

Presentations 1: preparation and introduction

A Types of presentation

Melanie Kray is an expert in giving presentations. Here, she gives some examples of different presentations:

- **press conference:** two chief executives tell journalists why their companies have merged.
- **briefing:** a senior officer gives information to other officers about a police operation they are about to undertake.
- **demonstration:** the head of research and development tells non-technical colleagues about a new machine.
- **product launch:** a car company announces a new model.
- **lecture:** a university professor communicates information about economics to 300 students.
- **talk:** a member of a stamp-collecting club tells other members about 19th century British stamps.
- **seminar:** a financial adviser gives advice about investments to eight people.
- **workshop:** a yoga expert tells people how to improve their breathing techniques and gets them to practise.



A briefing

B Dos and don'ts: preparation

Here are some tips for a **stand-up presentation** (one person talking to an audience).

- a Find out about the **audience**: how many people there will be, who they are, why they will be there, and how much they know about the subject.
- b Find out about the **venue** and the **facilities**: the room, the seating plan, the equipment, etc.
- c Plan the **content** and **structure**, but don't write the complete text of the presentation.
- d Write notes on sheets of paper, not on **cards**.
- e Try to **memorize** the first five sentences of your talk.
- f Prepare **visual aids**: pictures, diagrams, etc.
- g **Rehearse** your presentation (practise it so that it becomes very familiar) with friends or colleagues.

C Key phrases: introduction

Melanie is advising Anne-Marie Duval on giving a presentation at a conference.

h **Introduce** yourself and your subject.

My name's Anne-Marie Duval and I work for Gem Consultants. My talk is called 'Consultancy Skills for the 21st Century'.

i **Outline** what you're going to talk about: describe the different sections of your talk.

There are three main skills areas I want to talk about today ...

j Say whether people should ask **questions** during the talk, or at the end.

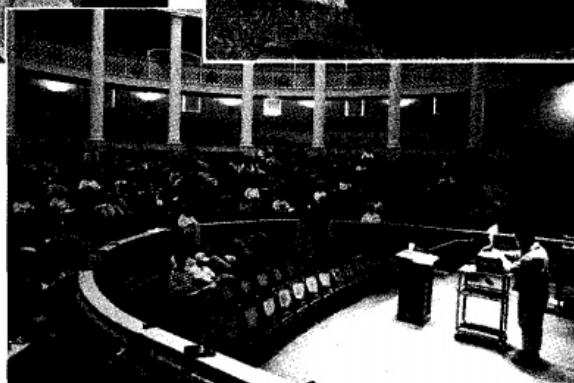
If you have any questions, I'll be very happy to answer them at the end of the session.

A seminar



A workshop

A product launch



A lecture

59.1 Match the presentation types in A opposite to the things (1–8) that people say in them.

- 1 As you can see, this prototype is far in advance of anything we've done before.
- 2 Here are some typical patterns for demand and supply in the widget industry.
- 3 I'm going to give each group a series of problems faced by an imaginary company, and I want you to suggest solutions.
- 4 Now is the right time to get out of company shares and invest in property.
- 5 The combined resources of our two organizations will allow us to achieve great things.
- 6 The first postage stamp in the world was the Penny Black in 1840.
- 7 The parachutists will come in at 08:30 and land in two waves, here and here.
- 8 The X300 has the most advanced features of any car in its class.

59.2 Here are reasons for the advice given in B and C opposite. Match each reason (1–10) to a piece of advice (a–j).

- 1 If you drop the cards on the floor, you're in trouble.
- 2 It could sound monotonous and boring if you speak from a complete, prepared text.
- 3 It will help you adjust the content of your talk so that it is suitable, for example not too easy or difficult.
- 4 It will help you to keep control, and avoid people interrupting if you don't want them to.
- 5 It will help your audience follow the logic of what you're going to say.
- 6 It will make you feel more at ease at the beginning, when you may be nervous.
- 7 It will reassure people that they are in the right place, and provide a focus for the beginning of your talk.
- 8 They add visual interest, provide you with support and help the audience follow you.
- 9 You can ask for changes in the seating plan if necessary.
- 10 They will be able to tell you if anything is unclear before the presentation.

Over to you



Have you ever given a presentation? What type was it?
In your experience, what makes a good/bad presentation?

A

Dos and don'ts: timing

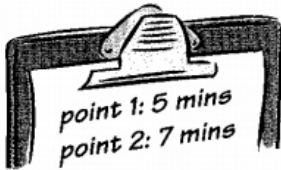
Melanie Kray is giving more advice about presentations.



