

Part One Presentation

Unit 1 Identifying Key Issues

Learning Guide:

In this unit you're going to:

- have an overview of what makes a good presentation;
- understand the need for making an effective presentation;
- assess your own strengths and weaknesses in meeting this need;
- learn how to conquer stage fright;
- understand the important issues of a presentation.

1. Overview: making an effective presentation

A presentation is also called a speech or a talk sometimes. What is an effective presentation? An effective presentation makes the best use of the relationship between the speaker and the audience. It takes full consideration of the audience's needs in order to capture their interest, develop their understanding, inspire their confidence and achieve the speaker's objectives.

Let's Talk!

Task 1: Have you ever had to stand in front of an audience and give a presentation?

Below is a list of some situations which require you to speak publicly. Which of them do you or will you have experience of, either in Chinese or in English? Put a check (✓) in the appropriate box.

Situations	English	Chinese
Giving a formal presentation in class		
Discussing and giving your opinion in a seminar on the pre-assigned articles you have read		
Making a toast at your best friend's wedding		
Speaking in a speech contest		
Making a campaign speech		
Making an oral defense for your thesis		
Presenting a research paper at a conference		
Reporting at a company's annual meeting		
Others? (Please state)		

Task 2: Work in pairs. First compare your experiences with those of your partner.

Give details of:

- a. where you had each of the experiences;
- b. how they were structured (e.g., audience size, formality, length);
- c. what kinds of topics you covered;
- d. how you felt about those experiences;
- e. how the audience reacted to your performance.

Then evaluate your last presentation.

A General

What were the strengths of the presentation?

B Preparation

1. Was the objective clear?
2. Had you considered the audience?
3. Were the contents relevant to the topic?

C Organization

1. How was your introduction?
2. Did the presentation have a clear and logical structure?
3. Did you conclude with a summary at the end of your presentation?

D Delivery

1. What about your use of notes?
2. What about your use of visual aids?
3. Was the timing of the presentation well controlled?
4. What about the speed of speaking?
5. Could everyone hear clearly?
6. What about the clarity of speaking?
7. Did you make eye contact with the audience?
8. What about your body language (posture, position, etc.)?

E Discussion

How well did you deal with the audience's questions?

F Language

If you had any difficulties in giving the presentation, were they caused by:

- Grammar?
- Vocabulary?
- Pronunciation?

G General

What could you have done differently to make it clearer or more enjoyable for the audience?

Task 3: Think about some presentations you've ever seen or heard. What makes a presentation so unforgettably impressive or boring? Write down the elements of a good presentation and a poor one in terms of topic, subject matter, structure, way of delivery, speaker's appearance or personality, etc.

A Good Presentation	A Poor Presentation
e.g. <i>A clear and simply presented message.</i>	e.g. <i>Little eye contact with the audience.</i>

Let's Listen!

Listen to "Ten Simple Rules for Good Presentations" and complete the following tasks.

Task 1: Listen to the audio clip. Take notes of the ten rules.

- Rule 1: _____.
- Rule 2: _____.
- Rule 3: Only talk _____.
- Rule 4: Make _____ persistent.
- Rule 5: Be _____.
- Rule 6: Treat _____.
- Rule 7: _____ your presentation.
- Rule 8: Use visuals _____.
- Rule 9: _____ of your presentation.
- Rule 10: Provide _____.

Task 2: Listen to the audio clip again. Decide whether the following explanations for the rules are true (T) or false (F).

- () 1. "Talk to the audience" means you'd make eye contact with as many

people as possible to add a sense of intimacy and comfort to the presentation.

- () 2. Provide main messages rather than all the details, for the audience only remember a fraction of what you have to say.
- () 3. If you don't have much to say, you'd conclude your presentation quickly.
- () 4. If your audience can remember three points you were trying to get across a week later, you have done a good job.
- () 5. Make your presentation like a logical story with a clear beginning, body and ending.
- () 6. Making a presentation is, in a sense, making the entertainment, so the speaker should try what he can to amuse the audience.
- () 7. The more you practice, the less you will be likely to go off on tangents.
- () 8. Never have more than one slide per minute. Avoid reading the visuals unless you wish to emphasize something explicitly.
- () 9. Review the audio and/or video files of your own presentation before you give a presentation.
- () 10. Express your gratitude to those who have made contributions.

