

**Dealing with questions in presentations politeness competition game**

*What is wrong with all the Q&A phrases below?*

**Inviting questions/ Starting the Q&A**

Now, ask me questions, please!

**(Filling silence by) encouraging people to ask questions/ suggesting questions**

No questions at all? Really??/ Please ask me about...

**Indicating whose question you will answer next (pointing with an open hand)**

Yes, you. Ask me your question./ What?/ (*Only pointing, with one finger*)/ Yes, the fat man over there.

**Checking the meaning of the question/ what they want to know**

I can't understand your question./ I don't understand what you are saying./ What?/ Say again!

**Commenting on the question**

Odd question!/ What a strange question!/ Oh no, not that question!

**Asking people to wait**

Wait!/ Please wait!

**Mentioning what you said earlier**

I've already answered that question./ I already told you that in the presentation./ Don't you remember that I said...?/ I already clearly explained in my intro that...

**Not answering the question (yet)****Giving a reason for not answering yet**

Dunno./ No idea./ I didn't research that.

I can't tell you. It's a secret./ That's a secret./ I can't answer that.

Please let other people ask questions./ You are asking too many questions.

The other people aren't interested in your question.

**Offering to answer the question another way**

Come up and speak to me later./ Catch me later on and ask me again.

**Checking if your answer was okay**

Do you understand?/ Okay?/ Clear enough now?/ Need more info?

**Inviting more questions**

More?/ More questions?

**Bringing the Q&A to a close**

Stop, stop! No more questions please!/ No more time for questions, thank goodness!

p. 1. Written by Alex Case for UsingEnglish.com ©2015/ 2024

300 pages of presentations materials at: <https://www.usingenglish.com/e-books/teaching-presenting/>

*Answer: All of them are too informal/ casual/ rude for most presentations.*

*Choose one of the phrases above and take turns making it more polite (often meaning making it longer). You can add or change the words there as much as you like as long as the function remains the same. Stop whenever everyone gives up making it more polite or when the attempts are not as polite as those that came before. Discuss which of those phrases would probably be the most suitable in real life (e.g. in your next presentation), then do the same for other phrases.*

-----fold, cover or cut-----

### **Mixed answers**

*Put the answers below in order by politeness from 1 (the least polite) by writing numbers next to each.*

#### **Inviting questions/ Starting the Q&A**

- Any questions, anyone?/ Anyone have any questions?
- Any questions?
- Does anyone have any questions?/ Are there any questions?/ Please put your hands up if you have any questions./ There will now be a few minutes for Q&A.
- I will now be delighted to answer any questions that anyone may have.
- I'll now be happy to answer any questions.
- I'll now be very glad to answer your questions.
- Now, ask me questions, please!
- Questions?

#### **(Filling silence by) encouraging people to ask questions/ suggesting questions**

- Are there any questions about...?/ E.g., anyone want to ask me about...?
- No questions at all? Really??/ Please ask me about...
- Would you perhaps like to ask me about...?/ Did anyone perhaps have any questions about...?/ For example, I'm not sure that I explained... very well.

#### **Indicating whose question you will answer next (pointing with an open hand)**

- Yes, fire away.
- Yes, please ask away./ Yes, go ahead./ Yes, do you have a question?
- Yes, please go ahead./ Yes, please ask your question.
- Yes, the man over there./ Yes, the woman in the red dress.
- Yes, what's your question please?/ Yes, what would you like to know?/ Yes, the gentleman in the corner./ Yes, the lady in the second row.
- Yes, you. Ask me your question./ What?/ (*Only pointing, with one finger*)/ Yes, the fat man over there.

#### **Checking the meaning of the question/ what they want to know**

- I can't understand your question./ I don't understand what you are saying./ What?/ Say again!
- Sorry, can you ask me that again?/ Are you asking...?/ Do you mean...?
- Sorry, could you possibly repeat the question just one more time?/ Do you perhaps want to know...?
- Sorry, could you repeat the question?/ If I understand your question correctly, you want to know...

### Commenting on the question

- Odd question!/ What a strange question!/ Oh no, not that question!
- Thank you for that very interesting question.
- That's a tricky one!/ I was hoping no one would ask me that!/ I should've expected that one!
- That's an interesting question./ That's a difficult question./ I'm glad you asked me that./ I'm sure many people have the same question.
- That's rather a difficult/ complex/ big/ deep/ philosophical question./ I'm very glad you asked me that.

### Asking people to wait

- Erm. Just a mo'. I've got that info here somewhere./ Just a sec. It's in my notes.
- If you will allow me to just go back a couple of slides to look at that chart in more detail,...
- Just a minute. I have the information here somewhere./ Just a second while I look at my notes./ Let me think./ Let me see./ Just a moment while I find the right slide./ How can I best answer that?
- Wait!/ Please wait!
- Wait. Got that info in my notes./ Please wait. That's on a slide.

