

26 I can describe a conference

Feedback from the 10th International Memory Conference, York

✦ A terrific conference. The time just **flashed by** and I **came away with** a wealth of ideas. You can give yourselves **a pat on the back!**

✦ I really enjoyed the weekend. I met some delegates¹ who I didn't **see eye to eye with**, but that's given me plenty of **food for thought**. Thanks from one very satisfied delegate!

✦ I was impressed with the standard of speakers – Jim Rose really **opened my eyes** with his talk, and he was brilliant at answering questions **off the cuff**. Plus I got the chance to hear about the latest research, which had been my aim **all along**.

✦ Thank you. You **lined up** some great speakers. I really appreciated the way they **bridged the gap between** theory and practice, and managed to **cater for** all sorts of participants. And the accommodation on the university campus was **second to none**.

✦ I was disappointed at the lack of opportunity to **bounce ideas off** one another. We needed more time to **feed** our ideas **back** to the organizers while the conference was still going on.

✦ A couple of events were swapped but we were not told about it, so I **missed out on** Jim Rose's apparently excellent talk. Instead, I sat through a terrible talk in the Great Hall where the speaker really didn't **know his stuff**. And we needed wireless facility – it would be worth **bearing in mind** for next year.



¹delegates

Glossary

flash by

If time **flashes by**, it goes very quickly. SYN **fly by**.

come away with sth

leave a place with new knowledge or ideas or a particular impression.

a pat on the back

INF praise for something you have done well.

see eye to eye with sb

share the same views as sb about sth.

food for thought

an idea that makes you think about sth seriously and carefully.

open sb's eyes (to sth)

make sb realize the truth about sth.

all along

all the time; from the beginning.

line sb/sth up

arrange for sb to be available for an event or arrange for an event to happen.

bridge the gap/gulf/divide
(between ...)

reduce the differences between two things or groups of people.

cater for sb/sth

provide the things that a person or a situation requires.

second to none

as good as the best; excellent.

bounce ideas off sb

discuss ideas with other people to get their opinion and make a decision.

feed (sth) back (to sb)

give information or opinions about sth to sb, especially so that it can be improved. **feedback** N.

miss out (on sth)

lose the opportunity to have or to do sth.

know your stuff

INF know a lot about a particular subject or job.

bear sth in mind

remember an important piece of information that could be useful in the future.

spotlight Idioms with off

He speaks well off the cuff. = without planning it first; spontaneously.

She said a number off the top of her head. = without careful thought or checking the facts.

His talk was a bit off the wall. = INF unusual; slightly crazy.

1 Circle the correct word.

- 1 If you're speaking off the *cuff* | *wall*, you are speaking spontaneously.
- 2 If a school is second to none, it is *the best* | *second best*.
- 3 If you've known something all along, you've known it *for a while* | *from the beginning*.
- 4 If you bear something in mind, you remember some information to use *now* | *later*.
- 5 If you say something off the top of your head, you do it *without* | *after* thinking carefully.
- 6 If you don't get the chance to do something you enjoy, you *miss it out* | *miss out on it*.
- 7 If something gives you food for thought, you *eat* | *think about* it.
- 8 If someone makes you realize the truth about something, they open your *ears* | *eyes* to it.

2 Complete the sentences with a word or phrase that has the opposite meaning of the words in italics.

- Did she *criticize* you for your talk, or did she give you a *pat on the back* ?
- 1 Was it a fairly *sensible* talk, or was it a bit ?
 - 2 Had she *planned* what she was going to say, or did she just speak ?
 - 3 Will you just *ignore what people said*, or will you bear ?
 - 4 Did they *say nothing* to you after your talk, or did they give you some ?
 - 5 Did the time pass *slowly* or did it ?
 - 6 Have you found out about it *recently*, or have you known about it ?

3 Complete the dialogues.

- 1 A Do you get on well with your boss?
B No, we don't really see _____ to _____, unfortunately.
- 2 A I was sorry to _____ out on the chance to hear Professor Quentin.
B Yes, he's a great speaker, and he really _____ his stuff.
- 3 A Do you know who they've got _____ up to open the conference?
B Not yet. But it's hard to find someone who can _____ for the interests of everyone in the audience.
- 4 A How did the discussion go?
B Fantastic! It was a great opportunity to _____ ideas off each other.
- 5 A I thought my talk went OK.
B It was far better than that – you should give yourself a _____ on the back.
- 6 A When I fed _____ to the organizers, I told them I wasn't happy about the venue.
B Let's hope they _____ that in mind for next time.

4 Order the words to make sentences.

- 1 and | between | the | must | rich | bridge | we | gap | poor
- 2 the | to | see | I | didn't | with | eye | eye | teacher
- 3 important | eyes | my | she | things | more | opened | to
- 4 new | a | away | lot | with | ideas | came | we | of
- 5 my | off | an | top | I | answer | head | gave | the | of
- 6 back | on | a | organizers | pat | the | the | deserve

5 ABOUT YOU Think about the last time you listened to a speaker giving a talk. Circle the correct word, then write your answers in your notebook, or talk to another student.

- 1 Did the time go slowly, or did it flash *back* | *by*?
- 2 Did the speaker *tell* | *know* his/her stuff?
- 3 Was the talk very conventional, or a bit off the *cuff* | *wall*?
- 4 Did the speaker cater *for* | *with* the whole audience?
- 5 Did it give you food for *thinking* | *thought*?
- 6 Did you come *away* | *along* afterwards with any new ideas?