

Chapter 17

Useful Phrases

You will learn how to

- use the most appropriate phrase in different stages of your presentation
- recognize, and thus understand, the typical phrases used in other people's presentations

Why is this important?

Selecting some of the phrases below will give you confidence when you move from slide to slide and topic to topic. They will also enable you to deal with unexpected situations and with difficult questions that the audience may ask you.

Note: You don't need to learn all the phrases listed in this chapter, just choose the ones you find easiest to say and remember.

17.1 Introductions and outline

Introducing institute/department

Hi. Thanks for coming . . .

I am a PhD student/researcher/technician at . . .

I am doing a PhD/a Masters/some research at . . .

I am part of a team of 20 researchers and most of our funding comes from . . .

The work that I am going to present to you today was carried out with the collaboration of the University of . . .

Telling the audience what point your research has reached and in what context it is

What I am going to present is actually still only in its early stages, but I really think that our findings so far are worth telling you.

We are already at a quite advanced stage of the research, but I was hoping to get some feedback from you on certain aspects relating to . . .

Our research, which we have just finished, is actually part of a wider project involving . . .

Giving a general outline (formal)

In this presentation I am going to/I would like to/I will
 discuss some findings of an international project
 examine/analyze/bring to your attention
 introduce the notion of/a new model of
 review/discuss/describe/argue that
 address a particular issue, which in my opinion, ..
 give an analysis of/explore the meaning of
 cite research by Wallwork and Southern

Giving your agenda (traditional)

I will begin with an introduction to . . .

I will begin by giving you an overview of . . .

Then I will move on to . . .

After that I will deal with . . .

And I will conclude with . . .

Giving your agenda (less formal)

First, I'd like to do x/I'm going to do/First, I'll be looking at X.

Then we'll be looking at Y/Then, we'll focus on Y.

And finally we'll have a look at Z/Finally, I'm going to take you through Z.

So, let's begin by looking at X.

Giving your agenda (informal)

So this is what I am going to talk about . . .

... and the main focus will be on ...
 ... and what I think, well what I hope, you will find interesting is ...
 I'm NOT going to cover P and Q, I'm just going to ...

Giving your agenda (more dynamic)

This is what I'm planning to cover.
 I've chosen to focus on X because I think
 it has massive implications for ...
 it is an area that has been really neglected ...
 I'm hoping to get some ideas from you on how to ...
 that what we've found is really interesting
 I think we have found a
 radically new solution for ...
 truly innovative approach to ...
 novel way to ..
 We are excited about our results because this is the first time research has
 shown that ...
 Why is X is so important? Well, in this presentation I am going to give you
 three good reasons ...
 What do we know about Y? Well, actually a lot more/less than you might
 think. Today I hope to prove to you that ...

Referring to handout

I've prepared a handout on this, which I will give you at the end - so there's
 no need to take notes.
 Details can also be found on our website. The URL is on the handout.

17.2 Transitions

Moving on to the main body of the presentation

Okay, so let me start by looking at ...
 So first I'd like to give you a bit of background.
 So why did we undertake this research? Well, ...
 So what were our main objectives? Well, ...

Introducing a new element or topic

With regard to x ...
 As far as x is concerned ...
 Regarding x ...

Signaling that the topic is about to change

Before I give you some more detailed statistics and my overall conclusions,
 I am just going to show you how our results can be generalized to a wider
 scenario.

In a few minutes I am going to tell you about X and Y, which I hope should explain why we did this research in the first place. But first I want to talk to you about . . .

Showing where you are in the original agenda

Okay so this is where we are ..
 This is what we've looked at so far.
 So, we're now on page 10 of the handout.

Referring to previous topic to introduce next topic

Before moving on to Z, I'd just like to reiterate what I said about Y.
 Okay, so that's all I wanted to say about X and Y. Now let's look at Z.
 Having considered X, let's go on and look at Y.
 Not only have we experienced success with X, but also with Y.
 We've focused on X, equally important is Y.
 You remember that I said X was used for Y [*go back to relevant slide*], well now we're going to see how it can be used for Z.

Getting the audience interested in the next topic

Did you know that you can do X with Y? You didn't, well in the next section of this presentation I'll be telling you how.

