

Interpreting Tips for Guides - The TORE Method

special thanks to Dr. Sam Ham for outlining this technique in his book 'Interpretation: Making a Difference on Purpose'

T - Thematic
O - Organized
R - Relevant
E - Enjoyable

Interpretation is a process aimed at provoking audiences to do their own thinking and thereby develop their own subjective understanding of your topic.

The T.O.R.E. model, developed by Dr. Ham, is an acronym and guide to effective interpretation. These four qualities emerged from a large body of research on how humans respond to communication when it's done well.

T - Interpretation has a Theme

While presenting or sharing info on a topic, a theme makes your job easier because it helps you decide what to include, what to exclude and what to emphasize. Themes should be simple, usually expressed in a single sentence and answer the question 'Why are we learning about this particular topic today?'

e.g. Ants could teach present-day miners a thing or two about underground architecture.

OR Ants are able to solve architectural problems in ways that we are still trying to understand.

O - Interpretation is Organized

Your presentation is organized when it's it's easy to follow and doesn't require a lot of effort from the audience.

Guideline: Most people are capable of handling only four or fewer pieces of info for any given theme.

e.g. Theme: Ants could teach present-day miners a thing or two about underground architecture.

Sub-themes or connected points to share: Ants are incredibly efficient team players; Ants are master communicators; and the Ants' underground structure is engineered by the entire colony

R - Interpretation is Relevant

Information that's relevant to our audiences is meaningful AND it's personal. Meaningful means the audience has a connection to the info or some context from previous experience. Personal means finding a way to make your audience care about your theme. Use 'universal concepts' that that have always had special significance to human beings. e.g. love, hate, fear, sorrow, birth, death, uncertainty, the cosmos or morality.

E.g. Meaningful - Ants can lift up to 10x their own weight - can you picture your dad picking up an SUV?

E.g. Personal - Without ants to disperse seeds, pollinate plants, and aerate the soil, we humans would lose the all-stars of our gardens, farms and flower beds!

E - Interpretation is Enjoyable

Successful communication is enjoyable when it is mentally pleasing or it brings about satisfaction. This can mean entertaining and engaging, but it also covers things are not necessarily fun or or lighthearted.

e.g. Use group members to demonstrate ant behaviour, show a live colony or interesting photographs, use humor, tell a story about a typical day for a worker ant, act out a scene, be silly and have some fun

Remember, 'When you're smiling, the whole world smiles with you.' If you look like you're relaxed and having fun as the tour leader, your audience will begin to feel that way too!



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'Interpretation: Making A Difference on Purpose' by Dr. Sam Ham is available on Amazon