

Presentation skills

Introduction to Presentation

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. **Afterwards, you will be invited to** take a test and ask questions.

Preparation for presentation

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

Number 1 is . . . preparation

Number 2 is . . . preparation

Number 3 is . . . preparation

Preparation is everything for a presentation.

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? Will it be a small, intimate group of 4 colleagues or a large gathering of 400 competitors? How much do they know already and what will they expect from you?

Venue

Where am I making this presentation? In a small hotel, a 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. And you will prepare your visual aids, if you have decided to use them. But remember, in general, less is better than more (a little is better than a lot). You can always give additional information during the questions after the presentation.

Structure

A well organized presentation with a clear structure is easier for the audience to follow. It is therefore more effective. You should organize the points you wish to make in a logical order. Most presentations are organized in three parts, followed by questions:

Beginning	Short introduction	welcome your audience introduce your subject explain the structure of your presentation explain rules for questions
Middle	Body of presentation	present the subject itself

End	Short conclusion	summarize your presentation thank your audience invite questions
Questions and Answers		

Notes

When you give your presentation, you should be - or appear to be - as spontaneous as possible. You should not read your presentation! You should be so familiar with your subject and with the information that you want to deliver that you do not need to read a text. Reading a text is boring! Reading a text will make your audience go to sleep! So if you don't have a text to read, how can you remember to say everything you need to say? With **notes**. You can create your own system of notes. Some people make notes on small, A6 cards. Some people write down just the **title** of each section of their talk. Some people write down **keywords** to remind them. The notes will give you confidence, but because you will have prepared your presentation fully, you may not even need them!

Rehearsal

Rehearsal is a vital part of preparation. You should leave time to practice 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 practice difficult pronunciations
- you will be able to check the time that your presentation takes and make any necessary modifications

So prepare, prepare, prepare! Prepare everything: words, visual aids, timing and equipment. Rehearse your presentation several times and time it. Is it the right length? Are you completely familiar with all your illustrations? Are they in the right order? Do you know who the audience is? How many people? How will you answer difficult questions? Do you know the room? Are you confident about the equipment? When you have answered all these questions, you will be a confident, enthusiastic presenter ready to communicate the subject of your presentation to an eager audience.