English for Presentations

English with Ken

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This English for Presentations series will give you lots of advice and English presentation language. Each unit covers a different aspect of presenting and includes useful phrases and an example of an English presentation. You can read all the articles on this website, or download them all in one convenient eBook.

PREPARE

Feeling prepared can give you all the confidence you need to give a great presentation. Consider the following factors:

GOAL

Before you start preparing your presentation, ask yourself: "What is the goal of the presentation?" Is your goal to train, inform, persuade, or sell? If your objective is clear in your mind, then it will be clearer to your audience.

AUDIENCE

Who will you make the presentation to? How many people will there be? Are they a specific group or the general public? How well do they know your presentation topic? Do they know each other? Your audience will decide the formality of your tone, as well as the precision of your information.

TIMING

How long will your part of the presentation be? A longer presentation will require a lot more research, visual aids, and possibly some interactive parts. Will you speak after lunch or at the end of the day? If so, your audience may not be paying attention.

When you consider all of these things, the presentation will practically write itself. That is, it is much easier to write your presentation when you know your objectives, audience, and timing. With these 3 things in mind, now you can decide tone (friendly or formal), information (general or precise), visual aids, and interactive activities.

PRACTISE

Practise is key to feeling comfortable at the front of the room. They say that the 2 things that people are most afraid of are death, and giving presentations. In fact for many people, giving presentations is the scarier of the 2. I can relate. As a child, I was scared to death of giving presentations. The best way to deal with this fear is to practise. Luckily (or unluckily) for me, presentations were part of the Canadian elementary and high school curriculum, so by the time I finished university I had a good bit of experience in giving presentations, and this helped a lot in giving me confidence presenting.

SIGNPOSTING LANGUAGE

You can go almost anywhere in your home town without once looking up at a street sign. Of course! You know know your hometown like the back of your hand, so street signs are a bit superfluous. But when you travel on vacation, how often do you look at street signs or Google Maps? Constantly! If you don't know the area, you need something to tell you where you are and what direction you're going, otherwise you'd be lost. This is the value of presentation signposting: Preventing your audience from getting lost. Helping your audience follow you and stay with you. As soon as your audience hears signposting language like: "Now, let's move on to the implementation of our proposal", they know that the current section has come to a close, and a new theme is being introduced. In the following sections, we will cover various English Presentation signposting expressions. They are very specialised, but they do wonders for making your presentation clear, organised, and easy to follow.

For the remainder of the series, we will turn our focus to useful English sayings and expressions for giving presentations. In this section we will look at how to start an English presentation. Your presentation is a blank canvas, and your first brush strokes are important. The first 1 or 2 minutes of your presentation set the tone for the rest of the presentation. And as you know, first impressions are everything. So, let's dive into these 3 basic tasks:

1. Welcome your audience
2. Introduce yourself
3. introduce the topic of the presentation.

WELCOMING YOUR AUDIENCE

This is your 'hello' and your first impression. It's your chance to set the tone of the presentation. Choose between a formal or friendly tone. You can expand here with a joke, a story, a reference to the audience members that you know. There are many ways to build your rapport here.

- Good morning, ladies and gentlemen
- Good afternoon, ladies and gentleman
- Hello everybody. How are you?
- Hi everyone and welcome to my presentation.
- First of all, let me thank you all for coming here today.

INTRODUCING YOURSELF

Here you can choose between your full name or just your first name. You can add your company, department, job title, or even your professional background.

- Allow me to introduce myself. My name is ....
- I'm _(name)_____ from ___(company)_____
- Let me start by saying a few words about my own background.

INTRODUCING THE PRESENTATION SUBJECT

Here, you give the topic. The title is enough as you'll have plenty of time later to give further information.

- I am going to talk today about...
- This morning I'm going to take a look at .....
- The purpose / topic / goal of my presentation is to …
- As you can see on the screen, our topic today is......
- This talk is designed to ...
- My talk is particularly relevant to those of you who....

SAMPLE PRESENTATION

Below you will see how you can mix and match the expressions to make your presentation light and easy, or formal and professional

Friendly:
Hello everyone. How are you? **I'm** John **from** ABC Company, and **I'm going to talk today about** our new product.

Formal:
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. **First of all, let me thank you all for coming here today**. **Allow me to introduce myself. My name is** John McCucheon **from** ABC Company. **Let me start by saying a few words about my own background**. I'm originally from London, Ontario, and have been with ABC for 15 years in the R&D department.

The purpose of my presentation is to introduce our new product to you. **My talk is particularly relevant to those of you who** have noticed an increase in customer interest in the last 6 months in the sporting goods market. **This presentation is designed to** show you some of our products unique features and advantages.