Direct transition

Let me now move onto the question of . . .
 This brings me to my next point . . .
 Next I would like to examine . . .
 Now we're going to look at Z. // Now I'd like to show you Z. // Now I'd like to talk about Z.
 Okay, let's move on to Z.
 Now we are going to do X. X will help you to do Y.

17.3 Emphasizing, qualifying, giving examples

Emphasizing a point

I must emphasize that ..
 What I want to highlight is . . .
 At this point I would like to stress that . . .
 What I would really like you to focus on here is . . .
 These are the main points to remember:
 The main argument in favor of/against this is ..
 The fact is that . . .
 This is a particularly important point.
 This is worth remembering because . . .
 You may not be aware of this but . . .

Communicating value and benefits

So, the key benefit is . . .
One of the main advantages is . . .
What this means is that . . .
We are sure that this will lead to increased . . .
What I would like you to notice here is . . .
What I like about this is . . .
The great thing about this is . . .

Expressing surprise in order to gain interest

To our surprise, we found that . . .
We were surprised to find that . . .
An unexpected result was . . .
Interestingly, we discovered that . . .

Qualifying what you are saying

Broadly speaking, we can say that . . .
In most cases/In general this is true.
In very general terms . . .
With certain exceptions, this can be seen as . . .
For the most part, people are inclined to think that . . .
Here is a broad outline of . . .

Qualifying what you have just said

Having said that . . .
Nevertheless, despite this . . .
But in reality . . .
Actually . . .
In fact . . .

Giving explanations

As a result of . . . Due to the fact that . . . Thanks to . . .
This problem goes back to . . .
The thing is that . . .
On the grounds that . . .

Giving examples

Let's say I have . . . and I just want to . . .
Imagine that you . . .
You'll see that this is very similar to . . .
I've got an example of this here . . . *show slide*
I've brought an example of this with me . . . *show object*
There are many ways to do this, for example/for instance you can . . .
There are several examples of this, such as . . .

17.4 Diagrams

Making initial reference to the diagram

Here you can see ...
I have included this chart because ...
This is a detail from the previous figure ...
This should give you a clearer picture of ...
This diagram illustrates ...

