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Giving Effective Presentations in English

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General Aspects

- selecting material
- structuring material
- visualising material
- producing supporting material

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"Good presentation, Mr. Midgely."

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Selecting Material

- adequacy for target audience
- level of detail
- level of jargon
- level of formality
- adequacy for oral delivery

"I don't think we'll use visuals at this year's AGM."

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Agenda

- General Aspects
- Opening Presentations and Signposting
- Using Rhetorical Techniques
- Using Visuals Properly
- Creating Rapport and Non-verbal Communication
- Concluding Presentations and Handling Questions

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Structuring Material

Opening

- signalling start
- welcoming/introducing oneself/ institution
- stating purpose and scope
- optional: effective techniques


Main Body

- three to four main points
- transitions
- logical order
- coherence

Conclusion

- brief recapitulation
- significance/future prospects
- optional: effective techniques

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Visualising Material

Clear Layout
 colour scheme and contrast
 font type and size
 legibility


Balance of Text and Space
 key words
 parallelism
 typing errors and mistakes

Supporting Diagrams
 level of complexity
 adequacy for topic/audience

Choice of Medium
 available equipment
 equipment test

"If you can't state your position in eight words or less – you don't have a position" (Seth Godin)


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Conventional Openings

- signal beginning
- introduce yourself/company/institution
- state purpose and scope
- give brief overview
- signal transition to main part


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Producing Supporting Material

- adequacy for topic/audience
- level of detail
- point of time for distribution


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Conventional Openings: Example

Signalling start	<i>Perhaps we should begin.</i>
welcoming/introducing	<i>Good morning everyone. Thanks for coming. As you know I am a member of the Project X team here at the University of Rome, La Sapienza.</i>
stating purpose and scope	<i>My objective today is to provide an overview of our recent research results.</i>
giving overview	<i>So I'll start off by filling you in on the background to the experiment set-up. And then I'll go on to present the most significant results. I'll conclude by giving an overview of the impact of the results on our project.</i>
signalling transition to main part	<i>Let us now have a closer look at the experiments we conducted.</i>


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Opening the Presentation

- to choose the appropriate level of formality
- to establish rapport
- to make a good first impression

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Effective Openings

- give them a problem to think about
- give them some amazing facts
- give them a story or personal anecdote

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Effective Openings: Examples

Problem Technique

suppose ...How would you ...?
 Have you ever wondered why it is that ...well if I could show you ... Would you be interested?
 How many people here this morning ... Well imagine ...
 Do you think that's possible?

Amazing Facts Technique

Did you know that ...
 According to the latest study, ...
 Statistics show that ...
 I read somewhere the other day that ...

Story /Anecdote Technique

You know, ... When I think about ... I'm reminded of ...
 Have you ever been in the situation where ... I remember when ... It turned

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Rhetorical Strategies

- to highlight and focus attention
- to enhance rhetorical effectiveness

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Signposting

- to guide your audience through presentation
- to reinforce clarity and coherence

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Emphasising 1

using emphatic remarks

It's our best chance of success > It is our best chance of success

adding intensifiers

*We have done **much** better than we expected - **even** better than last year.*

using common verb-intensifier combinations

*We **strongly recommend** to expand the project team to include database specialists.*
*We **firmly oppose** any move to cut the project budget.*

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Signposting: Essential Phrases

- Making your next point	<i>to move on</i>
- changing direction	<i>to turn to</i>
- referring to earlier point	<i>to go back to</i>
- repeating the main points	<i>to recap</i>
- giving a wider perspective	<i>to expand on</i>
- doing a deeper analysis	<i>to elaborate on</i>
- giving the basics	<i>to summarize</i>
- departing from your plan	<i>to digress</i>
- finishing your talk	<i>to conclude</i>

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Emphasising 2

stressing certain words (adjective/intensifier)

*This was successful >This was very **sucCESSful**.*
*> This was **VEry** successful.*

stressing the definite article

*It's the project to invest in. > It's **thee** project to invest in.*

using certain phrases

introducing additional point
*Plus..., In **addition**, What's **more**, ...*
 highlighting point
***Above** all, ... In **particular**, ... The **main** thing is*