After you've welcomed everyone, and introduced the presentation topic and yourself, it is time to give a map of your presentation. This roadmap will help your audience to understand what to expect and the topics that will be covered. It is similar to giving instructions on how to listen to your presentation.

Remember that the people in your audience are not perfect:

- some might not have slept well the night before
- some might have just had a heavy lunch complete with 2 glasses of wine
- some might have a lot going on in their life at the moment
- some might not speak English as a first language

These people will not be paying perfect attention to your presentation, and might get lost from time to time as their mind wanders. With this in mind, your signposting and presentation outline will help them to stay with you throughout the presentation.

OUTLINING YOUR STRUCTURE

The first step is to introduce the <u>idea</u> of outlining. You can easily do that with one of these phrases:

- In my presentation I'll focus on three major issues.
- My presentation is divided into 3 parts.
- My presentation is in 3 parts
- This presentation is structured as follows....
- We can break this down into the following....

ORDERING

Now that they know you are going to give the outline, you can describe the outline with these. In the real world we often mix these sets together, eg. Firstly, second, next…. .   It isn't the best form, but it also is not the worst crime. However, if you can plan ahead, it is stylistically best to stick to one set only, eg. Firstly...secondly...thirdly...lastly...

- First...second...third...last...
- First of all...then...next...after that...finally...
- To start with...later...to finish up...

QUESTIONS FORMAT

It's your presentation and you are in the driving seat, so you get to decide when people can ask questions. The following phrases will clearly explain to your audience how and when to ask questions or give feedback:

- Feel free to interrupt me if you have any questions.
- If you have any questions, I am happy to answer them at any time
- I'll try to answer all of your questions after the presentation.
- I plan to keep some time for questions after the presentation.
- If you don't mind, I'd like to leave questions until the end of my talk
- There will be time for a Q&A session at the end...

TIMING

The length of the presentation is important information for you audience, so don't keep it a secret.

- It will take about 20 minutes to cover these issues.
- My presentation should take about 20 minutes

HANDOUTS

If you have handouts or other auxiliary materials, you can explain with these useful phrases:

- Does everybody have a handout?
- Have you all received a copy of my report?
- Don't worry about taking notes. All the important information is in the handout you received.
- I'll be handing out copies of the slides at the end of my talk.
- I can email the PowerPoint file to anyone who would like a copy.

EXAMPLES

Informal
My presentation is in 4 parts. **To start with** I'll go over the sales progress we have made this year. **Then** I'll talk about some of the problems we've run into and how we dealt with them. **After that** I'll outline the opportunities for growth next year. **Finally**, **I'll sum up** my presentation, and end with my recommendation. **It'll take** about 20 minutes to cover this material. **If you have any questions, I am happy to answer them at any time, so feel free to interrupt. Does everybody have a handout?**

Formal
This presentation is structured as follows. Firstly, I'll describe the sales performance over the first 3 quarters of this fiscal year. **Secondly**, I'll provide an explanation of some of the challenges we have faced as well as the action we have taken in response. **Thirdly**, I will present some potential opportunities for growth in the next year. **Finally**, I'll summarise and offer my recommendations. **The entire presentation should take** approximately 20 minutes**. If you don't mind, I'd like to leave questions until the end of my talk where there will be time for a Q&A session. Have you all received a copy of my report?** FYI, I will also **be emailing everyone the PowerPoint file after the presentation.**

You've made good progress. In the previous 2 units, you have learned the following:

- Start the presentation
    - Welcome the audience
    - Introduce yourself
    - Introduce the topic of the presentation
- Outline the presentation
    - Give the order of the topics
    - Give instructions for questions
    - Give instructions for handouts

In this unit, we'll actually start the presentation and move from one topic to the next. The goal here is to make it easier for the audience to understand your presentation. Here's the basic format:

1. Tell them the name of the topic
2. Explain the topic
3. Tell them that you have finished

It's a simple concept, but it takes a bit of practice to make it automatic. Check the example at the end of this unit for a complete illustration of the concept.

INTRODUCING THE FIRST SUBJECT

Introducing each and every topic is important as it helps your audience mentally prepare for what they are about to hear. Once they hear your introduction, they might start to visualize the direction your talk might take. Or they may start referencing previous knowledge about the topic. Or they could think about the questions they want answered. The point is that introducing each topic helps them to follow, understand, and remember much better.

In a presentation, we introduce **all** topics, but the first topic is usually introduced in its own special way. The following examples illustrate this:

- I'd like to start by...
- Let's begin by...
- First of all, I'll...
- Starting with...
- I'll begin by...