### Mentioning what you said earlier

- As I said in my introduction,.../ As I mentioned earlier,...
- As you might remember from the second section of my presentation,.../ As I briefly mentioned a few minutes ago,.../ You may remember that I showed a graph which.../ I've already answered that question./ I already told you that in the presentation./ Don't you remember that I said...?/ I already clearly explained in my intro that...
- That's related to my introduction, where I said...

### Not answering the question (yet)

#### Giving a reason for not answering yet

- Dunno./ No idea./ I didn't research that.
- I'm afraid I didn't research that topic in much detail because.../ I'm sorry I don't have any actual data on that, but.../ I'm terribly sorry but I don't have the exact answer to that question due to...
- I'm afraid I didn't research that./ I'm sorry but I don't know the answer to that question.
- I'm sorry but I don't really know.
- Sorry, I don't know.
  
- I can't tell you. It's a secret./ That's a secret./ I can't answer that.
- I hope you can understand that I'm not really able to share that information due to...
- I'm afraid that's confidential./ I'm sorry but I'm not able to answer that.
- Unfortunately, I can't really give much of an answer on that because of.../ Due to confidentiality concerns...

- Can I come back to you after some other people have asked questions?
- Could I come back to you after some other people have asked questions?
- Could I possibly come back to you after some other people have asked questions?
- I'll come back to you after some other people have asked questions.
- Please let other people ask questions./ You are asking too many questions.
  
- That question is rather specialist.
- That question is rather specialist. It might be better for us to discuss that in person later.
- That question is very specialist.
- The other people aren't interested in your question.

### **Offering to answer the question another way**

- Actually, it might be better for us to discuss that later in person, if you don't mind too much.
- Come up and speak to me later./ Catch me later on and ask me again.
- I'd love to be able to talk about it later./ Maybe you'd be better asking me in person later./ Actually, it might be better for us to discuss that later in person, if you don't mind.
- Please come up and speak to me later.

### **Checking if your answer was okay**

- Do you understand?/ Okay?/ Clear enough now?/ Need more info?
- Does that answer your question?/ Is that what you wanted to know?
- Does that help?/ Is that alright?
- I really hope that I have at least partly answered your question.
- Is that a bit clearer now?/ I hope I have answered your question./ I hope that answers your question.
- Is that answer alright?
- Is that clear now?/ Alright?/ Do you need more details?

### **Inviting more questions**

- Any more questions?
- Any more?
- Does anyone else have any further questions?/ Is there anything else that anyone would like to ask me about?
- Does anyone have any more questions?/ Are there any more questions?/ Would anyone else like to ask a question?
- More?/ More questions?

### **Bringing the Q&A to a close**

- I'm afraid I've run out time, so.../ If there are no further questions,...
- Sorry but I've run out of time, so.../ If no one else has any questions,...
- Stop, stop! No more questions please!/ No more time for questions, thank goodness!
- There don't seem to be any further questions. In that case,.../ I'm terribly sorry but I've run out of time, but...

*Check as a class or with the suggested answers, making sure that you know why they are ranked that way.*

## Suggested answers

### Inviting questions/ Starting the Q&A

1. Now, ask me questions, please!
2. Questions?
3. Any questions?
4. Any questions, anyone?/ Anyone have any questions?
5. Does anyone have any questions?/ Are there any questions?/ Please put your hands up if you have any questions./ There will now be a few minutes for Q&A.
6. I'll now be happy to answer any questions.
7. I'll now be very glad to answer your questions.
8. I will now be delighted to answer any questions that anyone may have.

### (Filling silence by) encouraging people to ask questions/ suggesting questions

1. No questions at all? Really??/ Please ask me about...
2. Are there any questions about...?/ E.g., anyone want to ask me about...?
3. Would you perhaps like to ask me about...?/ Did anyone perhaps have any questions about...?/ For example, I'm not sure that I explained... very well.

### Indicating whose question you will answer next (pointing with an open hand)

1. Yes, you. Ask me your question./ What?/ (*Only pointing, with one finger*)/ Yes, the fat man over there.
2. Yes, the man over there./ Yes, the woman in the red dress.
3. Yes, fire away.
4. Yes, please ask away./ Yes, go ahead./ Yes, do you have a question?
5. Yes, please go ahead./ Yes, please ask your question.
6. Yes, what's your question please?/ Yes, what would you like to know?/ Yes, the gentleman in the corner./ Yes, the lady in the second row.

