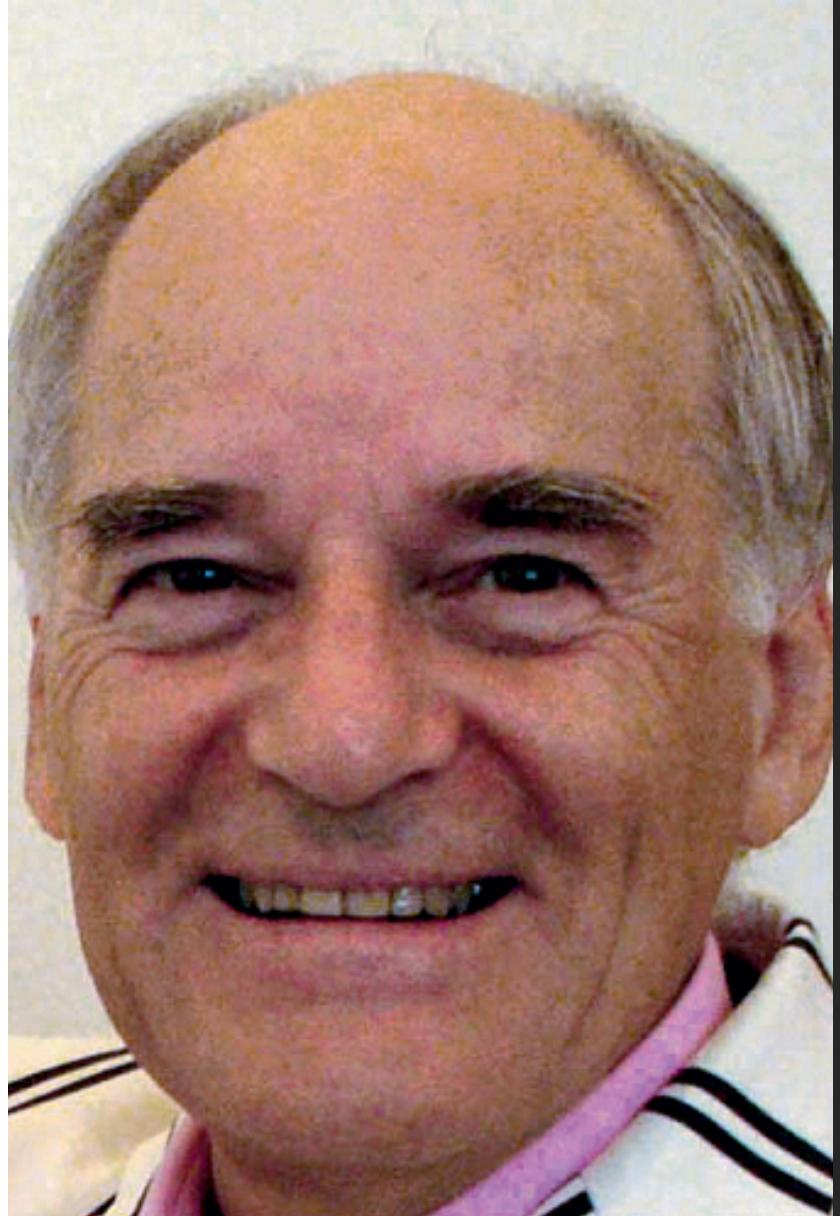


# Oral and Written Communication in English

Engineering S9  
Session 2  
Opening and closing  
techniques for presentations



**People tend to remember openers more than any other part of a presentation, except perhaps for the closing remarks.**

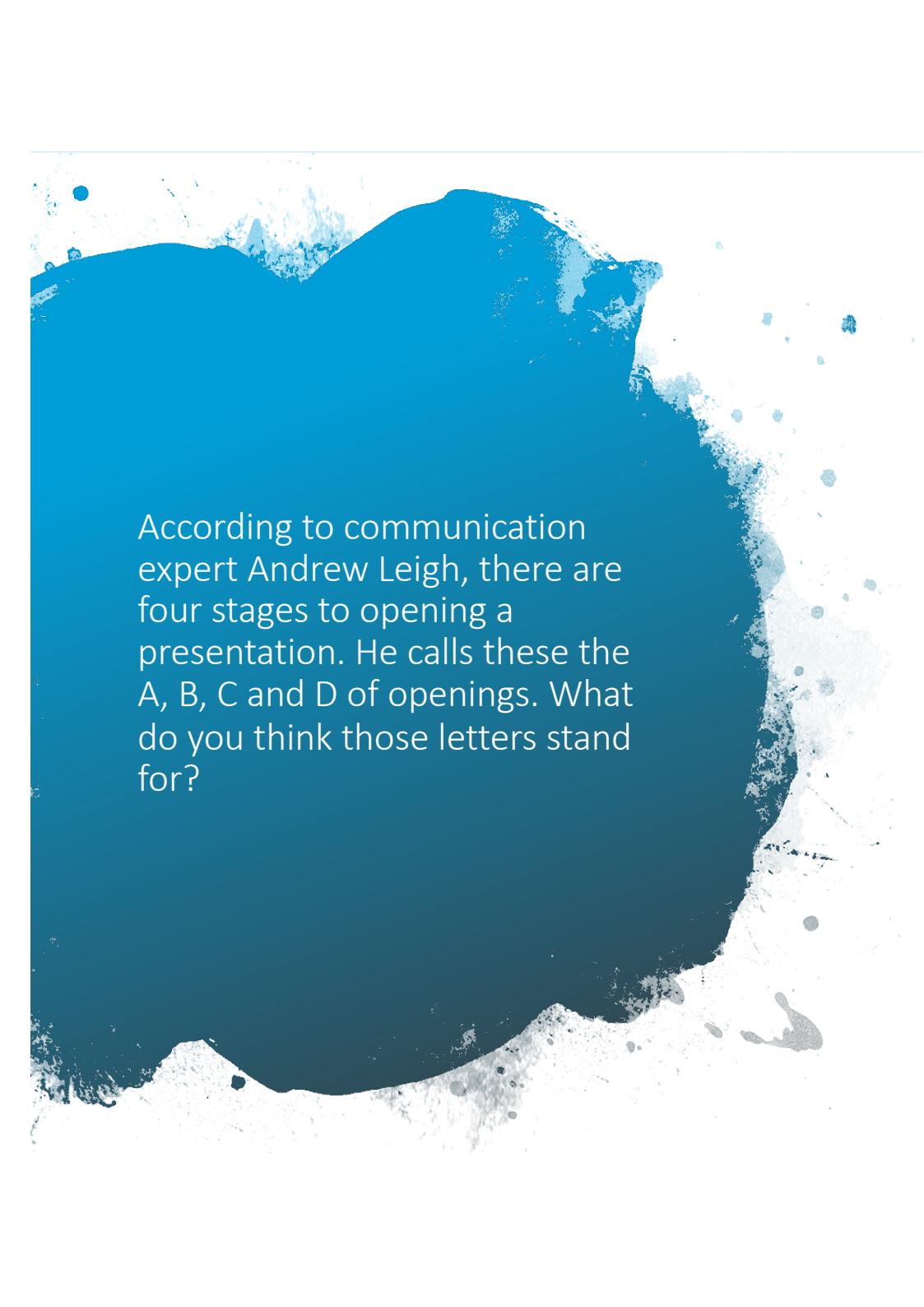
*Andrew Leigh, Maynard Leigh Associates,  
[www.maynardleigh.co.uk](http://www.maynardleigh.co.uk)*

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What's more important in a talk: how you start  
or how you finish?

Which do you find more challenging?



According to communication expert Andrew Leigh, there are four stages to opening a presentation. He calls these the A, B, C and D of openings. What do you think those letters stand for?