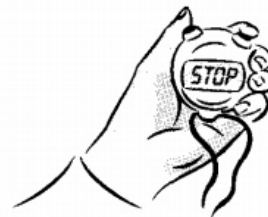
- a Start on time.
Don't wait for latecomers.



- d Don't **digress** (talk about things that have nothing to do with the subject), unless you have a particular purpose in mind.



- b Plan how long you're going to spend on each point and keep to these **timings**.



- e Finish on time. Don't **run over**. It looks bad if you don't have time to finish all your points and answer questions.



- c Don't **labour** a particular point (spend too long on something).

B

Dos and don'ts: voice

- f Project your voice to the back of the room, but don't shout. Don't ask if people at the back can hear. Check the volume (loudness) of your voice beforehand.
g Use a **microphone** if you need one. Don't hold it too close to your mouth.
h Whether using a microphone or not, speak in a **natural tone of voice**. Don't speak in a **monotone** (on the same level all the time). Vary the **pitch** (level) of your voice.

C

Rapport with the audience

Experts say that you can **gain the audience's attention** in a presentation by:

- telling an **anecdote** (a story, perhaps a personal one).
- mentioning a **really** surprising **fact** or **statistic**.
- stating a **problem**.
- asking a **question**.

Of course, it is important to respect the cultural expectations of your audience. (See Units 45–7)

D

Key phrases: main part

Anne-Marie continues her presentation:

'OK. To **begin**, let's look at the first type of skills that consultants need: technical skills. Of course, related to technical skills is a good general knowledge of management subjects ... But I'm **digressing**; let's **get back** to the technical skills themselves ... **That's all I have time for** on technical skills.

Let's **move on** to the second area: interpersonal skills. **As you can see** on this transparency, there are two **key areas in relation to** interpersonal skills ... I think **that covers everything on** interpersonal skills.

Time is moving on, so let's **turn to** the third area: people management issues.'

60.1 Melanie recently went to a presentation where the speaker did not follow her advice. Match each of Melanie's thoughts (1–7) to the points (a–h) in A and B opposite.

- 1 Why is he yelling like that? The room's not that big!
- 2 He's already said that three times.
- 3 I know there are people who want to ask questions, and there won't be time.
- 4 He's really droning on: there's no life in his voice and everyone's asleep.
- 5 The sound of his breath in the microphone is really annoying.
- 6 I don't see what this has got to do with what he's trying to say.
- 7 Get on with it! If people turn up late, that's their problem.

60.2 Look at D opposite and correct the mistakes in these sentences.

- 1 OK. (For begin), (let we look for) the most basic product in our range.
- 2 Of course, (related with product specifications) of our basic model is the issue of product performance.
- 3 But (I'm a digression): (let's get back on) the product specifications themselves.
- 4 That's all (I'm having time for) on product specifications. (Let's moving on) to our mid-range model.
- 5 (As you can be seeing) on this transparency, there are two key features I want to talk about (in relative to) our mid-range model.
- 6 I think that (covers up everything) on our mid-range model.
- 7 (Time is moved on), so (let's turn up to) our top-of-the-range product.

Over to you

How are people expected to dress for different types of presentation in your country?
What do people think about humour in presentations?

A

Dos and don'ts: body language

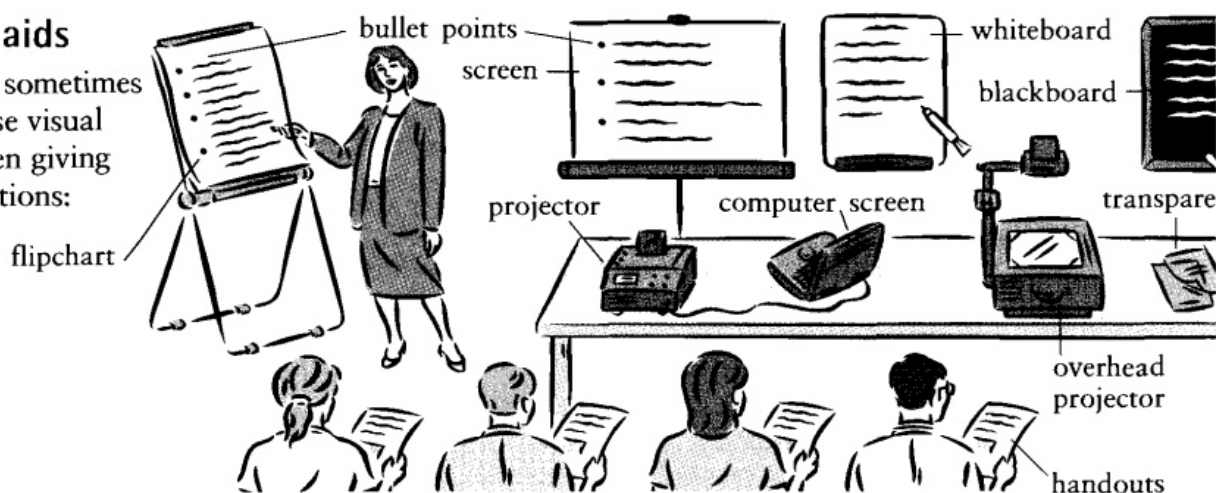
Melanie gives these tips on body language.