FINISHING ONE TOPIC

After you have finished the topic, you should tell the audience that you are done with it. Once the audience knows that you have reached the end of the section, they'll automatically start organising their thoughts and developing their understanding of the subject matter. It also helps the audience know that they will need to switch gears and get ready for a change in the direction of your discourse. Below are a few ways to do that:

- Well, I've told you about...
- I've explained…
- That's all I have to say about...
- We've looked at...
- So much for...
- We've had a look at…

STARTING THE NEXT TOPIC

As I mentioned previously, the first topic is introduced in its own special way, but all further topics are introduced in a more standardised fashion.

- Next...
- Now we'll move on to...
- Now, moving on to…
- Now, let me turn to...
- Turning to…
- Now I'd like to discuss...

- Now I'd like to have a look at…
- Now Let's look at...
- Let me shift focus to…
- Let's now discuss…

DEALING WITH UNEXPECTED QUESTIONS

Even if you told everyone to not ask questions until the end of your presentation, it often happens that someone asks questions or makes comments that will upset your rhythm, or pull your presentation in a different direction. When that happens, you can deal with it diplomatically with one of the following:

- We'll be looking at this later on...
- I'll come back to this later in my talk...
- I'd like to deal with this question later...
- I'd be happy to discuss your question at the end of the presentation.
- Perhaps you'd like to raise this point at the end...
- I won't comment on this for now...

EXAMPLE

This presentation is structured as follows. Firstly, I'll describe the Velocitor. Secondly, I'll provide the pricing options. Thirdly, I will outline how the Velocitor performs compared with similar apps. Finally, I'll explain the partnership opportunities that we are launching next month. The entire presentation should take approximately 15 minutes. If you don't mind, I'd like to leave questions until the end of my talk where there will be time for a Q&A session. I will also be emailing everyone the PowerPoint file after the presentation.

Let's begin by looking at the new product. Its name is Velocitor, and it is an app that helps you achieve optimal efficiency in your electric vehicle. This unique app can help users save 20% energy use in their BEV regardless of the the car manufacturer's onboard program. It is easy to use, secure, and highly customisable. **Right, we've had a look at** the general description. **Now, let me shift focus to** the pricing options. We are offering 2 pricing tiers for the Velocitor……. Hi, I see that you have a question, and **I'd be happy to discuss your question at the end of the presentation**
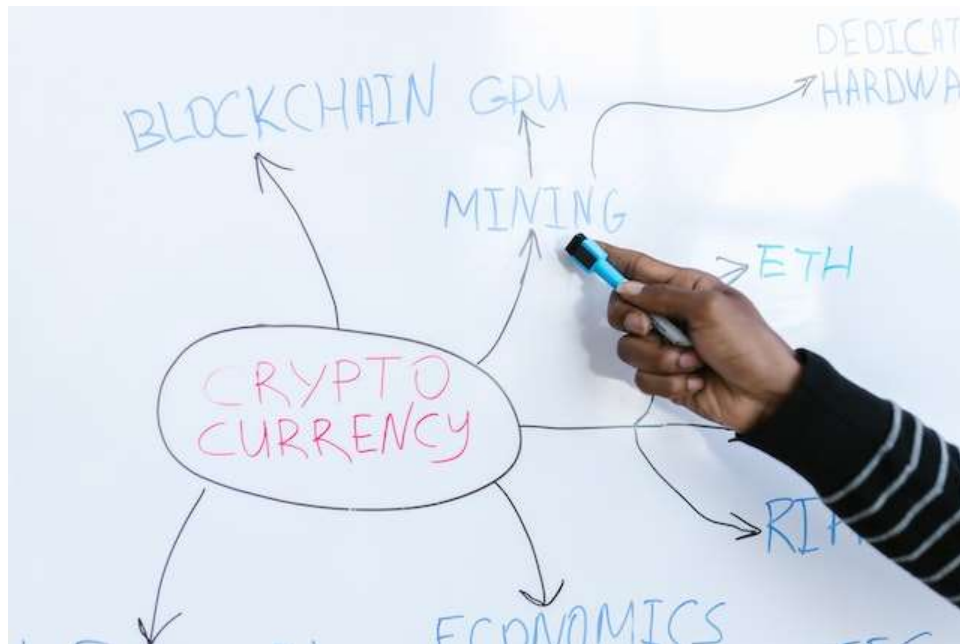
Planning and outlining your presentation can greatly help your audience understand you, but what about the difficult, confusing parts? There are a few tools that can help. In this unit we'll look at how to give more detail, explain implications, simplify, use a different perspective, and give an example.

