



# Presentation Skills

## OUTLINE – A Brief Structure of the Presentation Process

- 1 **PREPARATION** – think about topic selection – audience analysis – purpose statement
- 2 **TITLE DEVELOPMENT** – develop an informative & interesting title
- 3 **INTRODUCTION** – present yourself & your topic with a purpose statement (aim of talk) & outline\*
- 4 **MAIN BODY** – arrange content in a logical structure
- 5 **ENDING** – signal to end – provide a summary, conclusion & closing – invite questions
- 6 **REHEARSAL** – focus on phrases & timing
- 7 **DELIVERY** – think about body language & how to speak confidently
- 8 **DISCUSSION** – be prepared to handle questions

## 1 PREPARATION

TOPIC SELECTION – try to find an interesting and specific perspective on your theme.

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS – determine what their knowledge of the subject is. Your audience members may not even be from your department.

PURPOSE STATEMENT – determine the purpose of the presentation. Write out a single declarative sentence which states the specific objective you wish to achieve and why it may be interesting for your audience.

## 2 TITLE DEVELOPMENT – develop an informative & interesting title

A title must **attract** your audience, **describe** your topic clearly, and give a precise idea about what to **expect** in the presentation. Here are some useful points to keep in mind when creating your title.

- Avoid using redundant\* words and phrases such as “a study on”
- Avoid using abbreviations\* and jargon\*
- Avoid using “cute” or sensational titles
- Avoid being too vague\* or too general

## Task 1

Look at the following examples of titles of presentations. Which of these enable you to predict the content of the presentations? In which cases are the sub-headings helpful?

1. Living Near Airports: Noise Stress and Human Behaviour
2. The Billion Dollar Question!
3. Out of the Oceans and on to Faster Bicycles
4. Common Stereotypes: Children’s Images of Scientists
5. Presentation Skills: Effective Communication in the Information Age

## 3 INTRODUCTION

Present **yourself** (name & study area) and your **topic** (with a clear purpose statement describing the aim of your talk and most important idea) and provide an informative **outline of the main points** (don’t put structural information such as the words *introduction*, *summary*, *conclusion*, *discussion* into the outline).



An introduction is a very important part of a presentation. It should not only arouse curiosity, but also provide an overview of the most important points. The audience should get the impression that your topic is well thought out (an interesting, informative title), that you have done the audience analysis (well-chosen style and register\*), and that you have a clear idea about the actual content of the presentation. A well planned introduction will “set an objective framework in which the audience will accept the information as accurate and as significant.” (Laster & Pickett 1996:442)

## Task 2

As introductions can become repetitive, it is important to have a choice of words and expressions ready. Use one of the following expressions to replace the synonyms in bold. Find the purpose statement.

**don't hesitate**      **a chance**      **I take care**      **I'm delighted**      **sections**      **to communicate**  
**go through**      **in more depth**      **my purpose is**      **finally**      **divide**      **to emphasise**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. **It's a pleasure** to be with you today. My name is Gordon Mathews and **I'm in charge** of teaching presentation skills. **We are here today** to **review** some key ideas about why it is important to learn effective communication skills. As we are living in the information age and may often be overwhelmed with massive amounts of information, it is important to know how **to highlight** the main ideas and provide a framework for what we are trying **to get across**. What I intend to do is to **break down** this presentation into three **parts**: first, the preparation phase; second, the use of sign-posting language, and **third**, the actual delivery of the presentation. If you have any questions, please, **feel free** to interrupt me, but I should also say that there'll be **an opportunity** to discuss issues **at greater length** after my talk.

**4 MAIN BODY** – present content in a coherent and logical structure – use natural transition markers and sign-posting language between main points

Transition and sign-posting language is the use of phrases that allow the listener to be **easily oriented** throughout the presentation. This involves time phrases (e.g. “Now I will move on to...”) and informative headings. The main body outlines the **main arguments**, **sub-points**, **supporting arguments**, and **evidence** of the subject of the presentation into a logical and coherent order.

When doing your research, don't forget to find several sources in English to be sure to use correct terminology.

