



УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ИТМО

Workshop

**Working with audience and
answering questions during the
defense**

April, 2021

Today we're going to find out

- How to make the audience analysis
- How to keep your audience and involved
- How to answer ANY Question During Your Defense Q&A Session



“Audiences are always right. The audience is the speaker’s only customer.”
Max Atkinson



Reasons why an audience may not listen to you?



Self-focused approach

“What do I want to say?”

The curse of knowledge

You fail to put your audience in content

Audience-focused approach

“What does my audience need to hear or learn?”

Your content scaffolds their knowledge

Everybody likes to talk about themselves

Know your audience

- Gender
- Age
- Values
- Cultural background
- Ethnicity / religious background
- **socioeconomic status:** group membership, the level of income, level of education
- Size
- Goals
- Problems
- Expectations
- Emotional state
- Level of energy
- Their attitude toward the topic / speaker
- level of knowledge
- physical setting

Ask yourself:

- What **knowledge** and past experience have my audience had with my topic?
- What **attitudes** and emotions will my audience likely have towards my topic?
- What **areas** of resistance or hesitation will my audience likely have toward my topic?



What audience's beliefs, attitudes, values, concerns, and other variables should you consider during the defense?



Consider Audience Diversity

avoid racism, ethnocentrism,
sexism, ageism, elitism, and
other assumptions



Avoid Offending Your Audience

1. Be accurate; present the facts accurately
2. Be aware of the emotional impact; make sure that you don't manipulate feelings.
3. **Avoid hateful words**; refrain from language that disparages or belittles people.
4. Be sensitive to the audience; know how audience members prefer to be identified



Audience-connecting techniques

- Ask your audience to participate
- Ask your audience to visualize the outcome or situation
- Rephrasing information as questions
- Focus on the relevance of your topic to your audience
- “Think pair share”
- Create a common experience



Introduction

greeting

self-presentation

compliment to
your audience

mainstreaming

announcing the
plan

regulation

strong facts

big figures

story

your feelings

strong question

good joke

Discuss in pairs and share your results with a group

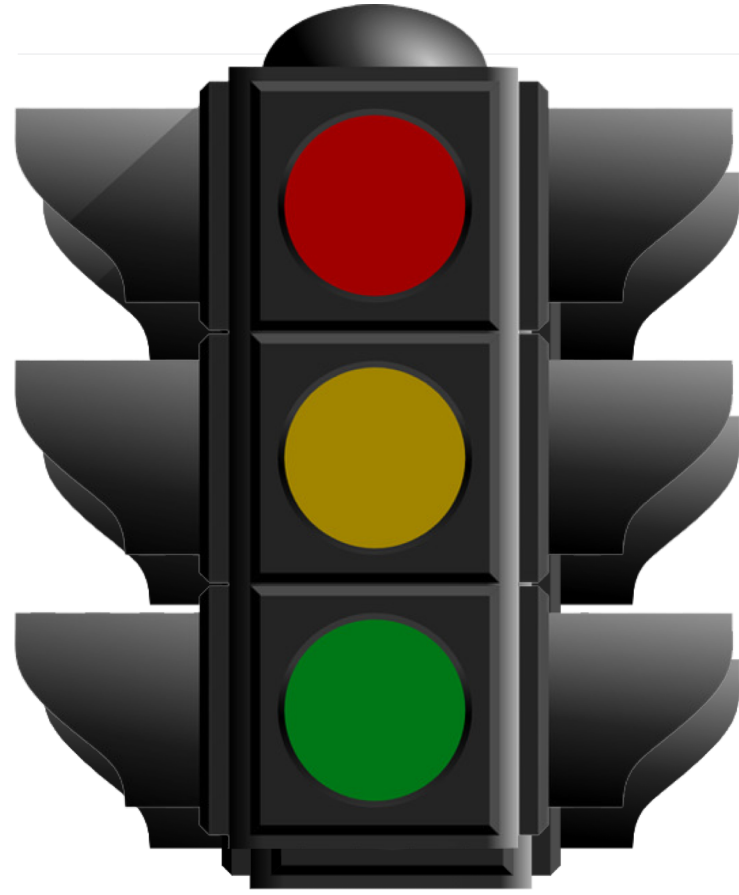
- Make a catchy introduction to your defense speech
- Evaluate each other's intro, give recommendations