Let's Watch!

Watch the video clip "Avoid a Bad Speech" and answer the following questions.

1. What is the potential disaster people are worried about?
They completely _____, _____, _____ with _____ coming out and PPT _____.
2. What is the presentation tragedy in reality?

3. Why are some presentations so boring?
They're devoid of _____, _____ and _____.
There're no _____ and _____ in the PPT slides.
They're nothing but a wheelbarrow full of _____ throwing on people.

Project

Suppose an identity for yourself. Deliver a three-to-five-minute speech to the class. Arrange to have your speech videotaped. Review the videotape with your partner to identify your strengths as well as aspects that you would like to improve. Based on the feedback, establish goals for improving your presentation skills.

Save the record for future viewing and compare it with other exercises at the end of the course to note the differences between this first speech and the last one.

Record the goals for improving your presentation skills below:

I would like to improve the following presentation skills:

2. Understanding the need for an effective presentation

What is meant by “making a presentation”? Generally, a presentation is a formal talk to one or more people in order to make a point or share some information in a clear and structured way.

Regardless of who you are and what type of job you currently have or plan to have, there’s a good chance that one day you will be required to make a presentation. And there might be a time when you have to speak in front of others; it can be one of the most important events in your life. If you take an academic course you may be assessed on a presentation. You may also find yourself needing to present something in less academic environments: giving a key report to your company’s big cheese, making a presentation to your critical colleagues, or conducting a training program. Whatever the purpose is, you need to be prepared for that day.

Presentation skills are what everyone needs to learn for the following reasons:

Practical benefits: Almost every one of us will be involved in making a presentation of some kind at some point in our life, so we need to be prepared to do a good job when that time comes.

Academic benefits: Students may be required to make presentations in oral English class or oral defense. Researchers may present papers at seminars or conferences.

Professional benefits: Employers consistently rank presentation skills and communication skills as the top skills they look for in employees.

To summarize, being an effective public speaker gives you the tools to make a big difference in your academic community, in business, and even in the world. Presentation skills not only develop your confidence in front of audience, but also improve your ability to think quickly, clearly and analytically.

Let's Talk!

How do you think the learning of presentation skills can help you with your personal life, as well as academic or professional goals?

3. Differences between conversation and presentation

The passive attention of a group in a presentation is quite different from the give-and-take of a conversation. A presentation is less fluid and interactive than a conversation. In a conversation you can talk and listen easily to exchange information or ideas. While in a presentation the only response you can expect from the audience is restless movement, laughter, clapping or nerve-wracking silence. All those eyes stare at you as if you are being judged. The situation is totally different in a friendly conversation.

The next difference lies in the distance between you and the audience. In a conversation you are usually seated or standing closely to the people to whom you are speaking. You look into their eyes or faces; you rarely look at their bodies, as you speak in front of a group. In a presentation the distance between you and the audience can be disconcerting if you are not used to it because you unconsciously miss the closeness of a conversation. Some may find this extremely threatening and have a feeling of indifference. Compounding the dilemma, since your heart is beating very fast, you have a tendency to speak more quickly. As a matter of fact this is what you should not do—the distance between you and the audience calls for a slower pace.

In addition, a presentation has a specific agenda; your role in it is totally different from your role in a conversation. Unless there is a question-and-answer session in a

presentation, as the leader of a group, you are engaged in a monologue with little, if any, feedback. If you have any doubt about your right to be a leader, this uncertainty may bring about unsettling issues: low self-esteem, the feelings of shame and self-deprecation that accompany the whole process.

What's more, seen from the perspectives of verbal and nonverbal communication, a presentation is more formal than a conversation. The slang or casual language often used in a conversation is not appropriate for a presentation. Standard English with proper grammar and vocabulary is required for the public speakers. The nonverbal communication of a presentation is also more formal. People engaged in a conversation often sit or stand close together, gesture spontaneously and sometimes move about restlessly. Although public speakers may use extemporaneous gestures while speaking, they also had better plan and rehearse some gestures and movements to highlight the important parts of their speeches and make their speeches forceful.

