

# Presentations and Public Speaking in English

A presentation is a formal talk to one or more people that "presents" ideas or information in a clear, structured way. People are sometimes afraid of speaking in public, but if you follow a few simple rules, giving a presentation is actually very easy. This tutorial guides you through each stage of giving a presentation in English, from the initial preparation to the conclusion and questions and answers. This tutorial is itself set out like a mini-presentation.

## Introduction

All presentations have a common objective. People give presentations because they want to communicate in order to:

- **inform**
- **train**
- **persuade**
- **sell**

A successful presentation is one of the most effective ways of communicating your message. And because English is so widely used in international business, a working knowledge of the vocabulary and techniques used in an English language presentation is a valuable asset.

We will start by exploring

**the importance of preparation.**

After that, we will consider

**what equipment to use.**

Then we will look at

**how to "deliver" a presentation.**

After Delivery, we will examine

**the language of presentations,**

before moving on to

**the presentation itself.**

Finally, we will conclude with

**a review of what we have covered.**

## **Preparation**

Can you name the **3 most important things** when giving any presentation?

Number 1 is **Preparation** Number 2 is **Preparation!** Number 3 is . . . **Preparation!!**

With good preparation and planning you will be totally **confident** and less nervous. And your audience will **feel** your confidence. Your audience, too, will be confident. They will be confident in **you**. And this will give you **control**. Control of your audience and of your presentation. With control, you will be 'in charge' and your audience will **listen positively to your message**.

## **Objective**

Before you start to prepare a presentation, you should ask yourself: "**Why** am I making this presentation?" Do you need to inform, to persuade, to train or to sell? Your objective should be clear in your mind. If it is not clear in your mind, it cannot possibly be clear to your audience.

## **Audience**

"**Who** am I making this presentation to?" Sometimes this will be obvious, but not always. You should try to inform yourself. How many people? Who are they? Business people? Professional people? Political people? Experts or non-experts?

## **Where**

"**Where** am I making this presentation?" In a small hotel meeting-room or a large conference hall? What facilities and equipment are available? What are the seating arrangements?

## **Time and length**

"**When** am I making this presentation and how long will it be?" Will it be 5 minutes or 1 hour? Just before lunch, when your audience will be hungry, or just after lunch, when your audience will be sleepy?

## **Method**

"**How** should I make this presentation?" What approach should you use? Formal or informal? Lots of visual aids or only a few? Will you include some anecdotes and humour for variety?

## **Content**

"**What** should I say?" Now you must decide exactly what you want to say. First, you should brainstorm your ideas. You will no doubt discover many ideas that you want to include in your presentation. But you must be selective. You should include only information that is relevant to your audience and your objective. You should exclude all other ideas. You also need to create a title for your presentation (if you have not already been given a title). The title will help you to focus on the subject. **Remember that a little is better than a lot.**

## Structure

A well organised presentation with a clear structure is easier for the audience to follow. It is therefore more effective. You should organise the points you wish to make in a logical order.

Beginning	<b>Short introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• welcome your audience</li><li>• introduce your subject</li><li>• explain the structure of your presentation</li><li>• explain rules for questions</li></ul>
Middle	<b>Body of presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• present the subject itself</li></ul>
End	<b>Short conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• summarise your presentation</li><li>• thank your audience</li><li>• invite questions</li></ul>
<b>Questions and Answers</b>		

## Notes

When you give your presentation, you should be - or appear to be - as spontaneous as possible. **You should not read your presentation!** Reading a text is boring! Reading a text will make your audience go to sleep! You can create your own system of notes.

## Rehearsal

Rehearsal is a vital part of preparation. You should leave time to practise your presentation two or three times. This will have the following benefits:

- you will become more familiar with what you want to say
- you will identify weaknesses in your presentation
- you will be able to practise difficult pronunciations
- you will be able to check the time that your presentation takes and make any necessary modifications

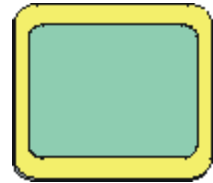
# Equipment

asily your most important piece of equipment is...**YOU!** Make sure you're in full working order, and check your personal presentation carefully - if you don't, your audience will!



The **overhead projector (OHP)** displays **overhead transparencies (OHTs or OHPTs)**. It has several advantages over the 35mm slide projector:

- it can be used in daylight
- the user can face the audience
- the user can write or draw directly on the transparency while in use



The **whiteboard** (more rarely **blackboard** or **greenboard**) is a useful device for spontaneous writing - as in brainstorming, for example. For prepared material, the OHP might be more suitable.