10 min



How to ace the Q&A session of your speech

Types of questions

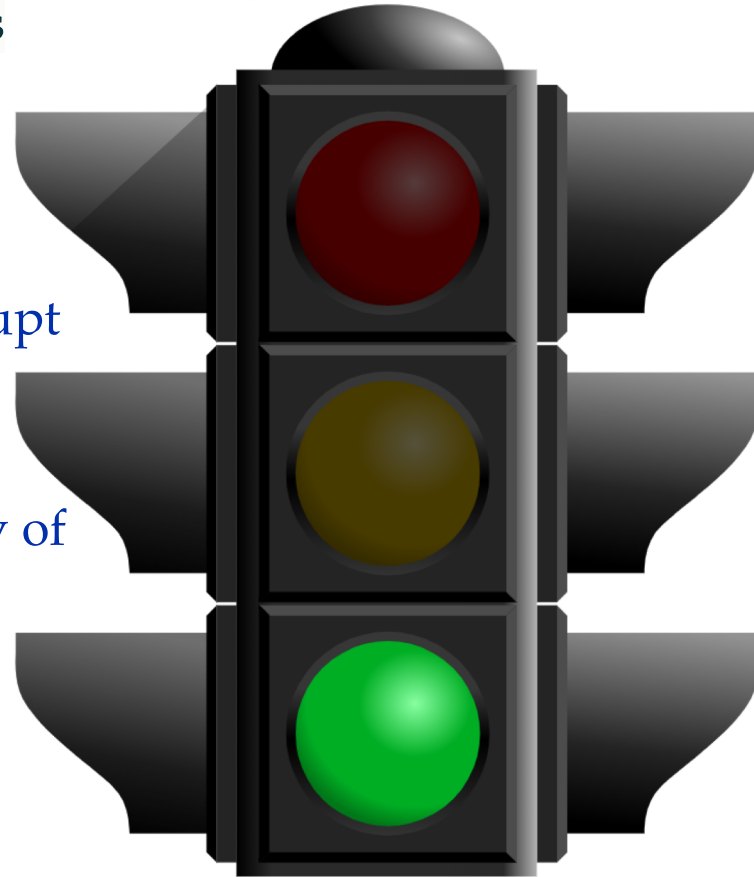


Green light

- the questioner has good intentions and goals
- you know the answer

How to answer:

1. listen to the questions carefully, don't interrupt
2. Repeat, paraphrase
3. Thank
4. Evaluate critically the length and granularity of your answer
5. Stay in contact with the WHOLE audience

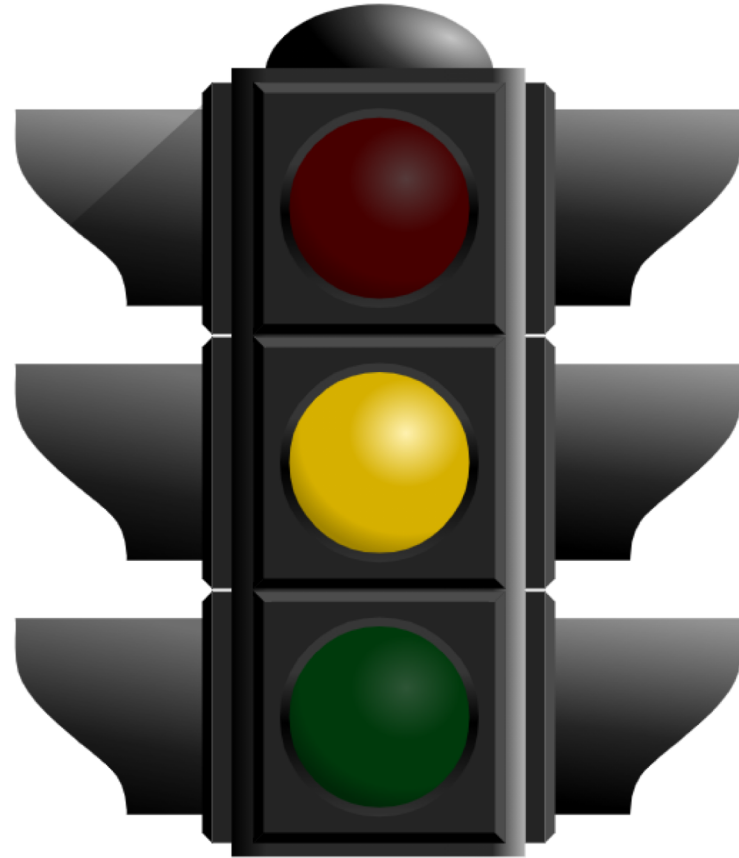


Yellow light

- the questioner has good intentions and goals
- you DON'T know the answer

How to answer:

1. Prepare for the questions in advance
2. Admit that you don't know - **Nobody knows everything**
3. **Don't make up an answer**
4. Be frank, say about the lack of information
5. Promise to find out and come back
6. Write down the question
7. Make a compliment to the deep knowledge of your audience

