

Unit 2 Planning a Presentation

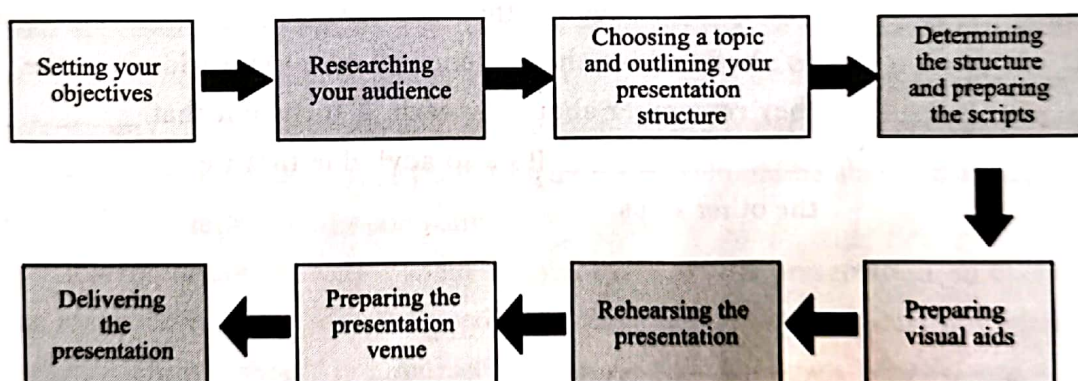
Learning Guide:

In this unit you're going to:

- have an insight into the process of planning an effective presentation;
- understand the importance of the speaker's relationship with the audience;
- know how to choose a topic;
- learn some key strategies for making an impact.

1. The presentation process

An oral presentation can be given to a small group of fellow students who are quite familiar to you, or a large group of people you have never met before. Whatever the situation is, the processes you must go through are the same.



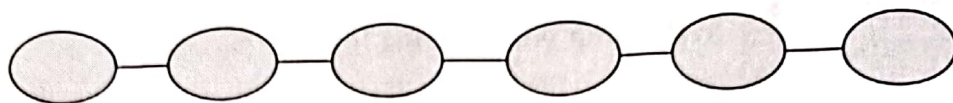
The process of preparing for a presentation can be time-consuming, but you need a plan of some kind in order to understand what your objectives are and how you are going to achieve them. A thorough planning lets you know that you have done everything you can to ensure a successful presentation, and hence increases your confidence to stand in front of a group of people. Planning a presentation doesn't simply involve sitting down and writing out what you are going to say and show it to your audience. In fact, it is far more complex than that.



Let's Watch!

Watch the video clip "How to Prepare a Speech" and complete the following tasks.

Task 1: Watch the video clip and then put the following steps into the correct order.



1. Come up with a related image for each PPT slide.
2. Put the points in a priority.
3. Videotape your rehearsal.
4. Write down the messages.
5. Make an outline.
6. Make a story for each of your message point.

Task 2: Watch the video clip again. Fill in the blanks with the missing information.

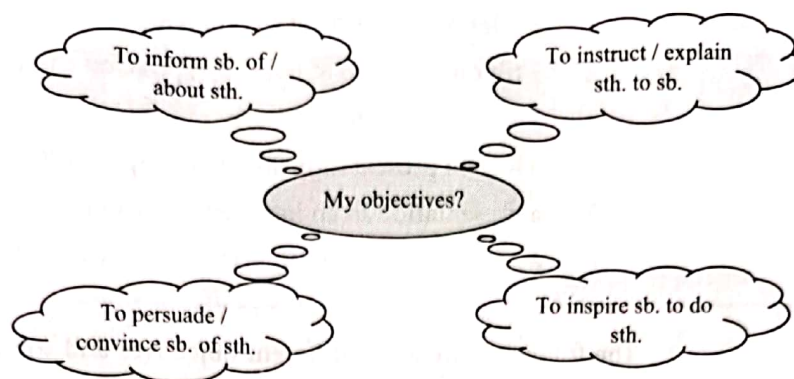
1. In preparing a speech, most people _____ the office, gathering more _____ and _____, asking _____ for help and end up with a _____ amount of information. It is _____ to the speaker.
2. The speaker suggests that messages _____. In the past _____ years, he's been asking the audience all over the world about the _____ they remember about a speech. It turns out that _____. It's also advisable that we _____ and do the other steps.

2. Establishing the objectives

What were the objectives of the last presentation you gave? Did you achieve them?

A good preparation does not start with how to kick off from the contents or how to introduce your topic. Setting objectives is as important as attaining them. This should be done at the onset of the preparation stage of your presentation. Having a set of defined objectives for your presentation will keep you focused on the topic, drive your presentation and lead the audience to your ultimate objective.





