

First impressions

A Complete the second sentence in each pair so that it has approximately the same meaning as the first sentence. Use between *two* and *five* words, including the word given, and a word related to one of the words in the first sentence.

- 1 Sue is very experienced in giving PowerPoint presentations. (considerable)
Sue *has considerable experience of* giving PowerPoint presentations.
- 2 The presenter failed to emphasise the benefits of the reforms. (place)
The presenter failed to the benefits of the reforms.
- 3 I have arranged for our guests to be met at the airport. (made)
I have our guests to be met at the airport.
- 4 As far as I know, the seminar has been postponed. (best)
To, the seminar has been postponed.
- 5 Could you briefly summarise the main points of the meeting for us? (brief)
Could you give of the main points of the meeting?
- 6 They plan to publish the report next month. (scheduled)
The report next month.
- 7 The debate was hastily concluded. (hasty)
The debate was brought to
- 8 Do you think you could guide me a bit on how to structure my speech? (some)
Do you think you could on how to structure my speech?
- 9 These reforms will significantly reduce government spending. (significant)
These reforms will make government spending.
- 10 We bought these laser jet printers to replace our old dot matrix ones. (as)
We bought these laser jet printers our old ones.
- 11 Ms Wilkinson heads the Human Resources department. (of)
Ms Wilkinson is the Human Resources department.

B Cross out the word which does not normally go with the keyword in the bubble.



C Complete the sentences with the correct form of a collocation from Exercise B.

- 1 *Rehearsing*..... his *speech*..... for three days before the conference had greatly boosted his self-confidence.
- 2 The task of..... is often to introduce the theme of a conference and give the main talk.
- 3 Just because people did not clap frantically does not mean that you had.....
- 4 The aim of..... is to encourage and energise the audience.
- 5 The audience had been rather quiet so I did not expect them..... at me at the end of my talk.
- 6 We are pleased to announce that our next..... will be..... in May.

D Complete each sentence with the best word.

- 1 It is a good idea to make eye contact with your audience but you should avoid.....
 a) watching b) staring c) peeping
- 2 In some cultures, when people seem to..... their heads in agreement, it does not necessarily mean that they agree with you.
 a) nod b) lean c) fold
- 3 I felt rather tired during the talk and my mind soon began to.....
 a) slouch b) wander c) distract
- 4 I..... into an old friend at the conference. I hadn't seen him for ages.
 a) crashed b) flowed c) bumped
- 5 The manager had allegedly been involved in..... dealings with cash payments in brown envelopes.
 a) sleazy b) referral c) selfless
- 6 A presenter needs to think about.....: for example, the way they stand, the way in which they can be upright but not rigid, the way they take charge of the space.
 a) gesture b) posture c) figure

A

Complete the article below with some of the sentences a–h. You will only need six of the eight sentences.

- a) A presentation cannot be successful unless it takes the needs and interests of the audience into account.
- b) Having a clear objective in view enables you to map out the most convenient route to get to your destination.
- c) Once you have established that, you can prioritise your material.
- d) In addition, make sure you plan carefully how you are going to introduce yourself.
- e) It will also affect the manner in which we choose to deliver our talk.
- f) Most presenters feel more relaxed if they have had the opportunity to go to the conference venue beforehand.
- g) Of course, it is better to plan in advance when you want to deal with questions.
- h) With such information, you can tailor both the style and the content of your talk to your audience's expectations.

PREPARING FOR YOUR PRESENTATION

What you really need to think about before you face your audience

Before you actually get down to the nitty-gritty of planning the presentation itself, you need to reflect on a number of crucial questions. First of all, ask yourself what exactly your aim is.^b.....¹ You can then decide how many stages are necessary to get there, what the aim of each individual stage is and how each one contributes to your overall aim.² In other words, you can sift the essential data from the rest and get rid of any irrelevant or unnecessary detail.

However, content and structure are not everything. The talks we give are not just about a certain topic, they also have a specific purpose. Talks may be delivered in order to convey information, to persuade, to spur people into action or for countless other reasons. Obviously, the purpose of our talk will have a significant effect on the language we use.³ Although the importance of clear aims cannot be overstated, most experienced presenters

seem to agree that it is only secondary to the human factor.

Which brings us to the second question we should all be asking ourselves at the planning stage: Who are the audience?⁴ What you say has to be appropriate not only to your aim but also to your audience.

Therefore, it is always a good idea to find out as much as you can about the audience well before you face them.⁵ You can also anticipate how much they already know about your topic and so pitch your talk at the right level.

Finally, never underestimate the importance of the physical environment in which you will deliver your talk.⁶ Walking around the room where your talk is going to be will help you focus on your audience rather than on your surroundings. This also gives you the chance to check that all the equipment you need is there and is in working order.

B Insert (^) each of the adverbs 1–8 in the corresponding underlined text in the article below.

- 1 absolutely
- 2 actively
- 3 actually
- 4 afterwards
- 5 badly
- 6 barely
- 7 forever
- 8 physically

The careerist: First impressions

Why are first impressions so important?