Explaining what you have done to simplify a diagram

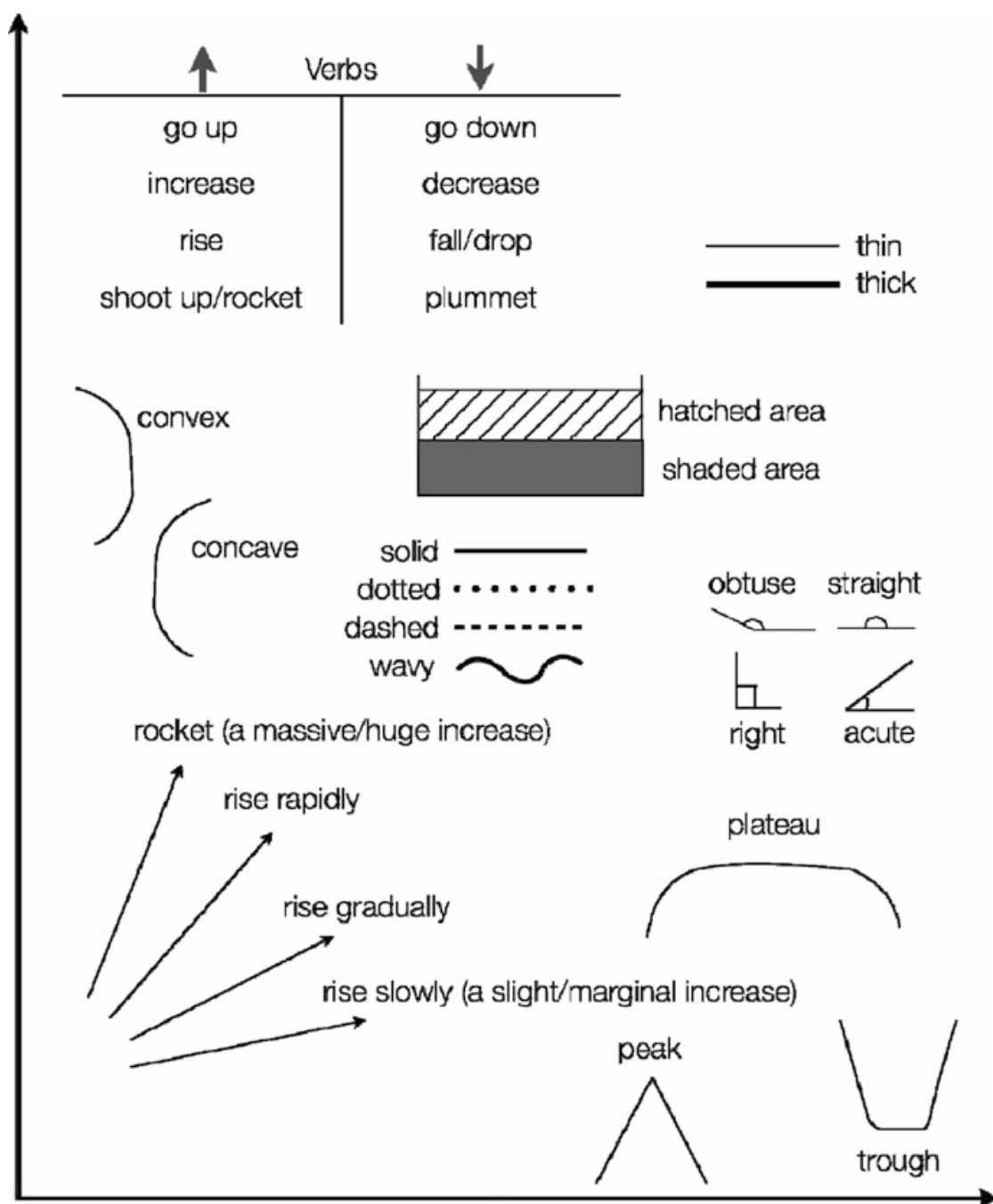
For ease of presentation, I have only included essential information.
For the sake of simplicity, I have reduced all the numbers to whole numbers.
This is an extremely simplified view of the situation, but it is enough to illustrate that ...
In reality this table should also include other factors, but for the sake of simplicity I have just chosen these two key points.
This is obviously not an exact/accurate picture of the real situation, but it should give you an idea of ...
I have left a lot of detail out, but in any case this should help you to ...
if you are interested you can find more information on this in my paper.

Indicating what part of the diagram you want them to focus on

Basically what I want to highlight is ...
I really just want you to focus on ...
You can ignore/Don't worry about this part here.
This diagram is rather complex, but the only thing I want you to notice is ...

