



Connections

Tense overview

Reading: First impressions

1 Discuss these questions.

- 1 Some psychologists say that it takes people 20 seconds to form a first impression. Do you agree? How long does it take you?
- 2 People who have to speak in front of an audience generally try to make a good first impression. How do they do it?

2 Read the magazine article below. Do you agree with what the author says about presentations? Why?/Why not?

3 Find an example of each of the following in the article.

- 1 the present simple
- 2 the past simple
- 3 the present perfect
- 4 the past perfect
- 5 a future form

Looking for maximum impact

As the saying goes, you never get a second chance to make a first impression.

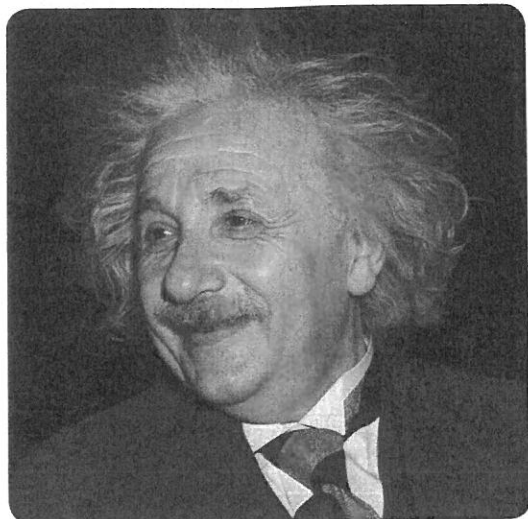
Have you ever wondered why first impressions are so important? According to communication experts, their importance can be explained by the fact that people not only hold on to them, but also seek to reinforce them. In other words, when you make a great first impression, people keep looking for the good points in you. On the other hand, if you mess up, you have to work really hard afterwards to project a positive image.

A few years ago, I attended an international conference and was struck by how most presenters started their talk. All of them had already been introduced; most of them had a slide behind them with the title of their talk, their name and affiliation. Everyone in the audience had received a programme with the same information and an abstract of the talk. Yet, how did the talk start? 'Good afternoon. My name is John Smith and I work for Waits Academy. My presentation today is about ...' How could you be more uninspiring?

No wonder that the workshop I remember best is the one where the presenter adopted a radically different approach. Her very first words were: 'Where do people learn languages?' Complete silence in the audience. After a few seconds, she then replied: 'Between their ears.' She had us. We all thought it was a brilliant opener, we all expected the talk to get even better, and it did.

So, next time you're going to give a presentation, make an important phone call or write an email, ask yourself these two questions: 'How am I going to command attention? How am I going to enter the other person's world?'





Listening: Getting it right

4 Read these quotes. How do they relate to first impressions?

A *'Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.'*
(Seneca)

B 'It's always the badly dressed people who are the most interesting.'
(Jean-Paul Gaultier)

C 'I don't like that man. I must get to know him better.'
(Abraham Lincoln)

5 1.1 Listen to three people talking about first impressions. Match the quotes in exercise 4 to the conversations.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1 Vladimir | Quote _____ |
| 2 Rick | Quote _____ |
| 3 Liliana | Quote _____ |

6 Listen again and complete the sentences.

Conversation 1

- When _____ you first _____ her?
- She _____ biochemistry.
- I _____ already _____ her once without being aware of it.

Conversation 2

- _____ you _____ what it _____ to really know someone?
- I _____ always _____ in that idea.

Conversation 3

- But competition _____ fierce, no doubt about that.
- I _____ *How To Make A Positive First Impression.*

Grammar: Tense overview

7 Look at the tenses used in the sentences in exercise 6. Then write 1-7 in the appropriate spaces in the table below.

	Present	Past	will future
Simple			
Continuous			
Perfect			
Perfect continuous			
>> For more information on the English tense system, see pages 156-162.			

8 Match these sentence halves. Then complete the table in exercise 7 by writing a-e in the appropriate spaces.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| a By the end of this year, | well before the deadline. |
| b I was exhausted on Tuesday | because I'd been entertaining guests till 2 a.m. |
| c I've been working all morning, | but I still have a lot to do. |
| d This time next week, I'll be | we'll have been going out for three years. |
| e We'll have finished everything | heading for Singapore. |

9 Explain the use of the different tenses in these pairs of sentences.

- a We work for a Canadian NGO.

b We are working on an educational exchange programme.
- a What did you do when the head nurse came in?

b What were you doing when the head nurse came in?
- a When the visitors arrived, they were redecorating the office.

b When the visitors arrived, they had redecorated the office.
- a She's given some lectures on Brazilian culture.

b She gave some lectures on Brazilian culture.
- a I've been filling in forms all day.

b I've filled in my visa application form.

Speaking: What makes you tick?

10 What is most important for you about someone you meet for the first time? Add your own ideas to the list. Then work in pairs and agree on the three most important points.

- They have a firm handshake.
- They tell you a lot about themselves.
- ...

TALKING POINT

How can companies make a good impression when emailing a potential customer?

And when phoning a business contact for the first time?