**5 ENDING** – Signal to End – Summary – Conclusion – Recommendation – Closing – Questions

The ending should contain a **summary** of the data, where the main points of the presentation should again be stressed. There must be an evaluative **conclusion**, i.e. a **comment on the importance** of the findings\*. In an academic presentation there should be a **recommendation** for future research, development, proceedings\*, etc. and a **closing** – thanking the audience and inviting **questions**.



**Task 3** – Try to match the phrases with their functions.

**FUNCTIONS:** 1. Signal to end      2. Summarizing      3. Concluding  
4. Recommending      5. Closing      6. Inviting questions

**PHRASES:**

- a) So, I would suggest that we...
- b) Briefly...
- c) As you can see, there are some very good reasons...
- d) That completes my presentation.
- e) Thank you for your attention.
- f) Before I stop/finish, let me just say...
- g) I'd like to propose... (more formal)
- h) In conclusion...
- i) Let me just run over the key points again.
- j) That covers all I wanted to say today.
- k) I hope you have gained an insight into...
- l) If you have any questions, I'd be pleased to answer them.
- m) I'll briefly summarize the main issues.
- n) To sum up, I would like to say that...
- o) That brings me to the end of my presentation.
- p) I'd like to leave you with the following thought/idea.
- q) In my opinion, the only way forward is ...
- r) Thank you for listening.
- s) I would welcome any comments/suggestions.
- t) I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**CONCLUSION** (thesis statement or concluding statement)

A conclusion reinforces\* the main ideas you wish your audience to remember and allows you to emphasize the main points and the importance of specific ideas, as well as value\* particular concepts. In short, the design of your conclusion will depend on your initial purpose. A strong conclusion is as important as a strong introduction, as both the beginning and the end will be the parts that are most likely to be remembered.

**Task 4** – Complete the following **ENDING** with words from the list. Then find the summary, the concluding statement and closing.

**questions**      **that's all**      **secondly**      **discussion**      **meaningful**  
**conclude**      **issues**      **briefly**      **finally**      **begin**

So, \_\_\_\_\_ I have planned to say about the topic. Let me summarize the main \_\_\_\_\_. Very \_\_\_\_\_, they are four. First, I spoke about the preparation phase, where it's very important to determine the aim and its relevance to the audience; \_\_\_\_\_, the use of sign-posting language, which is used to provide optimal orientation; and \_\_\_\_\_, the actual delivery, where it's good to think about your voice and body language. I'd like to \_\_\_\_\_ by emphasizing that many presentations could be greatly improved by providing the audience with a \_\_\_\_\_ concluding statement that stresses the position of the speaker on the topic. I suggest we start the \_\_\_\_\_, but before we \_\_\_\_\_, let me thank you for your attention. I'd be glad to answer any \_\_\_\_\_ now.



**6 REHEARSAL** – practice your key phrases and transition language – check your timing – think about your body language and eye contact

Approximately 50% of your presentation work should go to preparation & another 50% to rehearsal!

- write down and learn the key sentences and phrases, concentrating on the sequence of ideas
  - privately practice delivering the presentation 4-5 times, using all the aids and/or visuals you will need
  - go through one final rehearsal to focus on your weak points (poor eye contact, low volume, poor structure, weak dynamics)
  - deliver your presentation using only a well-structured **outline** of main and sub-points
- Do NOT memorize word for word and DO NOT READ! The illusion of spontaneity must be kept!!!

## VISUALS AND AIDS

**Some useful phrases** – Integrate your visuals into the presentation by preparing the audience for what they are going to see using these possible expressions:

- “In this picture/slide you can see that...”
- “Now, I’ll show you...”
- “Let’s move on and look at the figures for ...”
- “The next slide shows ...”
- “If we now turn to this graph/map/diagram, we can see that...”

Explain what the visual shows. This helps to focus attention and avoid misunderstandings.

- “The lower chart compares political parties in two countries ...”
- “The upper left part of the slide gives information about ...”
- “You can see here in the middle the development over the past five years...”

Some useful tips: a) Don’t use visuals to **repeat** exactly what you are saying.

b) Don’t **overcrowd** visuals with too much information.

c) Don’t **read** from the visuals.

d) Don’t use distracting visuals. Make sure the images support your ideas.

e) Don’t forget to do a computer-assisted proofreading of the final version of the presentation, that is, **SPELL-CHECK**.