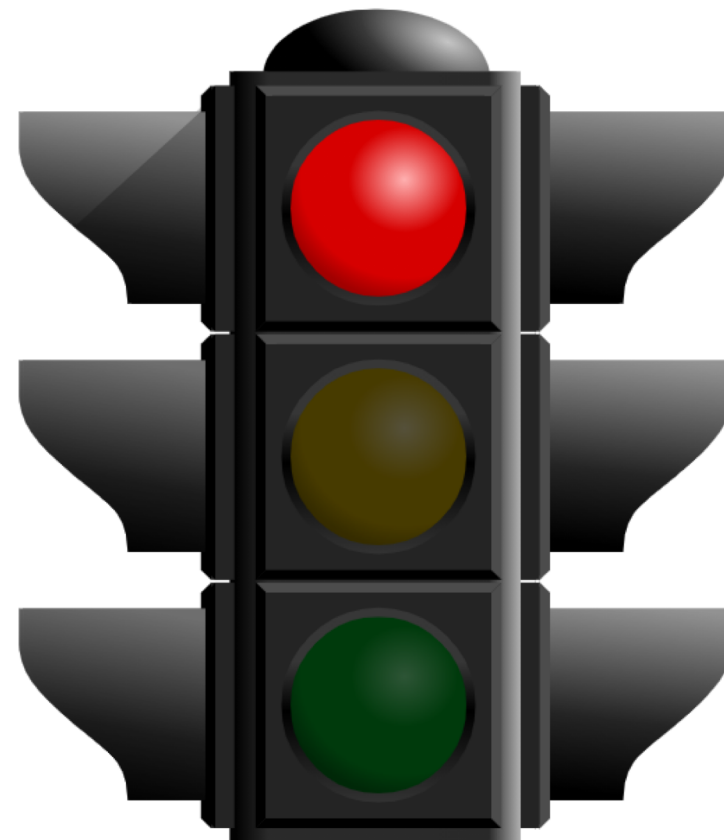


Red light

- the questioner has an intention to criticize, provoke, blame, humiliate, etc.

How to answer:

- Stay calm! Control your temper**
- Control your non-verbals
- Reframe while addressing key issue
- Ask the questioner back
- Satisfy the need of the questioner in attention
- Do not make excuses
- Don't argue
- Some of the negative comments can be ignored

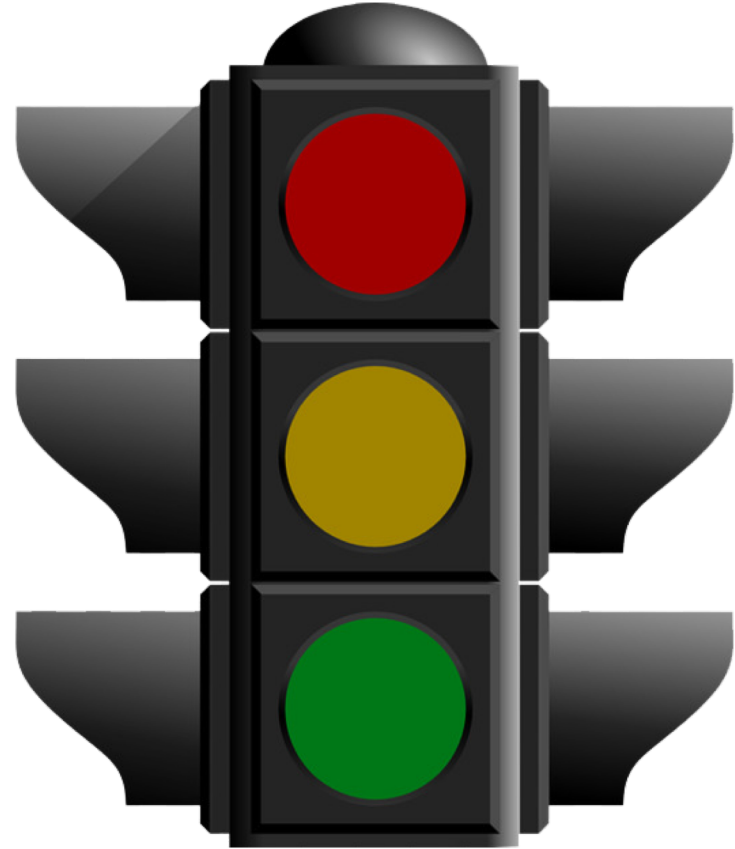


Broken traffic light

- no questions from the audience

What to do:

1. Be patient and wait
2. Help your audience with the first question
3. Ask your friend to be your fake audience
4. Say “ask me your question” instead of “Do you have any questions?”
5. Answer your own question



Treat every question like a present



Make two lists:

Questions I **might be asked** after my defense

Questions I **don't want to be asked** after my defense

Don't tell this to your audience

"You didn't / don't understand me"

"Yes, but..."

"No, you're wrong / You're mistaken"

"I don't know / I don't know what to say"

"I don't want to answer this question"

"You must..."

"Listen to me..."

"I repeat you one more time..."

"I finished / My presentation is over"

Key take aways

- Be in service of your audience, focus on their needs
- Avoid the curse of knowledge
- Use audience connecting techniques throughout your presentation
- Create an introduction that captures attention
- Show the relevance of your content



Юлия Николаевна Романенко | Yulia N. Romanenko

Преподаватель Soft Skills | Soft Skills Instructor

Институт международного развития и партнерства | Institute of
International Development and Partnership

cell: +7(921)423-46-49 | yulia_romanenko@itmo.ru

Университет ИТМО | ITMO University

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UNIVERSITY