Hi, I’m Gina.

Welcome to Oxford Online English!

In this lesson, you can learn how to make a presentation in English.

Do you have to make presentations in English in your job?

Imagine you have to give an important presentation in English tomorrow.

How would you feel about it?

This lesson will help you learn useful phrases and techniques to introduce yourself and your

topic, keep your ideas organised, deal with problems, and respond to questions from audience

members.

Imagine you’re standing in front of your colleagues.

You need to introduce yourself and what your presentation is about.

What are some words and phrases you could use?

If some people in the audience don’t know who you are, you should introduce yourself

and your position.

In a more formal setting, you could say something like this:

Good morning everyone.

For those who don’t know me, my name’s Simon, and I work in the marketing department.

Or: Hello everybody.

Before we begin, let me introduce myself briefly: I’m Reese and I’m the head of HR.

If you work in a more informal company, you could say:

Hi guys; if you don’t know me, I’m Sylvia and I work in digital marketing.

Or: Hello!

I see some new faces, so I’ll introduce myself first: I’m Julia and I’m one of

our customer service team.

Next, you need to introduce your topic.

If your presentation topic is simpler, you could just say one sentence, like this:

Today, I’m going to be talking about our new HR policies and how they affect you.

Or: I’d like to talk to you today about quality control and why we’re all responsible

for quality control, whichever department you work in.

If your topic is more complex, you might add more detail to break your idea into stages.

For example: I’ll begin by outlining the policies, and

then I’ll go on to highlight what they mean for you and your working habits.

Finally, I’ll briefly discuss why we feel these new policies are necessary and beneficial

for us all.

Here’s another example: First of all, I’ll explain why ‘quality

control’ has a broader meaning than you might expect.

I’ll continue by giving examples of real quality control, and why this matters for

all of us.

To finish, I’ll be asking you to think of ways you can incorporate quality control into

your working habits.

Here, you saw two examples.

You can use these as templates to begin your presentation:

I’ll begin by… and then I’ll…

Finally, I’ll…

Or: First of all, I’ll…

I’ll continue by…

To finish, I’ll…

Okay, now you can practice!

We’d like you to do two things.

First, practice introducing yourself informally, and explaining your topic in a simple way,

with one sentence.

Then, practice introducing yourself formally, and explaining your topic in a more detailed

way.

Pause the video and practice speaking.

All the language you need is in this section.

Ready?

Let’s move on!

I’m sure that in your life, you’ve heard good speakers and bad speakers.

Good speakers grab your attention and don’t let go.

You want to hear what they have to say.

You feel interested and energized by listening to them.

Bad speakers are the opposite.

Even if you try to make yourself listen, you find that your attention drifts away.

Your eyelids feel heavy, and you have to struggle to stay awake.

So, here’s a question: what’s the difference between good speakers and bad speakers?

And, how can you make sure you speak effectively when you make your presentation in English?

Here’s one way to think about it: bad speakers don’t think they have to earn your attention.

Good speakers understand that no one has to listen to them, so they work hard to make

you want to pay attention.

What does this mean for you, and your presentation?

Getting people’s attention starts from the beginning.

You need to make it clear what people should expect from your presentation, and why they

should care about what you have to say.

Sounds like a nice idea, but how do you do this?

Here are three techniques you can use.

One: establish a problem which many people in your audience have.

Then, establish that you have a solution to their problem.

For example:

Have you ever felt unfairly treated at work, or felt that the work you do isn’t appreciated?

We’ve been working to design new HR policies that will make sure all staff get fair recognition

for their contribution to the company.

In this way, you take a boring-sounding topic like HR policies, and you make it more relevant

to your audience.

How?

By connecting it with their experiences and feelings.

The second technique?

Mention an interesting fact, or a surprising statistic to get people’s attention.

For example:

Did you know that the average office worker spends eight hours a day at work, but only

does four hours of productive, useful work?

I’m here to tell you about ‘quality control’, and how you can use this idea to make better

use of your time.

Finally, you can engage people by telling a short story and connecting it to your topic.

Stories are powerful, and they can add an emotional dimension to your topic if you do

it well.

For example:

I once met a young salesman—I won’t mention his name.

He spent several weeks building a relationship with a potential client.

He worked overtime, and he was working so hard that he was under severe stress, which

started to affect his personal life.

In the end, he didn’t close the deal—the clients signed with another firm.

Today, I’m going to talk about confidence as a sales tool, and how you can avoid the

traps that this young man fell into.

Use one of these three techniques in your introduction to connect with your audience

and show them why they should be interested in what you have to say.

Here’s a question for you: which technique would you prefer to use, and why?

Okay, now you’ve introduced your topic and you have everyone’s attention.

What next?

There’s a famous quote about making presentations:

“Tell the audience what you’re going to say; say it, and then tell them what you’ve

said.”

Have you heard this before?

Do you know who said it?

This comes from Dale Carnegie, a very successful American salesman and writer.

He lived a long time ago, but his advice is still relevant today.