This is essential because **1)** it ensures you will minimize embarrassing spelling mistakes;

**2)** it prevents you from having your knowledge of the subject discredited;

**3)** it gives an impression of professionalism.

*Adapted from [Http://www.spaco.org/magiform.htm](http://www.spaco.org/magiform.htm)*

**7 DELIVERY** – communication skills – body language – speaking confidently

Although the structure should be formal, the most effective speaking manner is usually **conversational style** (but not too familiar): use **short sentences** and concrete language to give examples. Your speech should suggest to your audience that you are really talking to them, and your ideas should be accessible to your specific audience. The ideas should be coherent and follow each other naturally. Think about your body language and try to avoid nervous gestures.

**8 DISCUSSION** – *welcome the question – think before answering – clarify the question – accept criticism diplomatically – reply positively – check whether the questioner is satisfied*



## USEFUL PHRASES FOR HANDLING QUESTIONS

### Welcoming the question

That's a good question.  
That's interesting.  
Go ahead / Please do / Certainly.  
Good point.

### Asking for clarification

If I understand you correctly, you are saying / asking...  
I didn't quite catch that.  
Could you repeat your question?  
I'm not sure what you're getting at.  
I'm afraid I don't see the connection.

### Rephrasing the question (for others)

Do you mean to say...  
Have I understood correctly that...

### Checking that the questioner is satisfied

Does that answer your question?  
Is that clear?  
Can we go on?

### Avoiding giving an answer

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 my colleague could better address that question.  
That's interesting, but I prefer not to answer that right now.  
I think I answered that earlier.

## HANDLING QUESTIONS

Handling questions is an important part of a presentation, so it is important to get accustomed\* to certain tactics.

### **Task 5** – *What would you say or do in the following situations?*

#### SITUATIONS:

1. Instead of asking a question, a person strongly and rather angrily disagrees with you.
2. Instead of asking a question, a person states a viewpoint that agrees with yours.
3. A person says that some of your information is inaccurate\*, but you are absolutely sure that you are correct.
4. A person says that some of your information is inaccurate, and you are not sure whether your information is correct or not.
5. A person asks you a question that will require a very long, complicated answer.

*Match the situations above with the following responses.*



## RESPONSES:

A. Do not regard this as an attack. You can say: *“I appreciate your bringing this to my attention. I’ll have to recheck my sources to see what is correct.”*

B. If possible, give your **source** of information. If you cannot do so, you can say: *“I believe that my information is correct, but I will certainly recheck my facts.”*

C. Address the person’s question, noting that you cannot answer it at this time. You can say: *“That’s an interesting question, but it would take much too long to answer it. Perhaps we can discuss it later.”*

D. Listen politely, then restate your point of view, with **additional evidence**, if possible. Do not argue with the person. If they repeat their position, you can say: *“Well, we’ll have to agree to disagree on this point.”* or *“Unfortunately, there’s no time to go into this more deeply right now.”*

E. Show how this person’s ideas **support** your own point of view. You can say: *“Yes, that fits in exactly with what I was saying.”*

IALS TEST materials (1997) in M. Pavlovová, Oral Presentations, 2002.

## VISUAL OUTLINE OF KEY PRESENTATION POINTS

<p><b>TITLE</b></p> <p>You may use a sub-heading</p> <p>Make it interesting &amp; informative</p>	<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b></p> <p>Purpose Statement</p> <p>Why and how is <b>your topic</b> important?</p>	<p><b>OUTLINE</b></p> <p>main points: 1 2 3</p> <p>Don’t write structural words here like introduction, summary, discussion, sources</p>
<p><b>POINT 1</b></p> <p>Provide supporting ideas</p>	<p><b>POINT 2</b></p> <p>Give specific examples</p>	<p><b>POINT 3</b></p> <p>Signal to end after your last point</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>Give one sentence for each main point, not just a list of the main points (i.e. do not repeat your original outline)</p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION</b></p> <p>Thesis Statement</p> <p>In one or two sentence, why and how is <b>what you’ve just said</b> important?</p>	<p><b>CLOSING</b></p> <p>Thanking audience and inviting questions Sources should be shown at the end</p>

