

COMMUNICATION

Making a point

LEVEL

Upper-Intermediate
(B2)

NUMBER

EN_B2_3103X

LANGUAGE

English

Learning outcomes

- I can identify and explain some key strategies to formulate ideas in a more persuasive way.
- I can use a wide range of structures to emphasise the main point of my discussion or talk.



Warm-up

**Do you know anyone who
is particularly persuasive?**

What is the secret to their success?



The art of persuasion

Below are some actions that are often associated with highly persuasive people.
Why might these actions help a person to be persuasive? Can you think of any others to add?



Greet people by
name

Be a good
listener

Know your
audience

Ask questions

Find common
ground

Smile

Seek to please
people

Be honest and
genuine

Use positive body
language



The art of persuasion

Read the text. **Answer** the questions.

There are certain traits that highly persuasive people have:

They **acknowledge** the points of view of others. They are likeable, which means people trust them more easily. They aren't **pushy** but also aren't **pushovers**. Persuasive people are always **assertive** and confident but they never force their ideas on others. They ask **insightful** questions and know when to step back and listen to what others have to say.

The power of persuasion is important for presentations.

Do you understand the words in bold? Discuss the meanings.

Why do you think the power of persuasion is important for presentations?

What are some other situations where it can be useful to be persuasive?



Antonyms

Match the words (1-5) with their antonyms (a-e). Think of examples of these character traits. Complete this activity **in breakout rooms** or **as a class**.

1

unlikeable

a

short-sighted

2

assertive

b

confident

3

insecure

c

timid

4

insightful

d

mousey

5

pushy

e

likeable

emphasis

Emphasis is used when you want to **stress**, or **draw attention to**, a word or words to show that they are particularly important. We'll look at some techniques for emphasising:

- ...emphasising phrases
- ...strategic placement of words
- ...variation of sentence length



Let me stress the importance of the word **emphasis** by **emphasising** it!



Useful phrases for emphasis

Read the sentences below, paying attention to the highlighted parts.



The point is that we need to hire new staff.

There is just one thing I would like you to focus on, which is our problem with high staff turnover.



It all comes down to one thing, namely our need to work harder at retaining talent.

If there's anything you should take away from this, it's that motivating your staff is a key factor in higher performance levels.





More useful phrases for emphasis

Here are some more **phrases** you can use if you want to emphasise a point.

1



I want to **stress** the fact that...

2



This report **emphasises** the need for...

3



The committee **highlighted** the impacts of...

4



The key point to **take away** is that...

strategic placement

Another great way of emphasising points is by adding certain words or phrases to the sentence in a strategic way.

Called **introductory adverbs** or **adverb phrases**, these include words and phrases such as *especially, above all, particularly* and *most importantly*.

These words should be placed at the **beginning of the sentence** or **after the subject**.



Above all, we need to concentrate on a more timely delivery.

We **especially** need to hire more IT staff.

”

Remarkably, the sales figures are still good.

Crucially, the report did not avoid the question of political responsibility.

What effect do the adverbs have on the meaning of these sentences?

Can you think of a synonym or substitute phrase for each adverb?





Practise emphasising your point

Your team has just had a **major achievement**. You're in charge of preparing the announcement thanking your team members for their **contribution**.

Write a short paragraph, using the words and phrases below to add emphasis.

especially

above all

particularly

to highlight

to stress

The point is...

variation of sentence length

Varying sentence length can also increase the impact of your words. It is good practice to use a variety of sentence types.

A short sentence followed by a longer sentence will emphasise the meaning of the shorter sentence. Remember that subordinate clauses will receive less stress than main clauses.

Avoiding too many complex sentences will improve the flow of what you are saying. Include the most important information in your main clauses.