- Make **eye contact**: look at each person in the audience for about a second, before moving on to the next person. Don't concentrate on just one or two people.
- Don't speak to the equipment or the screen: **face the audience** at all times.
- **Smiling** is fine at appropriate moments, but not too much.
- Use **gesture** (hand movements) to emphasize key points.
- Stay more or less in one place: don't move around too much.
- Avoid **mannerisms** (ways of moving and speaking which you do repeatedly without realizing).

B

Visual aids

Melanie sometimes uses these visual aids when giving presentations:



C

Key phrases: closing and dealing with questions

Anne-Marie is bringing her presentation to a close:

'Let me **sum up**. Firstly, we looked at technical skills, **secondly**, at management skills and **last, but by no means least**, at interpersonal skills. **In my view**, the secret for success in the future is going to be interpersonal skills. **That brings me to the end** of my presentation. **Are there any questions?**'

Here are some phrases which can be useful when answering questions:

- a **That's a fair point.** I know that some consultants don't have a very good image. But I think that Gem Consultants have helped companies reduce costs and increase profits enormously.
- b **That's confidential.** I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to tell you.
- c **That's not really my field.** But I can put you in touch with someone in my organization who is working on Internet applications.
- d **The questioner would like to know** what sort of background the people we recruit usually have. Is that right?
- e **Well, I think that goes beyond the scope of today's presentation.** Today I wanted to concentrate on consultants' skills, not go into particular case studies in consultancy.
- f **I'm afraid we've run out of time.** But if you'd like to come and discuss that with me now, I'll try and give you an answer.

If a member of the audience didn't hear a question, they might say:

'Sorry, I **didn't catch the question** – could you repeat what the questioner said?'

Anne-Marie ends the presentation by saying:

'I think that's a good place to stop. Thank you for listening.'

- 61.1** Which words from A and B opposite could the underlined words refer to? In some cases there is more than one possible answer.
- 1 But don't overdo it. It can seem insincere (not real).
 - 2 Again, don't overdo it. Look round at everybody in the room.
 - 3 Don't let these dominate the presentation. People have come to see you, not the equipment.
 - 4 Do not use continuous text on these.
 - 5 Do not use one in a large room because people at the back won't be able to see it.
 - 6 Don't look at it or the screen behind you: face the audience at all times.
 - 7 Have a backup plan if it fails to work.
 - 8 Keep them under control. Remember, for example, that pointing with your finger is rude in some cultures.
 - 9 Make sure there will be enough of them for everyone and make sure that they reach everyone in the room as some people tend to keep them without handing them on.
 - 10 Some of them, for example putting your hands in your pockets or running your fingers through your hair, really upset some people.

- 61.2** Match these questions from the audience (1–6) to the answers (a–f) that Anne-Marie gives in C opposite.
- 1 Sorry, I didn't catch the end of the question – could you repeat what the questioner said?
 - 2 In what ways do you think the Internet is going to change the way management consultants work in the future?
 - 3 Some companies refuse to use management consultants. What do you say to people who say that consultants are a waste of time and money?
 - 4 What's the average salary for your consultants?
 - 5 I don't know if you have time to answer this, but can you tell me how I can apply to work for Gem?
 - 6 You say that Gem have enormously increased profits for some companies. Can you give one or two examples of this?

Over to you



How is body language used in presentations in your country? Which gestures are acceptable and which are not?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using different types of equipment?
What are some of the potential problems?