show! "There is no certainty in science, where mathematics can not be applied." -- Leonardo Da Vinci

7. You must choose your volunteers before they walk into the performing space to avoid lengthening the performance time. Volunteers should sit in the front or along the sides of the seating area to ensure quick access to and from the performing area. If you need to read their names off a list, that's okay. I'll simply ask for the category.
8. All windows need to be blacked out. All lights need to be turned off at the time of the introduction. Most gymnasiums today have mercury vapor lights that take many minutes to re-light the room. Since the lights that I use to light the performing area involve 2,500 watts of illumination, the students should have no trouble exiting the gym while the mercury vapor lights are warming up since my lights will remain on and will give adequate visibility for safety. If the performing area has emergency lights, for the sake of the slide presentation it would be best if these were temporarily turned off or at least covered -- especially if they shine down directly above or in front of the projection screen (the corner of the gym on the audience's right hand side). For a Monet and Van Gogh this is absolutely essential.
9. There is no need for a center aisle -- these are the best seats in the house! Seating should not be arranged so that the audience wraps around the performing area, since slides are part of the show and they become less luminous the more they are viewed at an acute angle toward the projection screen.
10. If the students are sitting on the floor, it is advisable to allow the youngest who are often seated first in front, to stand at their places until everyone has arrived for the performance -- otherwise they have to sit the longest.
11. If the students are sitting on the floor, it is best if the performing area is raised or the class or classes seated at the back of the audience are elevated in some way -- such as on chairs. If the entire audience is sitting in chairs on the same level, it is also advisable to have a raised performing area and it may be necessary for the class or classes seated at the back of the audience to be permitted to stand during certain parts of the presentation in order to see over all the students seated in front of them.
12. A brief introduction as the character I portray, concluding with welcoming applause, is necessary to let me know when everyone is ready for me to begin.
13. Students should have a thorough understanding of the difference between a live presentation and a television show -- that sharing thoughts with their neighbor during the show is disrespectful to the performer who hears everything they say, and is disrespectful to the other audience members who can't hear the performer over their voices. Live performances are two way communication between each individual audience member and the performer.

14. Since most students are quite capable of sitting for one and a half or two hours to watch a movie, they should be expected to be able to take care of their washroom needs before the performance and not have to exit during the show. This performer, however, has no problem with students, who have an emergency, exiting without permission as long as the total number exits are as few as possible.
15. Relax and enjoy the show: educational, insightful, but always high-spirited. Your audience should leave invigorated and inspired.