The **duster** is used for cleaning the whiteboard.



**Markers** are used for writing on the whiteboard



"A good workman never blames his tools."



The **flipchart** consists of several leaves of paper that you 'flip' or turn over..



The **notebook computer** is increasingly being used to display graphics during presentations. It is often used in conjunction with an overhead projector, which actually projects the image from the computer screen onto the wall screen.



**Handouts** are any documents or samples that you 'hand out' or distribute to your audience. Note that it is not usually a good idea to distribute handouts *before* your presentation. The audience will read the handouts instead of listening to you.

## Delivery

'Delivery' refers to the way in which you actually deliver or perform or give your presentation. Delivery is a vital aspect of all presentations.

### **Nerves**

Most speakers are a little nervous at the beginning of a presentation. So it is normal if you are nervous. The answer is to pay special attention to the beginning of your presentation. **During this time, try to speak slowly and calmly.** You should perhaps learn your introduction by heart. After a few moments, you will relax and gain confidence.

### **Audience Rapport**

You need to build a warm and friendly relationship with your audience. If you are enthusiastic your audience will be enthusiastic too. And be careful to establish eye contact with each member of your audience. Each person should feel that you are speaking directly to him or her. This means that you must **look at** each person in turn.

## **Body Language**

Your body is speaking to your audience even before you open your mouth. Your clothes, your walk, your glasses, your haircut and your expression - it is from these that your audience forms its first impression as you enter the room. Generally speaking, it is **better to stand rather than sit** when making a presentation. Be aware of and avoid any repetitive and irritating gestures. Be aware, too, that the movement of your body is one of your methods of control. When you move to or from the whiteboard, for example, you can move fast or slowly, raising or reducing the dynamism within the audience.

## **Voice quality**

It is, of course, important that your audience be able to hear you clearly throughout your presentation. Remember that if you turn away from your audience, for example towards the whiteboard, you need to speak a little more loudly. In general, you should try to vary your voice. Your voice will then be more interesting for your audience. You can vary your voice in at least three ways:

- speed: you can speak at normal speed, you can speak faster, you can speak more slowly - and you can stop completely! You can pause. This is a very good technique for gaining your audience's attention.
- intonation: you can change the pitch of your voice. You can speak in a high tone. You can speak in a low tone.
- volume: you can speak at normal volume, you can speak loudly and you can speak quietly. Lowering your voice and speaking quietly can again attract your audience's interest.

The important point is **not to speak in the same, flat, monotonous voice** throughout your presentation - this is the voice that hypnotists use to put their patients' into trance!

## **Visual aids**

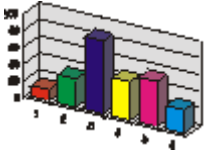
**Of all the information that enters our brains, the vast majority of it enters through the eyes.** 80% of what your audience learn during your presentation is learned visually (what they see) and only 20% is learned aurally (what they hear).

When designing you visuals, keep the information on each visual aid to a minimum - and **give your audience time to look at and absorb this information.** Remember, your audience have never seen these visual aids before. They need time to study and to **understand** them. Without understanding there is no communication.

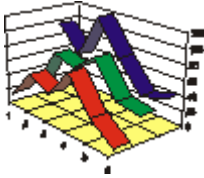
Apart from photographs and drawings, some of the most useful visual aids are charts and graphs, like the 3-dimensional ones shown below:



**Piecharts** are circular in shape (like a pie).



**Bar charts** can be vertical (as here) or horizontal.



**Graphs** can rise and fall.

# Language

## *Simplicity and Clarity*

If you want your audience to understand your message, your language must be **simple** and **clear**.

**Use short words and short sentences.**

## *Linking language shows where you are*

When you drive on the roads, you know where you are on those roads. But when you give a presentation, how can your audience know where they are? How can they know the structure of your presentation? How can they know what is coming next? They know because **you tell them**. You might say something like this:

"I'll **start** by describing the current position in Europe. **Then** I'll move on to some of the achievements we've made in Asia. **After that** I'll consider the opportunities we see for further expansion in Africa. **Lastly**, I'll quickly recap before **concluding** with some recommendations."