Informing the audience of something is a simple and common objective of a presentation. It means providing the audience with the basic information of the presentation. An example of this would be an information officer notifying the audience about the latest update of the company's website for online ordering.

If you want the audience to remember the key points of your presentation, you need a main objective to impress them. A very common example of this type of objective is a technical or training presentation in which the main objective is to educate the participants and let them put what they have learned into practice.

Persuading and motivating the audience to take action are two very challenging objectives. A presentation is definitely aimed at convincing the audience and winning their approval. Both objectives require the speaker to have a good understanding of the audience's level of thinking on the topic. This is because the ultimate goal is to modify their viewpoints and even their attitudes toward the contents of your presentation. An officer who is proposing a program should be able to convince the boss(es) of its impact on the company.

It is important to be clear about the objectives of your presentation, so that you can make the contents of it fit the context. Therefore, before you start to prepare a presentation, you should ask yourself such questions as follows: Why do you make the presentation? Do you need to inform the audience about something, to persuade them to do something or to train them, or to sell something to them? What do you want your audience to understand? What action do you want your audience to take after your presentation? All in all, your objectives should be clear in your mind. If they are not clear in your mind, they cannot possibly be clear to your audience.

Let's Talk!

Choose an objective for each presentation topic listed below. You will probably be able to think of more, as some types of presentations have multiple motives. Work in pairs, and compare your choices with that of your partner and argue for your choices.



1. a sales presentation at a conference
2. a training session at your workplace on a new computer system
3. a speech at a wedding party
4. a formal presentation about your specialist project/subject
5. a presentation in an interview for a new job
6. a presentation to summarize an activity at a tutorial or a regular class.

The following are some different objectives and some suggested guidelines for them.

Objectives	Guidelines
To inform the audience of / about something or describe something: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observations; - Background information; - Results, facts and details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to know the audience's current level of knowledge to see if jargon is necessary, or if there's a need to explain the meanings of some words. • Use anecdotes, examples and illustrations to make the presentation lively and colorful. • Use the deductive, chronological or spatial order and carefully chosen words to describe things precisely.
To instruct or explain something: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How things work; - How processes or procedures are carried out; - How action is performed; - Why things are the way they are; - Why certain steps are taken in a process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use diagrams, pictures or demonstrations. • Your words must be chosen to create clear visual images which the audience can grasp. • Use analogy to describe something familiar to the audience: "This process is rather like..." • Use a less systematic order to explain why a procedure is necessary, or why it is the way it is.
To persuade or inspire the audience to do something: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing the audience's beliefs, attitudes or behavior; - Presenting an argument for or against something. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Above all, (a) get the audience's attention, (b) find out what their needs and interests are, (c) show how you can satisfy those needs, (d) ask for an appropriate reaction or approval. • Quote relevant materials and evidence to back up your arguments and to appeal to the audience's hearts and head—statistics, authoritative opinions, others' experiences. • Avoid generalizing and exaggerating, using "emotive" and "colored" language. • Give some reference to the other side of the story, or your case will be weakened.

(To be continued)



(Continued)

Objectives	Guidelines
To entertain or amuse the audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A thank-you speech; - An "after-dinner" speech. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be brief. • Use appropriate humor. • Relate your speech to the audience's interests and to the occasion—be personal and particular.

3. Researching your audience

At the end of the course, you're going to make a presentation to the class. As a speaker, how much do you know about your classmates?

Establishing the objectives for your presentation requires an analysis of your audience's needs and expectations. By considering the nature of your audience, you can more easily determine what you will present and how you will present it. An analysis of the audience will enable you:

- to select some appropriate points to emphasize in your presentation;
- to develop some appropriate details;
- to choose and prepare appropriate visual aids;
- to create a tone that is sensitive to your audience's circumstances.

Your presentation will ideally form a bridge between what you have and what your audience want. If you have been asked to present a topic to a seminar group, you will provide a basic overview of it, with suggestions for further reading. If you are presenting your own research at a conference, you will explain the background of it, outline your methods, state your main results, and then offer brief comments on the results before inviting questions. If you are presenting your research to the members of your own department, you may not need to explain the background of it, but you may wish to show your tutor that you have read the relevant literature; and you may wish to take the opportunity to have members of the group discuss your questions about the research methods or the results.

Who are the audience?

"Who am I making this presentation to?" Sometimes the answer is obvious, but not always. You should try to ask yourself such questions as follows: "Who are they?"



“Are they business people, professional people, political people, or experts?” “How much have they already known and what will they expect from me?”