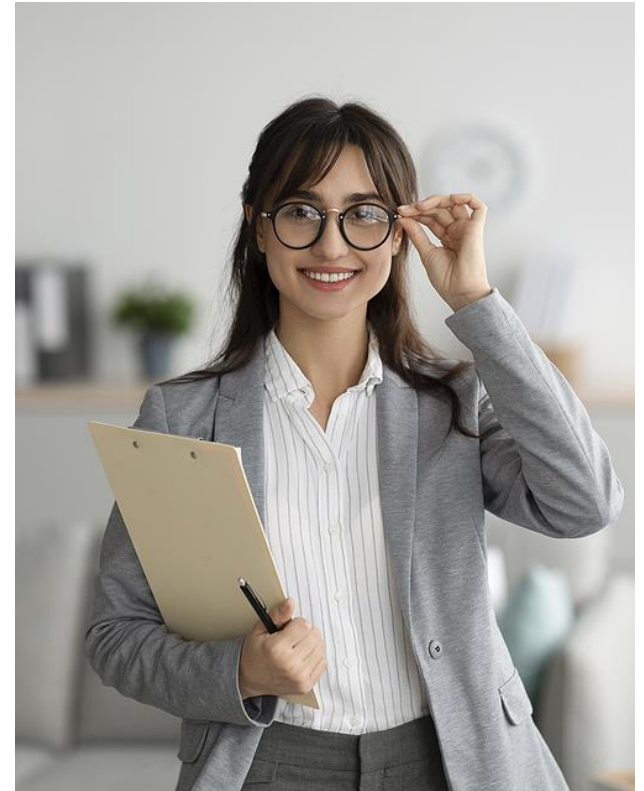
Our company's main problem is a lack of effective marketing. **That's all.** That's what it has always been.



Test your memory!

**Can you remember
the key points about
varying sentence
length?**

**How can this technique
increase the impact of your
words?**



Variation of sentence length

Rewrite the following points to emphasise the most important points.

Use a variety of sentence lengths, as well as adjectives and phrases.

Read it out to the class – note similarities and differences in emphasis in your classmates' texts.



A short sentence followed by a longer sentence will emphasise the meaning of the shorter sentence.

Subordinate clauses will receive less stress than main clauses.

Avoiding too many complex sentences will improve the flow of what you are saying.

Include the most important information in your main clauses.



Create sentences using the prompts

Repeat the main point with short sentences, using the phrases in the box to help you.
Complete this activity **in breakout rooms** or **individually**. **Share** your sentences with the class.

1 Sales went up
Example: *We have achieved 20% profit this month. **We really have.***

2 Our team won an award

3 Stock market crash

4 Another meeting was cancelled

5 High unemployment

Really, it's true.

That's all.

As I said, this is
the main issue.

We really have.

It was only that.

It always has been
that.



Discuss

How are these three techniques for adding emphasis linked to the art of persuasion?



Think of some situations where you could try out these techniques.



Techniques:

Useful phrases
Strategic word placement
Varying sentence length



End of the lesson

Idiom

to lay it on thick

Meaning: to exaggerate

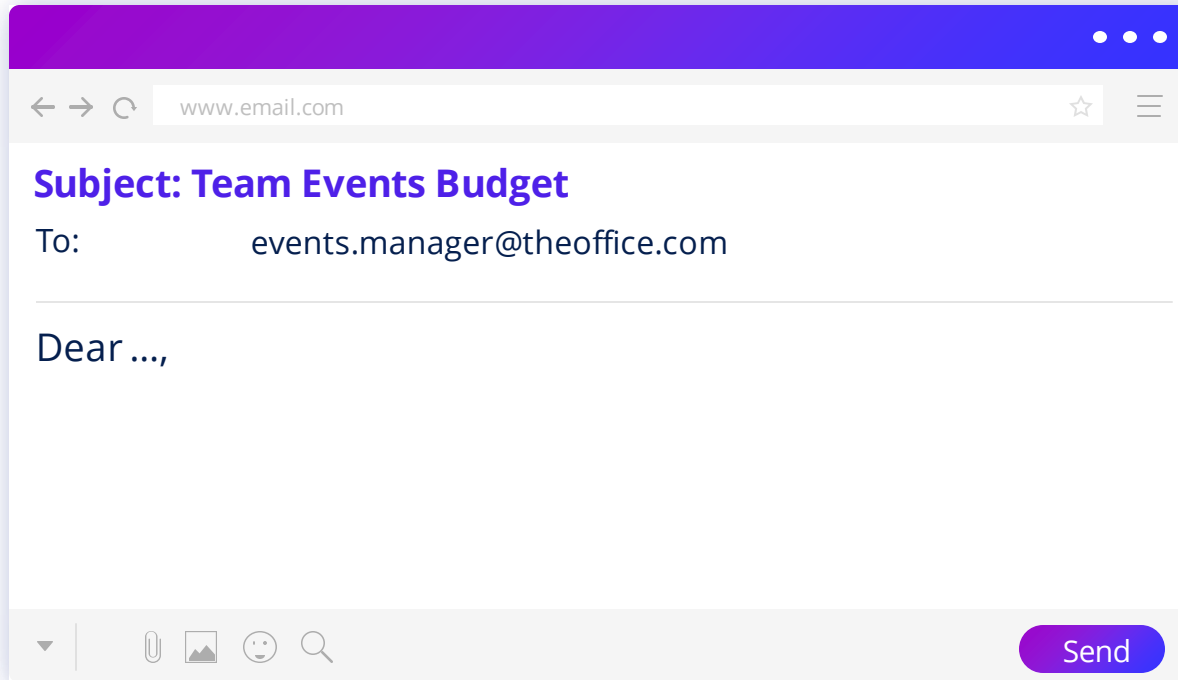
Example: Now you're really laying it on thick... It was that good of a performance.



