

# PRESENTING YOUR PORTFOLIO

A portfolio review is a chance to show work that you have created and receive feedback on that work. Whatever the context for your review, whether in an informational review or an interview, you can use the experience to improve both individual pieces and the way you show and explain your work overall.

The reviewer(s) may or may not also consider you for opportunities, but keep in mind that any review is an opportunity to get your work and yourself in front of others and expand your creative network.

## Before a Review:

- Research the reviewers, if possible, so you know who you are talking to and what they are most likely to focus on and be interested in.
- Curate your work for the review and the time limit. Select 1-2 projects (depending on the length of the review). Depending on the focus of the review, these can be the pieces that you most want to show, or they can be pieces that you most want feedback on.
- Consider preparing a slide deck or PDF with just images and sketches from those projects. If you're going to present from your website, take some time to make sure your website is up-to-date, that each project is clearly presented, and practice navigating to and through the projects you are going to focus on.
- Prepare questions for the reviewer. This is a great way to make use of extra time during the review.
  - Example 1: *"What do you feel are my three strongest skills?"*
  - Example 2: *"What do you feel are three areas that I should work on?"*



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## Test Your Technology:

- You want to make a good first impression when you pull up your portfolio. Make sure that you don't show things on your device that you don't want the reviewer to see.
  - Have your portfolio open beforehand.
  - Close or minimize other windows on your machine.
- In-person review: While you are waiting, check to make sure you can successfully get on the Wi-Fi.
- Virtual review: Practice screen sharing so that you can get into and out of it quickly.
- Test to be sure your website or files are working before you bring them up in front of the reviewer(s).



## Start Successfully:

- Introduce yourself. Say your first and last name slowly and distinctly.
  - Example: *"Hi, I'm Jane Kim. It's nice to meet you. I'm a fifth term Illustration, Entertainment Arts major, and I'm interested in visual development. I'm looking forward to reviewing my work with you today."*
- Ask for what you need. In an informational review, if you are unsure what area of your field you are interested in, let the reviewer know that and ask for advice on what your work is most suited to.
- If they don't share them, ask for the reviewer(s) name(s). Sharing your own name will usually prompt the exchange.



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## Present the Work:

- Have a main talking point for each piece you show, and state it in 1-2 sentences. Share the main purpose of the project as well as a key thing you learned from working on it.
- Show your process. Give an overview and then expand where the reviewer shows interest. Show sketches, ideations, in-process steps, research, etc.
- Go beyond the visible. Avoid saying “This is...” Share your artistic or design decisions and give reasons why you created something the way you did.
- Get clarification. Feel empowered to ask questions and to ask for more detail. Repeat back feedback to be sure you understand it.



- Example 1: *“You’re suggesting I work on the form language in this design. Do you have any specific recommendations?”*
- Example 2: *“It’s great that you like this piece. Could you tell me what you think the strongest aspects of it are?”*

## End Effectively:

- Thank the reviewer(s) for their time and express appreciation for their feedback.
  - Example: *“Thank you very much for your time today. Your feedback was very helpful and is going to help me fill in the gaps in my portfolio.”*
- Ask for contact information. It’s great if you can get an email address. This lets you follow up and helps you build your network.
- Connect on LinkedIn. When you send a connection request, include a message and remind the reviewer(s) how they met you.
  - Example: *Thank you again for the review today at ArtCenter. I really enjoyed getting your insights on my work.*
- Send a thank-you. Whether you do this via LinkedIn or email, it’s both polite, and a great way to help the reviewer(s) remember you. Mention something that you discussed in the review to help them remember your review specifically.

*THANK YOU!*