

Add hedging language to academic presentations tips

Listen to your partner give their presentation and give them feedback after the Q&A stage.

Possible topics:

- Aim, and achieving it
- Getting and keeping people's attention/ Hooking the audience
- Connecting with/ Acknowledging/ Noticing the audience
- Using personal information
- Transitions between stages

- Organisation/ Structure
- Visuals (PowerPoint etc)
- Voice
- Stress and intonation
- Pauses
- Pacing
- Speaking without notes
- Looking up from notes/ Making eye contact
- Body language/ Gestures/ Movement
- Taking into account the knowledge and interests of the audience
- Ease of understanding

- Summarising/ Concluding
- Q&A stage
- References/ Further sources

- Preparation, e.g. practising
- Notes/ Script

Add hedging language to academic presentations tips

Academic presentations tips/ Hedging and generalising language

What is wrong with all the statements below? (They all have the same kind of general problem).

Introduction

- You must use a phrase and gesture to get the audience's attention.
- It's good to welcome the audience to your presentation or thank them for inviting you.
- You should give your name.
- It's a good idea to state your research interests.
- Mentioning how they feel is a good way making a personal connection to the audience.
- Show how topical your subject is to hook your audience.
- You need to have a clear, concrete and achievable aim and to state it.
- Divide your presentation into three parts (plus an introduction and conclusion).
- Don't state anything your audience already knows.
- Questions should be rhetorical questions.
- You should invite the audience to ask questions at any time in your presentations.

Visuals

- Don't use ClipArt.
- You should only use one font – a sans serif one.
- Use the "appear" function so that bullet points appear one by one.
- Use the same background for all slides.

Voice

- Record yourself doing the presentation.
- You should use extreme intonation.
- Marking pauses and stressed words on your presentation notes helps.

Body language

- You shouldn't stand in one position.
- Use many gestures to keep mobile.
- Don't turn towards the screen.

Ending

- The rule is to not give new information in your conclusion.
- Describe the person who you are selecting to ask the next question.
- End the questions by inviting more questions in person or by email later.
- Mention the next speaker.

Misc

- Don't apologise.
- What you read from should be in note form – don't write out in full.
- You shouldn't correct grammar mistakes while speaking.
- Don't turn the lights off – it will make the audience concentrate on the screen rather than you and fall asleep.
- You should rehearse as much as possible.

Choose sentences from above and make them more realistic by changing or adding to what is written there. You might also need to make other changes to the sentence to make sure it remains grammatically correct.

Look on the next page if you need extra help

Suggested things to think about

Different presenters

Exceptions

How likely it is that a piece of advice would be useful

If it matches your situation or not

If the whole statement is true, or only part

If you really need to do it or not

Limits to the advice

Not being the only option

People already knowing

Plan B

Relevance to your presentation

Situations in which the advice does and doesn't help

Useful but overgeneralised advice

Compare your ideas with the suggested answers below. Many other answers are possible, so please check your own ideas with the teacher.

Introduction

- You must use a phrase and gesture to get the audience's attention. – You very probably won't need to, but you can use a phrase and gesture to get the audience's attention.
- It's good to welcome the audience to your presentation or thank them for inviting you. – Providing it matches the situation you are in, it is usually good to welcome the audience to your presentation or thank them for inviting you.
- You should give your name. – You should almost always give your name, unless everyone already knows it.
- It's a good idea to state your research interests. – It's generally a good idea to state your research interests, as long as they are relevant to your presentation or you explain the contrast between them and your topic.
- Mentioning how they feel is a good way making a personal connection to the audience – Mentioning how they feel is often a good way making a personal connection to the audience, but there are also other options such as mentioning previous contact.
- Show how topical your subject is to hook your audience– Showing how topical your subject is one possible way of hooking your audience, along with using humour, images and interesting facts and figures.
- You need to have a clear, concrete and achievable aim and to state it – You need to have a clear, concrete and achievable aim, but you don't necessarily have to state it (for example, if it would sound unambitious).
- Divide your presentation into three parts (plus an introduction and conclusion). – If possible, dividing your presentation into three parts is probably best.
- Don't state anything your audience already knows. – Restrict stating anything your audience already knows to things they need reminding of or a lead in to new information.
- Questions should be rhetorical questions. – Almost all questions should be rhetorical questions, but survey questions are another good choice.
- You should invite the audience to ask questions at any time in your presentations. – You should invite the audience to ask questions at any time in the vast majority of your presentations, but you can make an exception if there might be too many interruptions.