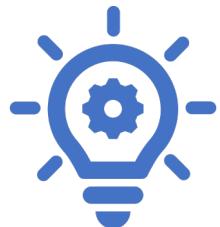
- **1.** Capture your audience's interest instantly = A \_ \_ E \_ T \_ \_ N
- **2.** Explain what they will gain from the talk = B \_ N \_ F \_ T
- **3.** Show them you have the authority to speak = C \_ \_ D \_ B \_ \_ \_ Y
- **4.** Give them a route map of the presentation = D \_ R \_ \_ T \_ \_ N

## VIDEO

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyE1Kz0e--0>

Does the speaker talk about Leigh's 4 stages of:

1. Attention
2. Benefit
3. Credibility
4. Direction



## TRY IT YOURSELF:

Look at the useful underlined phrases in the extract. Then use the phrases and your own ideas to make a powerful short introduction to a presentation of your own. You should invent facts to make your introduction light-hearted.

In the five minutes it will take me to give this presentation, 45 species of insect will become extinct. By the end of this presentation, you'll know how to make a real difference in the lives of those insects. In my 30 years as a professor of biology, I've learnt quite a bit about insects. My presentation today is in four main parts. Feel free to interrupt as we go along.

Starting a presentation *strong* means being ***unpredictable***. When we don't know what to expect, we pay more attention. That's why we love movies with a twist: the unpredictability engages us more deeply.

*"I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation."*

(<https://business.tutsplus.com/tutorials/how-to-start-a-presentation-strong-and-end-powerfully--cms-27601>)



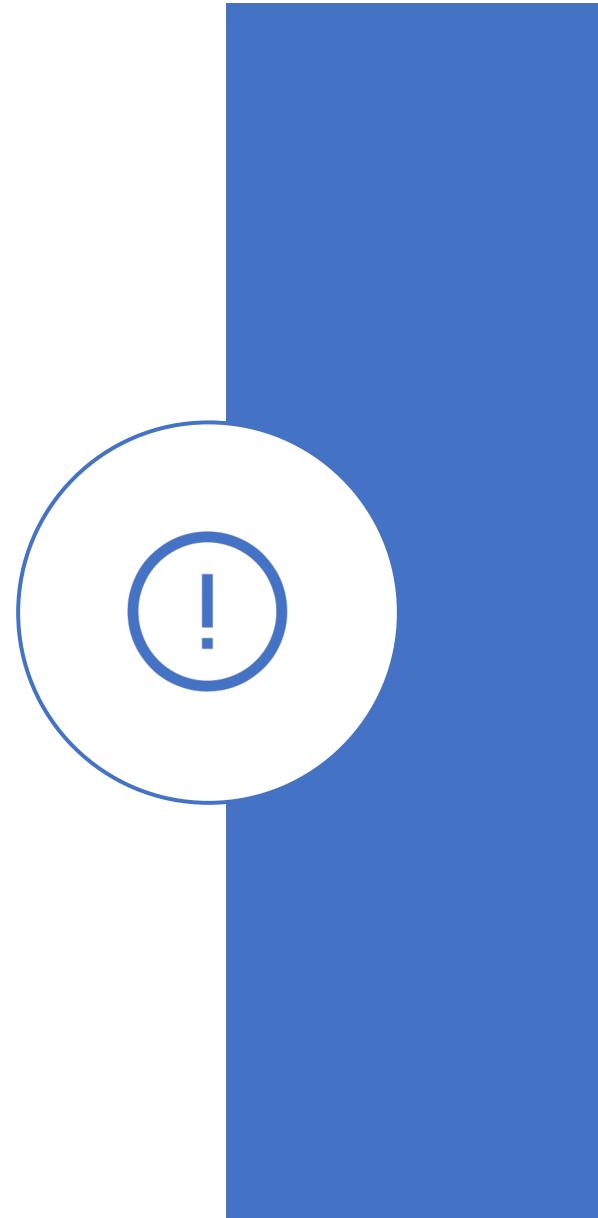
# Getting attention

1. Make a bold claim (like MLK Jr)
2. Contradict expectations:

*"Okay, I don't want to alarm anybody in this room, but it's just come to my attention that the person to your right is a liar! Also the person to your left is a liar."*

3. Stimulate curiosity:

*"I need to make a confession, at the outset here. A little over 20 years ago, I did something that I regret. Something that I am not particularly proud of. Something that in many ways I wished no one would ever know, but that here I feel kind of obliged to reveal. In the late 1980s, in a moment of youthful indiscretion, I went to law school."*