So, here’s a question: what does the quote mean?

It means that your presentation shouldn’t just give information.

You also need to show people how your information is organized.

To do this, you need signposting language.

Let me give you an example to explain.

Imagine you go to a website.

The website is full of really useful, interesting information.

But, the information is all on one page.

There’s no organization, and you have to scroll up and down, up and down this huge

page, trying to find what you need.

Would you stay on that website?

Probably not.

You’ll find a website which makes it easier for you to find the information you need.

What’s the point here?

The point is that having interesting or relevant information is not enough.

How you structure and organize your information is equally important.

If you don’t structure your presentation clearly, people won’t pay attention, just

like you won’t stay on a website if you can’t find the information you want.

So, how can you do this?

You use signposting language.

This means using words and phrases to show the audience where your points begin and end,

to show what’s coming next, and to remind them about things you talked about before.

For example:

Okay, that covers the new policies.

Next, I’d like to move on and discuss what these policies mean for you.

Or: Now that you’ve heard a bit about what not to do, let’s focus on positive advice

to help you be more effective salespeople and close more of your leads.

When you say something like this, you aren’t giving people information about the topic

of your presentation.

Instead, you’re showing people where you are, and where you’re going next.

It’s a kind of signpost.

You don’t need signposts to travel from one place to another, but they can make it

easier.

What else can you use signposting language for?

You can use signposting language to move from one point to the next.

For example:

Next, I’d like to talk about…

Let’s move on and discuss…

Or: At this point, I’d like to turn to…

You can use signposting language to add detail to an idea:

Let me go into some more detail about…

Let’s examine … in more depth.

Or: I’d like to elaborate on…

You can use signposting language to show that you’ve finished your main points, and you’ve

reached your conclusion:

To wrap up, let’s remind ourselves of why this should matter to everyone here.

Let’s review the key points from this session.

So, you’ve heard what I have to say.

What conclusions can you take away from this?

If you have an important presentation in English, practice using signposting language.

Use signposting language to move between points, to show when you’re giving a summary or

going into more detail, and to signal that you’ve reached your conclusion.

Okay, but things don’t always go so smoothly in real life.

We know that!

Let’s look at some advice and language for dealing with problems during your presentation.

Imagine you’re making your presentation in English.

What could go wrong?

What problems could you have?

There are many common problems:

You might forget where you were, or forget an important word.

You might realise that you said something wrong, or you didn’t explain something clearly.

You might forget to mention something important.

Or, someone might ask you an awkward question, which you have no idea how to answer.

Of course, there are other possibilities!

Let’s think about these problems.

What can you do, and more importantly, what can you say in these situations?

First of all, it’s a good idea to make a cue card with key points, as well as any important

vocabulary you need.

If you lose your place, or you forget a word, it could help.

However, you can’t prepare for everything.

So, it’s useful to learn some phrases to deal with problems smoothly.

If you lose your place, and can’t remember what to say next, you can use a filler phrase

like:

Where was I?

So, what was I saying?

What’s the word in English again?

If you still can’t remember, look at your cue card with your main points.

Of course, forgetting something isn’t ideal.

But, if you do, it’s better to keep talking, rather than just standing there in silence.

What if you make a mistake, or you realise that you didn’t explain something well?

You could say:

Let me rephrase that.

Actually, what I meant to say is…

To clarify, I wanted to say that…

In this way, you can correct yourself without admitting that you made a mistake!

What if you realise that you forgot to mention something important?

Use a phrase like this:

Let me just add one more thing:…

I’d like to add something to a point we discussed earlier.

Let me return to an earlier point briefly.

Again, this allows you to correct your mistake in a confident way, so you look like you’re

in control.

Finally, what do you do if someone asks you a difficult question, which you can’t answer?

You have a few options.

First, you can delay giving an answer.

For example:

I’ve allocated time for questions at the end of this session, so we’ll address your

idea later.

Or: I’m not in a position to answer that right now, but I’ll get back to you later

this week.

This gives you time to think of an answer and do some research if you have to!

Next, you can deflect the question, by asking a question back, or maybe by asking other

audience members what they think.

For example:

That’s an interesting question.

Before I answer, I’d like to know: what’s your take on this?

Or: You’ve raised an important point there.

What does everyone else think about this?

Finally, if the question is irrelevant, you can dismiss the question and move on.

For example:

Thanks for your input, but I don’t see how that’s connected to what I’m saying.

I don’t mean to be blunt, but I don’t think that’s relevant to today’s discussion.

Notice how you can use phrases like thanks for your input, but… or I don’t mean to

be blunt, but… to make your language more indirect and polite.

So, for dealing with difficult questions, just remember the three d’s: delay, deflect,

dismiss!

Finally, we want to ask you something.

Do you have any advice for giving good presentations, in English or any language?

We’d love to hear your ideas!

Please leave a comment and tell us what you think.

Remember to visit our website for more free English lessons: Oxford Online English dot

com.

Thanks for watching!

See you next time!