

Preparation and presentation

- A** Read the brief and prepare your own presentation. Don't forget to KISS (Keep it Short and Simple)!

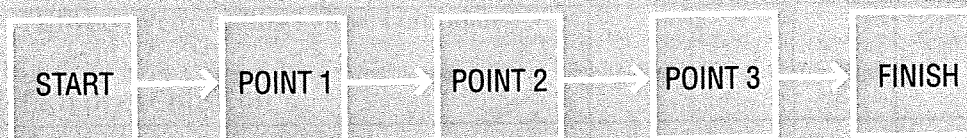
Full presentation practice: Giving information

Subject and structure

Choose from the following list or think of your own subject.

- My department and / or my company
- My industry
- My university
- My research
- My country

Take any direction you wish with your chosen subject, but divide your presentation into three clear parts using the structure below.



Your audience

You are making this presentation to a group of people who are very important for your future career. This could be your board of directors, a group of external professors, an assessment centre panel or an audience at an international conference, for example. Describe your audience before you start your presentation.

Your targets

- To have a fluent 'who', 'why', 'what', 'how' start
- To have a well-structured and signposted presentation
- To finish well with a summary and clear conclusion
- To leave a good impression by giving a well-prepared presentation

- B** Give your full presentation.

B Now read the text and check your answers.

The presentation journey

Giving a presentation is like taking your audience from start to finish on a journey. At the start, your audience require some basic information before they can accompany you on this journey. Once they have the information, they're on your side, attentive and ready to listen to every step of the journey along to your final message.

Who

Introduce yourself. Clearly, the amount of information you give about yourself and your work and the level of formality you use, depends on the presentation you're giving. For example, for a presentation to a group of your colleagues, you probably don't need to give your name and background and you can use informal language. A presentation to a new client can require more detailed information about your background and experience and a more formal approach. Make sure that you're comfortable talking about your past and present experience in such cases.

Why

Tell your audience your destination – the reason they're there to listen to you and the purpose of your presentation. If the audience don't know why they should listen, they won't have any reason to accompany you along your journey. The 'why' is linked to the conclusion, your final message – probably, the most important part of your presentation.

What

Outline the roadmap – the main points that you're going to develop and the order in which you would like to develop these. When your audience have a clear view of the roadmap you want to navigate, they can follow you more easily and can also see you're planned, prepared and effectively managing the presentation. There are good reasons for giving the roadmaps, as research shows your audience listen better and remember better and more when they know the structure and shape of your presentation. The technique we use to give the roadmap is called 'sequencing'. This is a very simple technique as it just involves using language such as *one, two, three* or *firstly, secondly, thirdly*. Nevertheless, it is also highly effective as 'sequencing' or 'ordering', as it is sometimes called, is a principle of memory by which we recall information.

How

Put yourself into your audience's shoes: address your audience's needs. Your audience won't listen to you as you go into the main part of your presentation if they have other concerns. They may be thinking: *How long do I have to sit here? Do I have to take notes? When can I ask questions? Is there any coffee here?* It can therefore be useful to answer such questions in your 'start' so that your audience are ready to listen.

Your 'start' should include these points but at the same time not be too long. Ninety seconds is a good guideline as there's evidence that you begin to lose listeners after this amount of time. Your audience tend to listen to your every word and form an impression of you in these ninety seconds. An accurate 'start' helps to create a good impression and you should aim to be grammatically accurate at this stage.

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

Signposting	
Function	Language
Introducing the subject	• I'd like to start by... • Let's begin by... • First of all, I'll... • Starting with... • I'll begin by...
Finishing one subject...	• Well, I've told you about... • That's all I have to say about... • We've looked at... • So much for...
...and starting another	• Now we'll move on to... • Let me turn now to... • Next... • Turning to... • I'd like now to discuss... • Let's look now at...
Analysing a point and giving recommendations	• Where does that lead us? • Let's consider this in more detail... • What does this mean for ABC? • Translated into real terms...
Giving an example	• For example,... • A good example of this is... • As an illustration,... • To give you an example,... • To illustrate this point...
Dealing with questions	• We'll be examining this point in more detail later on... • I'd like to deal with this question later, if I may... • I'll come back to this question later in my talk... • Perhaps you'd like to raise this point at the end... • I won't comment on this now...

