

NOLS Presentation Outline for Alumni Reps

This is a general idea of what a good NOLS presentation looks like. Feel free to ad lib and use personal anecdotes wherever you see fit. If you're puzzled about how to talk to a group of people about your NOLS experience, this outline will give you the nuts and bolts to do it! We've combined some facts and figures with ideas for ways to bring up your own personal experience—if something we've included here seems too “stiff” for your style, put it in your own words. It's a good idea to keep our talk under an hour (remember that the NOLS Expedition DVD is 15 minutes long). Good luck!

I. Introduce yourself and NOLS

- A. Name, graduate of <YOUR COURSE HERE>
- B. NOLS, the National Outdoor Leadership School, is a non-profit, wilderness skills school that has been in operation for over 40 years. The NOLS curriculum focuses exclusively on outdoor skills, leadership techniques and environmental studies. NOLS operates in 14 locations worldwide. Domestically in the Rocky Mountain West, Pacific Northwest, Alaska, and the Southwest. Internationally in Patagonia, Brazil, India, Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia, Canada and Mexico. Students can choose from a variety of course types that range between 14 and 135 days in length.
- C. *This might be a good time to play the NOLS Expedition DVD.*

II. Talk about what you learned on your NOLS course!

- A. Technical skills:
 - i. Camping, cooking, navigation, wilderness medicine *and more specific skills depending on your course (backpacking, mountaineering, rock climbing, sea kayaking, canoeing, horsepacking, etc.).*
- B. Leadership:
 - i. The goal of a NOLS course is to give students the skills they need to plan and execute their own expeditions. A big part of working toward that goal is leadership, and giving students more responsibility as the course progresses. The culminating event of a NOLS course (with Instructor approval of course) is the Independent Student Group Expedition. Most courses achieve this goal and the leadership techniques that students learn on course transfer to their everyday lives.
 - ii. *Were you leader of the day? Tell the audience about your experience being a peer leader on your NOLS course.*
- B. Environmental Studies:

- i. On a NOLS course students learn and practice Leave No Trace. This is a set of principles focusing on low-impact techniques to live and travel responsibly in the wilderness. Students also have the opportunity to learn and teach natural history about the places they are traveling.
- ii. *What are some of the specific environmental studies classes you remember from your NOLS course?*

III. *NOLS and College Credit*

- A. Optional undergraduate and graduate level college credit is available for every NOLS course through the University of Utah. More than 400 colleges and universities worldwide have accepted the transfer of credit and many more grant their own direct credit for a NOLS experience.
- B. *Did you receive credit for your NOLS course? Do you have any advice for students who might be interested in doing the same?*

IV. *NOLS, Scholarships and Financial Aid*

- A. NOLS is able to give away almost one million dollars a year in scholarship aid, thanks to donations from graduates and their families. Funds are awarded on a first come first served basis according to both need as well as merit. Though full tuition scholarships are rare, the typical award ranges between \$500 and \$1500 depending upon course type and cost.
- B. If you are receiving federal financial aid to attend school, it may also be possible to access those funds to pay for a NOLS course. NOLS also accepts AmeriCorps stipends and the GI Bill.
- C. If you have questions about financial aid or other ways to fund your NOLS course, feel free to call the NOLS admissions office at 800-710-NOLS for more details.

V. *Tell a story! What was your favorite day?*

VI. *Show your course pictures!*

VII. *Conclude with a Q & A session.*

VIII. *Did you hand out all the NOLS materials?*