Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Unit 1

Giving an Introduction Speech

When we think about making academic presentations, we probably don't think about making introductions. However, introductions are a part of many academic situations. For example, we may introduce a new member of our department to other members. Similarly, at a national meeting or conference we often informally introduce one colleague to another. We may also find ourselves making introductions in more formal contexts, such as presenting the members of a panel discussion or introducing a speaker at a guest lecture, seminar, or conference.

We may also have to introduce ourselves. For example, we may visit advisors, professors, or mentors to share relevant background information about ourselves. Or, in a more formal setting, we might be expected to provide information about ourselves as proof of our expertise, such as when presenting a conference talk or interviewing for a research or teaching assistant (graduate student instructor) position. In this unit, you will make a presentation in which you introduce one of your classmates to the rest of the class.

Before preparing any academic speech, it is important to consider

- ❒ audience
- ❒ purpose
- ❒ organization

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Sizing Up Your Audience

Your audience will influence how you develop your speech—from content to organization to presentation style. For speeches in class, your audience will generally consist of the other students and the instructor.

Discussion Questions

1. Size up your audience. What characteristics of the audience members should you take into account when planning and presenting an introduction speech?
2. How is this audience similar to or different from one you would encounter in your own department?

Clarifying Your Purpose

The purpose of an introduction speech may vary. For instance, in a social-academic context you may want to establish a network among peers. When introducing a speaker at a conference, your purpose may be to establish the speaker's credibility.

Discussion Question

1. Besides providing the opportunity for you to speak in front of the class, what might the purpose of the introduction speech in this unit be?

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Organizing Your Speech

Organizing a speech is probably the single most important task of a good presenter. If your speech is well organized, the audience members will likely be able to follow you, even if your grammar and pronunciation are not totally accurate. As you work through the text, you will become familiar with several major organizational patterns in English. Depending on the type of speech you are making and the information you want to convey, these patterns will form the framework of your presentation.

Task 1: Organizing Notes

Here are some notes from an interview with an international student from Germany. How would you organize them? Working in groups, compare your strategy with those used by other members of your group.

Notes

____ Gundren Freilig — German

____ Lives with husband and daughter

____ 2007 Bach. of Sci.—envir engin

____ 2008 Intern, water mgt project

____ Langs: German, Spanish (mother from Spain), Engl.

____ Plays guitar, played in café to help pay college

____ 2009-2010 wrkd in water mgt proj in Central Amer

____ 2013 began Master's in envir engin—water resources

____ undergrad awds—academic excellence, graduated with honors

____ loves hiking with family in nat'l parks in N. Amer.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Task 2: Two Introduction Outlines

Here are outlines of two introduction speeches. Answer the questions.

1. How is Speech 1 organized?
2. Is Speech 2 organized the same way? Explain the similarities or differences.
3. Was the organizational style you used in Task 1 similar to the style used in either of these speeches?

Speech 1	Speech 2
Introduction of partner: name and country	Introduction of partner: name and country
B.S. degree (2006) 1st job—military (2006) 2nd job (2008) M.A. degree + award (2012) 3rd job (2013)	Educational background ▪ B.A. degree ▪ M.A. degree ▪ Current studies
Current studies and research assistantship ▪ major ▪ research area of interest	Work experience ▪ 1st job ▪ 2nd job ▪ current job—research assistant
Current interests ▪ family: new baby ▪ American football	Extracurricular activities ▪ Skiing ▪ Computer games
Closing	Closing

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Both speakers use chronological order (arrangement of information in order of its time of occurrence from past to present) to discuss the person's educational background and work experience. However, the second speaker first uses classification (organization of information by category) to separate the person's educational background from work experience. Then, within each of these two categories, the speaker organizes information chronologically. Both speakers will likely present information about the person's current studies, interests, and extracurricular activities by listing details.

Task 3: Introducing Someone with No Work Experience

Look at the outline for a third speech. The person being introduced doesn't appear to have work experience. How does the speaker compensate for this? Which organizational patterns do you think the speaker plans to use?

