

# ENGLISH HELPSHEET

## PRESENTATIONS

### PRESENTATIONS IN GENERAL

When giving a talk or a presentations, a lot of aspects of communication are involved, not only language. Nevertheless, a good command of **language functions** is vital: the better you master them, the less you will have to search for words, and the more relaxed you will be. Also, some of the language functions you will find here will help you to **structure** your talk (much like paragraphs in written texts) so as to make it **easy to follow** for your audience.

Of course, that is not all. Remember, what is clear to you may not be clear to your audience. Use all the means necessary to make your point, and make it in a way that is as **enjoyable** as possible for the audience: using appropriate language, of course, but also **intonation**, (combined with) **body language**, **visual aids**, **handouts...**

### THE GOLDEN RULES OF PRESENTATIONS

#### The Rule of Three

- 1) Tell them what you are going to say
- 2) Say it
- 3) Tell them what you said

#### One Thing

Focus on one thing at the time. Make sure to repeat the main point of your presentation several times (paraphrasing it avoids boredom).

#### Do NOT read

It is boring and borderline rude. Moreover, spoken English is not the same as written English.

#### K.I.S.S.

Keep It **S**hort and **S**imple. Especially as far as language is concerned.

#### Signal

...new ideas, important points, where you are. There are many ways to do that!

## **Prepare, Prepare, Prepare**

Check your equipment, rehearse, check the timing, arrive on time, anticipate questions... Remember Murphy's law!

## **Relax**

...which is a lot easier if you're well-prepared, of course!

## **Captivate your audience from the start...**

The first 15 seconds are crucial. Audiences decide very early if they like you. Engage them early and show that you like them.

## **...and keep them captivated until the end**

The average attention span ranks from 7 to 20 minutes. In some cases, even less.

Prolong the attention span by

- giving them a rest (tell an anecdote, illustration, demo...)
- including variation – in speech (intonation), visuals, movement...
- using pauses (to let the information sink in)

## **BEFORE THE PRESENTATION**

- define the audience
- clarify the objectives / purpose
- plan the content
- design suitable visual aids
- control the length
- follow a clear structure

## DURING THE PRESENTATION

- keep eye contact with the audience
- don't rush (remember to pause)
- articulate clearly and project your voice
- refer regularly to your road map/structure

### Delivery and style

#### *Tempo*

Vary the speed—don't talk at the same pace all the time. And pause from time to time—a few seconds of silence are sometimes just as effective as words.

#### *Volume*

Project your voice. There's no need to shout. Vary the volume.

#### *Expressiveness*

Vary the pitch. One way of doing this is to introduce (rhetorical) questions.

#### *Articulation*

Don't rush. Practise difficult words beforehand. Make sure the stress is on the right syllable.

#### *Sentence length*

Avoid reading. Keep the sentences short.

#### *Register*

Make your English sound natural.

#### *Linkers*

Use linking expressions to guide the audience through your presentation.

#### *Emphasizers / Minimizers*

It's always a good idea to exaggerate a little—it will help to get your message across persuasively.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD PRESENTATION?

### Overall

- awareness of your audience (who are they? what are their needs or interests? what do they expect from you?)
- clear objectives (to inform, persuade, train, entertain, etc.)

### System

- planning: clear structure (introduction - outline - main parts - summary - conclusion - question time) and sense of timing
- organization: clear connections between parts or ideas
- information: interesting and relevant to your audience
- impact: strong introduction and conclusion

### Delivery

- clear, simple, fluent
- use of natural spoken language
- use of pauses for emphasis

### Body Language

- gestures for emphasis
- eye contact
- relaxed, confident manner
- no distracting gestures

### Visual aids

- clear and simple messages
- efficient use of equipment

**PRESENTATIONS IN DETAIL**  
**WITH USEFUL LANGUAGE**

**INTRODUCING YOURSELF AND YOUR TALK**

***Items that can be included in your introduction***

- your name and position
- the title/subject of your presentation
- the purpose of your presentation
- the length of time you will take
- the main parts or points you will cover
- any visual aids you will use
- when the audience may ask questions
- a reference to the audience

***Useful language for introductions***

Greeting, name, position

*Good morning. My name's ... . I'm the ... . It's a pleasure/an honour to be here with you today.*

Title / Subject

*I'd like to talk (to you) today about ...*

*I'm going to present ... / inform you about ... / describe ... / brief you on ...*

*The subject/topic/focus of my talk/presentation/speech/paper is/will be ...*

Purpose / Objective

*We are here today to learn about ... / discuss .../ review ...*

*The purpose of this talk is to make you familiar with ... / put you in the picture about ... / update you on ... / give you the background to ...*

*This talk is designed to act as a springboard for discussion / start the ball rolling*

Length

*I shall only take ... minutes of your time*

*I plan to be brief*

*This should only last ... minutes*

## Outline / Main parts

*I've divided my presentation into four parts / sections. They are ...*

*The subject can be looked at under the following headings: ...*

*We can break this area down into the following fields:*

*Firstly/first of all ...*

*Secondly/then/next ...*

*Thirdly/and then we come to ...*

*Finally/lastly/last of all ...*

## Questions

*I'll be glad to answer any questions at the end of my talk*

*If you have any questions, please feel free to interrupt*

*Please interrupt me if there's something that needs clarifying.*

*Otherwise, there'll be time for discussion at the end.*

## Reference to the audience

*I can see many of you are ...*

*You all look as though you've heard this before*

## LINKING THE PARTS

- Organize your information and ideas
- Remember the Rule of Three!