Additional practice



Write a persuasive email



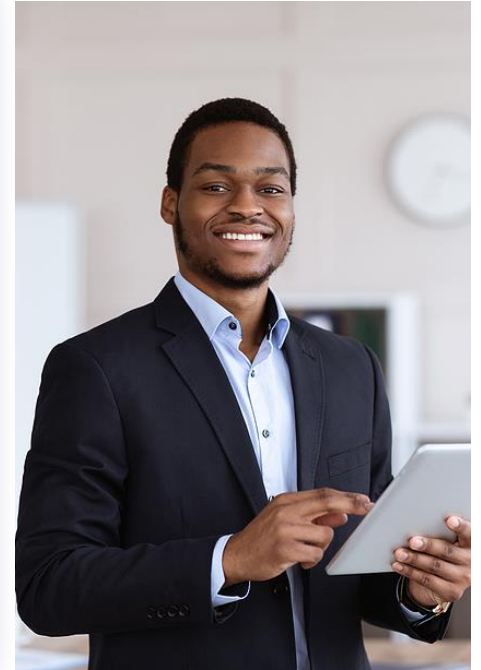
A screenshot of a web-based email composition interface. The browser address bar shows 'www.email.com'. The email subject is 'Subject: Team Events Budget'. The recipient is 'To: events.manager@theoffice.com'. The body of the email starts with 'Dear ...,'. At the bottom, there are icons for attachments, images, emojis, and a search function, along with a blue 'Send' button.

Subject: Team Events Budget

To: events.manager@theoffice.com

Dear ...,

Send



Write a persuasive e-mail to a colleague saying that the budget for office parties and team events is too low / too high (you decide).

Make your point as convincingly as possible, using the techniques that you have learned.



Practise emphasising your point

Give your opinion on one of the topics below.

Use the techniques discussed in this lesson to add emphasis.

alcohol
consumption

learning
foreign
languages

eco-tourism

recycling
programmes
in the
workplace

having to
attend school

e-learning



Answer key

P.6: possible solutions: 1. e 2. c 3. b 4. a 5. d

pushy → timid / pushy → mousey

assertive → mousy / assertive → timid

likeable → unlikeable

confident → insecure

insightful → short-sighted



Summary

Antonyms:

- *unlikeable; assertive; insecure; insightful; pushy; short-sighted; confident; timid; pushy; likeable*
- *Persuasive people are always **assertive** and confident but they never force their ideas on others. They ask **insightful** questions and know when to step back and listen to what others have to say.*

Phrases for emphasis:

- **Emphasis** is used when you want to **stress** a word or words to show that they are important.
- *The point is; There is just one thing I would like you to focus on, which is; It all comes down to one thing, namely; If there's one thing you should take away from this, it's*
- *to stress; to emphasise; to highlight; to take away*

Strategic placement:

- Add certain words or phrases to sentences in a strategic way. **Introductory adverbs** or **adverb phrases** include words and phrases such as *especially, above all, particularly* and *most importantly*. These words should be placed at the **beginning of the sentence** or **after the subject**.
- ***Above all**, we need to concentrate on a more timely delivery. We **especially** need to hire more IT staff.*

Variation of sentence length:

- A short sentence followed by a longer sentence will emphasise the meaning of the shorter sentence. Subordinate clauses will receive less stress than main clauses. Avoid too many complex sentences. Include the most important information in your main clauses.
- *Our company's main problem is a lack of effective marketing. **That's all.***



Vocabulary

assertive

insecure

insightful

pushy

short-sighted

timid

mousy