A member of the audience can now visualize your presentation like this:

<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome</li> <li>• Explanation of structure (<b>now</b>)</li> </ul>
<b>Body</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Europe</li> <li>• Asia</li> <li>• Africa</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summing up</li> <li>• Recommendations</li> </ul>

The table below lists useful expressions that you can use to signpost the various parts of your presentation.

Function	Language
<b>Introducing the subject</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'd like to start by...</li> <li>• Let's begin by...</li> <li>• First of all, I'll...</li> <li>• Starting with...</li> <li>• I'll begin by...</li> </ul>
<b>Finishing one subject...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well, I've told you about...</li> <li>• That's all I have to say about...</li> <li>• We've looked at...</li> <li>• So much for...</li> </ul>
<b>...and starting another</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now we'll move on to...</li> <li>• Let me turn now to...</li> <li>• Next...</li> <li>• Turning to...</li> <li>• I'd like now to discuss...</li> <li>• Let's look now at...</li> </ul>
<b>Analysing a point and giving recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where does that lead us?</li> <li>• Let's consider this in more detail...</li> <li>• What does this mean for ABC?</li> <li>• Translated into real terms...</li> </ul>
<b>Giving an example</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example,...</li> <li>• A good example of this is...</li> <li>• As an illustration,...</li> <li>• To give you an example,...</li> <li>• To illustrate this point...</li> </ul>
<b>Dealing with questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We'll be examining this point in more detail later on...</li> <li>• I'd like to deal with this question later, if I may...</li> <li>• I'll come back to this question later in my talk...</li> <li>• Perhaps you'd like to raise this point at the end...</li> <li>• I won't comment on this now...</li> </ul>



<b>Summarising and concluding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In conclusion,...</li> <li>• Right, let's sum up, shall we?</li> <li>• I'd like now to recap...</li> <li>• Let's summarise briefly what we've looked at...</li> <li>• Finally, let me remind you of some of the issues we've covered...</li> <li>• If I can just sum up the main points...</li> </ul>
<b>Ordering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firstly...secondly...thirdly...lastly...</li> <li>• First of all...then...next...after that...finally...</li> <li>• To start with...later...to finish up...</li> </ul>

## The Presentation

Most presentations are divided into 3 main parts:

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>Questions</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>BODY</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	
	<b>Questions</b>	

As a general rule in communication, repetition is valuable. In presentations, there is a golden rule about repetition:

- say what you are going to say
- say it
- then say what you have just said

### ***Introduction***

The introduction is a very important - perhaps the most important - part of your presentation. This is the first impression that your audience have of you. You should use the introduction to:

1. **welcome your audience**
2. **introduce your subject**
3. **outline the structure of your presentation**
4. **give instructions about questions**

## **Body**

The body is the 'real' presentation. If the introduction was well prepared and delivered, you will now be 'in control'. You will be relaxed and confident.

Remember these key points while delivering the body of your presentation:

- do not hurry
- be enthusiastic
- give time on visuals
- maintain eye contact
- modulate your voice
- look friendly
- keep to your structure
- use your notes
- signpost throughout
- remain polite when dealing with difficult questions

## **Conclusion**

Use the conclusion to:

1. **Sum up**
2. **(Give recommendations if appropriate)**
3. **Thank your audience**
4. **Invite questions**

## **Questions**

Questions are a good opportunity for you to interact with your audience. It may be **helpful for you to try to predict what questions will be asked so that you can prepare your response** in advance. You may wish to accept questions at any time during your presentation, or to keep a time for questions after your presentation. Normally, it's your decision, and you should make it clear during the introduction.

## **Review**

### ***In this seminar, you have learned:***

- to allow plenty of **time for preparation**
- to ask the all-important question-words, why? who? where? when? how? and what?
- to structure your presentation into **introduction, body, conclusion and questions**
- to write **notes** based on keywords, **no reading!**
- to **rehearse** your presentation several times and modify it as necessary
- to select the right equipment for the job
- to make use of clear, powerful visual aids that **do not overload your audience**
- to use **clear, simple language**

- to **explain the structure of your presentation** at the beginning so that your listeners know what to expect
- to **link** each section of your presentation = use of various **linking phrases**
- to say what you are going to say, say it, and say what you have just said
- to **overcome your nerves**
- to establish audience rapport = **a relationship between you and your audience**
- to be aware of your body language
- to maintain interest by varying the **speed, volume and pitch** of your voice