

Starting presentations tips and useful phrases

Some of the things below are clearly not good advice on how to begin a presentation, so cross them off. You should just leave any others, including ones which are debateable or which depend. There is no need to tick, circle or debate any ones which might be okay.

- The best start for a presentation is usually “Can I have your attention, please?”
- The best start for a presentation is usually a greeting (“Hello”, “Hi guys”, “Good morning everyone”, “Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.”) and/ or a getting down to business phrase (“So, shall we get started?”, “Okay, let’s make a start, shall we?”, etc).
- A direct question to the whole audience (“How are you?”, “How was your weekend?”, “Have you been busy?”, etc, as you would say in a one-to-one situation) is a good way to make a personal connection to an audience/ show awareness of the audience at the beginning of most presentations.
- Mentioning something specific to that moment is a good way of making a personal connection to the audience (“Thanks for coming so early in the morning”, “I know you are probably all thinking about the free drinks afterwards, but...”, etc).
- Showing that you have noticed the audience (number of people, specific people, things that they are holding, positions, etc) is a good way of making a personal connection to them (“It’s good to see some people came back after my last presentation”, “I’m glad to see most of you got some coffee, because this is a bit of a heavy one”, etc).
- Mentioning how the audience probably feel (their mood, feelings about the temperature, etc) is a good way of making a personal connection to them (“I’m sure like me you are really inspired after that last presentation”, “I know some of you must still be jetlagged”, etc).
- Apologise in advance for your presentation (“I’m sorry but this is not a very interesting topic”, “I’m afraid my English isn’t very good”, etc).
- You should usually give just your name and organisation which you belong to when you introduce yourself (“My name is Alex Case and I work for XYZ Linguistic Research Inc.”, etc).
- You should include personal information which is relevant to your presentation topic (“I first became interested in this topic when...”, “Although I mainly specialise in..., I also research...”, “Although my research is about..., I’m also really interested in...”, etc).
- Think about what your audience already knows and will be interested in when deciding what personal information to include (“I think most of you know that..., but you may not be aware that...”, “It might surprise you to hear that...”, “I don’t think any of you could guess that...”, etc).
- A good “hook” is one which interests the audience in the topic they are going to hear, such as a connection to a recent news story, a connection to their lives or an intriguing question which will be answered during the presentation (“You may have seen in the news just yesterday that...”, “I guess everyone here sometimes worries about...”, “Have you ever wondered why people remember the same events so differently to each other?”, etc).

- A good hook is one which wakes the audience up by making them laugh, shocking them, etc, such as a witty or surprising quotation, a joke, an amazing fact or an interesting statistic (“Einstein’s famous quote on this topic is...”, “You may know the old joke about this that goes...”, “You may be surprised to hear that in Mongolia the most famous Japanese person is...”, “Did you know that an unbelievable two billion people in the world...?”, etc).
- A direct question to the whole audience is often the best hook (“What’s your favourite flavour of ice cream?”, “How much do you know about Jeremy Bentham?” etc).
- If you want to ask a question to hook the audience, it should usually be a survey question that everyone needs to answer, usually by raising their hands (“How many people here...?”, “Please raise your hand if you have ever...”, etc) or a rhetorical question that it’s obvious no one should answer (“Have you ever wondered why solid ice floats on liquid water?”, “How can we be happy?”, etc).
- You should usually state one or more aim, meaning what you want to achieve by presenting that information to that audience (“I’ll be happy if after today’s presentation at least a few of you...”, “My purpose in presenting this to you is...”, etc).
- Stating your aim is basically the same as explaining your topic (“I want to let you know about...”, “I want to talk to you about...”, “I’d like to explain...”, etc) or your personal motivation for choosing the topic (“The reason why I wanted to talk about this is...”, etc).
- Explain how the body of your presentation is organised (“I’ve divided my presentation into three parts. Firstly, I’ll talk about...”, “I’ll talk about three topics today. The first of those is...”, etc).
- Explain your policy on the audience asking questions (usually something offering to answer at any time like “Please stop me any time if anything isn’t clear” or “Please feel free to ask a question if there is anything you’d like to know”, etc).
- If you don’t want interruption during the presentation, it’s usually best to clearly say so (“Please leave any questions until the end”, etc).
- If you don’t want interruption during the presentation, just offer to answer questions at the end (“There will be five minutes at the end for Q&A”, etc).
- You should use a phrase to transition from the introduction into the body of the presentation (“So, if there are no questions so far, I’ll start with...”, “So, I’d like to really get started with...”, “That brings to my first slide, which shows...”)
- You should usually double check that everyone is following you before you move onto the body of the presentation (“Is that all clear?”, “Okay?”, “Is that all okay so far?”, etc).
- Unlike the body of the presentation (where you should just use notes/ key words), it’s probably a good idea to write out the introduction and summary/ conclusion as a full script. You should then highlight the most important parts and practise enough that you can spend most of the time looking up from your script.

