

This study guide focuses exclusively on the **Framing** component of starting conversations, which involves clearly stating the **Context**, **Intent**, and **Key Message** in the first 15 seconds of a work conversation. It does not incorporate the **GPS (Goal, Problem, Solution) structured summary**, which is a subsequent step for more complex messages.

Study Guide: Mastering the First Minute - Framing Your Conversations

This guide is designed to help you understand and apply the principles of "Framing" for starting clear and effective work conversations. Framing ensures your audience knows:

- **What you are talking about (Context).**
- **Why you are telling them this (Intent).**
- **What is the most important message (Key Message).**

By mastering framing, you can avoid common communication pitfalls like providing too much detail, jumping between topics, or not having a clear point. The goal is to deliver these three elements in **less than fifteen seconds**, ideally in **three sentences or less**.

Scenarios: Identify the Best Framing

For each scenario, an "Original Statement" demonstrates common communication issues. Your task is to select the multiple-choice option that best represents a properly "framed" conversation start, containing clear Context, Intent, and Key Message.

Scenario 1: Project Update

- **Original Statement:** "Hey, about that new project... I was looking at the data, and it's pretty complex. Lots of moving parts, and we got some feedback from marketing yesterday. Anyway, it's definitely something we need to think about."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "Can we talk about the new project? It's complex, and I need you to think about it."
 - B. "Hi, regarding the 'Phoenix' project, I need to update you because we've identified a major risk."
 - C. "I heard some things about the project that are complex and involve marketing feedback."
 - D. "Let's discuss project data and marketing feedback; it's important."

Scenario 2: Request for a Meeting

- **Original Statement:** "Can we chat? I have a few things I want to go over."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "Do you have a few minutes? I'd like to update you on the budget and get your input on staffing."
 - B. "I need to talk to you about some things. When are you free?"
 - C. "I have several topics that need to be discussed, requiring about 10 minutes of your time."
 - D. "Can we chat about everything on my mind today?"

Scenario 3: Hiring Issue

- **Original Statement:** "So, the new hire for the sales team? We're having some trouble getting them onboarded. HR is saying something about paperwork."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "Regarding the new sales hire, I need your advice because there's an issue with their onboarding paperwork."
 - B. "The sales team onboarding has paperwork issues that HR mentioned."
 - C. "There's a problem with a new hire; I need to talk to you about it."
 - D. "The new sales hire can't start because of HR."

Scenario 4: Budget Concern

- **Original Statement:** "About the budget for next quarter... it's looking a bit tight. I've been reviewing the numbers, and there are some unexpected expenses."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "The budget is tight. I need help reviewing expenses."
 - B. "Regarding the Q3 budget, I need your approval for additional funds as we're currently over budget."

- C. "We need to discuss financial numbers and unexpected costs for the next quarter."
- D. "The budget for next quarter looks bad, so I'm bringing it to your attention."

Scenario 5: New Policy Announcement

- **Original Statement:** "There's a new policy coming out. You'll need to read it. It's pretty long."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "I'm letting you know about the new 'Remote Work' policy; it requires everyone to be in the office three days a week."
 - B. "The new policy is long, and you have to read it."
 - C. "There's a new policy that needs your attention, and it's quite detailed."
 - D. "I need you to review a new document that's been released."

Scenario 6: Customer Complaint

- **Original Statement:** "A customer just called. They're really unhappy about something that happened last week. It was related to that service outage, I think."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "The service outage last week made a customer unhappy."
 - B. "I need your help with a customer complaint, as the 'Alpha' account is threatening to cancel due to the recent outage."
 - C. "We have an issue with a customer, and it's a big deal."
 - D. "I just got off the phone with a customer who is very upset about something."

Scenario 7: Software Bug

- **Original Statement:** "The system crashed again. I don't know why, but it's causing issues for a lot of people."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "The system is causing problems for users because of a crash."
 - B. "Regarding the 'Sales CRM' system, I need your approval to roll back the recent update as it's causing frequent crashes."
 - C. "There's a software issue that needs to be fixed urgently."
 - D. "People are having issues with the system again; I'm not sure what to do."