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Focusing

change in sentence structure
use of what ...
use of **do** instead of main verb

We can't expect too much too soon >

What we can't **do** is expect too much too soon.

effect: builds up anticipation

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Rhetorical Questions

- more interesting
- more conversational
- involves audience
- raises attention and anticipation

*We've successfully started this project.
So, **where do** we proceed from here?*

*So, just how big IS the potential? - eNORMous.
So, just how big IS the potential? - I'll tell you how big it is. It's absolutely eNORMous.*

*The fact is our budget is tight. So what's the SOLUTION?
The SOLUTION is to convince our sponsors to provide further FUNDS.*

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Repeating

simplest form:
repetition of intensifier/adjective

*The overall result has been **far, far** more significant than expected*

statement > repetition > explanation

We didn't go AHEAD with the project ... we didn't go ahead - because we weren't READY

pause + repetition of key word

*Nobody knows that better than we do. - **NOBODY**.*

*There is no alternative to using the xy algorithm. - **NONE**.*

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Dramatic Contrast

- reinforces point made
- use of (simple) opposites
- use of contrasting expressions

*Ten years ago we were unknown to the public.
Today we have a reputation for excellence.*

*While other universities have relied on **traditional** approaches, we have been adopting **innovative** techniques.*

*Nothing will change, if we don't do **something**.*

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Tripling / Machine Gunning

- three- (manifold) repetition of certain types of expressions
- makes point more memorable

*The new connection is **faster, more reliable and more cost-effective**.*

*The new connection is faster, more efficient, more reliable, easier to handle, more secure and above all **more cost-effective**.*

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Conclusion

- relevance of planning
- opening presentations
- basic rhetorical strategies

Continuation tomorrow

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"I know I shouldn't have shown a pie chart so close to lunch."

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Revision

- General Aspects ✓
- Opening Presentations and Signposting ✓
- Using Rhetorical Techniques ✓
- Using Visuals Properly
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Giving Effective Presentations in English Part 2

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January 2008

Perhaps we should begin.
Good afternoon everyone.

Thanks for coming. I'm And, as you know, I

This afternoon I'm going to be

- talking to you about
- telling you
- showing you
- reporting on
- taking a look at

So, I'll start off by

- filling you in on the background to
- bringing you up-to-date on
- giving you an overview of
- making a few observations about
- outlining

And then I'll go on to

- highlight what I see as the main
- put the situation into some kind of perspective
- discuss in more depth the implications of
- talk you through
- make detailed recommendations regarding

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Revision

- General Aspects ✓
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Rhetorical Techniques


- Emphasising (stress pattern, intensifiers)
- Repetition including Tripling and Machine Gunning
- Focusing
- Rhetorical Questions
- Dramatic Contrasts

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Functions of Visuals

- backing up and reinforcing talk
- more memorable
- easier to understand
- self-explanatory
- appealing to visual sense



"Hold it! It's not the sales graph, it's a drawing of the new escalator!"

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Exploiting Visuals

- to visualise complex matters
- to support explanations
- to demonstrate important aspects

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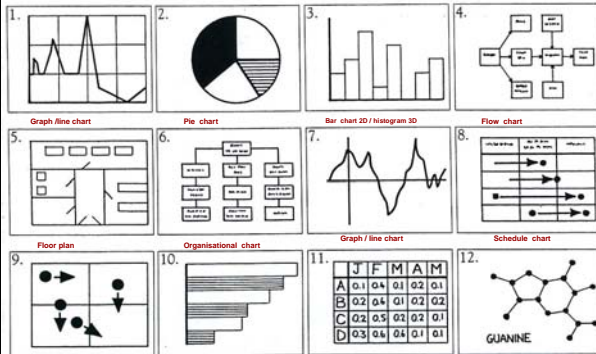
Introducing Visuals

signal use of visual
Have a look at this chart/schematic diagram/table...
I'd like you to look at ...