### ***Useful language for linking ideas***

#### Ordering / Sequencing

*firstly ... secondly ... thirdly ...*

*then ... next ... finally/lastly ...*

*let's start with ...*

*let's move/go on to / turn to ...*

*now we come to ...*

*that brings us to ...*

*let's leave that ...*

*that covers ...*

*let's get back to ...*

#### Summarizing

*to sum up*

*in brief*

*in short*

#### Concluding

*in conclusion*

*to conclude*

#### Giving reasons / causes

*that's why ...*

#### Highlighting

*in particular*

*therefore ...  
as a result ...  
so ...*

*especially*

*Digressing  
by the way  
in passing*

*Contrasting  
however  
but*

*Giving  
examples  
for example  
for instance  
such as*

*Comparing  
similarly  
in the same way*

*Generalizing  
usually  
generally  
as a rule*

*Contradicting  
in fact  
actually*

## THE LANGUAGE OF PRESENTATIONS

### ***Advantages of reading a presentation***

- there is little hesitation
- it may be easier to follow the topic because there are fewer distractions
- the speaker feels more confident

### ***Disadvantages of reading a presentation***

- no eye contact with the audience
- written English is more complex and often difficult to understand
- the tone is more impersonal
- the delivery is less spontaneous
- the phrasing is less natural, so it's difficult to listen to
- the reader often speaks too quickly

***Written language*** vs.  
long sentences  
complex vocabulary

***Spoken language***  
shorter sentences  
simpler vocabulary

complex arguments  
impersonal style  
few pauses

simpler arguments  
personal style  
pauses to emphasize  
meaning

### ***Useful language for making your style personal***

Active forms and personal pronouns

*I think ... (vs. it is thought ...)*

*We are discussing (vs. it is being discussed)*

*I will refer to this later (vs. this will be referred to later)*

Reference to the audience

*As I'm sure you know ...*

*We have all experienced ...*

*You may remember ...*

*As I'm sure we'd all agree ...*

## **VISUALS**

### ***Design***

- don't use visuals to repeat what you can say with words
- don't overcrowd visuals with too much information
- use visuals to support or summarize what you say
- only use key words, not lines of text
- think about which kind of visual is right for you (graph / table / flow chart / pie chart / picture / words etc.)
- (if possible) use colour, but not too much

### ***Use***

- don't use too many visuals
- don't read from the visuals
- make sure the audience understands the visual
- use a pointer and/or masking techniques where appropriate
- face the audience as much as possible
- don't block the audience's view



## BODY LANGUAGE

### **Eye contact**

Maintain good eye contact with different people in the audience. Don't just look at one person.

### **Facial expressions**

Use facial expressions (e.g. smiles) to emphasize your feelings.

### **Hands**

Use your hands to emphasize what you say. Keep them out of pockets. Use a pen or pointer—but don't play with it.

### **Movement**

Don't stand completely still, but don't move around too much.

### **Posture**

Try to keep your posture upright but relaxed. Look straight ahead, not down at the floor or up at the ceiling.

### **Useful language to accompany body language (intonation is also important)**

Emphasizing  
*absolutely*  
*to ...*  
*completely*  
*been/done ...*  
*entirely*

*extremely*  
*very*

*fairly*  
*reasonably*  
*quite*

Minimizing  
*It seems we will have*

*He appears to have*

*just*  
*a bit*

*perhaps*  
*might*

*I tend to think ...*  
*To some extent*

## CONCLUDING

### ***The final part of a presentation should include:***

- a clear signal that you are about to end
- a brief, clear summary of what you have said
- a conclusion or recommendation (if appropriate)
- an invitation for questions, to make comments, or start a discussion

### ***Useful language for finishing off***

#### Signalling the end

*That brings me to the end of my presentation*

*That completes my presentation*

*Before I stop/finish, let me just say ...*

*That covers all I wanted to say today*

#### Summarizing

*Let me just run over the key points again*

*I'll briefly summarize the main issues*

*To sum up ...*

*Briefly ...*

#### Concluding

*As you can see, there are some very good reasons ...*

*In conclusion ...*

*I'd like to leave you with the following thought/idea*

#### Recommending

*So, I would suggest that we ...*

*I'd like to propose ...*

*In my opinion, the only way forward is ...*

#### Closing

*Thank you for your attention*

*Thank you for listening*

*I hope you will have gained an insight into ...*

#### Inviting questions

*I'll be glad to try and answer any questions*

*So, let's throw it open to questions*

*Any questions?*

## QUESTION TIME

### ***Handling questions***

- Welcome the question
- Listen carefully to the question - don't interrupt
- Take time to think before you answer
- Check you have understood the question - rephrase if necessary
- Reply positively - be brief and clear
- Accept criticism positively
- Check that the questioner is satisfied with your answer

### ***Useful language for handling questions***

Welcoming a question

*That's a good question*

*That's interesting*

Clarifying a question

*If I understand you correctly, you are saying/asking ...*

*I didn't quite catch that*

*Could you go over that again?*

*I'm not sure what you're getting at*

Avoiding giving an answer

*Perhaps we could deal with that later*

*I'm afraid that's not my field*

*I'm sure Mr ... could answer that question*

Checking the questioner is satisfied

*Does that answer your question?*

*Is that clear?*

*May we go on?*

