

Developing speaking & presentational skills

Structure, techniques, useful expressions

Academic Presentations

A: Structure

Most presentations are divided into 3 main parts:

- 1 Introduction**
 - welcome your audience
 - introduce your subject
 - outline the structure of your presentation
 - give instructions about questions
- 2 Body**
(main part)
 - follow a clear structure which is divided up logically
 - support your message with concrete examples
 - use carefully spaced visuals
- 3 Conclusion**
 - invite questions
 - sum up / conclude / give recommendations
 - (- thank your audience)

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.** In other words, use the three parts of your presentation to reinforce your message. In the introduction, you tell your audience what your message is going to be. In the body, you tell your audience your real message. In the conclusion, you summarize what your message was.

Opening techniques:

Communication experts all agree that the first three minutes of a presentation are the most important. They talk about 'hooks' – simple techniques for getting the immediate attention of the audience. A good start makes you feel more confident. Here's how the experts suggest you 'hook' your audience:

- Give them a **problem** to think about.
- Give them some **amazing facts**.
- Give them a **story** or **personal anecdote**.

Task 1

Look at the presentation openings below and divide them under the three headings by writing their numbers in the correct column.

PROBLEMS	AMAZING FACTS	STORIES

- 1 **Did you know that** Japanese companies spend four times more on entertaining clients in a year than the entire GDP of Bulgaria? 40 billion dollars, **to be precise. You know, that's** twice Colombia's total foreign debt. You could buy General Motors for the same money.
- 2 **Suppose** your advertising budget was cut by 99% tomorrow. **How would you** go about promoting your product?
- 3 **According to the latest study,** by 2050 only one in every four people in Western Europe will be going to work. And two will be old age pensioners.
- 4 **You know,** R&D is 90% luck. **When I think about** creativity, **I'm reminded of** the man who invented the microwave oven. He spent years messing around with radar transmitters, then noticed the chocolate in his pocket was starting to melt!
- 5 **Statistics show that** in the last ten years more people have legally emigrated to the United States than to the rest of the world put together – about half a million of them a year, **in fact. Now,** over ten years, **that's roughly equivalent to** the population of Greece.
- 6 **Have you ever wondered why it is that** Americans are easier to sell to than Europeans? And why nine out of ten sales gurus are American? **You have? Well, if I could show you** what stops Europeans buying, **would you be interested?**
- 7 **I read somewhere the other day that** the world's highest paid executive works for Disney and gets \$230 million a year. **Now, that's about** \$2,000 a minute! **That means** he's currently making more money than Volkswagen.
- 8 **How many people here this morning** hate going to meetings? Just about everybody, **right? Well, imagine** a company where there were never any meetings and everything ran smoothly. **Do you think that's possible?**
- 9 **Have you ever been in the situation where** you've had to negotiate with the Japanese? **I remember when** I was working in Nagoya and everybody had told me the Japanese don't like saying 'no'. So, in meetings I just kept saying 'yeah' to everything. And they hated it. **It turned out** 'yeah' sounds like 'no' in Japanese!

Here is a frame for you to use for an effective opening, using the language in **bold** from Task 1. Whatever technique you choose, prepare your opening carefully. You should always know exactly how you are going to start.

<p>Problem technique</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppose How would you..... ? • Have you ever wondered why it is that? You have? Well, if I could show you ..., would you be interested? • How many people here today ? Well, imagine..... Do you think that's possible?
<p>Amazing facts technique</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you know that..... ? • According to the latest study, • Statistics show that • I read somewhere the other day that
<p>Story / anecdote technique</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You know,..... When I think about, I'm reminded of • Have you ever been in the situation where.....? I remember when It turned out

Body of the Presentation

When it comes to the main part of your presentation, you need to make sure that you deliver your idea **piece by piece**, in a logical and cohesive manner. You should give examples and provide evidence and **vivid explanations** for complex (e.g. scientific/ technological) concepts and terms to ensure that your audience experiences that satisfying **'ah-hah!' moment** as they grasp the message of your presentation.

Closing techniques

The most important thing about your conclusion: DON'T FORGET IT!

The end of a presentation should never come as a surprise to your audience, which means that you need to signal it. Many people believe that finishing a presentation is all about summarizing clearly what you've said e.g. Let's summarize briefly what we've looked at... True, but the key is in how you do it—the journey should not look the same looking back as it did looking forward (otherwise, why make it?). Here are some more creative closing techniques:

<p>Inspired conclusion</p>	<p>Can involve telling a story, anecdote or a quotation to make your final point.</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>Make a recommendation for future actions.</p>
<p>Call for action</p>	<p>Suggest a course of action for the audience to take.</p>
<p>Challenge</p>	<p>Leave the audience with a challenge or a challenging question of your own.</p>

Whatever you choose, your ending should make sure your audience never asks itself the question: 'Well, that was all very interesting, ... but so what?'

Task 2

Look at the closings below and divide them under the three headings by writing their numbers in the correct column.