give overall topic/significance
As you can see it illustrates the exponential growth of internet usage

explain parts necessary for understanding
The vertical axis represents the number of users in 1000s, whereas the horizontal axis shows the years from 1980 to 1999

Technical Communication – Diagram Description



- Graph / line chart
- Pie chart
- Bar chart 2D / histogram 3D
- Flow chart
- Floor plan
- Organizational chart
- Graph / line chart
- Schedule chart
- Portfolio chart
- Bar chart
- Table / matrix
- Diagram

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Commenting on Visuals 2

highlight significant aspect/s
I'd like us to focus our attention on the year 1987.

comment on significance
If you look at it more closely, you'll realise that 1987 was the year with the highest growth rate.

give interpretation
The conclusion to be drawn is clear. This was the year when the World Wide Web began to facilitate internet usage.

give audience enough time to take in visual

Sample Visual Introduction 1



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 see, it's a fairly typical growth | 2 Have a look at |
| 2 Have a look at | 5 this graph. As you can |
| 3 stages if its development. The vertical axis | 1 see, it's a fairly typical growth |
| 4 and the horizontal | 7 curve for a young company in the early |
| 5 this graph. As you can | 3 stages if its development. The vertical axis |
| 6 shows turnover in millions of dollars | 6 shows turnover in millions of dollars |
| 7 curve for a young company in the early | 4 and the horizontal |
| 8 axis represents the years 1990 to 1996 | 8 axis represents the years 1990 to 1996 |

Visual Commentary: Phrases



- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| | us to look | at | this part of the graph in more detail. |
| | us to focus our attention | on | one particularly important feature. |
| I'd like (you) | to think | about | the significance of this figure here. |
| | to point | out | one or two interesting details. |
| | to draw your attention | to | the upper half of the chart. |
| | | | |
| | conclusions | to be drawn from this are | |
| | lesson | to be learned from this is | |
| I'm sure the | Implications | of this are | clear to all of us. |
| | significance | of this is | |
| | message | here is | |

Sample Visual Introduction 2



- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 productivity of our European | 5 The graph we're |
| 2 levels in the Netherlands, shown | 3 looking at very clearly |
| 3 looking at very clearly | 8 demonstrates the comparative |
| 4 plants, and gives you some | 1 productivity of our European |
| 5 The graph we're | 4 plants, and gives you some |
| 6 here, exceed the rest | 7 idea of how far production |
| 7 idea of how far production | 2 levels in the Netherlands, shown |
| 8 demonstrates the comparative | 6 here, exceed the rest |

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Creating Rapport / Survival Tactics / Non-verbal Communication

- to establish good relationship with audience
- to prepare for problems
- to use appropriate body language

Sample Visual Introduction 3



- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 products. Let's take a closer | 8 I'd like you |
| 2 position of six of our leading | 5 to look at this chart |
| 3 which shows the current | 3 which shows the current |
| 4 movement in the high | 2 position of six of our leading |
| 5 to look at this chart | 1 products. Let's take a closer |
| 6 growth sector | 7 look for a moment at product |
| 7 look for a moment at product | 4 movement in the high |
| 8 I'd like you | 6 growth sector |

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Building up a Good Atmosphere

- include audience by**
 - using first person plural
we (all), us (all), ours, ourselves ...
- adding question tags
We have to find an additional sponsor.
And that won't be easy, **will it?**
- using negative question forms
We all had similar experiences at one time or other >
Haven't we all had ...?
- using phrases to impact tone
You know, ... You see... Well,... Actually,... Ok?... So...,
- referring to background of audience
as everybody here has probably heard/is aware of...

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Coping with Problems

Facts wrong!	Sorry, what I meant was this.
Too fast!	So, let's recap on that.
Forgotten something!	Sorry, I should just mention one thing
Too complicated	So, basically what I'm saying is this ...
Talking nonsense!	Sorry, perhaps I didn't make that clear
Don't know the English	Sorry, what's the word/ expression
Sounds wrong	Sorry, let me rephrase that
No time	So, just to give you the main points here

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Non-verbal Communication 2

Voice quality

- speak at a natural pace
- better be slow than too fast
- articulate clearly
- don't drop voice at end of sentence
- use stress and emphasis

Audience reaction

- be sensitive
- be ready to deal with interruptions



"Remember the secret of selling is 'sincerity' - once you can fake that, you've got it made."

