

Structure

The following points can make your handling questions more effective. Explain why?

INVITE QUESTIONS

LISTEN CAREFULLY RIGHT TO THE END

WELCOME THE QUESTION

REPEAT, PARAPHRASE, OR CLARIFY IF NECESSARY

TAKE TIME TO THINK BEFORE ANSWERING

ANSWER THE QUESTION RELEVANTLY

CHECK WHETHER THE QUESTIONER IS SATISFIED

Functions

It is important to identify a purpose of the question in order to apply an effective strategy for your reaction. What would you do or say if a member of the audience:

1. disagrees with you

2. pays you a compliment

3. questions the accuracy of your sources

4. interrupts you

5. asks for clarification

6. asks an irrelevant question

7. asks for repetition

8. asks for some proof

9. is showing off

10. asks strings of questions

VOCABULARY

1. Welcoming the question

That's a good question.

That's interesting.

I'd like to know / Could you tell me

Could I ask / Would you mind if I ask you ...

Go ahead / Please do / Certainly.

Good point.

That's actually a question I frequently get asked / I'm often asked.

I'm glad you brought that up / asked that ...

2. Clarifying the question

If I understand you/your question correctly, you are saying / asking...

I didn't quite catch that. Could you say that again?

I'm not sure what you're getting at.

I'm afraid I don't see the connection.

So, what you are asking is ..

Well, the question is ... Is that right?

Let me just check that I have understood your question. You're asking ...

I am not quite with you. Could you repeat that?

I'm afraid I don't quite see what you mean.

3. Checking whether the questioner is satisfied

Does that answer your question?

Is that clear?

Is that clearer now?

Is that OK?

Can we go on?

Is that the kind of information you were looking for?

4. Closing discussion time

I think we have time for one more question ...

If there are no other questions, I'll finish there. Thank you very much.

Before I make some concluding remarks, who has a question to ask?

So if there are no further questions, I guess....

5. Strategies of reactions to different kinds of questions:

5a) Postponing an answer in case of interruption

I'll be dealing with that a little later on, so if you don't mind I'd rather answer that question then.

I'll be coming to that, so if you don't mind, I won't answer your question straight away. But I won't forget.

5b) Repetition

Going back to what I was saying

As I was saying ...

5c) Clarification

Sorry, perhaps I am not making myself clear. Let me put it another way.

What I was trying to say was ...

5d) Disagreement

I have already stated my point of view during the presentation. I don't think I have anything more to add at this juncture...

You have certainly made a valid point, but I prefer to think that ...

No, that is not what I am saying at all. I would like to reiterate that what I am actually saying is ...

Whereas I appreciate what you are saying, I feel that I must emphasize that ...

5e) Irrelevant question

I'm afraid I don't see the connection.

To be honest, I think that raises a different issue.

I think the aim of this talk is to focus on ... rather than ...

5f) Question for what has been said already

I think I answered that earlier.

Well, as I said, ...

Well, as I mentioned earlier, ...

5g) Showing off

Thanks for your comment....Next question?

Yes, it is interesting. ... Next question?

5h) Avoiding giving an answer

I'm afraid I don't know the answer to that one. Perhaps someone else here can help us?

I'm sorry I don't know the answer to that, but what I will do is find out and send/give you an answer before the end of the week.

Perhaps we could deal with that later.

Can we talk about that on another occasion?

I'm afraid that's not my field.

I don't have the figures with me.

I'm sure Mr (...) could answer that question.

That's interesting, but I'd prefer not to answer that today.

I think I answered that earlier. I think we covered that earlier.

I'm afraid that's not my field, but I'm sure Mr/Mrs/Ms... will be able to answer you.

I'm afraid I don't have that information, but I can ask our ... department to send you the details.

That's quite a difficult question to answer briefly. Perhaps we, and anyone else, who is interested, could discuss that after my presentation.

I'd be happy to talk to you afterwards.

I'd be happy to find that source for you.

That's an interesting question but it would take too much time to answer that now.

I don't know the answer, but I can find out for you. If you leave me your address, I will get back to you.

I need to think about that one. Could we come back to it later? Next question, please.

I'm not sure I know the answer to that one. Perhaps we could discuss it after the session.

There is no right or wrong answer to that. However, my personal belief is ...

I don't know that off the top of my head.

Interesting. What do you think?

I'm afraid I'm not in a position to comment on that.

I'm afraid I don't have that information with me.

I wish I knew.

It's too early for us to say whether ...

We don't have enough evidence to show that ...

That's not something I've had time to deal with, but ...

B) PRESENTERS AND QUESTIONERS

1) Giving examples

For example, ...

For instance, ...

And as proof of that, ...

Remember ...

