

C. How to give an oral presentation

The **planning stage** of an oral presentation is very similar to that of a written report or an essay. So, think about what you want to achieve (Do you want to inform your audience, inspire them to think about your topic, or convince them of a particular point of view?); think about your audience (What background do they have about your topic? Do they have any particular interests? How are you going to involve them in your presentation?). Then...

Brainstorm your topic, and write a rough outline. Research your topic. Don't get carried away – remember you have a limited time for your presentation. Organise your material and write a draft – think about the length of time you have to talk. Summarise your draft into points to write on overheads and/on cards. Plan and prepare your visual aids.

Organising the content. Like a written report or an essay, an oral presentation is divided into three main parts:

Introduction, Body, Conclusion.

- **Introduction:** Greet the audience. Capture your listeners' attention (you can begin with a question, a funny story, a starting comment, or anything that will make them think).
State your purpose.
Present an outline of your talk.
- **Body:** Present your main points one by one in logical order.
Make it absolutely clear when you move to another point.
Use clear examples to illustrate your points.
Use visual aids to make your presentation more interesting.
- **Conclusion:** It is very important to leave your audience with a clear summary of everything you have covered.
Summarise the main points.
Restate the purpose of your talk, and say that you have achieved your aim.
Thank the audience, check comprehension and invite questions.

USEFUL STANDARD ORAL PHRASES

1 INTRODUCTION	2 THE BODY	3 CONCLUSION
<p>Introducing oneself Good morning. My name is ... and I am the ... at ... On behalf of ... I'd like to welcome you to today's presentation.</p> <p>Stating the purpose of the presentation I'm going to talk about/describe/outline... This morning I want to explain...</p> <p>Presenting an outline of the presentation My talk will be divided into (three) parts. Part one will deal with ...; part two ...; part three ... I will concentrate on the following points: first of all... Then... This will lead to... And finally...</p>	<p>Starting from the first point I'll begin with/I'd like to begin with ... To start with, I'd like to consider... First of all, I'd like to consider/talk about ...</p> <p>Moving to another point The next point is that... OK, now I'm going to talk about... Right. Now I'd like to explain... Moving on /Turning to ... Let's move to the next point ... Finally, I'll focus on ...</p> <p>Referring to the previous topic As I said before, ... In the previous part of my talk I mentioned / said / described / focused on /...</p> <p>Postponing I'll come back to that later.</p> <p>Referring to visual aids Looking at the map/table/chart/... we can see... If you look at the graph/table/..., you can see... This diagram/graph/... shows ... Let's look in details at the figures. As you can see ...</p>	<p>Summarizing main points To summarize / to conclude, I'd like to ... Let's summarise the main points. In summary then, ... To recap the main points...</p> <p>Restating the purpose of the presentation I think you can now see that... My intention was..., and it should now be clear that...</p> <p>Thanking the audience Thank you for your attention. This concludes my talk. Thank you very much.</p> <p>Checking comprehension Have I made myself clear? Are there any questions? As anyone got any questions?</p>

Delivering your presentation

- **Talk** to your audience, don't read to them! If you read out your presentation as if it were an essay, your audience will probably understand very little and will lose concentration quickly. So, use note, cue cards or overheads as prompts, and speak to the audience. Include everyone by looking at them and maintaining **eye-contact** (but don't stare or glare at people).
- **Watch your language!** Keep it simple. The aim is to communicate, not to show off your vocabulary.
- Use your **voice** to communicate clearly. So, speak loudly enough for everyone in the room to hear you.
- Don't rush! Speaking fast doesn't make you seem smarter; it will only make it harder for other people to understand you. Vary your voice quality. When you begin a new point, use a higher pitch and volume. Use pause – Don't be afraid of short periods of silence. They give you a chance to gather your thoughts, and your audience a chance to think.
- Use your **body** to communicate, too! Stand straight and comfortably. Hold your head up. Look around and make eye-contact with people in the audience. Do not stare at a point on the carpet or the wall. If you don't include the audience, they won't listen to you. Do not worry about your **gestures**. Use your hands, facial expressions and your body naturally. Do not turn your back to the audience.
- Interact with the **audience**. Be aware of how your audience is reacting. Are they interested or bored? If they look confused, ask them why? Stop if necessary and explain a point again. Check if the audience is still with you (Does that make sense? Is that clear?). Be open to questions and be ready to get the discussion going on after your presentation. Just in case nobody has anything to say, have some provocative or points for discussion ready to ask the group.

Using visual aids

- **Overheads** - Overheads are the easiest and most reliable form of visual aids. You can use them as a prompt for your talk, so that you may not need cards. (But don't read word-for-word from your overheads!). Using colour, pictures and graphs can make your overheads more interesting.
- **PowerPoint** - You can use PowerPoint software to produce very professional overheads, or to make a computer-based presentation.
- **Handouts** - Handouts are a great idea. Think about whether you want to distribute them before or after your presentation. It is a good idea to include your references on a handout, so that people can follow up on them later. You could also include some follow-up questions for discussion.

Checking out the facilities

Whenever possible, check the facilities of the room when you are going to deliver your talk. Does the overhead processor work? Where is the plug for the computer? Is there a white board, or is it a blackboard?

Dealing with nervousness

The first few times you make a presentation, you will be nervous. That's quite a good thing – a bit of adrenalin often helps you to perform well.

However, to make sure that your nervousness does not become a problem, here are some things to consider:

- Smile! Your audience will react warmly if you smile and at least look relaxed.
- Confess that you are nervous! Your audience will be very sympathetic – they know how you are feeling.
- Breathe deeply. It will calm you down.

- Be well-prepared. Practice giving your talk (you can ask a friend to listen to you before delivering your talk).
- Be organised. If you are well organised. Your task will be easier.
- Slow down! When people are nervous, they tend to get confused easily. So your mind may start to race, and you may feel panicky. Don't start rushing through the presentation, but use the pacing established during your many rehearsals. Make use of pauses and force yourself to stop at the end of a sentence, take a breath, and think before you continue.
- Remember - Giving an oral presentation is a performance – you have to be like an actor. If you act the part of someone enjoying themselves and feeling confident, you will not only communicate these positive feelings to the audience, you will feel much better, too.