Corinne Mills, Managing Director of Personal Career Management, explains that people do not just hold on to first impressions, they also seek to reinforce them¹. 'If you make a good first impression, people will look for the best in you. If you make a bad or indifferent first impression, you have to work so much harder².'

How should I prepare?

'It's all visual to start off with,' says Ms Mills. 'You need a look that is contemporary and appropriate – if you're starting a new job, then this is the time to get a new suit and a new haircut. If you look up-to-date, others will believe that your ideas and thinking are up-to-date; people do make these assumptions.'

Louise Mowbray, a personal branding consultant, says you need to ensure you are relaxed³. 'Body language doesn't lie: ensure you're relaxed when you meet someone – and make sure you don't have to run to meetings.'

How should I behave?

'Treat people as though they are your peers,' advises Ms Mills. 'Don't be too deferential or cocky. Have a sense of self.'

What are the main pitfalls?

You need to be authentic. Unrealistic embellishments will not help your confidence and can create future problems. 'Don't put yourself in a position where you're having to cover up⁴,' says Ms Mowbray.

Finally, remember that good manners go a long way – so do not take mobile phone calls unless you have to⁵.

What if things are going⁶?

'It's worth asking the other person,' says Ms Mills. 'Say something like, "Am I missing something?"' This, she explains, shows both confidence and sensitivity. 'I had a client who had a job interview with a chief executive who looked at him⁷. After a while, he asked, "Is something wrong?" and the guy said, "Didn't anyone tell you before you came in? My father just died." After that, the interview went okay and he got the job⁸.'



A Match the informal phrases 1–6 with the formal phrases a–f.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Because of ... | a) Please find enclosed ... |
| 2 Can you tell us more about ... ? | b) Please let us know your exact requirements. |
| 3 Here are ... | c) We regret to inform you that ... |
| 4 I've got some bad news. | d) Owing to ... |
| 5 What exactly do you need? | e) We are pleased to inform you that ... |
| 6 I've got some good news. | f) We would be grateful if you could send us further information about ... |

B The e-mail below is inappropriate because it uses an informal writing style. Rewrite it completely using the formal phrases in the box to replace the underlined items.

attend the event
 if you could confirm your talk at your earliest convenience
 We are writing to inform you
 With best wishes
 We would be honoured
 Please do not hesitate to contact me
 We realise this is a topic close to your own heart
 should you require further details
 We would be extremely grateful

From: Frances Reynolds
To: Dieter Fuchs
Date: 18th September
Subject: Conference: Beyond Culture Shock

Dear Mr Fuchs,

This is just to let you know¹ that the Chamber of Commerce in Birmingham is hosting a one-day event early next month on the subject of 'Beyond Culture Shock'.

We know this is the kind of stuff you are interested in² following the recent merger of the Savings Bank of Salzburg with the Midlands Savings Bank and the intercultural issues that subsequently arose. It would be great³ if you could come⁴ and give a plenary talk to the business community at large.

Thanks in advance⁵ for letting us know as soon as possible if you can make it⁶. Please find attached a speaker's proposal form. Just get in touch with me⁷ if you need more information⁸.

All the best⁹,

Frances Reynolds
 Events Manager
 Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
 franreynolds@msb.co.uk

C Work out the difference between the sentences in each pair.

- We need a radical management shake-up.
What we need is a radical management shake-up.
- I really liked the way she kept in touch with her audience.
It was the way she kept in touch with her audience **that I really liked**.

D Rewrite the sentences in the same way as in Exercise C.

- I'm looking forward to a good networking function.
- They don't like slang or colloquialisms.
- Your rapport with the audience matters most.
- I didn't like the sort of questions they asked me.
- They expect a high-tech presentation.

E  1 Listen to the different presenters and decide what each one is doing.

- Write one letter (a–f) next to the number of the speaker.
 - You will have to use some letters twice.
- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Speaker 1 | a) introducing the main topic |
| Speaker 2 | b) turning to a new topic |
| Speaker 3 | c) going back to a previous point |
| Speaker 4 | d) referring to visuals |
| Speaker 5 | e) dealing with questions |
| Speaker 6 | f) concluding the presentation |
| Speaker 7 | |
| Speaker 8 | |

F  2 Listen to the examples. Notice where / t / and / d / tend to disappear.


- Pleased to meet you.
- Our website's just been updated.
- Sorry, I didn't quite catch your last point.

Explanation

In rapid speech, / t / and / d / often disappear when they are between two other consonants. This is called *elision*. An awareness of elision can help you understand rapid speech better.

G Cross out the letters in these sentences that may disappear during rapid speech.

- It's hard to say which aspects are the most positive.
- The second talk focused particularly on deregulation.
- Last summer we worked together on a research project.
- The first presentation wasn't very difficult to understand.
- I wouldn't say it was the greatest networking event I've ever attended.

 3 Listen and check your answers. Then listen again and practise the sentences.