Another important difference between a presentation and a conversation lies in one's mindset. In a conversation your attention is out-oriented as you listen to what your partner is saying. When making a presentation in front of a group of people, however, you should follow different rules. You must reconcile your customary social behavior with the inner attention. The reconciliation will allow you to concentrate properly on your agenda while the audience observe and evaluate you. This ability to focus on the inner attention empowers the speaker with the stability to withstand the scrutiny of the audience. The audience press in; the speaker stands his or her ground. If you can withstand this kind of pressure, you will own your role as a leader. As your presentation progresses, your steadfast concentration draws the audience's attention to you, and a magnetic field is created. Thus, the audience are completely involved.

Let's Talk!

In what ways does a presentation differ from a casual conversation?

Task 1: Work with a partner. Fill in the following forms with the differences between a presentation and a conversation. Add more to the forms if possible.

	Presentation	Conversation
Response		
Distance		
Role		

(To be continued)

(Continued)

	Presentation	Conversation
Verbal & Nonverbal Communication		
Attention		
Others?		

Task 2: The people in the following two pictures are engaged in the same topic. The only difference lies in that the topic is presented to the group by a speaker in the first picture and people are discussing the topic in a conversational way in the second one. Work in groups and discuss in what ways the speech delivered by the person in the first picture seems more formal, structured, or intentional than a conversation with this same speaker?



Let's Listen!

First listen to the two audio clips “Myth of Sales Page” and “Art of Convincing Clients” in which the speakers are giving presentations on sales respectively in a “conversational” and “presentation-like” way. Then have a group discussion about the following questions:

- Can you tell the differences?
- Which way do you prefer? Why?
- In what situations can the two ways be employed appropriately?

4. Stage fright

Let's Play a Game!

Directions: Have some students, one at a time, go to the front of the classroom and say something unique about themselves, sing a song, perform a dance, or do some strange or silly movements. The others are to just observe the classmates in the front without talking, laughing, making faces or doing anything else, and the audience's silence will give the classroom that nice and awkward tension. Make sure to emphasize that it is okay to feel awkward or nervous in this class and that we will learn how to deal with being in front of an audience.

As they have finished the appointed tasks, ask them a few more questions, either about their unique traits or some other things to get them thinking and talking as much as possible. The following are a few examples:

- Would you rather go to the bottom of the ocean or the top of the mountain and why?
- If you were an ice cream flavor, what would it be and why?
- What if it is the end of the world today?

Have a short discussion about how they felt, and what they thought about while they were being observed.

4.1 Symptoms of stage fright

Many of us are diffident about expressing our ideas and feelings, and almost every one of us has some fears of public speaking. Stage fright is an emotional and physical response that is triggered in some people when they need to perform in front of the audience. We may have profuse sweating, uncontrollable nerves, racing heartbeats, dizziness, uncontrollable burping, teeth chattering and even breathing problems when speaking in public or delivering an idea in front of the audience.

Let's Talk!

Task 1: The following are some typical reactions of speakers when they speak publicly:

- “I know exactly the point I want to make, but by the time I get the opportunity to express myself... all that comes out is a confusing babble.”

- “When I give a speech, I worry more about the audience’s reactions than my own expression.”
- “I am so anxious to leave the stage that I state my speech as fast as I can.”
- “English is not my first language and I lose confidence when I have to stand up in front of others in my group... it is easier with strangers.”

Have you ever experienced stage fright while making a presentation? Work in pairs, and identify your fears of public speaking. You could start with something like, “I always seem to get... sweaty hands... cold feet... an upset stomach... when I...”

Signs of stage fright vary from one individual to another, ranging from physical, emotional to cognitive. Physical signs range from stomachache, flush, shaking, light-headedness, sweating, accelerated heart rate, memory loss and even difficulty in breathing to verbal disfluencies including stuttering and vocalized pauses (like “you know”, “ah”, “um”, and so forth.) Speakers may show emotional symptoms like feeling anxious, worried or upset before delivering presentations. Cognitive problems are usually displayed by some negative thought patterns. A highly anxious person might dwell on such thoughts as “I’m going to make a fool of myself.”

If you have ever felt like this, then you are certainly not alone. A large percentage of people claim that public speaking is their biggest fear. Mark Twain said it best, “There are two types of speakers: those that are nervous and those that are liars.” Studies have also revealed that your fear is physically normal. When the human body gets ready for a big event, it starts sending out signals which cause bursts of adrenaline to be released. It is the adrenaline that causes all of the symptoms associating with speech anxiety. Keep in mind that a little tension is helpful because it will bring about an adrenaline rush that will get you into an active state and ready to give your presentation.