Hint: Around eight hints are probably not good ideas.

Check as a class or with the suggested answers.

Suggested answers

Ones which aren't recommended are in **bold** below. Some depend on the situation of your presentation, so please ask if you crossed off different ones.

- **The best start for a presentation is usually “Can I have your attention, please?”**
- The best start for a presentation is usually a greeting (“Hello”, “Hi guys”, “Good morning everyone”, “Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.”) and/ or a getting down to business phrase (“So, shall we get started?”, “Okay, let’s make a start, shall we?”, etc).
- **A direct question to the audience (“How are you?”, “How was your weekend?”, “Have you been busy?”, etc, as you would say in a one-to-one situation) is a good way to make a personal connection to an audience/ show awareness of the audience at the beginning of most presentations.**
- Mentioning something specific to that moment is a good way of making a personal connection to the audience (“Thanks for coming so early in the morning”, “I know you are probably all thinking about the free drinks afterwards, but...”, etc).
- Showing that you have noticed the audience (number of people, specific people, things that they are holding, positions, etc) is a good way of making a personal connection to them (“It’s good to see some people came back after my last presentation”, “I’m glad to see most of you got some coffee, because this is a bit of a heavy one”, etc).
- Mentioning how the audience probably feel (their mood, feelings about the temperature, etc) is a good way of making a personal connection to them (“I’m sure like me you are really inspired after that last presentation”, “I know some of you must still be jetlagged”, etc).
- **Apologise in advance for your presentation (“I’m sorry but this is not a very interesting topic”, “I’m afraid my English isn’t very good”, etc).**
- **You should usually give just your name and organisation which you belong to when you introduce yourself (“My name is Alex Case and I work for XYZ Linguistic Research Inc.”, etc).**
- You should include personal information which is relevant to your presentation topic (“I first became interested in this topic when...”, “Although I mainly specialise in..., I also research...”, “Although my research is about..., I’m also really interested in...”, etc).
- Think about what your audience already knows and will be interested in when deciding what personal information to include (“I think most of you know that..., but you may not be aware that...”, “It might surprise you to hear that...”, “I don’t think any of you could guess that...”, etc).
- A good “hook” is one which interests the audience in the topic they are going to hear, such as a connection to a recent news story, a connection to their lives or an intriguing question which will be answered during the presentation (“You may have seen in the news just yesterday that...”, “I guess everyone here sometimes worries about...”, “Have you ever wondered why people remember the same events so differently to each other?”, etc).
- A good hook is one which wakes the audience up by making them laugh, shocking them, etc, such as a witty or surprising quotation, a joke, an amazing fact, an intriguing or controversial statement, or an interesting statistic (“Einstein’s famous quote on this topic is...”, “You may know the old joke about this that goes...”, “You may be surprised to hear that in Mongolia the most famous Japanese person is...”, “Did you know that an unbelievable two billion people in the world...?”, etc).