# Getting attention

## 4. Ask questions:

*“How do you explain when things don't go as we assumed? Or better, how do you explain when others are able to achieve things that seem to defy all of the assumptions? For example, why is Apple so innovative? [...] Why is it that Martin Luther King led the civil rights movement?”*

## 5. Tell a surprising story



**Practice  
saying the  
following  
openings. Try  
to make them  
as powerful  
as possible.**

You know, there's a common misconception that mergers just don't work. In fact, we're repeatedly told that 70 to 80% of them fail. And it's true that one of the biggest of all time, the \$180 billion AOL-Time Warner merger went badly wrong. But that's the thing. It's megamergers that fail. When you merge with innovative smaller businesses, it's a different story – particularly in research-intensive industries like yours. Take pharmaceuticals. To date, Pfizer has formed successful alliances with over a thousand biotech start-ups. And in IT Cisco averages one small business acquisition every six weeks. Has it been successful? Well, let's put it this way, eighteen years after it went public, its market capitalization is bigger than Dell, Xerox and Apple combined!

I'd like to talk to you this morning about data rescue or what to do when your computer goes into meltdown, taking your data with it. So, to start off, could I ask you to raise your hand if you've backed up your hard disc in, oh, let's say, the last week ...? Nobody? Right. OK, how about the last month ...? Four people, OK. How about ever? A dozen of you. Good, good for you! Backing up your hard disc is a bit like making a dentist appointment, isn't it? We all know we should do it, but we just keep putting it off. Well, the system I'm going to show you today means that you'll never have to back up your data again ... and you'll never lose it.

Practice saying the following openings. Try to make them as powerful as possible.

Many of the techniques you can use to open a presentation will also work well to close one. But this is your last chance to get your message across. How far do you agree with Sonya Hamlin about closing a talk?

”

“Try to make your last line or two truly eloquent, meaningful, touching, accurate and wise. Always memorise your last few lines. This is the time to deliver straight to them: eye to eye, person to person. Try to leave them with a thought that will continue to provide an echo after you stop.”

*Sonya Hamlin, Sonya Hamlin Communications*



Match the techniques for closing a presentation with the meanings.

**heart-felt message**

a demand that something happens

**famous wise words**

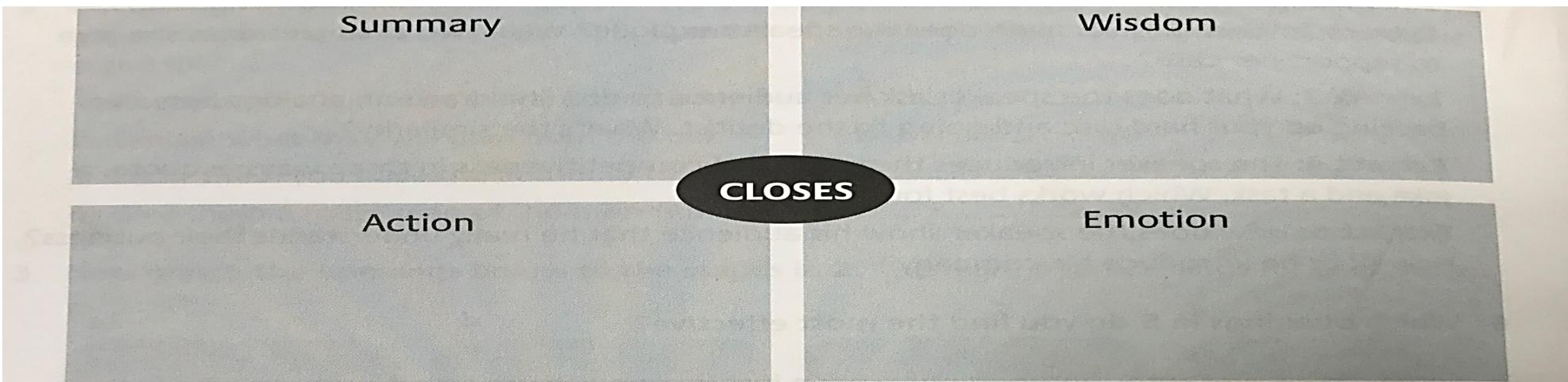
a short description full of action and excitement that gives the main facts or ideas