Summarising and concluding	• In conclusion,... • Right, let's sum up, shall we? • I'd like now to recap... • Let's summarise briefly what we've looked at... • Finally, let me remind you of some of the issues we've covered... • If I can just sum up the main points...
Ordering	• Firstly...secondly...thirdly...lastly... • First of all...then...next...after that...finally... • To start with...later...to finish up...

Presentations Handout 2

Strong beginning:

Anecdote; tell a personal story, preferably funny. Most business presenters try to be serious, or set the agenda right at the start. Time and time again, audiences report that this is the sure way to lose their attention. Yet, time and time again audiences say that personal anecdotes are a great way to start a business presentation - even serious ones.

If an anecdote isn't appropriate, there are other options. Starting with a question, or a series of linked questions, is a favourite loved by audiences. Similarly, a quotation by a famous person is also a good opener to a talk or presentation.

Other possibilities include a statistic or a controversial statement about the audience or the subject area. An appropriate poem is also a good start.

Things to avoid to open your presentation or speech include jokes, role plays or anything where you are trying to be 'clever'. The audience may be offended and therefore will distance themselves from you, lessening your impact.

No matter what the size of the audience, you can use the suggestions here. Whether you speak to a small group or several thousand, anecdotes, questions, quotations, statistics and controversial statements will always work.

Remember:

Who
Why
What
How

Strong ending:

Signal
Summary
Conclusion
Closing Remarks

Ready to finish
Overview

'Why' examples are a call for action, make a recommendation etc.
Examples are thanking your audience, asking for questions etc.

Dealing with questions:

At the end of your talk, you may get questions. You don't have to answer all the questions - they may not be good questions!

- If it is a good question, thank the person and answer it.
- Some of the questions may be irrelevant and not connected to what you want to say. Say so and get another question.
- Some may be unnecessary because you have already given the answer. Repeat the answer briefly and get the next question.
- And some may be difficult because you don't have the information. Again, say so and offer to find the information or ask the person asking the question what they think.

When you get a question, comment on it first. This will give you time to think. Here are some useful expressions to help you do that:

- That's a very interesting question.

C Read through these phrases. Write 'who', 'why', 'what' or 'how' next to each phrase.

Check any vocabulary you don't know.

- 1 On behalf of Mr Keane, may I welcome you to Jackson Inc. My name's Jo Black and I'm responsible for ... *who*
- 2 My purpose today is to ... *why*
- 3 I'm going to develop three main points. First, ... Second, ... Third, ... *what*
- 4 Let me introduce myself. I am ... I am a ... *who*
- 5 I'll pass round copies of my slides so you can make notes as I go through the presentation. *how*
- 6 Before I continue, let me tell you something about myself. *who*
- 7 Today I would like to give you a general overview of ... *why*
- 8 I've divided my presentation into three main points. I would like to begin with ... *what*
- 9 So, I'll be addressing three main points and the first one is going to be ... The second point will be ... And finally the last point is ... *what*
- 10 I'm going to outline three proposals. Firstly, I'll ... Then, I'd like to ... and finally ... *what*
- 11 Today, I'm going to bring you up to date with ... *why*
- 12 The presentation should last about five minutes. *how*
- 13 We'll take a short coffee break at about 10.30. *how*
- 14 My objective today is to ... *why*
- 15 Morning everyone. Thanks for coming. My name is Luca and I'm in charge of ... *who*
- 16 If you have any questions, I'd be grateful if you could leave them until the end. *how*
- 17 I'm happy to take any questions after that. *how*
- 18 For those who don't know me, my name is Carlos López and I'm the managing director. *who*
- 19 We can take two or three questions at the end of each point. *how*
- 20 You don't need to take notes as we'll be handing out presentation booklets. *how*
- 21 I would like to start with ... And then ... Lastly ... *what*
- 22 Today, I'm going to tell you ... *why*
- 23 What I am going to do today is review ... *why*
- 24 Please feel free to interrupt me at any time if you have a question. *how*
- 25 The reason we are here today is to ... *why*
- 26 Morning everyone. I'm ... I'm a ... at ... *who*

D 1.01, 1.02 Watch César and Zhan's 'starts' to their Step 1 presentations and tick the phrases they used.

Find Your Voice

Don't learn all these phrases now. Highlight one or two from each category that you really like or think are useful for you. Learn them by using them in your presentation practice – prepare the 'start' of a presentation that is typical of your work situation, using the phrases you wish to learn. When you're ready, stand up and present your 'start'.

2 The finish

Signal, summary, conclusion, closing remarks

A Read the text about the 'finish' of a presentation and answer the questions below.