Inspired conclusion	Recommendation/ Call for action	Challenge

- 1 'One thing we know for certain is that chasing meaning is better for your health than trying to avoid discomfort. So, I would say the best way to make decisions is to go after what it is that creates meaning in your life and then trust yourself to handle the stress that follows.'
- 2 'Now, as mentioned, machines are not making progress on novel situations. It will be humans that are creating the copy behind our marketing campaigns, and it will be humans that are developing our business strategy. So Yahli, whatever you decide to do, let every day bring you a new challenge. If it does, then you will stay ahead of the machines.'
- 3 'The great thing about social media was how it gave a voice to voiceless people, but we're now creating a surveillance society, where the smartest way to survive is to go back to being voiceless. Let's not do that.'
- 4 'Here's my question to you: What are you waiting for? I guarantee you the next 30 days are going to pass whether you like it or not, so why not think about something you have always wanted to try and give it a shot! For the next 30 days.'

Dealing with Questions

Presentations usually finish with a Q&A session. However, the problem with Q&A is that you might find yourself with an awkward or difficult question, which means the last impression the audience has of you is the energy that was in the room for that one question. It is therefore important for you to anticipate potential problematic questions and think about the answers that you could give to those. You should furthermore have 'ready-made' answers to questions that you do not have an answer to e.g. 'That is an interesting question, I would be happy to look into in more detail and discuss it with you at another time'. In this manner, you leave the audience on your terms, so you can achieve a lasting impact. Should your audience seem demotivated, you need to encourage them to ask questions.

B: Visual Aids

If you use visual aids well, they will enhance your presentation by adding impact and supporting your message; however, if they are managed badly they can ruin a presentation. Before you start designing a visual aid, ask yourself: 'What is the purpose of the visual aid?'

- To clarify/ simplify a key point?
- To provide an illustrative example?
- To enhance/ add impact?

In general, make sure you don't use too many visual aids. Remember: less is more.

Task 3: Practice

Here are some tips to keep in mind when using visuals in a presentation. Can you categorize them under DOs and DON'Ts in the table below? Write their numbers in the correct column.

- 1 Read straight from your visual.
- 2 Make sure your visual aids really support your topic.
- 3 Talk to the visual aid.
- 4 Require the audience to listen to you and read the slide at the same time.
- 5 Allow the audience enough time to study your slide.
- 6 Keep visual aids clear and brief.
- 7 Put too much information/ text on one same slide.
- 8 Use at least a 20pt font.
- 9 Check for grammar and spelling mistakes.
- 10 Include a lot of details.
- 11 Use key words or phrases, not long sentences.

DOs	DON'Ts

C: Delivery Techniques

Signposting Language - Signaling Your Position and Direction in a Talk or Presentation

When we give a presentation, we not only structure the content of the presentation, but also use so-called 'signposting' language to guide the audience through the presentation and signal a move or change in direction.

Task 4

Complete the table below with these signposting phrases:

1. A good example of this is ...
2. OK. So, ...
3. Let's begin with ...
4. To give you an example, ...
5. Let's summarise briefly what we've looked at ...
6. What does this mean for XYZ?
7. I'd now like to discuss / look at / consider ...
8. Turning to ...
9. Starting with ...
10. If I can just sum up the main points ...
11. As an illustration, ...
12. We've looked at ...
13. First of all, ..., then ..., next ...
14. To start with ... later ... to finish up ...
15. I'd now like to recap ...
16. I'll begin by ...
17. Let's now look at ...

Function	Phrase
Introducing the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I'd like to start by ...•
Finishing one subject ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well, I've told you about ...•
... and starting another	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Now we'll move on to...•
Analysing a point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let's consider this in more detail ...•
Giving an example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For example, ...•
Summarising and concluding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In conclusion, ...•
Ordering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Firstly, ... secondly... thirdly, ... lastly•

Task 5

Watch the [Ways to Improve Public Speaking](#) video by the University of Geneva on the art of effective delivery techniques and answer the following questions:

- **How many points of advice are given on content? What are they?**

- **In which other areas does the video give points of advice?**

D: Video Analysis

Instructions

- Form teams of three and assign ONE category to each team member: Student 1 evaluates A, student 2 evaluates B and student 3 evaluates C.

Task 6

- Watch the [TED Talk](#), rate the speaker using the rating scale (1 – 10) and answer the questions in your respective category (A, B or C) with your observations and evaluation.
- In your teams, compare and discuss your notes:
 - Which category is the best rated?
 - Why do you think this is?
 - How can you make use of the most effective techniques in your presentations?

Notes on categories:

A) Structure and Signposting

Is there a clear structure? Is the opening/ closing effective? Is signposting used effectively? Which signposting language is used? Give your rating and evaluation/ observations based on what we have covered in the lesson.

B) Visuals

Are visuals used effectively? Give your rating and observations/ evaluation based on what we have covered in the lesson.

C) Body language, Speech and Voice

Is body language and voice used effectively? Is the speaker's speech clear? Give your rating and observations/ evaluation based on what we have covered in the lesson.

Vocabulary _ Week 3AWL Sublist 3 Definitions and exercisesAWL Sublist 3 Word familiesAWL Sublist 3 More exercises**Sublist 3**

academic	evolution	orientation
adjustment	expansion	perspective
alter	exposure	precise
amendment	external	prime
aware	facilitate	psychology
capacity	fundamental	pursue
challenge	generated	ratio
clause	generation	rejected
compounds	image	revenue
conflict	liberal	stability
consultation	licence	styles
contact	logic	substitution
decline	marginal	sustainable
discretion	medical	symbolic
draft	mental	target
enable	modified	transition
energy	monitoring	trend
enforcement	network	version
entities	notion	welfare
equivalent	objective	whereas