Visuals

- Don't use ClipArt – Only use ClipArt if it makes your presentation easy to understand and remember, and looks professional.
- You should only use one font – a sans serif one. – You should almost certainly use only one sans serif one, apart maybe from headings.
- Use the "appear" function so that bullet points appear one by one. – It is well worth thinking about using the "appear" function so that bullet points appear one by one when they don't need to be seen at the same time.
- Use the same background for all slides. – Use the same background for most or all slides.

Voice

- Record yourself doing the presentation. – You could record yourself doing the presentation, although it makes some people more self-conscious and nervous and shouldn't be done too close to the final presentation.
- You should use extreme intonation. – You should use somewhat more extreme intonation than in most other language or speaking situations.
- Marking pauses and stressed words on your presentation notes helps. – Marking pauses and stressed words on a small section of your presentation notes helps some people.

Body language

- You shouldn't stand in one position. – While you shouldn't stand in one position for the whole presentation, in general it's a good idea to have a "home position" which you spend most of the time at.
- Use many gestures to keep mobile. – Using gestures can be a good way to keep mobile, but you can also have too many gestures.
- Don't turn towards the screen. – Don't turn towards the screen if you are not pointing at it.

Ending

- The rule is to not give new information in your conclusion. – It's a good general rule to not give new information in your conclusion if you take that to mean something that should have been in one of the sections of your presentation. However, you need to say something new and/ or in a very different way to make it worth it worth listening that long.
- Describe the person who you are selecting to ask the next question. – You might want to consider describing the person who you are selecting to ask the next question, if you don't know their name and won't say something rude.
- End the questions by inviting more questions in person or by email later. – There seems to be little reason not to end the questions by inviting more questions in person or by email later.
- Mention the next speaker. – In the right situation, you might well want to mention the next speaker.

Misc

- Don't apologise. – Limit apologising to unexpected situations such as computer problems, losing your place in your notes, or not being able to answer a question that you really should have been able to predict would be asked.
- What you read from should be in note form – don't write out in full. – What you read from should be mainly in note form, though you may want to write the introduction and conclusion out in full.
- You shouldn't correct grammar mistakes while speaking. – You should rarely correct your own grammar mistakes while speaking, specifically only when they could cause confusion about what you mean.
- Don't turn the lights off – it will make the audience concentrate on the screen rather than you and fall asleep. – Don't turn the lights off if at all possible – it tends to make the audience concentrate on the screen rather than you and perhaps fall asleep.
- You should rehearse as much as possible. – You should rehearse as much as possible, but without going as far as memorising what you will say.

Underline useful language above for generalising/ hedging.