Make your final message clear

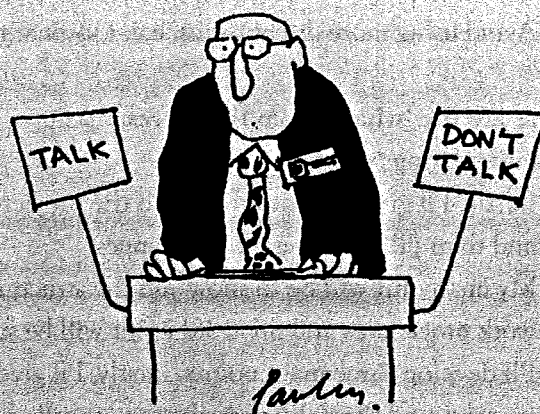
Stay in control until the very last second and follow these steps at the 'finish' of your presentation.

Firstly, pause briefly and **signal** clearly that you are now ready to finish the presentation. The audience will start to listen again closely at this point.

Then, make your **summary**, giving a brief overview of what has already been said. The summary is a reflection of your 'what' and looks back. It should not be too long as you will lose your audience's attention again, but detailed enough to cover your points. This can be a difficult balance to achieve! A good summary gives your listeners time to reflect on the content and builds up to your conclusion, making your conclusion stronger, more powerful and more effective. A conclusion without a summary can sound incomplete as your audience may not have listened to every point during the main part of the presentation and the purpose can be lost. Avoid giving any conclusions while you are making your summary.

After this, give your **conclusion**. This is a reflection of your 'why' and looks forward to what you want people to do or think after your presentation. It should follow logically from your summary. There are different kinds of conclusions: you can make a call for action, make a recommendation or assure your audience that they're better informed. This is the destination of your journey and the most important part of your presentation.

Finally, make your **closing remarks** by thanking your audience, asking for questions or passing round your presentation handouts.



Henry trained himself in the 'dramatic pause'.

- 1 Why don't some people finish their presentations effectively in your opinion?
- 2 Do you agree that every presentation has some kind of conclusion?
- 3 Have you ever thought 'What was the point?' after listening to a presentation?

B Write Sig (Signal), Sum (Summary), Conc (Conclusion) or CR (Closing Remarks) next to the phrases below.

- 1 So, that brings me to the end of my presentation. *Conc*
- 2 Let me summarise what we've looked at. *Sum*
- 3 Thank you for your attention. *CR*
- 4 I'll briefly summarise the main issues. *Sum*
- 5 I'll now hand out ... *CR*
- 6 I suggest Johannes ... and Michel *CONC*
- 7 I'd like to summarise. *Sum*
- 8 I'd like to conclude by strongly recommending ... *Conc*
- 9 So, that completes our presentation. *Conc*
- 10 Let me just go over the key points again. *Sum*
- 11 To sum up ... *Sum*
- 12 I trust you gained an insight into ... *Conc*
- 13 To conclude, I'd like to leave you with the following thought ... *CONC*
- 14 Well, that covers everything I want to say. *Conc*
- 15 If you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them. *Conc*
- 16 At this stage, I'd like to go over ... *Sum*
- 17 In my opinion, the only way forward is to ... *Conc*
- 18 Thank you for listening. *CR*
- 19 To summarise, I'll run through my three topics. *Sum*
- 20 In conclusion, I'd like to leave you with the following idea. *Conc*

Find Your Voice

Highlight the phrases above that you really like or think are useful for you, keeping in mind the kinds of conclusion that you often have to make in your presentations. Do you ...

- make recommendations?
- give information?
- motivate?
- inspire?
- give a call to action?
- persuade?

Business people often have to answer questions. You may have to respond to questions during a meeting or negotiation or after you have given a presentation. There are several possible responses to such questions. You can:

1. answer directly ("Yes", "No", "I'm..", etc)
2. ask for clarification of the question
3. reassure the questioner
4. give yourself time to think
5. avoid answering

The language you use becomes very important. It can provide you with certain helpful tactics to use in various situations. Look at these useful phrases:

Reactions to questions

Would you mind
rephrasing the
question? I didn't
quite understand it.

|
|

Have I understood
you correctly?

|
|

SEEKING CLARIFICATION

|
|

If I understand you
you're asking...

|
|

When you say...
do you mean...?

I'd like to reassure
you about that

|
|

There is no need for
concern on that
point

|
|

GIVING REASSURANCE

|
|

You need have no
worries on that front

|
|

I can understand
your concern but...

