

# Stating Your Purpose 1

It is essential to state the purpose of your presentation near the beginning. To do this clearly and effectively you need a few simple presentation verbs: **take a look at, report on, give an overview of etc.**

**cass**

## TASK

Below you will find a number of ways of stating the purpose of your presentation. Complete them using the words given. Combining the sentences with the number 1 will give you a complete introduction. Then do the same with those numbered 2 etc. The cassette provides a good model for you. Use it to check your answers after you have done the exercise.

OK, let's get started. Good morning, everyone. Thanks for coming. I'm (your name).

This morning I'm going to be:

showing    talking    taking    reporting    telling

1. .... to you about the videophone project.
2. .... you about the collapse of the housing market in the early 90s.
3. .... you how to deal with late payers.
4. .... a look at the recent boom in virtual reality software companies.
5. .... on the results of the market study we carried out in Austria.

... so, I'll begin by:

making    outlining    bringing    giving    filling

1. .... you in on the background to the project.
2. .... a few observations about the events leading up to that collapse.
3. .... company policy on bad debt.
4. .... you an overview of the history of VR.
5. .... you up-to-date on the latest findings of the study.

... and then I'll go on to:

put    discuss    make    highlight    talk

1. .... what I see as the main advantages of the new system.
2. .... the situation into some kind of perspective.
3. .... you through our basic debt management procedure.
4. .... detailed recommendations regarding our own R&D.
5. .... in more depth the implications of the data in the files in front of you.

Highlight all the verb phrases above, eg. *talking to you about, making a few observations about*. Notice it is not the verb alone, but the whole phrase you need to learn.

Prepare to introduce and state the purpose of a presentation of your own by completing the notes below. Then present your introduction.

Perhaps we should begin.

**or**

OK, let's get started.

Good morning / afternoon / evening, everyone.

Thanks for coming. I'm

And, as you know, I

This morning I'm going to be

- talking to you about
- telling you
- showing you
- reporting on
- taking a look at

So, I'll start off by

- filling you in on the background to
- bringing you up-to-date on
- giving you an overview of
- making a few observations about
- outlining

And then I'll go on to

- highlight what I see as the main
- put the situation into some kind of perspective
- discuss in more depth the implications of
- talk you through
- make detailed recommendations regarding

## Stating Your Purpose 2

When you give a presentation in English, clarity is very important, particularly if there are non-native speakers in your audience. It often helps if you state your purpose at each stage of your talk as well as at the beginning.

### TASK

Cross out the verbs which do not fit in the following presentation extracts. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. First of all, I'd like to ~~preview~~ / ~~overview~~ / **outline** the main points of my talk.
2. Perhaps I should start off by **pointing** / **stressing** / **reminding** that this is just a preliminary report. Nothing has been finalized as yet.
3. But later on I will, in fact, be **putting forward** / **putting out** / **putting over** several detailed proposals.
4. One thing I'll be **dealing with** / **referring** / **regarding** is the issue of a minimum wage.
5. And I'll also be **asking** / **raising** / **putting** the question of privatization.
6. So, what we're really **driving at** / **aiming at** / **looking at** are likely developments in the structure of the company over the next five to ten years.
7. If we could just **draw** / **focus** / **attract** our attention on the short-term objectives to begin with.
8. The eighteen-month plan, which by now you should've all had time to look at, **outlines** / **reviews** / **sets out** in detail our main recommendations.
9. Basically, what we're **suggesting** / **asking** / **reviewing** is a complete reorganization of staff and plant.
10. I'd now like to **turn** / **draw** / **focus** my attention to some of the difficulties we're likely to face.
11. I'm sure there's no need to **draw out** / **spell out** / **think out** what the main problem is going to be.
12. But we do need to seriously **ask** / **answer** / **address** the question of how we are going to overcome it.
13. The basic message I'm trying to **get through** / **get across** / **get to** here is simple. We can't rely on government support for much longer.
14. Disappointing end-of-year figures **underline** / **undermine** / **underestimate** the seriousness of the situation.
15. And the main conclusion we've **thought** / **got to** / **come to** is that massive corporate restructuring will be necessary before any privatization can go through.