## Vocabulary

1. noted (adj.)
2. spellbound
3. overview
4. register
5. springboard, starting point
6. in depth
7. at length
8. to be in charge
9. to review

- slavný, významný  
okouzlený, fascinován  
přehled, nástin  
slovní registr  
základ  
do hloubky  
obšírně  
mít na starosti  
znovu probrat



10. to break down into	rozdělit na
11. option	možnost
12. to propose	předložit
13. feel free to interrupt me	nebojte se mě přerušit
14. recommendation; to recommend	doporučení, doporučit
15. findings (noun)	zjištění, nález
16. to proceed; proceedings (noun)	pokračovat; postup, kroky
17. to conclude; in conclusion	uvést na závěr; na závěr, závěrem
18. to quote a well-known saying	citovat známé rčení
19. participation	účast
20. to reinforce (to emphasise)	zdůraznit
21. to value; evaluative (adj.)	ohodnotit, ocenit; hodnotící
22. to get accustomed to	zvyknout si na něco
23. to handle questions	vypořádat se s otázkama
24. inaccurate	nepřesný
25. hint	rada, pokyn
26. to clarify; clarification	objasnit; objasnění
27. to avoid	vyhýbat se
28. humiliation / embarrassment	ponížení / ztrapnění
29. to express oneself/something	vyjádřit se
30. to cope with something	vypořádat se s něčím
31. to draw attention to st	upoutat pozornost
32. to pay attention to st	věnovat pozornost, dávat pozor
33. to make an impression on / impress	udělat dojem, zapůsobit
34. first(ly)	za prvé
35. second(ly)	za druhé
36. at the end	na konci
37. in the end/finally	nakonec
38. in my opinion	podle mě, dle mého názoru
39. from my point of view	podle mě, z mého pohledu
40. according to sb	podle někoho
41. in a nutshell	stručně řečeno
42. to agree to st	přistoupit na něco
43. to partially agree	částečně souhlasit
44. to go down well with sb	najít u někoho odezvu
45. to appreciate	ocenit, vážit si

### Video Web Links:

#### **A) How to use PowerPoint:**

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OC1OixM\\_118&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OC1OixM_118&feature=related) (Powerpoint Extreme Makeover)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLpjrHzgSRM> Don McMillan, How Not to Use PPT

#### **B) Public speaking song:**

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xv6kZM0Le-w&mode=related&search=\(I+Hate+Public+Speaking\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xv6kZM0Le-w&mode=related&search=(I+Hate+Public+Speaking))

#### **C) Some theory on presentations**

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whTwjG4ZIJg&mode=related&search=\(Killer+Presentation+Skills\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whTwjG4ZIJg&mode=related&search=(Killer+Presentation+Skills))
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcMOzkne8ko&mode=related&search=\(5+Quick+Tips+to+Effective+Public+Speaking\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcMOzkne8ko&mode=related&search=(5+Quick+Tips+to+Effective+Public+Speaking))

#### **D) How to give or how not to give presentations:**

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rud9jbuUAU&mode=related&search=\(Video+tip+#1+-+The+Importance+of+Presentation+Skills\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rud9jbuUAU&mode=related&search=(Video+tip+#1+-+The+Importance+of+Presentation+Skills))



## Presentation Assessment Criteria

- 1. Organisation**
  - preparedness
  - logical sequence
  - introduction
  - purpose statement
  - outline of key points
  - sign-posting language
  - summary
  - conclusion
  - closing
  - timing
  
- 2. Content**
  - relevant topic coverage
  - informative
  - understandable
  - interesting
  - entertaining
  
- 3. Language**
  - appropriate to audience
  - explanation of jargon
  - voice – speed, volume, clarity, intonation
  - grammatical accuracy
  - correct pronunciation of key words
  
- 4. Body language**
  - eye contact (with the whole class, not only the teacher)
  - good use of notes; not reading large parts of the presentation
  - positive stance, enthusiasm
  
- 5. Visuals**
  - appropriate, supportive, clear
  
- 6. Questions**
  - handling of the discussion
  - clear and appropriate responses
  
- 7. Sources**
  - reliable; some English sources, bibliography format