GIVING YOURSELF TIME TO THINK

I'm glad you asked
that question

That's a very
interesting question

I'm afraid I can't
give you an answer
to that question
at the moment

I'd prefer not to
comment on that
for the moment

AVOIDANCE

Perhaps I could
answer that
question later

Well, that would
depend on
various factors

- I'm glad you've asked that question.
- A good question.
- I'm sorry but I don't have that information to hand.
- Can I get back to you about that?
- I'm afraid I can't answer that.
- I'm not in a position to comment on that.
- As I said earlier, ...
- I think I answered that when I said ...
- I did mention that.
- I don't see the connection.
- I'm sorry, I don't follow you.
- I think that is a very different issue.

1. *Good question ... I'll look into that and get back to you.*
2. *That's a really interesting question ... to which I don't have the answer right now.*
3. *I'd need to do some more research into that.*
4. *I'm sorry I don't know the answer to that question ... but perhaps X can help?*
5. *That isn't my field I'm afraid.*
6. *With all due respect, that question is a little off-topic.*
7. *I'm afraid I don't know but you should be able to find out on the X website.*
8. *Ask me another question!*

Strong Disagreement

I 'totally disagree with you.
I don't agree at all.
You're completely mistaken.
I disagree entirely.
Under no circumstances could I agree to that.
What you are saying is just not 'feasible.

1. > completely.
 > wholly.
 > utterly — only used in this negative way
2. Not as strong as *disagree* (see page 13).
3. After *under no circumstances* the auxiliary and the subject are inverted.
4. > possible.

Softening Neutral Disagreement

I'm afraid . . .
I'm sorry, . . .
With respect, . . .
I respect your opinion, of course, however . . .

Similar to Softening Strong Disagreement except that you not so obliged to use these phrases with Neutral Disagreement. It is, however, a good idea to "soften" any disagreement in English.

1. These two phrases are included here and not in Softening Strong Disagreement as they are not as powerful as the other phrases. (see page 12).

Neutral Disagreement

I don't 'completely agree with you on that.
I really can't agree with you on that.
I can't say that I share your view.
'We'll have to agree to differ.
I'm not 'totally convinced by your argument.
I can't accept your point of view.
I can't help feeling that . . .
I feel I must disagree.
I really must take 'issue with you here.

1. Although this suggests you agree to a large extent, it usually means the contrary.
2. A convenient way to stop the argument if there doesn't seem to be any way to reach agreement on the subject.
3. Argue.

Tactful Disagreement

I agree up to a point, but . . .
To a certain extent I agree with you, but . . .
You have a point there, but . . .
I 'take your point, Mr Hoffman, but have you considered . . .?
I can see your point of view, but surely . . .
I have some sympathy with your 'position, but . . .

The main difference between this section and Partial Agreement is that these phrases are on the negative side. They suggest below 50% agreement, whereas the phrases in Partial Agreement suggest agreement above 50%.

1. > see.
2. > argument.
 > view.

Strong Agreement

I ¹completely agree.

I agree entirely with your point of view.

²I'm of exactly the same opinion.

I'm in ³total ⁴agreement.

1. ▷ thoroughly.
▷ entirely
2. I have.
3. ▷ complete.
4. ▷ accord — very formal.

Neutral Agreement

I agree.

I think we are in agreement on that.

I think you're right.

I think we ¹can accept your position on that.

1. ▷ could — less certain.

Partial Agreement

¹I would tend to agree with you on that.

I agree with you on the ²whole, but it could be said that . . .

I agree in ³principle, but . . .

⁴By and large I would accept your views, but . . .

Although I agree with most of what you've said, I find it difficult to agree with your point about . . .

1. Shows agreement but still leaves room for manoeuvre. Often followed by a "but . . .".
2. Taking everything into consideration.
3. In general, usually followed by giving the *details* on which you still disagree, or where you need more information.
4. To a great extent.

Softening Strong Disagreement

¹Frankly, . . .

²To be quite frank, . . .

To put it ³bluntly, . . .

⁴With respect, . . .

Strong disagreement is relatively rare in English. Often introduced by various "softeners" before phrases of strong disagreement. Any of the phrases for "softening" may be used before any of the phrases for Strong Disagreement.

1. These are ways of showing your thoughts and feelings clearly and honestly.
2. Directly — without wasting time being unnecessarily diplomatic about it.
3. ▷ With due respect — more formal.
▷ With all due respect — even more formal.