- **A direct question to the audience is often the best hook** (“What’s your favourite flavour of ice cream?”, “How much do you know about Jeremy Bentham?” etc).
- If you want to ask a question to hook the audience, it should usually be a survey question that everyone needs to answer, usually by raising their hands (“How many people here....?”, “Please raise your hand if you have ever...”, etc) or a rhetorical question that it’s obvious no one should answer (“Have you ever wondered why solid ice floats on liquid water?”, “How can we be happy?”, etc).
- You should usually state one or more aim, meaning what you want to achieve by presenting that information to that audience (“I’ll be happy if after today’s presentation at least a few of you...”, “My purpose in presenting this to you is...”, etc).
- **Stating your aim is basically the same as explaining your topic** (“I want to let you know about...”, “I want to talk to you about...”, “I’d like to explain...”, etc) or your **personal motivation for choosing the topic** (“The reason why I wanted to talk about this is...”, etc).
- Explain the structure of your presentation/ how the body of your presentation is organised (“I’ve divided my presentation into three parts. Firstly, I’ll talk about...”, “I’ll talk about three topics today. The first of those is...”, etc).
- Explain your policy on the audience asking questions (usually something offering to answer at any time like “Please stop me any time if anything isn’t clear” or “Please feel free to ask a question if there is anything you’d like to know”, etc).
- **If you don’t want interruption during the presentation, it’s usually best to clearly say so** (“Please leave any questions until the end”, etc).
- If you don’t want interruption during the presentation, just offer to answer questions at the end (“There will be five minutes at the end for Q&A”, etc).
- You should use a phrase to transition from the introduction into the body of the presentation (“So, if there are no questions so far, I’ll start with...”, “So, I’d like to really get started with...”, “That brings to my first slide, which shows...”, etc).
- **You should usually double check that everyone is following you before you move onto the body of the presentation** (“Is that all clear?”, “Okay?”, “Is that all okay so far?”, etc).
- Unlike the body of the presentation (where you should just use notes/ key words), it’s probably a good idea to write out the introduction and summary/ conclusion as a full script. You should then highlight the most important parts and practise enough that you can spend most of the time looking up from your script.

Ask about any tips you are not sure about, phrases you don’t understand, etc above.

Brainstorming stage

Without looking above for now, brainstorm at least two suitable phrases into each of the gaps below. Many phrases not above are also possible.

- The best start for a presentation is usually a greeting (_____

_____) and/ or a getting down to business phrase
(_____

_____).
- Mentioning something specific to that moment is a good way of making a personal connection to the audience (_____

_____).
- Showing that you have noticed the audience (number of people, specific people, things that they are holding, positions, etc) is a good way of making a personal connection to them (_____

_____).
- Mentioning how the audience probably feel (their mood, feelings about the temperature, etc) is a good way of making a personal connection to them
(_____

_____).
- You should include personal information which is relevant to your presentation topic (_____

_____).
- Think about what your audience already knows and will be interested in when deciding what personal information to include (_____

_____).
- A good “hook” is one which interests the audience in the topic they are going to hear, such as a connection to a recent news story, a connection to their lives or an intriguing question which will be answered during the presentation (_____

_____).
- A good hook is one which wakes the audience up (makes them laugh, shocks them, etc) such as a witty or surprising quotation, a joke, an amazing fact, an intriguing or controversial statement, or an interesting statistic
(_____

_____).

- If you want to ask a question to hook the audience, it should usually be a survey question that everyone needs to answer, usually by raising their hands (_____

_____) or a rhetorical question that it's obvious no one should answer (_____

_____).
- You should usually state one or more aim, meaning what you want to achieve by presenting that information to that audience (_____

_____).
- Explain the structure of your presentation/ how the body of your presentation is organised (_____

_____).
- Explain your policy on the audience asking questions (_____

_____). If you don't want interruption during the presentation, just offer to answer questions at the end (_____

_____).
- You should use a phrase to transition from the introduction into the body of the presentation (_____

_____).

Compare your ideas with the phrases on the previous pages, brainstorm more, then compare your extra phrases as a class or with a big list of phrases.