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Non-verbal Communication

Nerves

- be slow in beginning
- memorise introduction
- use notes (A5 at most in size)

Eye Contact

- look at all sides
- be enthusiastic



In negotiations, he appeared to have ice in his veins, but his tail betrayed him.

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Concluding Presentations

- to wrap up your topic
- to leave the audience with a clear final message
- to make a memorable final impression

Non-verbal Communication: Body Language

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tip







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tip





tip

- try to stand relaxed
- use open-arm gestures
- have arms above the belt line
- don't lock arms
- avoid repetitive gestures
- don't turn back to audience

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Concluding the presentation

sum up the main aspects

Let me now wrap up our topic today. We first looked into ... then we discussed ... And finally we sketched ...

point out relevance of topic

So in a nutshell, Web 2.0 is nothing new but only a media hype

or refer to future implications

let me conclude by pointing out that more research needs to be done to validate our findings

or provide recommendations

So let's all make sure that this project will be successful – only we as a team can make this happen

or use a quotation

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Handling/ Asking Questions

- to deal with interruptions
- to enjoy question and answer session
- to ask appropriate questions

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Dealing with Questions 2

unnecessary questions

- refer to information already given
- answer briefly again
- move on
- remain polite

As I mentioned when responding to Mr Miller's question, this implies that we have to secure additional funds. Any other questions? Yes, please

irrelevant questions

- point out irrelevance
- move on
- remain polite

I'm afraid I don't see the connection. There is another question back there. Please,

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Clarification

politely interrupt

sorry to interrupt you but...

ask clarifying question

*Which country were you talking about?
What was the figure you just mentioned?*

focus - ask clarifying question

*You talked about the country with the highest internet usage.
Could you give us more details on that.*

give context - focus - ask clarifying question

*When you were outlining the new project objective, you said something about a new routing protocol.
Could you elaborate on that?*

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Dealing with Hostile Questions

be diplomatic

stay firm

be short and simple

if necessary, be evasive or vague

*It depends.
Yes and no.
It's a very complex matter.*

avoid saying no

*Not quite.
Not really.
Not entirely.
Hopefully not.*

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Dealing with Questions

R - respond (acknowledge and thank, reformulate)

A - answer (be brief and structured, no individual discussions)

C - check (find out if question was properly answered)

E - encourage (invite further questions)

good questions

- thank people for asking them.
- I'm glad you asked that.*

difficult questions

- say you don't know
- offer to find out
- ask questioner of his/her opinion/position
- I am afraid that's outside the scope of my presentation but I can try to find out and get back to you.*
- Well, what do you think ?*

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Evaluating the Presentation

- to assess quality and effectiveness
- to become aware of potential flaws

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Assessing Presentation Performance

Planning carefully prepared?

Objectives clearly stated? appropriate for audience/subject?

Content well researched? broad/detailed enough?
relevant? appropriate for audience?

Approach supported message? varied enough?
humorous?

Organisation coherent? clear? appropriate?

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“Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm.”
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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Assessing Presentation Performance

Visual Aids appropriate for subject and audience, clearly legible and structured? introduced and explained well?

Delivery rate of speech and quality? established audience rapport/eye contact? posture appropriate? clearly audible?

Language clear? accurate? fluent? appropriate? well pronounced? used signalling phrases?

Overall message clear? objectives achieved? interesting? enjoyable? informative? motivating?

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Golden Rules

Leave nothing to chance	Take your time
Know exactly how to start	Don't be deliberately funny
Be concise	Choose effective visuals
Talk to your audience	Never compete with your visuals
Know your audience	Enjoy the experience
Speak naturally and be yourself	Welcome questions
Treat your audience as equals	Finish strongly
	DEVELOP YOUR OWN STYLE