# Effective Openings

Communications experts are all agreed that the first three minutes of a presentation are the most important. They talk about 'hooks' – simple techniques for getting the immediate attention of the audience. A good start makes you feel more confident. Here's how the experts suggest you 'hook' your audience:

1. Give them a problem to think about.
2. Give them some amazing facts.
3. Give them a story or personal anecdote.

## **cass** TASK

Look at the presentation openings below and divide them under three headings:

PROBLEMS	AMAZING FACTS	STORIES
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What do you think each presentation was about?

1. **Did you know that** Japanese companies spend four times more on entertaining clients in a year than the entire GDP of Bulgaria? 40 billion dollars, **to be precise. You know, that's** twice Colombia's total foreign debt. You could buy General Motors for the same money.
2. **Suppose** your advertising budget was cut by 99% tomorrow. **How would you** go about promoting your product?
3. **According to the latest study,** by 2050 only one in every four people in Western Europe will be going to work. And two will be old age pensioners.
4. **You know,** R&D is 90% luck. **When I think about** creativity, I'm reminded of the man who invented the microwave oven. He spent years messing around with radar transmitters, then noticed the chocolate in his pocket was starting to melt!
5. **Statistics show that** in the last ten years more people have legally emigrated to the United States than to the rest of the world put together – about half a million of them a year, **in fact. Now, over ten years, that's roughly equivalent** to the population of Greece.
6. **Have you ever wondered why it is that** Americans are easier to sell to than Europeans? And why nine out of ten sales gurus are American? **You have? Well, if I could show you** what stops Europeans buying, **would you be interested?**

7. I read somewhere the other day that the world's highest paid executive works for Disney and gets \$230 million a year. Now that's about \$2000 a minute! That means he's currently making more money than Volkswagen.

8. How many people here this morning hate going to meetings? Just about everybody, right? Well, imagine a company where there were never any meetings and everything ran smoothly. Do you think that's possible?

9. Have you ever been in the situation where you've had to negotiate with the Japanese? I remember when I was working in Nagoya and everybody had told me the Japanese don't like saying no. So in meetings I just kept saying yeah to everything. And they hated it. It turned out yeah sounds like no in Japanese!

## PRESENTATION

Use the frames below to help you prepare effective openings, using the problem, amazing facts, or story technique. Whatever technique you choose, prepare your opening carefully. You should always know exactly how you are going to start.

### PROBLEM TECHNIQUE

1. Suppose .....  
How would you ..... ?
2. Have you ever wondered why it is that .....  
..... ? You have?  
Well, if I could show you .....  
..... would you be interested?
3. How many people here this morning / afternoon / evening .....  
..... ?  
Well, imagine .....  
..... Do you think that's possible?

### AMAZING FACTS TECHNIQUE

1. Did you know that ..... ?
2. According to the latest study, .....
3. Statistics show that .....
4. I read somewhere the other day that .....

### STORY / ANECDOTE TECHNIQUE

1. You know, .....  
When I think about .....  
I'm reminded of .....
2. Have you ever been in the situation where ..... ?  
I remember when .....  
It turned out .....

**CASS TASK 3**

Once you know the nine basic signposts, you can build them into the points you make to give direction and coherence to your presentation.

Complete the following signpost phrases and sentences using the notes to help you. Say them first. Then write them down. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. Moving on / question / the US market,  
*Moving on to the question of the US market,*
2. Expand / the figures / last year,  
.....
3. I'd like / recap / the main points.  
.....
4. Let's go back / question / clinical research methods.  
.....
5. Digress / a moment, let's consider / alternatives.  
.....
6. Going back / a moment / the situation last year,  
.....
7. Let's turn now / our targets / the next five years.  
.....
8. I'd like / turn now / our projections / year 2005.  
.....
9. Go back / the main reason / our collaboration / the Germans,  
.....
10. I'd like / expand / that / little, before we move on.  
.....
11. Let's go back / a moment / what we were discussing earlier.  
.....
12. Let me expand / some / the main points / our proposal.  
.....
13. Elaborate / that / little / those of you / aren't familiar / Russian business practices,  
.....
14. If I could just move on / some / the problems we face / Central / Latin America,  
.....
15. I'd like / conclude / I may / repeating what I said / the beginning / this presentation.  
.....

Present the signpost sentences above until you feel comfortable saying them.

Neat, short signposts are more effective than long explanations of the structure of your presentation. Remember, the simplest way to signpost the end of one stage of your presentation and the beginning of the next is to say:

**OK. So, ...**