Speech 3
Introduction of partner: name and country
Current studies and goals
Past educational experience
Educational accomplishments
Extracurricular activities and hobbies
Volunteer activities

Rather than beginning with a description of prior educational accomplishments and proceeding in chronological order, the speaker first focuses on the person's current academic studies and goals, placing the subject in a specific area of expertise within the academic community. Then the speaker shifts back in time to past educational experience. At this point, the speaker will likely organize information about this topic chronologically. Because the person being introduced has no work experience, the speaker chose three other categories to highlight, beginning with specific educational accomplishments, such as winning a science award. Next, the speaker discusses extracurricular activities, such as being a member of a school club or sports team, and hobbies, such as jewelry-making or building model planes. Last, the speaker mentions non-academic community volunteer work. The speaker's organizational strategy for these last three sections will likely be listing.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Flow: First Look at Connecting Devices and Topic Shifts

The organizational patterns you choose often lend themselves to the use of specific connecting or linking devices, such as time connectors (*then*, *after*, *next*, etc.) or listing words (*first*, *second*, *third*, *also*, etc). These devices help maintain a smooth, coherent flow of speech, which makes it easier for the audience to follow.

Connecting devices can be used to indicate topic shifts, but topic shifts can be more elaborate, as shown in these examples.

> *You may be wondering why Andrea didn't go to college right after she graduated from high school.*
>
> *What about Yoshi's work experience?*
>
> *As for Amir's research interests, he is currently . . . .*
>
> *Now let me tell you a little about Sun's family.*
>
> *Surprisingly, Soroya's area of studies is very different from her past work experience.*

What other options might the speaker choose?

the following, following

In addition to words like *after*, *while*, *then*, *during*, and *before*, the words *the following* and *following* can be used as time connectors in speeches that are organized chronologically.

The following generally precedes a time period, such as *the following year*, *month*, or *week*. *Following*, on the other hand, generally precedes a specific event, such as *following my job as a lab technician*, *retirement*, *the birth of my child*, *his two-year internship*, or *high school*. Notice that the event can be an experience that takes place over a period of time.

- During my first semester of college, I majored in art. *The following semester*, however, I switched to architecture.
- *Following graduation*, Sonya had three laboratory jobs.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Task 4: Announcing Topic Shifts

Read the three excerpts. Then, with a partner, underline the connecting devices the speakers use to announce a topic shift.

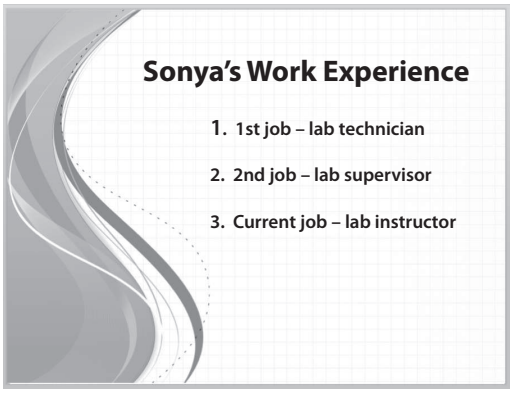
Excerpts
1. Wei worked in a pharmaceutical company for three years. Now he's come back to school to get a PhD in Pharmacology so that he can teach at a university in his country. I was curious to know what Wei does in his spare time. He says he especially enjoys listening to jazz.
2. In high school, Adrienne was president of the student government for two years. She was also a member of the drama club and had the lead in three plays. When she was a senior, Adrienne got her first real job as the lead in a summer theater production. So what does Adrienne see as her future educational goals? She plans to major in Communication Studies in college.
3. Marco told me that this summer he spent a lot of time on his favorite hobby—fixing his two motorcycles. This fall, though, he's enrolled in a M.A. program in Botany at the university. His major area of interest is medicinal properties of plants. You may be surprised to know that before Marco came to the U.S. he worked as a nurse.*

*Notice that the speaker refers to the present and then shifts to the past. Why?

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Organization Indicator Statements

Working in pairs or small groups, look at the slide about Sonya's work experience and read the excerpts. Then answer the questions. Notice the content is similar to the Work Experience section of the Speech 2 outline in Task 2.