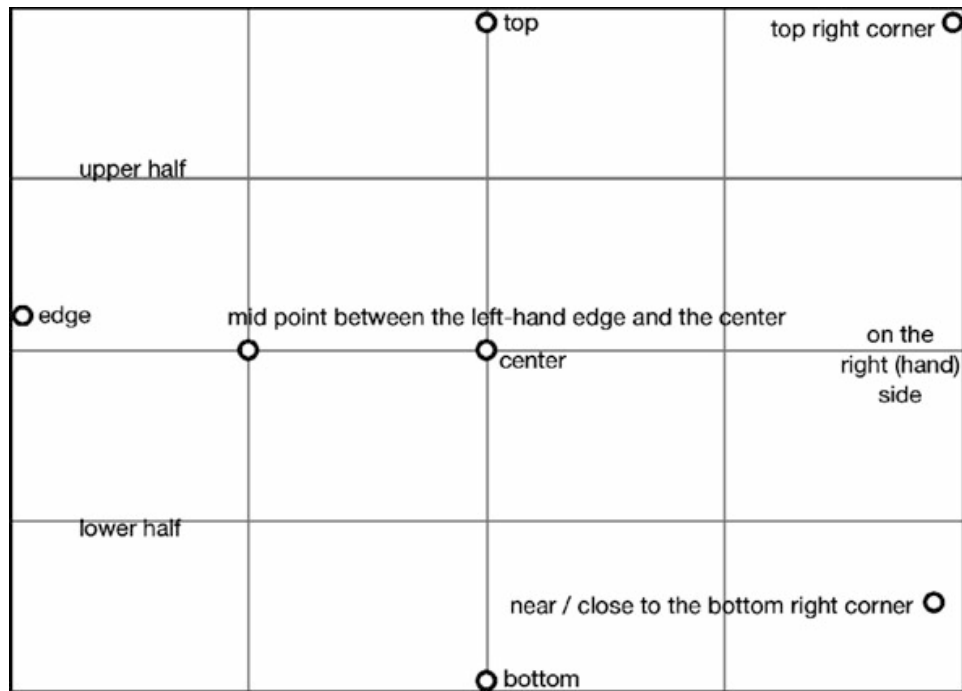
Explaining the lines, curves, arrows

On the x axis is ... On the y axis we have ...
I chose these values for the axes because ...
In this diagram, double circles mean that ... whereas black circles mean ...
dashed lines mean ... continuous lines mean ...
Time is represented by a dotted line.
Dashed lines correspond to ... whereas zig-zag lines mean ...
The thin dashed gray line indicates that ...
These dotted curves are supposed to represent ...
The solid curve is ...
These horizontal arrows indicate ...
There is a slight/gradual/sharp decrease in ...
The curve rises rapidly, then reaches a peak, and then forms a plateau.
As you can see, this wavy curve has a series of peaks and troughs.



Explaining positions

on the left is ... on the left side here ...
 in the middle ...
 here, at the top ...
 down in this section ...
 over here is a ...
 the upper/lower section ...



17.5 Making reference to parts of the presentation

Referring forward

I'm going to do X, Y, and Z.

I'm not going to cover this aspect now, I'm just going to ...

I'll go into a bit of detail for each concept.

I'll explain this in a moment/I'll talk about that later.

As we will see later ...

Referring backward

As I said before ...

Remember I said that ...

The concept I mentioned earlier ...

As I mentioned a moment ago ...

To return to my earlier point ...

If we go back to this slide ... (*shows an earlier slide*)

Referring to current slide

Here you can see ...

Notice that it has ...

As you can see ...

17.6 Discussing results, conclusions, future work

Very strong affirmations (but see Section 14.4)

These results definitely prove that ...

We are convinced that our results show that ...

What these results prove is ...

Tentative affirmations

Our results would seem to show that ...

What these findings seem to highlight is ...

I think that these results may indicate that ...

It seems probable from these results that ...

I think it is reasonable to assume that ...

Under the hypothesis that $x = y$, what these results probably mean is ...

We are assuming that the reason for this discrepancy is ...

We are presuming that this nonagreement is due to ...

This may indicate that ...

A possible explanation is ...

I believe this is due to ...

Future work

So, we've still got quite a long way to go. What we need to do now is ...

Given these results, it seems to us that the best thing to do now is ...

A promising area for future research would probably be ...

What we are planning to do next is ...

Eliciting audience help

To be honest, we are not exactly sure what these results may implicate ...

We think our results show that $x = y$, and we were rather hoping to find other people who may be doing similar research to confirm this for us ...

We are not really sure why the results appear to be so contradictory, and we were wondering whether someone here might be able to help us out with this.

We are actually looking for partners in this project, so if anybody is interested, please let us know.

17.7 Ending

Warning audience that presentation is near the end

Okay, we're very close to the end now, but there are just a couple of important things that I still want to tell you.

Final summary

Well that brings me to the end of the presentation. So, just to recap ...

Telling the audience where they can find further information

I am afraid that I don't have time to go into this in any further detail. But you can find more information about it on this website (which is on the back page of your handout).

If you would like more information on this, then please feel free to email me.
 My address is on the back page of the handout./My address is in the congress notes.

Thanking the audience

Thanks very much for coming.
 Thank you for your attention.

17.8 Questions and answers

Beginning a Q&A session

Does anyone have any questions on this?
 I'd be really interested in hearing your questions on this.
[If no one asks as a question] One question I am often asked is . . .

Referring to level of English just before Q&A session

If you ask any questions I would be grateful if you could ask them slowly and clearly, as
 - my English is a bit rusty
 - many attendees here today are not native speakers of English

Handling the session

Okay, could we start with the question from the gentleman/lady at the back.
 Yes, you.
[Interrupting someone] Sorry, first could we just hear from this woman/man at the front.
 Do you mind just repeating the question because I don't think the people at the back heard you.
 I think we have time for just one more question.
 Okay, I am afraid our time is up, but if anyone is interested in asking more questions I'll be in the bar and at the social dinner tonight.