**dramatic summary**

well-known words that show good judgement

**call for action**

a strong and sincere piece of information that one person gives to another



- a Let's take a look back at what we've spoken about this morning.
- b I'm reminded of the words of ...
- c Now let's get out there and ...!
- d If you take just one thing from this talk, take this ...
- e In the end, this is what matters
- f Here, at a glance, are the main points I've made ...
- g So, how to sum up?
- h I'm counting on you to ...
- i We have a saying where I come from ...
- j So what does all this really mean for you – personally?
- k In a nutshell, then ...
- l In the famous words of ...
- m So, next time you ..., remember to ...

“When you prepare a presentation, don’t use the word ‘summary’ at the end. The word ‘summary’ switches people off. Think about it. When I say the word ‘summary’ at the end of this podcast, you’ll think ‘Oh, right, he’s going to repeat himself’ and you’ll click off and stop listening. That’s what I’d do. And if you don’t believe me, sit at the back of the seminar and watch what happens to the room when the speaker says ‘summary’. You’ll see people actually put their coats on and leave.”

*Andy Bounds, communications expert*



# Good or bad?



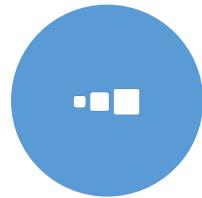
Phrase the summary  
as a question



Introduce it with the  
word 'summary'



Introduce new  
supporting  
information



Build up a powerful  
one-line close



Repeat what you've  
already said in brief



Introduce it with a  
phrase such as *All in  
all ...* or *In conclusion*

**Follow the instructions below to prepare and present the opening and close for a simple product or service presentation. Choose one of the product or service ideas or use an idea of your own.**

You are going to present your product or service to the rest of your study group, who are your prospective clients. In your opener, try to use some of the techniques you have studied to:

- capture your audience's **attention**
- tell them what's in it for them (**benefit**)
- establish your **credibility** and expertise
- **preview** some of the features and benefits of the product or service.

Then, skip the main body of the presentation and fast forward to your conclusion to:

- briefly summarize your main points
- explain what you'd like your audience to do (**call to action**)
- close in a memorable way
- See if you can perhaps link your opening to your close to create a 'loop'. And try to avoid the word 'summary'!



## Cocoon MRI Systems

Magnetic resonance imaging is a standard diagnostic tool in today's hospitals. But for many patients having to lie perfectly still in an MRI scanner for up to half an hour at a time can be highly stressful. For such patients the Cocoon creates a calming virtual environment. The fully customisable system provides a wide range of relaxing ambient settings – from rainforest to coral reef to Himalayan snow peak. Ceiling-mounted 3D video screens and surround-sound audio capability leave the patient feeling totally rested and refreshed at the end of their scan. That's the Cocoon experience.



## The Avenir Consultancy

The Avenir Consultancy is your company's access point to a network of some of the world's largest databases of global business intelligence. Working with one of our expert scenario planners and Avenir's own highly sophisticated computer simulation software, plot the trends likely to affect your business over the next decade, explore different commercial, economic and political scenarios and get a detailed digital profile of your company ten years into the future! Take strategic planning to the next level. At Avenir we have a word for it. We call it Tomorrow-ology.



## Smart Fabrix Inc.

Using microscopic LEDs and cutting-edge fibre-technology, SmartFabrix has designed a range of light-emitting garments that can display multi-coloured graphics and animations without compromising wearability. By linking the luminous clothing to a PC or smartphone visuals can be modified to suit the wearer's mood and keep up with the latest urban fashions. Commercial applications include programming promotional messages into the clothes to turn their wearers into highly effective walking advertisements! Just follow the light.



## **Uneedanerd.com**

More than just an IT support service or helpline, a year's subscription to uneedanerd.com provides you with an instant videoconferencing link from your PC or Mac to 'nerd central' where our resident nerds will sort out computer problems big or small online on a pay-per-solution basis, offer impartial advice on hardware and software selection or even coach you in the use of the latest Web 2.0 and multimedia applications. In a full-scale emergency a nerd crash-team is on call 24/7. You need a nerd? You need us!