Discussion Questions

Excerpt A
Following graduation, Sonya first worked as a lab technician. . . . Then she was promoted to lab supervisor. . . . And after that, she became a lab instructor.

Excerpt B
Following graduation, Sonya had three laboratory jobs. First, she worked as a lab technician. . . . Then she was promoted to lab supervisor. . . . And after that, she became a lab instructor.

1. How are Excerpts A and B similar? Different? Which one do you prefer? Why?
2. In Excerpt B, the speaker uses an organization indicator statement, *Following graduation, Sonya had three laboratory jobs,* before listing Sonya's lab jobs. What is its purpose?
3. Would you use an organization indicator statement before these statements? Why or why not. If so, how would you word it?
   a. He enjoys dancing, surfing, and playing games with his son.
   b. He thought he wouldn't like the food here. His writing in English wasn't very good. He thought people would be unfriendly.
   c. In her department, she won first prize for the best urban park design. She won first prize for her waterfront design.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Both Excerpts A and B list Sonya's jobs in sequence by using the time connectors *first, then,* and *after that.* However, Excerpt B includes an organization indicator statement that summarizes how many jobs Sonya has had, which is an indication of how the information that follows will be organized: *Following graduation, Sonya had three laboratory jobs.* Organization indicator statements or discourse indicator statements are used frequently in academic English. They are procedural in that they tell the audience what information they can expect to hear next and give some indication about how it might be organized. They are useful when presenting lists that are composed of complete sentences, as in 3b. Organization indicator or discourse indicator statements can also be used to highlight important information, as in 3c.

Beginning Your Speech

There are a number of ways to begin your introduction speech. Some openings may be rather formulaic and others more creative. A few may seem slightly inappropriate or odd. Which of these options do you think are effective? Why? Which is grammatically correct in English? *I'm going to introduce you* [name] or *I'm going to introduce you to* [name]?

> *Today I'm happy to introduce you to _____ , who recently came to the university from the Czech Republic.*
>
> *Good morning. I'd like to introduce you to that girl with the brown hair over there, _____. She's a nurse from Bangkok, Thailand.*
>
> *My dear classmates, today I have the honor of introducing you to a nice Russian kid named _____.*
>
> *Hi, everyone. It's my pleasure to introduce you to a journalist who never expected to be studying photography. His name is _____.*
>
> *I'm pleased to introduce you to a woman who's interested in stones and bones. She's studying physical anthropology here at the university. Her name is _____ .**

*Notice that the speaker begins by telling the audience what the woman's current position is. This strategy of first situating the subject in his or her present context is common and does not preclude the speaker from (1) using chronological order to organize the rest of the speech or (2) elaborating on the subject's current position later in the speech.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Concluding Your Speech

When you conclude your introduction speech, try to end on a positive note. You may rely on formulaic expressions such as

So let's (please) welcome . . . .

I'm sure we'll all enjoy getting to know . . . .

Let's give a warm welcome to . . . .

Avoid an abrupt ending such as *So that's all* or *I'm done*.

Task 5: Gathering Information for an Introduction Speech

Working in pairs, interview your partner. Gather enough information to enable you to develop a three- to four-minute introduction speech. First, concentrate on collecting information about your partner's educational and professional experience and current academic interests. Then take some time to ask your partner about family, extracurricular activities, and other non-academic interests. If you are interviewing an undergraduate who has had little professional experience, include questions about participation in high school clubs and community organizations, awards, travel, volunteer work, and short-term jobs.

During the interview, encourage your partner to provide details about the topics you discuss. Before you end the interview, be sure you know how to pronounce your partner's name and what your partner wants members of the class to call him or her.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

List the questions that you plan to ask your partner during the interview in the box. Then write the notes you collect.

QUESTIONS	NOTES

Task 6: What to Include and How Much?

Read the excerpt from the beginning of an introduction speech and decide which changes you would make. Working in small groups, answer the questions on page 12.