GIVING MORE DETAIL

If you would like to expand on a certain concept, you can introduce your explanation with these useful expressions:

- Let's consider this in more detail...
- Let's look deeper into this …
- Let's dive deeper …
- Let's zero in on this…
- Why is this?

EXPLAINING IMPLICATIONS

After giving raw data, you can explain the meaning and implications of that information with these:

- What are the implications?
- Think about the significance of this
- What does this mean for us?
- Where does that lead us?
- This means that…

SIMPLIFYING

Perhaps you have given them a lot of information or very complex data. Or maybe you want to ensure they process the information a certain way. Simplifying could work well for you here.

- I'd like to put the situation into some kind of perspective
- Whichever way you look at it, it's clear that…
- In other words…
- Another way of saying this is…
- Put simply, …
- In a nutshell, …
- In real terms...

USING A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Sometimes, changing your perspective can help your audience understand better:

- Let's look at this a different way
- Let's look at this from a different angle
- Let's look at this from a _____ point of view
- Let's consider their perspective
- Perhaps another perspective will shed some light on this
- What about …?

A good, visual example can clearly explain the most complicated theories. Be sure to use them often.

- For example,...
- For instance,…
- A good example of this is...
- To give you an example,...
- To give you a picture of,…
- To illustrate this point...

REFERRING TO INFORMATION

A picture is worth a thousand words. But don't forget about your charts, graphs, handouts, and diagrams:

- Let's have a look at this chart
- Take a look at this diagram
- Could you turn your attention to your page 3 of your handouts
- This picture shows / explains / illustrates…

EXAMPLE

Let's put all that together in this example of a presentation of the thoroughly confusing concept of Bitcoin. Using these tools, we'll try to make the presentation easy to understand.

Well, I've told you about our strategy . Now let's move on to our digital currency initiatives. Before we go any further, **let's dive deeper into** digital currency. What is digital currency? Digital currency is a virtual currency which is underpinned by cryptographic systems. They enable secure online payments without the use of third-party intermediaries. "Crypto" refers to the various encryption algorithms and cryptographic techniques that safeguard these entries, such as elliptical curve encryption, public-private key pairs, and hashing functions. **Put simply**, digital currency is safe, secure, easily transferrable form of money. **A good example of this is** Bitcoin, which is the most famous and the most valuable of all the digital currencies. **Take a look at this chart which shows** Bitcoin's growth over the past 20 years. Impressive, isn't it? **What does this mean for us?** Because digital currencies are growing at an astronomic rate, if we enter the market now, we can grow with it. **In other words**, they represent explosive growth potential. **Let's look at this from a different angle**. If we don't get into digital currencies now, we won't be around tomorrow. **What about risks? Let's look at this a from a risk exposure point of view**. We can minimize the risk by ………………

You have made it to the end. You have explained all your talking points. Now, the only thing left to do is bring the presentation to an official close. There are 4 basic functions here: Signal the end, summarise, thank, and answer questions.

SIGNALLING THE END

It's obvious to you, but your audience needs to be aware. Tell them clearly that the presentation is over. They need time to pack, unpack, organise, analyse, and prepare feedback and questions for you.

- Well, I've covered the points that I needed to present today.
- That concludes my talk for today
- That brings me to the end of the presentation

SUMMARISING

It is customary to review the main content of the presentation at this point. A summary will help the audience to retain the information.

- In conclusion,...
- To conclude,...
- Right, let's sum up / recap / summarise, shall we?
- I'd like to recap / sum up / summarise ...
- Let's sum up / recap / summarise briefly what we've looked at...
- To sum up / recap / summarise…
- If I can just sum up / recap / summarise up the main points...
- I'd like to end by emphasizing the main points.
- I'd like to end with a summary of the main points.

THANKING YOUR AUDIENCE

- Thanks for your attention.
- Thank you all for being such a great audience.

INVITING QUESTIONS

If you started your presentation by announcing a closing question and answer period, now would be the best time to start the session. Here are some simple introductory phrases:

- Now we have (15 minutes) for questions and discussion
- So, now I'd be very interested to hear your comments and questions
- Now, I'd like to open the floor to any questions you have
- Now I'll try to answer any questions you may have
- Can I answer any questions?
- Are there any questions?
- Do you have any questions?

That brings me to the end of the presentation. **I'd like to recap the main ideas for you now**. The current market offers a unique opportunity for market penetration. Customers have a real demand here. Competition is ignoring the opportunity. My proposed strategy promises to yield a 50 % return every year for the next 5 years. The opportunity is there, but we have to take it. **Thank you all for being such a great audience. Now we have 15 minutes for questions.**