### Checking the meaning of the question/ what they want to know

1. I can't understand your question./ I don't understand what you are saying./ What?/ Say again!
2. Sorry, can you ask me that again?/ Are you asking...?/ Do you mean...?
3. Sorry, could you repeat the question?/ If I understand your question correctly, you want to know...
4. Sorry, could you possibly repeat the question just one more time?/ Do you perhaps want to know...?

### Commenting on the question

1. Odd question!/ What a strange question!/ Oh no, not that question!
2. That's a tricky one!/ I was hoping no one would ask me that!/ I should've expected that one!
3. That's an interesting question./ That's a difficult question./ I'm glad you asked me that./ I'm sure many people have the same question.
4. That's rather a difficult/ complex/ big/ deep/ philosophical question./ I'm very glad you asked me that.
5. Thank you for that very interesting question.

### Asking people to wait

1. Wait!/ Please wait!
2. Wait. Got that info in my notes./ Please wait. That's on a slide.
3. Erm. Just a mo'. I've got that info here somewhere./ Just a sec. It's in my notes.
4. Just a minute. I have the information here somewhere./ Just a second while I look at my notes./ Let me think./ Let me see./ Just a moment while I find the right slide./ How can I best answer that?
5. If you will allow me to just go back a couple of slides to look at that chart in more detail,...

### Mentioning what you said earlier

1. I've already answered that question./ I already told you that in the presentation./ Don't you remember that I said...?/ I already clearly explained in my intro that...
2. As I said in my introduction,.../ As I mentioned earlier,...
3. That's related to my introduction, where I said...
4. As you might remember from the second section of my presentation,.../ As I briefly mentioned a few minutes ago,.../ You may remember that I showed a graph which.../

### Not answering the question (yet)

#### Giving a reason for not answering (yet)

1. Dunno./ No idea./ I didn't research that.
2. Sorry, I don't know.
3. I'm sorry but I don't really know.
4. I'm afraid I didn't research that./ I'm sorry but I don't know the answer to that question.
5. I'm afraid I didn't research that topic in much detail because.../ I'm sorry I don't have any actual data on that, but.../ I'm terribly sorry but I don't have the exact answer to that question due to...

1. I can't tell you. It's a secret./ That's a secret./ I can't answer that.
2. I'm afraid that's confidential./ I'm sorry but I'm not able to answer that.
3. Unfortunately, I can't really give much of an answer on that because of.../ Due to confidentiality concerns...
4. I hope you can understand that I'm not really able to share that information due to...

1. Please let other people ask questions./ You are asking too many questions.
2. I'll come back to you after some other people have asked questions.
3. Can I come back to you after some other people have asked questions?
4. Could I come back to you after some other people have asked questions?
5. Could I possibly come back to you after some other people have asked questions?

1. The other people aren't interested in your question.
2. That question is very specialist.
3. That question is rather specialist.
4. That question is rather specialist. It might be better for us to discuss that in person later.

### Offering to answer the question another way

1. Come up and speak to me later./ Catch me later on and ask me again.
2. Please come up and speak to me later.
3. I'd love to be able to talk about it later./ Maybe you'd be better asking me in person later./ Actually, it might be better for us to discuss that later in person, if you don't mind.
4. Actually, it might be better for us to discuss that later in person, if you don't mind too much.

### Checking if your answer was okay

1. Do you understand?/ Okay?/ Clear enough now?/ Need more info?
2. Is that clear now?/ Alright?/ Do you need more details?
3. Does that help?/ Is that alright?
4. Is that answer alright?
5. Does that answer your question?/ Is that what you wanted to know?
6. Is that a bit clearer now?/ I hope I have answered your question./ I hope that answers your question.
7. I really hope that I have at least partly answered your question.

### Inviting more questions

1. More?/ More questions?
2. Any more?
3. Any more questions?
4. Does anyone have any more questions?/ Are there any more questions?/ Would anyone else like to ask a question?
5. Does anyone else have any further questions?/ Is there anything else that anyone would like to ask me about?

### Bringing the Q&A to a close

1. Stop, stop! No more questions please!/ No more time for questions, thank goodness!
2. Sorry but I've run out of time, so.../ If no one else has any questions,...
3. I'm afraid I've run out time, so.../ If there are no further questions,...
4. There don't seem to be any further questions. In that case,.../ I'm terribly sorry but I've run out of time, but...

*Discuss which phrase in each section above is best for your own future presentations.*

*Test each other on the phrases:*

- Read out a pair of phrases from above and see if your partner can remember which one is more polite/ more formal.
- Read out a rude phrase and see if your partner can make it more and more formal.
- Read out a rude phrase and see if your partner can make it a little more formal. Then make it more formal and see if they can make it even more formal.
- Read out a phrase which is too formal and see if your partner can make it more suitable.

*Other phrases not above are also fine.*