Suggested answers with useful language in bold

Introduction

- You must use a phrase and gesture to get the audience's attention. – You **very probably** won't need to, but you **can** use a phrase and gesture to get the audience's attention.
- It's good to welcome the audience to your presentation or thank them for inviting you. – **Providing** it matches the situation you are in, it is **usually** good to welcome the audience to your presentation or thank them for inviting you.
- You should give your name. – You should **almost always** give your name, **unless** everyone already knows it.
- It's a good idea to state your research interests – It's **generally** a good idea to state your research interests, as long as they are relevant to your presentation or you explain the contrast between them and your topic.
- Mentioning how they feel is a good way making a personal connection to the audience – Mentioning how they feel is often a good way making a personal connection to the audience, **but there are also other options** such as mentioning previous contact.
- Show how topical your subject is to hook your audience– Showing how topical your subject **is one possible way of** hooking your audience, **along with** using humour, images and interesting facts and figures.
- You need to have a clear, concrete and achievable aim and to state it – You need to have a clear, concrete and achievable aim, **but you don't necessarily have to** state it (for example, if it would sound unambitious).
- Divide your presentation into three parts (plus an introduction and conclusion). – **If possible**, dividing your presentation into three parts is **probably** best.
- Don't state anything your audience already knows. – **Restrict** stating anything your audience already knows **to** things they need reminding of or a lead in to new information.
- Questions should be rhetorical questions. – **Almost all** questions should be rhetorical questions, **but** survey questions **are another good choice**.
- You should invite the audience to ask questions at any time in your presentations. – You should invite the audience to ask questions at any time in the vast majority of your presentations, **but you can make an exception if** there might be too many interruptions.

Visuals

- Don't use ClipArt – **Only** use ClipArt **if** it makes your presentation easy to understand and remember, and looks professional.
- You should only use one font – a sans serif one. – You should **almost certainly** use only one sans serif one, **apart maybe from** headings.
- Use the "appear" function so that bullet points appear one by one. – **It is well worth thinking about** using the "appear" function so that bullet points appear one by one **when** they don't need to be seen at the same time.
- Use the same background for all slides. – Use the same background for **most or all** slides.

Voice

- Record yourself doing the presentation. – You **could** record yourself doing the presentation, **although** it makes **some people** more self-conscious and nervous and shouldn't be done too close to the final presentation.
- You should use extreme intonation. – You should use **somewhat more** extreme intonation than in **most** other language or speaking situations.
- Marking pauses and stressed words on your presentation notes helps. – Marking pauses and stressed words on **a small section of** your presentation notes helps **some people**.

Body language

- You shouldn't stand in one position. – **While** you shouldn't stand in one position for the whole presentation, **in general** it's a good idea to have a "home position" which you spend **most of the time** at.
- Use many gestures to keep mobile. – Using gestures **can** be a good way to keep mobile, **but you can also** have too many gestures.
- Don't turn towards the screen. – Don't turn towards the screen **if** you are **not** pointing at it.

Ending

- The rule is to not give new information in your conclusion. – It's **a good general rule** to not give new information in your conclusion **if you take that to mean** something that should have been in one of the sections of your presentation. **However**, you need to say something new and/ or in a very different way to make it worth it worth listening that long.
- Describe the person who you are selecting to ask the next question. – **You might want to consider** describing the person who you are selecting to ask the next question, **if** you don't know their name and won't say something rude.
- End the questions by inviting more questions in person or by email later. – **There seems to be little reason not to** end the questions by inviting more questions in person or by email later.
- Mention the next speaker. – **In the right situation, you might well want to** mention the next speaker.

Misc

- Don't apologise. – **Limit** apologising **to** unexpected situations such as computer problems, losing your place in your notes, or not being able to answer a question that you really should have been able to predict would be asked.
- What you read from should be in note form – don't write out in full. – What you read from should be **mainly** in note form, though **you may want to** write the introduction and conclusion out in full.
- You shouldn't correct grammar mistakes while speaking. – You should **rarely** correct your own grammar mistakes while speaking, **specifically only** when they could cause confusion about what you mean.
- Don't turn the lights off – it will make the audience concentrate on the screen rather than you and fall asleep. – Don't turn the lights off **if at all possible** – it **tends to** make the audience concentrate on the screen rather than you and **perhaps** fall asleep.
- You should rehearse as much as possible. – You should rehearse as much as possible, **but without going as far as** memorising what you will say.

Make similar general statements about these topics

- Filling silence
- Giving sources
- Making easy to use notes
- Making sure people listen to you
- Practising
- Technical problems
- Transitioning between slides
- Where to stand

Make generalisations about your partner's presentation topic using similar language and see if your partner agrees.

Brainstorm useful phrases to do the things mentioned above, e.g. how to say your name if not everybody knows it.