Of course, not all audience are the same. Some may have already known a great deal about your subject matter while others may need to be educated first. Some may agree with your points while others may be adamantly opposed to them. Ineffective speakers don't realize that there are some differences. Effective speakers, on the other hand, realize that a good presentation is audience-centered which basically means that it is created with your specific audience in mind.

What makes each of the audience different? Normally these differences are classified into two groups: demographical ones and situational ones.

Demographics are facts about your audience. These facts include such things as follows: age, gender, education and experiences, race or ethnicity, religion, group affiliation, language, belief, and morals.

All of these facts can help you put together a clearer idea of how the audience view the world and filter information. After all, an African-American female over the age of 60 will have a much different frame of reference from a 18-year-old Caucasian male.

Situational elements, on the other hand, would include such things as follows: the audience size, the presentation venue, the audience's interest in and knowledge of the topic, and the audience's attitudes toward you—the speaker.

All of these elements will impact your ability to identify and connect with your audience.

Let's Talk!

Task 1: Work in pairs. Make a list of questions about the audience that you would like to make clear. Share your list with another pair and discuss what the top three questions are related to the audience.

Task 2: Assume that you are giving a speech on the literary significance of William Shakespeare's works.

- How would your speech be different if most of your audience members were majoring in biology?
- How would your speech be different if most of your audience members were majoring in literature?
- How would your speech be different if your audience members were elementary school students?



What is the audience size?

The size of the audience might affect several aspects of your planning for a presentation. You should know beforehand how many people there will be: Will it be a very small and intimate group of 4 colleagues or a large gathering of 400 participants?

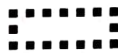
A small group (say about 10–15 members) would only need a small room. The seats might be grouped around the speaker, so you might prepare a more interactive approach to your presentation. There would be no need for a sound system to project your voice. You'd better prepare more questions and answers in your presentation as people tend to be more willing to ask questions in a small room.

For a larger size of audience, it may be harder to be easygoing, and interactive approaches may be less practical.

Let's Talk!

Task 3: Look at the different seating plans below. Decide which seating plan would be most suited to each type of audience size:

- group discussion
- large lecture
- panel discussion
- formal meeting.



A



B



C



D



E

4. Focusing on your topic

Selecting a topic sometimes feels like shooting an arrow in a random direction and you hope that it will hit a target. Having a clear understanding of your topic is critical to the success of your presentation.

Above all, make sure you have something new and interesting to say. While



it's almost a certainty that you find your topic interesting, others may not be so fascinated in it. Make sure your presentation is based on the part of your research that has the closest relevance to the broader field of research.

Take the audience into consideration. The first thing you should always do is to put yourself in your audience's shoes and consider what they would like to hear.

Brainstorm possible ideas. You will no doubt discover many ideas that you want to include in your presentation. But you must be selective. You should include only the information that is relevant to your audience and your objectives.

Refine your topic, if it seems too broad, and consider questions like:

- What have you already known about the subject?
- Is there a specific time period you want to cover?
- Is there a geographic region or country on which you would like to focus?
- Is there a particular aspect of this topic that interests you? For example, the public policy implications, historical influence, sociological aspects, psychological angles, specific groups or individuals involved in the topic.

Think about the significant terms, concepts, and keywords that are used to discuss your topic. They will become the key to searching the information about your subject in library catalogs, online databases, and other resources.

Think about the order you want to arrange for those ideas. Consider going from the biggest idea to the narrowest one, or consider going from the earliest idea to the latest one.

Create a title for your presentation (if you have not already been given a title). The title will help you to focus on the subject.

For example, you have been assigned to make a presentation on a movie you've seen. First, you need to choose a movie. Second, you need to think about what elements or parts of the movie you want to discuss. Third, you need to decide on the order you want to employ to discuss those elements or parts.

So your plan would look something like this:

Movie: *Avatar*

Elements and their order: plot, characters, animation

Stay with that order because you want to end with the most important subject: the animation. For the plot: summarize it but don't tell everything. For the characters: describe and comment on their significance. For the animation: discuss what you think about it. Do you like it? What, specifically, do you think of it?