Scenario 8: Team Morale

- **Original Statement:** "The team seems a bit down lately. I overheard some people complaining about workload and stuff."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "The team's morale is low, and I'd like to get your advice on how to address the workload concerns."
 - B. "People are complaining about work, so I'm telling you."
 - C. "I've noticed some issues with team dynamics and workload."

- D. "We need to do something about the team's complaints."

Scenario 9: Vendor Issue

- **Original Statement:** "Our vendor, XYZ Corp, they sent us the wrong shipment again. This is like the third time this month."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "XYZ Corp sent the wrong shipment again; we need to decide whether to switch vendors."
 - B. "I need to talk about our supplier, XYZ Corp, because there's a problem with their deliveries."
 - C. "We're having recurring issues with shipments from XYZ Corp."
 - D. "The vendor is messing up, and it's not the first time."

Scenario 10: Training Request

- **Original Statement:** "I saw a new training course offered. It looks interesting, covers a lot of new tools."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "There's a new training course available, and I think I should take it."
 - B. "Regarding professional development, I need your approval to enroll in the 'Advanced Analytics' course next month."
 - C. "I'm looking at training options that cover new tools and seem interesting."
 - D. "I'd like to tell you about a new course."

Scenario 11: Client Feedback

- **Original Statement:** "Remember that client presentation? They sent us feedback. Some good, some not so good."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "The client provided some feedback, and it's a mixed bag."
 - B. "I want to share client feedback about the recent 'Product Demo' presentation as they have some critical concerns."
 - C. "We need to go over the client's comments from the presentation."
 - D. "Client feedback is here; you'll want to see it."

Scenario 12: Office Supplies

- **Original Statement:** "We're almost out of printer paper and coffee. Someone needs to order more."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "We need to order more office supplies soon."
 - B. "I need your help with office supplies, as we're critically low on printer paper and coffee pods."
 - C. "There's a problem with supplies; we're running out."
 - D. "Who is in charge of ordering office supplies?"

Scenario 13: Travel Request

- **Original Statement:** "I need to travel next month for that conference. I checked the dates, and it clashes with something else."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "My travel plans are complicated because of a clash."
 - B. "Regarding my 'Industry Summit' travel request, I need your approval to adjust my schedule as the dates conflict with the 'Q4 Planning' meeting."
 - C. "I want to go to a conference, but there's a scheduling conflict."
 - D. "Can I talk to you about my upcoming trip?"

Scenario 14: System Downtime

- **Original Statement:** "The server went down last night. It was quite a mess, took us hours to get it back up."
- **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "I'm informing you about unexpected system downtime, as the 'Production Server' experienced a critical outage last night."
 - B. "The server had problems last night, and it took a long time to fix."
 - C. "There was a major mess with the server that required hours of work."
 - D. "We need to talk about what happened with the server yesterday."

Scenario 15: Performance Review

- **Original Statement:** "About my performance review... I thought it went okay, but I'm not sure what the next steps are."
 - **Which of the following best uses framing for this scenario?**
 - A. "I want to clarify the next steps for my performance review."
 - B. "Regarding my annual performance review, I need your advice on how to proceed with the development plan."
 - C. "My performance review was fine, but I'm a bit confused."
 - D. "I need to understand what comes after my review."
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Answer Key

Here are the correct answers and explanations, highlighting how they apply the principles of Context, Intent, and Key Message within the framing framework.

Scenario 1: Correct Answer: B

- **Explanation:** This option clearly states the **context** ("Phoenix project"), a specific **intent** ("need to update you"), and the crucial **key message** ("identified a major risk"). Options A and D are too vague, and C provides context but no clear intent or point.

Scenario 2: Correct Answer: A

- **Explanation:** This option provides a clear **intent** by stating the purpose and scope of the conversation ("update you on the budget and get your input on staffing"), and sets a **time expectation** ("a few minutes") which is also a form of framing the interaction. Options B, C, and D are either too generic or imply multiple, potentially unrelated topics without clear initial framing.

