

Introductory Presentation Skills

Selecting and Structuring your Content

Select your Content

1. Use your objectives to decide and prioritise what your content should be. If it helps, re-visit the questions about your audience:
 - What do you want them to know?
 - What do they want to know?
2. It's very easy to include content that you like, but that maybe isn't directly relevant to this particular talk. Be ready to leave stuff out if it doesn't help deliver your objectives.

Structuring your Talk: first things first

- **Begin with the end in mind.**

If you know what your destination is, it will be easier to determine the steps along the way

- **How are you going to create the most impact for your audience?**

By following a logical sequence? By presenting them with something like a mind map? By starting at the end and then recapping? By presenting your key messages in groups of three?

- **Whatever your sequence, make sure you have a clear beginning, middle, end.**

One way of doing this is tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, tell them what you've told them. Another way of describing this is to have an **Introduction, Main body and Conclusion**

Structuring your Talk: Beginnings

Craft a beginning that has maximum impact, is appropriate to the group and grabs the audience's attention. Possible ways of doing this are:

- Ask rhetorical/real question
- Make startling statement
- Do something unexpected – startle the audience in some way
- Use visual aid: drawing or cartoon

Make it clear in your introduction when you will take questions

Build the content – start with something you know everyone will understand then build on it

Structuring your Talk: Signposting

Use signposting language throughout your talk to guide your audience through your structure.

Signposts can be used to introduce, outline, summarise, conclude, analyse, recommend, give examples.....and more.

The BBC have a useful resource on signposting language here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/business/talkingbusiness/unit3/presentations/expert.shtml#:~:text='Signpost%20language'%20is%20the%20words,the%20listener%20through%20the%20presentation.&text=Signpost%20language%20is%20usually%20fairly,is%20relatively%20easy%20to%20understand>

Structuring your Talk: Endings

Make your ending clear and final. Don't just tail off, saying something like 'That's it, really.' Possible endings:

- 'Thank you for your attention'
- 'Are there any questions?'
- Make a statement referring to the future / what might happen next
- Revisit your objective(s), tell people what they should now know or be able to do and invite them to go and try it.
- Make sure the conclusion does not contain any new material