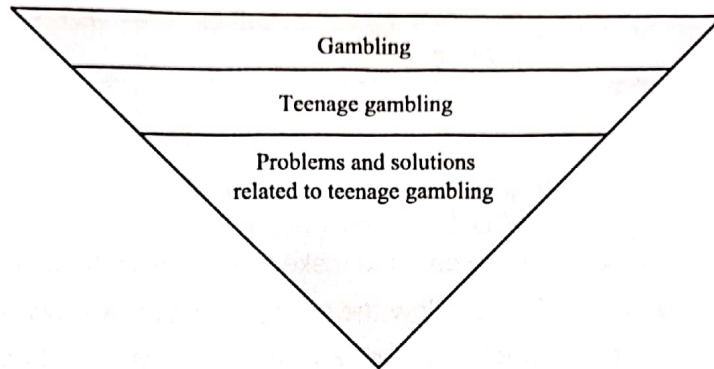
This approach can be displayed by an inverted pyramid, which helps you choose and focus on your topic. You can start by placing a broad topic at the top of the inverted pyramid, followed by more specific topics or key words at each level of the



inverted pyramid, until you arrive at the narrowest part of it.

For example, your topic may evolve in the following way:

- A broad topic: Gambling
- A somewhat focused topic: Teenage gambling
- The final topic: Problems and solutions related to teenage gambling



Let's Watch!

Watch the video clip "How to Choose Presentation Topics That Rock" and complete the following tasks.

Task 1: Watch the video clip and answer the following questions.

1. Why do many people consider choosing the right topic stressful?

2. Which words can describe the 3-step process that'll help select a topic relatively quick and painless?

Task 2: Watch the video clip again. Complete the table with the information you've got from the clip.

Step 1	Audience Demographics:
	age
	(1) _____
	(2) _____
	where they're from
	education
	income
	(3) _____



- Step 2 Understand what the audience are going through, either internally or (4) ____:
 situations, (5) ____, or pains.
 Figure out a topic and things that (6) ____.
 Use (7) ____ to get their attention.
- Step 3 Talk about:
 What are the relevant future (8) ____ of listening to you.
 How can they (9) ____ the current situation, problems, pains and avoid the future problems.

Let's Talk!

Suppose you are going to make an oral presentation on a topic of your own. What is your topic? First, follow the example to narrow down your topic and then create an inverted triangle diagram with the topics you've chosen. Work in pairs and make a brief description of your topic to your partner.

Example:

Original topic: University enrollment policy (too broad)

Focused time period: The 1990s

Focused location: China

Focused event: Enrollment expansion

Refined topic: China's university enrollment expansion policy in the 1990s

5. Presentation venue

One of the most important things that you can do to prepare for a presentation is to visit the venue ahead of time. Even if you are familiar with the venue, it's better to visit it again in case there have been changes that might affect your performance. You are in a position to take Murphy's Law out of the equation.

You should have some answers to the following questions:

- Where will you be delivering your presentation? (Get the correct address.)
- Can you access this venue early to set up well ahead of time? (Are there any security issues?)
- What is the size and lay-out of the venue?
- What are the seating arrangements? How many people are expected?



- What can you arrange to serve as backups to your visual aids?
- What equipment will be organized for you and what will you have to arrange?
- Where will you speak?
- Will you be introduced by someone else, or do you have to establish credibility on your own?
- Who can help if technical hitches occur?

You might try sitting in the auditorium to see how it feels to be one of the audience and if they can see the speaker clearly. Just as good tradesmen should never blame their tools for failures—professional speakers shouldn't make excuses for poor performance due to venue mishaps and technical hiccups.

Let's Talk!

Task 1: Imagine that you have been invited to deliver a presentation at a venue that you've never been to before, about 100 kilometers away from your home. Unfortunately you are too busy to pay a visit there before delivering the presentation.

Your presentation is due to start at 10:00 a.m. with the audience arriving at about 9:30 a.m. for registration and coffee. The most suitable train would get you there at about 9:15 a.m. and this would mean you would have to start from home at about 5:00 a.m.!

There is a generous budget for the event and the organizers have asked you to let them know if you have any questions.

Write down a list of queries about the location which you could send the organizers to help you organize your presentation.

Task 2: You are planning a presentation on a topic that is of interest to you. Completing the information in the following blank lines will help you create a vision or plan for your presentation.

Planning the Presentation

The topic(s) to be addressed in the presentation:



The title of the presentation: _____

The objective(s) of the presentation: _____

A brief description of the presentation: _____

A description of the target audience (including the number of them):

The date: _____

The starting time: _____

The ending time: _____

A description of the location:



Self-evaluation

Before preparing a presentation you might want to work your way through this checklist.

Statements	Yes	No	Not Sure	Action to Take
I'm clear about the presentation process.				
I understand the main types of presentation objectives.				
I understand the importance of setting objectives.				
I have a perfect mastery of the major guidelines to achieve different objectives.				
I've recognized the importance of audience analysis.				
I know the type of audience might well influence the format of my presentation and its contents.				
I know how to research the audience.				
I know how to choose presentation topics that rock.				
I know the venue can have significant implications for how I plan and deliver my presentation.				