You only have to think of ...

2) Explaining in other words

In other words, ...

That is to say, ...

To put it another way, ...

The point I'm making is ...

What I'm suggesting is ...,

Let me put it another way.

3) Giving opinions

I definitely think that....

I'm sure that....

I'm convinced that....

I really do think that....

I'm of the opinion that ...

As I see it,

I think

I consider

I feel

Personally, I believe ...

In my opinion/view,

It seems to me

I'm inclined to think that ...

I tend to think that

4) Agreeing

I couldn't agree more.

On the whole, I think your arguments are fair.

I (quite) agree.

I think you're absolutely right.

That's a very good point.

You've got a very good point there.

I fully support what you say.

I totally agree.

Exactly!

True ...
Yes, I know
On the whole, yes.

5) Doubt and reservation

Well ... maybe ... possibly ...
I'm not so sure about that.
You may be right.
I don't think I'd say that.
I can see your point, but ...
I think that's debatable.
I agree to some extent, but ...
It seems to me ...
I tend to think ...
To some extent ...
It depends.
Yes and no.

6) Disagreeing

Yes/Perhaps, but don't you think that ...?
I see what you mean, but ...
But isn't it really a question of ...
But what about ...?
But surely ...?
I take your point, but ,...
But all the evidence suggests that ...
I'm afraid I can't agree with you on this matter.
I wouldn't say that.
I don't agree at all.
I can't accept that.
Not quite / not really / Not at all / not entirely / Not as a rule / Not necessarily...
By and large, I would accept your views but....
I'm afraid I'm not convinced.
I know this isn't really my area, but ...
I am not an expert in this, but ...
I wonder whether there isn't another possible explanation ...?
Wouldn't it also be possible to ... ?
Wouldn't you agree that ... ?
May I suggest another explanation?

1) Introductory phrases of questions

Sorry, ...

Could I ask a question?

Can you tell us?

May I just ask a question about ... ?

I'd like to ask you about the...

You talked about

talking about

dealing with...

When you were summing up...

telling us about...

describing...

showing us why / how

made the point that

mentioned the possibility of

said something about...

the issue of you commented on

spoke about

referred to

quoted something

2) Clarification questions

Please let me know if I have misunderstood your arguments, but ...

Sorry, could you explain what you meant when you said that?

If I understood you correctly, Is that right?

Can you clarify, are there ...? ...

I'm sorry, I didn't understand (catch) what you said about

So what you are saying is that?

What you seem to be saying is ... Am I right?

Sorry, I don't (quite) see what you mean. Could you just explain that, please?

I didn't understand what you said about ...

I'm sorry, I didn't catch what you said about ...

What does ... mean?

I'm not sure what you mean.

Sorry, but I'm not quite clear on ...

What did you mean when you said ...?

Could you be more specific about ...?

Could you give an example of ...?

Could you explain in more detail...?

So what you're saying is that ...?

So you mean that ...?

Are you saying that ...?

Am I correct in assuming that ...?

What does mean?

3) Repetition questions

Could we come back to ...?

Could you run us through that again?

Could you go back to what you were saying about ... ?

Could you show us the transparency of again?

I'm afraid I didn't quite get the last point. Could you go over it again, please?

Sorry, I don't quite follow you. Could you just run through that again, please?

I'm sorry, could you repeat what you said about ...

Sorry I missed that. Could you say that again, please?

Sorry I didn't catch that. Could you repeat it, please?

Sorry, ... (e.g. thinking of what? ... you contacted who? ... the whole project needs what?)

4) Asking for sources / evidence questions

Excuse me, could you tell us what your sources were?

Do you have any other materials/sources to recommend....?

Where did you get the information on ... ?

What experience do you have of ?

What real evidence is there that ?

5) Asking for additional information questions

Could you elaborate on that?

Could you be a bit more specific?

Could you say a bit more about that?

Could you expand a little on that idea /theory/ example /.... ?

6) Interrupting questions

If I could just come in here?

Sorry to interrupt, ... ?

Could I just interrupt...?

I'd just like to say that...?

7) Asking for opinion questions

Could I ask you for your view on ...
What do you think about ...?.
What are your views ...?
What do you feel about ...?
What's your opinion of ...?
What are your feelings about ...?
Have you got any comments on ...?
Could I have your reaction to ...?
Do you have any particular views on ...?
Don't you agree, ...?

8) Following up a question questions

Perhaps my question was not clear. What I'd like to know is
That's not really what I was asking. My question is about ...
Perhaps I didn't make my question clear. In fact what I asked was ...
I think you've answered a slightly different question. What I would like to know is ...
I understand that but what I actually had in mind was ...
Sorry, I'm still not clear about ...