What to say when you don't understand a question from the audience

Sorry, could you repeat the question more slowly please?
 Sorry, could you speak up please?
 Sorry, I didn't hear the first/last part of your question.
 Sorry, I still don't understand—would you mind asking me the question again in the break?
 Sorry, but to answer that question would take rather too long, however you can find the explanation on my web pages or in my paper.
 I'm not exactly clear what your question is.

Going back to the presentation after taking questions mid presentation

Okay, would you mind if I moved on now, because I've still got a couple of things I wanted to say?

Interpreting the questions

If I'm not wrong, I think what you are asking is ...

Can I just be sure that I understand? You are asking me if ...

So what you are saying is ...

So your question is ...

Avoiding difficult questions

I'm not familiar with the details regarding that question.

I can't give you an exact answer on that, I am afraid.

That's a very interesting question and my answer is simply I really don't know!

That's a good question and I wish I had a ready answer, but I am afraid I don't.

You know, I've never been asked that question before and to be honest I really wouldn't know how to answer it.

I would not like to comment on that.

I am sorry but I am not in a position to comment on that.

I am not sure there really is a right or wrong answer to that. What I personally believe is ...

Asking for time or deferring

I think it would be best if my colleague answered that question for you.

Can I get back to you on that one?

Could we talk about that over a drink?

I need to think about that question. Do you think we could discuss it in the bar?

You've raised a really important point, so important that I think I would rather have a bit of time to think about the best answer. So if you give me your email address at the end, I'll get back to you.

At the moment I don't have all the facts I need to answer that question, but if you email me I can get back to you.

Offhand, I can't answer that question but if you ...

Commenting on audience questions

I know exactly what you mean but the thing is ...

I take your point but in my experience I have found that ...

You're quite right and it is something that I am actually working on now.

I'm glad you raised that point, in fact one of my colleagues will be able to answer that for you.

Yes, the additional experiments you suggest would be very useful. Maybe we could talk about them over lunch.

Suggesting that Q & A session can continue at the bar

Does anyone fancy going for a drink? because it would be very helpful to have your feedback.

Would anyone like to go for a drink? because I'd be really interested to hear your views on this.

17.9 Things that can go wrong

Equipment doesn't work

I think the bulb must have gone on the projector. Could someone please bring me a replacement? In the meantime let me write on the whiteboard what I wanted to say about . . .

The microphone/mike doesn't seem to be working. Can everyone hear me at the back?

I don't know what has happened to my laptop but the program seems to have crashed. Please bear with me while I reboot.

Okay, it looks as if I will have to continue my presentation without the slides. Let me just look at my notes a second.

You realize that a slide contains a mistake

You know what, there's a mistake here, it should be . . .
Sorry this figure should be 100 not 1,000.

Your mobile phone rings and you have to turn it off

I'm really sorry about that. I thought I had switched it off.

You forget where you are in the presentation

Sorry, what was I saying?
Where were we up to? Can anyone remind me?
Sorry I've lost track of what I was saying.
Sorry, I seem to have forgotten what I was saying.

If you are about to go over your allocated time

It looks as if we are running out of time. Would it be okay if I continued for another 10 minutes?
If any of you have to leave straight away, I quite understand.
I am really sorry about this. But in any case, you can find the conclusions in the handout.
I will put a copy of the presentation on our website.

17.10 Posters

Getting the person interested

Hi, would you like some more information?
Would you like me to take you through the process?
I have a short demo here if you would like to look at it.
Would you like to hear some more details on the methodology?

Offering further help

Would you like a copy of this handout/brochure/document? It basically says the same as the poster but in a lot more detail.

Here is my paper, if you would like a copy.

You can find more details on my website, which is written on my card here.

Asking questions about the person's research

May I ask what field you are in?

Where are you based?

How long have you been working in this field?

Opening up possibilities for further contact

Would you like to give me your email address?

Are you giving a presentation yourself?

Are you going to be at the dinner tonight?

Might you be interested in setting up a collaboration?

Saying goodbye

Thank you very much.

It was very nice to meet you.

Hope to see you around.

Hope to see you again.

I'll email you the website/my paper/the documentation.

Let's keep in touch.

Goodbye.

For good websites on the art of creating posters see page 163.