Task 2: Read the following experience about the fear of public speaking, and then tell your story to a partner about how you felt when you made a presentation for the first time.

“Years ago, I could not have conceived or dreamt of speaking or presenting to more than a couple of people... even though I was a teacher! Whenever I stood before a small group of people... or whenever I had to attend an important meeting, I stuttered, trembled, sweat trickling down my face and my neck... and I could feel those awful swarms of butterflies (and ants)... taking charge of my stomach... and my brain!”

4.2 Tips to overcome stage fright

If realizing that your anxiety is a natural reaction and that millions of people, including the majority of people in your audience have the same fear you do doesn't help you to relax, then here are a few tips that will help you to lessen your speech anxiety.

- **Prepare well for your speech.** Nothing will relax you more than to know you are properly prepared. It is extremely important to have a thorough understanding of your topic. Knowing a great deal about the topic will enable you to overcome public speaking anxiety and will convey to the audience your interest and passion for the topic. Also, by immersing yourself in the topic, you are actually shifting the focus from yourself to the message that you are delivering, moderating much of the self-consciousness that is associated with public speaking anxiety.
- **Recognize the importance of introductory remarks.** Getting off to a good start can be an important boost. Pause to arrange your notes and get oriented. Start slowly and smilingly. Seek an early favorable response from the audience—perhaps with an anecdote, a reference to someone in the audience, an acknowledgement of common interests, or a rhetorical question. Positive feedback from the audience can boost one's confidence quickly.
- **Learn how to relax.** You can ease tension by doing exercises. Sit comfortably with your back straight. Breathe in slowly, hold your breath for 4 to 5 seconds, and then exhale slowly. To relax your facial muscles, open your mouth and eyes wide, and then close them tightly. Pause briefly and then do it again.
- **Visualize yourself speaking successfully.** Prior to giving your speech, imagine the execution of it in its entirety: Visualize yourself exuding complete confidence as you walk to the podium and start to speak. See yourself speaking slowly and concisely, and making eye contact with audience members as you move from one audience member to another. Picture your audience as warm and receptive. Anticipate the problems and/or mistakes and imagine yourself moving through them gracefully and without incident. If you close your eyes and visualize yourself successfully delivering the speech, you will literally trick your brain into believing you've done it before and you won't feel nervous.
- **Utilize notes/outlines.** Well designed notes and/or outlines are acceptable

and expected. However, notes should not be read verbatim, and should only be used for reference. Many people suffering from public speaking anxiety (stage fright) just focus on their notes without making eye contact with the audience. This makes them seem unprepared. Rather, design your notes and/or outlines as such: Write down your introduction in full, because this is when your anxiety will be at its peak. Use symbols for key points. Write down the transitional sentences in full, to avoid abrupt transitions and/or uncomfortable pauses (also to avoid such interjections as “um” and “ah” that you might feel compelled to use while you are gathering your wits). Write down your conclusion in full as well, as it will be the summary of your speech, and should be communicated clearly. This does not mean reading your notes directly, but rather, using them as insurance against forgetting valuable information.

- **Practice.** An effective way of overcoming public speaking anxiety is rehearsing your speech loud and repeatedly until you feel that you know it by heart, and can recite it with ease. Practicing in front of your family and/or friends can help tremendously, and rehearsing your speech in front of a mirror also works. Practice is the best time to make revisions, to smooth out or create pauses if necessary. The fine line here, however, is not to memorize it to the point that it comes across as rehearsed. Remember to speak in a conversational tone, as though you are talking with a friend. Reading your speech verbatim will only highlight your nervousness to your audience.
- **Don't apologize for being nervous.** Admitting that you are a little nervous may ease some of the tension you are experiencing, and some feel that it may break the ice. However, this admission could bring unnecessary attention to your public speaking anxiety that the audience probably would not have noticed anyway. Most of the time your nervousness does not show at all. If you don't say anything about it, nobody will notice it. If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have during your speech, you'll only be calling attention to it.
- **Realize that the audience want you to succeed.** The audience want the speakers to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They want you to succeed, not to fail. If you get nervous when speaking in front of strangers, try to chat with a few members of the audience before you give your speech. This helps establish contact with them and makes you feel as though you're in a friendly environment.
- **Understand that mistakes are going to happen.** No matter how much you

prepare and practice, mistakes will happen. While we may be devastated if we screw something up during our speech, the truth is that the audience will only realize that you've made an error if you draw it to their attention. Instead of making a big deal out of the error, you should simply take a deep breath, collect your thoughts, and keep moving on as if nothing has ever happened.

Let's Watch!

Watch the video clip "Stage Fright" and complete the following tasks.

Task 1: Watch the video clip. Identify the items that are NOT mentioned to overcome stage fright.

1. doing rehearsal
2. picturing things going perfectly
3. drinking orange juice
4. listening to music
5. reciting your lines
6. doing a Japanese exercise
7. chewing gum
8. moving around the room
9. imagining everyone in the audience as a person supporting you
10. meditating
11. rubbing hands with a little scented lotion
12. eating high-carbon food
13. speaking slowly
14. wearing a lucky charm
15. reading a poem aloud
16. talking to the audience
17. arriving early

Task 2: Watch the video clip again. Match the following information with the items you identified in Task 1 to make complete sentences.

1. helps lower blood pressure and decrease stress hormones
2. used by hospitals
3. psych themselves up before a competition
4. a long-lasting effect of lessening stress and anxiety
5. trigger the release of a calming chemical substance in the brain

6. calms the nerve system and helps slow your breathing
7. switch the brain from busy beta waves to slower, calmer alpha waves
8. legendary actor Sir Laurence Olivier
9. relax the entire body
10. loved by actors and athletes
11. a favorite technique of Shirley MacLaine

Let's Talk!

Task 1: Identify whether the following statements are helpful or not for managing your presentation anxiety. Why or why not?

1. You arrive early and walk around the room including the platform. Standing at the lectern, and speaking into the microphone. Walking around where the audience will be seated.
2. You buy a new suit and a pair of new shoes just before your presentation to make yourself feel more confident.
3. You apologize to the audience for your nervousness and for any problems you think you have during your speech.
4. Because of the fear of public speaking, you avoid any opportunity to speak in front of people.
5. You greet some of the audience as they arrive and chat with them.
6. At the night before an important presentation, you lie in bed, visualizing yourself as successful in the presentation.
7. You think the audience won't be interested in what you have to say, so you speak rapidly to make the presentation come to a quick end.
8. You have well prepared the PPT slides for your presentation. You think there's no need to rehearse it beforehand.

Task 2: Work with a partner. Imagine that a close friend of yours is going to have to give an important presentation. Unfortunately, he/she is terrified of public speaking. What would you tell this friend to make him/her feel better about giving the presentation? What could you do to ease his/her anxiety?

5. Speaking in an appropriate style

How different is the act of reading from the act of listening? How do the differences affect the writing and speaking styles?

Compare the following sentences and decide which of them are appropriate for an academic paper or an academic presentation.

Table A
(1) Because the jobs are even more complex, programs to train people will take longer.
(2) The increased complexity of tasks will lead to the extension of the duration of training programs.

Table B
(1) The use of this method of control unquestionably leads to safer and faster train running in the most adverse weather conditions.
(2) You can control the trains in this way and if you do that you can be quite sure that they'll be able to run more safely and more quickly than they would otherwise, no matter how bad the weather gets.

5.1 Academic writing style

When writing or speaking, we choose the words which seem most suitable for the purpose and the audience.

Academic writing in English is linear, which means it has one central point or theme in every part contributing to the mainline of the argument, without repetition. Its objective is to provide information rather than entertainment. In addition, it is written in the standard form of the language. Academic writing is, to some extent, complex, formal, objective, explicit, and responsible. It uses language precisely and accurately.

Academic speaking style is also similar in many ways to academic writing style in that it involves:

- ▶ the precise use of formal language;
- ▶ the impersonal style;
- ▶ clearly constructed sentences;
- ▶ logical and systematic development of ideas.

However, it is less complex and objective than written language.

Example 1:

Improvements in technology have reduced the risks and high costs associated with simultaneous installation. (written language)

Because the technology has improved, it's less risky than it used to be when you install them at the same time, and it doesn't cost so much either. (spoken language)

As we can see, the sentence in written language is lexically denser compared to the one in spoken language—it has proportionately more lexical words than grammatical words. Written texts are usually shorter and have longer, more complex words and phrases. They have more nominal phrases, and more lexical variants.

Example 2:

Many futile attempts have been made to teach animals to speak how humans speak.

Many futile attempts have been made to teach animals to speak in human fashion.

Formal written English uses more nouns than verbs.

Example 3:

With economic specialization and the development of external economic linkages, division of labor intensifies, a merchant class is added to the political elite, and selective migration streams add to the social and ethnic complexities of cities.

Adjectives can be used either attributively (e.g. the *big* house) or predicatively (e.g. the house is *big*). Attributive adjectives are common in academic English.

Written language is grammatically more complex than spoken language. It has more subordinate clauses, more “that/to” complement clauses, more long sequences of prepositional phrases, more attributive adjectives and more passives than spoken language.

More examples for the complexity of academic writing style:

The other way in which the economic aspects of military expenditure were presented was in the form of the public expenditure costs. (subordinate clause)

What are the main features of academic speaking style?

Formality

Although academic spoken English is less formal than academic written English, in general, in a formal academic presentation, you should still avoid:

- a. colloquial words and expressions: *stuff, a lot of, sort of*;
- b. two-word verbs: *put off, bring up*.

Let's Talk!

Task 1: Read and rewrite the sentences in a more academic style using the verbs from the list below. Note that you may need to change the verb tenses.

investigate	assist	raise	discover
establish	increase	eliminate	

1. System analysts can help out managers in many different ways.
2. This program was made to improve access to medical care.
3. Medical research expenditure has gone up to nearly \$350 million.
4. Researchers have found out that this drug has serious side effects.
5. Exercise alone will not get rid of medical problems related to blood pressure.
6. Researchers have been looking in this problem for 15 years now.
7. This issue was brought up during the coroner's inquest.

Explicitness

It is the responsibility of the speaker to make it clear to the audience how the various parts of a presentation are related. These connections can be made explicit by the use of different signal words.

Simplicity

Simplicity means the focus on a single concept or bit of information that you want to get across to your audience. Before preparing your presentation, think about what single idea or concept you want your audience to remember after the presentation is over. Try to sum up your idea or concept in a phrase or a short sentence—if what you are trying to get across can't be summed up so easily, it is likely that your topic is too complicated for a short presentation, and you'll need

to reconsider and simplify what you want to say.

It is important to note that simplicity and focus should not be confused with lack of elaboration. Concentrating on one topic does not mean that you avoid using complicated arguments to support your point, that you avoid citing evidence, or that you neglect theoretical considerations. However, whatever you include in your presentation needs to support your central point, and you need to be sure that you make that argument explicit. Don't expect the audience to sum up your idea or concept—do it for them, and point it out for them over and over again.

Complexity

Spoken language (S) is less complex than written language (W). Spoken language has shorter words; it is lexically looser and has less varied vocabularies. It uses more verbal phrases than nominal phrases. Spoken language is less grammatically complex, including fewer subordinate clauses and more active verbs.

In conclusion, compared with written language (W), spoken language (S) has:

- more verbal phrases (e.g. *having treatment* (W), *being treated* (S); *hospital care* (W), *go to hospital* (S));
- more predicative adjectives (*misleading statistics* (W), *statistics are misleading* (S));
- more pronouns (*it, they, you, we*);
- more lexical repetition;
- more first-person references;
- more active verbs;
- fewer complex words and phrases.

Spoken texts are:

- more fragmented—using more simple sentences and coordinating conjunctions like *and, but, so, because* rather than subordinating conjunctions like *which, what, who, that*;
- lexically looser;
- longer.

Let's Talk!

Task 2: Read the following sentences. Put the numbers into the corresponding boxes.

Writing style	Speaking style

1. Violence changed the face of the once peaceful city.
2. The city had once been peaceful, but it changed when people became violent.
3. The people in the colony rejoiced when it was promised that things would change in this way.
4. Public opinion in the colony greeted the promised change with enthusiasm.

Task 3: Rewrite the underlined parts of the following sentences using clauses instead of nominal phrases.

1. Many factors must be considered in explaining the rapid growth of population in the developing countries.
2. Menzel has shown that non-speaking chimpanzees can convey the location of food to one another.
3. At the time of the riots 36 percent of the workforce in Handsworth was out of work.
4. Classes differ greatly in the manner of the establishment of membership and in the rate of change of membership.
5. The length of imprisonment is determined by someone who has not heard any representations by or on behalf of the prisoner on grounds which the prisoner does not know.
6. The level of precaution is regularly reviewed in the light of the patient's progress.

Objectivity

Compare the changes in these sentences from informal style to academic style.

Informal style	Academic style
<i>When I look at</i> the situation in emergency wards, with many staff leaving, <i>it's hard not to worry</i> about how many doctors will be available to treat patients in the future.	If we consider the situation in emergency wards, with increasingly low staff retention rates, there are concerns about the capacity of hospitals to maintain adequate doctor to patient ratios.

(To be continued)

(Continued)

Informal style	Academic style
<i>It's so obvious</i> that people were given jobs <i>just because they were male or female. I don't think that is an acceptable approach</i> and is even against the law.	It appears that in a number of instances jobs were assigned on the basis of gender. Given the current anti-discrimination laws, this raises serious concerns.

You will notice that, in general, in academic style we:

- minimize the use of the first person “I” in the text, like avoiding writing *when I look; I don't think this is an acceptable approach*.
- use more formal verbs and fewer verbal phrases (verb + preposition), like using *consider* rather than *look at*.
- use impersonal expressions, like *there are...*, *this raises...*
- use more nouns than verbs, like using *concerns* rather than *to worry*.
- avoid emotional expressions, like *it's so obvious* (*it appears* is preferable) and *just because* (*assigned on the basis of* is preferable).
- often use concise and abstract expressions, like using *gender* rather than *male or female*.

In general, academic style aims to be objective in its expression of ideas. Therefore specific references to personal opinions, or to yourself as the performer of some actions, are usually avoided.

Expressing opinions objectively

Personal	Objective
In my opinion, ... I believe that... In my view...	It has been argued that... Some writers claim... Clearly, ... It is clear that... There is little doubt that...

Avoiding too many references to yourself as the agent in your presentation

Agent or performer	No agent or performer
I undertook the study... I propose to ... In this paper I will examine...	The study was undertaken... It is proposed to... This essay examines...

However, spoken language in general has more words that refer to the speaker and the audience than written language. This means that although the main emphasis should be put on the information you want to give and the arguments you want to make, it is not unusual to refer to yourself or your audience.

Written	Spoken
Every previous visit had left me with a sense of the futility of further action on my part.	Whenever I'd visited there before, I'd ended up feeling that it would be futile if I tried to do anything more.

Repetition

Unlike a written work, an oral presentation does not allow the audience to go back and refer to what was said previously. Therefore, it is essential in getting your main point across that you repeat that point several times so the audience may remember it. “Tell them what you are going to tell them, then tell them, and then tell them what you told them.” Start your presentation by giving the audience an overview of what you are going to say in an outline, follow that outline, and then briefly review your most important points.

Let's Talk!

Task 4: Read the following description of an awful academic talk. Have you ever seen it? Work with a partner and discuss why it is an ineffective talk.

The speaker approaches the platform and sits down (*You can't see him through the heads in front of you*). He begins to read from a paper, speaking in a soft monotone (*You can hardly hear him—soon you are nodding off*). Sentences are long, complex, and filled with jargon. The speaker emphasizes complicated details (*You rapidly lose the thread of the talk*). With five minutes left in the session, the speaker suddenly looks at his watch. He announces—in apparent surprise—that he'll have to omit the most important points because time is running out. He shuffles papers, becoming flustered and confused (*You do too, if you are still awake*). He drones on. Fifteen minutes after the scheduled end of the talk, the host reminds the speaker to finish for the third time. The speaker trails off inconclusively and asks for questions. (*Thin, polite applause from an audience finally rouses you from dreamland*).

Self-evaluation

Before you go to plan a presentation you might want to work your way through the following checklist.

Statements	Yes	No	Not Sure	Action to Take
I've understood what makes a good or poor presentation.				
I've identified my own weaknesses in making a presentation.				
I understand the importance of making an effective presentation.				
I know a presentation is different from a casual conversation.				
I've learnt some effective strategies to overcome stage fright.				
I can distinguish between academic writing style and speaking style.				
I know how to speak in an appropriate style.				