Scenario 3: Correct Answer: A

- **Explanation:** This option establishes the **context** ("new sales hire"), the **intent** ("need your advice"), and the **key message** ("issue with their onboarding paperwork") concisely. The other options are either too vague or lack a clear request for action/advice.

Scenario 4: Correct Answer: B

- **Explanation:** This option provides clear **context** ("Q3 budget"), definite **intent** ("need your approval"), and a direct **key message** ("currently over budget," implying a need for additional funds). Other options are too general or don't specify the intent or what is needed.

Scenario 5: Correct Answer: A

- **Explanation:** This option immediately identifies the **context** ("new 'Remote Work' policy"), the **intent** ("letting you know about"), and the direct **key message** ("requires everyone to be in the office three days a week"). The other options lack specific context or clear intent.

Scenario 6: Correct Answer: B

- **Explanation:** This option gives the **context** ("Alpha account"), the clear **intent** ("need your help"), and a precise **key message** ("threatening to cancel due to the recent outage"). The original statement and other options are too vague about the customer, the issue, and what is required.

Scenario 7: Correct Answer: B

- **Explanation:** This option provides specific **context** ("Sales CRM system"), a clear **intent** ("need your approval"), and a direct **key message** ("roll back the recent update").

as it's causing frequent crashes"). Other options describe the problem but don't state a clear intent or specific action.

Scenario 8: Correct Answer: A

- **Explanation:** This option clearly states the **context** ("team's morale is low"), a clear **intent** ("get your advice"), and the **key message** ("address the workload concerns"). The other options are less specific in their intent or key message.

Scenario 9: Correct Answer: A

- **Explanation:** This option states the **context** ("XYZ Corp"), the **key message** ("sent the wrong shipment again"), and the **intent** (implicitly, to make a decision or take action) by directly stating the decision that needs to be made ("decide whether to switch vendors"). Option B is close but less direct on the ultimate point.

Scenario 10: Correct Answer: B

- **Explanation:** This option provides clear **context** ("professional development"), a specific **intent** ("need your approval"), and the **key message** (enroll in the "Advanced Analytics" course). The other options are descriptive but don't convey a clear intent or direct request.

Scenario 11: Correct Answer: B

- **Explanation:** This option provides the **context** ("client feedback about the recent 'Product Demo' presentation"), the **intent** ("want to share"), and a direct **key message** ("they have some critical concerns"). Options A, C, and D are less specific about the nature of the feedback or the urgency.

Scenario 12: Correct Answer: B

- **Explanation:** This option clearly states the **context** ("office supplies"), the **intent** ("need your help"), and the **key message** ("critically low on printer paper and coffee pods"). The other options are statements of fact without a clear intent for the conversation.

Scenario 13: Correct Answer: B

- **Explanation:** This option sets the **context** ("my 'Industry Summit' travel request"), the clear **intent** ("need your approval to adjust"), and the **key message** ("dates conflict with the 'Q4 Planning' meeting"). Other options are too vague or don't present a clear action required.

Scenario 14: Correct Answer: A

- **Explanation:** This option immediately provides the **intent** ("informing you about"), the **key message** ("unexpected system downtime"), and specific **context** ("Production

Server experienced a critical outage last night"). The other options lack the clarity of intent or specific context.

Scenario 15: Correct Answer: **B**

- **Explanation:** This option provides the **context** ("my annual performance review"), a clear **intent** ("need your advice"), and the specific **key message** ("how to proceed with the development plan"). The other options are too ambiguous about what specific help or information is sought.

Analogy for Framing: Think of framing your conversation like setting the stage and handing out programs before a play begins. The **Context** is the play's title and genre (e.g., "Romeo and Juliet, a tragedy"). The **Intent** tells the audience *why* they are there – are they reviewing it, performing in it, or just watching for entertainment? The **Key Message** is the one-sentence synopsis on the front of the program (e.g., "Two star-crossed lovers meet a tragic end"). Without this upfront information, your audience might spend the first few minutes trying to figure out what they're watching, why they're there, and what the main point is, instead of being ready to engage with the performance itself.