

Signposting: bridging and linking

In your presentation, each new point clearly needs development but you also need to ensure that the audience is aware of when you move on to a different point. This technique is known as signposting. Signposting has several aims. Just as connectors are used in writing (words like *however*, *consequently*, *lastly*), speeches also need to contain markers that help the listener follow the thread of the discourse. Furthermore, the markers trigger memory and help the speaker remember what comes next. Lastly, by using these markers the speaker bridges and links the different parts of the presentation, keeping it together as a whole. Generally, a presentation can be divided as follows:

1. Greeting
2. Introduction
3. Main body
4. Conclusion
5. Question time

The information below examines the different parts of a presentation and the various signposting expressions appropriate for those parts.

1. Greeting your audience

Remember to state your name(s) and family name(s) as this creates a greater sense of formality. If you are giving your presentation in pairs or a group of three, the first speaker should introduce the others.

Hello / Good morning / Good afternoon. My name is ...

Let me introduce my colleagues XXX and YYY who will be giving this presentation with me.

XXX and YYY, my colleagues, will be sharing this presentation with me.

2. The introduction

The introduction is one of the key moments in your presentation. Your task is to capture the audience's attention and ensure that they are focussing on your chosen subject. It is important to take your time because if you give the title and main points too quickly, the audience may fail to understand what your talk is actually about.

The subject of your talk

My / Our interest today lies in ... and I / we will examine ...

XXX is the subject of our talk today.

I / We intend to explain why ...

I / We would like to analyse ... from the perspective of ...

I / We have decided to focus on ...

I am / We are going to show you how / why ...

The subject / theme of my / our presentation is ...

Signalling

My / Our talk will focus on three issues / areas.

My / Our talk will be in (three) parts.

In the first part I'll / we'll explain ... then we'll look at ... and finally ...

There are three points to consider. First ... Second ... Third ...

We can see three advantages and two disadvantages.

The first advantage is ... Another is ... Finally, ...

On the other hand, there are two disadvantages. Firstly, ... Secondly, ...

3. The main body

If you have successfully introduced the topic and explained its various components, the audience will be able to follow the information you provide in the body, as long as you use signposting and linking phrases.

Beginning

Now, let's move to the first part of my /our talk which is about ...

So, first ... To begin with ...

Sequencing

There are XXX different parts ...

First / Then / Next / After that / Last ...

There are two steps involved.

The first step is ... The second step is ...

There are four stages to the ...

At the beginning ... later ... then ... finally ...

That completes / concludes the first part of my / our talk.

Transitions

If you are working with others you will need to use phrases that signal a transition from one speaker to another. The new speaker should acknowledge the previous one by thanking them and then continue with a phrase that indicates the next stage of the talk.

Now my colleague XXX will explain ...

Let me hand over to my colleague YYY who will continue with ...

XXX will now discuss ...

Thank you YYY. Let me continue by focussing attention on / addressing the issue of ...

Linking

I'd like to go on to ...

So now we come to ...

Now let's turn to / examine / consider / ...

The next part I'd like to focus on is ...

This brings me to the next / last point.

Comparing

This compares ... with ...

Let's compare the ...

Here you can see a comparison between ...

Using Visuals

I'd like to show you ...

This map / graph / photo shows / represents ...

Here we can see ...

Let's look at ...

As you can (clearly) see in this slide ...

I'd like to refer you now to this chart ...

The next image ...

This slide illustrates ...

A comparison of the data in these two tables / graphs / charts shows ...

3. Referring to your sources

It is important to show that you have researched your topic to demonstrate that your opinion is well-founded and based on a good knowledge of the issue, and not merely a superficial impression.

Referring to an article / book / journal

The article XXX / book XXX / journal XXX reports that ...

These statistics from XXX indicate that ...

The article XXX / book XXX / journal XXX argues that ...

YYY, who is a journalist working for XXX describes / states ...

The researcher YYY found that

Referring to a website

According to the website XXX ...

The website XXX rejects the idea that ...

If you go to (website XXX) it states that ...

To quote from (website XXX) ...

Referring to research

Some very interesting research on this exact topic was carried out in (date) by XXX.

Referring to XXX's survey, we can quite clearly see the connection between ...

In (date) research by XXX at the University of YYY showed that ...

General phrases for making references

As XXX points out ...

XXX shows / tells us that ...

According to XXX, ...

In an article entitled YYY, XXX makes the claim that ...

To quote from XXX, "..."

XXX states / suggests that ...

4. Concluding and inviting questions

Ensure that you finish with just as much energy as when you began. Use clear signposting to signal the end of the talk rather than suddenly stop speaking which is disconcerting for the audience. Do not rush your concluding remarks and ask for questions confidently.

I'd like to end by emphasising the main points.

I'd like to finish with ...

- a summary of the main points.

- some observations based on what has been said.

- some conclusions / recommendations.

To recap / summarise / sum up ...

That concludes my / our talk. Thank you for listening / your attention.

Now I'd like to invite your questions / comments.

If you have any questions, I'll / we'll be very happy to answer them.

5. Question Time

When you are part of the audience during another student's presentation, you will be expected to ask questions at the end. Your interaction will be calculated in the mark for your own presentation.

Asking questions (for the audience)

Do you mind if I ask you about ...

Do you mind if I ask you whether / if ...

Would you mind if I ask you whether / if ...

Could / can you tell me ... about ...

I'm interested to know more about ...

I'd like to know about ...

Could you possibly explain the reasons for ...

Clarifying questions (for the speaker)

Sorry, I'm not sure I've understood. Could you say that again?

I didn't quite catch that.

Are you asking if ...?

Do you mean ...?

If I understand you correctly, you are saying / asking ...

Could you go over that again?

I'm not sure what you mean by that. Could you be more specific?

Does that answer your question?

Is that clear?