> The lady I'm going to introduce you to today is Carolina from San José. San José has about 2 million people. It's got great night life, shopping, and museums. Carolina lives at 30 Stone Hill Lane in case you want to visit her. Carolina is a first-year Master's student in the School of Nursing. She began to show an interest in medicine at the age of four when her brother stepped on her cat's tail. She responded quickly by bandaging the tail in adhesive tape.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Discussion Questions

1. What information has the speaker included in this introductory excerpt that you would omit? Why?
2. What information has the speaker left out that you would include? Why?
3. Why do you think the speaker mentions the cat story? Would you keep the story or eliminate it?

In a more casual or collegial academic setting, introduce a person by both his or her first and last name (e.g., *Carolina Mendoza*) and then refer to the person by his or her first name (*Carolina*). In a more formal academic setting, also begin by saying the person's complete name (e.g., *Mohammad Aziz*). Depending on the situation, it may be appropriate to include the person's title, such as Professor, Doctor, or Dean. You may wish to ask the person how he or she would like to be referred to after your opening. However, if you feel uncomfortable calling the person by his or her first name, simply continue to use the person's title (e.g., *Dr. Aziz*). Men with no specific title can be referred to as *Mr.* and women as *Ms.,* unless they prefer *Miss* or *Mrs*.

Avoid referring to the person you introduce as *lady, girl, gal, kid,* or *guy,* even in an informal setting. These references are not considered appropriate. Instead, use *person, woman,* or *man.*

Focus on the academic and professional information you gathered. To avoid embarrassing your partner, (1) exclude personal information, such as phone number, address, and age, and (2) avoid references to the person's physical attributes, such as how attractive he or she is. Instead, use adjectives that might describe academic and/or professional attributes, such as *talented* or *creative.* Other adjectives that may aptly describe your partner include *industrious, promising, enthusiastic,* and *versatile.* Be sure to provide details to support your use of the adjective.

Include background information that the audience might need. For example, rather than simply saying San José, use the complete geographical location (*San José, Costa Rica, or San José, the capital of Costa Rica*).

Remove information that shifts the focus away from the person you're introducing, such as *San José has about 2 million people. It's got great nightlife, shopping, and museums.*

Sometimes speakers plan to use humor in their presentation; other times it arises spontaneously from the circumstances. When using humor, keep your audience, purpose, and relationship to the person you're introducing in mind. If used appropriately, humor can heighten audience interest, which in turn may make you feel more relaxed. If you know the person well, you may want to tell a humorous anecdote about that person to provide a more personal touch as well as serve as a lead-in to a section of your introduction.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Task 7: Introducing Colleagues at Lectures and Conferences

At academic lectures and conferences, a guest speaker may be introduced to the audience by one of the organizers or moderators of the event. In this situation, the guest speaker, James Hilton, is being introduced by the director of the Language Resource Center at the University of Michigan, Monika Dressler, at a conference called "Integrating Teaching, Information, and Technology." It was designed for faculty members at the university.

Read the introduction and then, with a partner, answer the questions on page 14. Sentence numbers have been added for your convenience.

> ① The title of this opening event is "Two Sides of the Technology Coin: Perspectives on Enhancing Student Learning and Supporting Faculty Scholarship." ② Our first speaker will present on the first side of the coin–that of enhancing student learning. ③ James Hilton is an Arthur F. Thurnau Professor* and the undergraduate chair in Psychology at the University of Michigan. ④ He received his undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of Texas in 1981 and his PhD from the social psychology program at Princeton University in 1985. ⑤ Among the courses he teaches are Introductory Psychology, Introductory Social Psychology, and Experimental Methods. ⑥ These courses range in size from 25 to 1,200 students. ⑦ He is a three-time recipient of the LS&A Excellence in Education Award at the University of Michigan, and (although he doesn't look all that old) he is also the recipient of the Class of 1923 Memorial Teaching Award. ⑧ His research focuses on expectancy effects, stereotypes, and the psychology of suspicion. ⑨ Along with Charles Perdue, he is the author of a multimedia CD-ROM in psychology entitled *Longman Mind Matters* published by Addison Wesley Longman. ⑩ Whew . . . that's his official introduction. ