Hints for doing opposition on a thesis presentation

The aim of the opposition:

To critical review the report concerning scientific content, the aim of the work and its achievements in relation to the aim. The task of the opponent is also to give an opportunity to discuss the results. Consider that criticism can be both positive and negative. Formal points, language treatment and the layout/disposition, readability/clearness and form of the report must not be forgotten.

Some central topics for the opposition can be:

- Aims and research problems: are the aims and the research problem clear?
- Formalia: Are the formal requirements fulfilled? Is the report well structured?
- Theory: Is the relevant theory discussed and is it treated in an adequate way?
- Analysis: Are the theory and the results related?
- The whole picture: Is there a line of arguments?

Suggestions for realisation:

1. Start with a short concise presentation of the topic of the report (method, results, conclusion), in at most 5 sentences (the respondent has already given a thorough presentation).

2. Evaluate the report with respect to readability, clarity and disposition. The language? The figures? The formulas? How is the sequence of sections?

3. Comment the contents by going through the report, discuss unclearities, contradictions, wrong methods etc. This is the main task for the opponent. Try to select some scientific problems to discuss, such as why did you do this and that, Figure 4 is interesting can you explain in more detail what it means? How do you judge the accuracy in Figure 5? What assumptions have you used when calculating X? Couldn’t one do it in this way instead? Try to do another interpretation of the results that are presented.

4. Evaluate the report regarding to minor errors and formal criteria. Are there a lot of careless mistakes? Incomplete notation? Missing units in the diagrams? How is the references given? Select some examples, but don’t take up all of it. Give a list to the respondent after the session instead!

5. Conclude with a short collective evaluation of the report. Start with the negative and conclude with the positive comments.

Speak up loud with a clear voice, use technical equipment if needed.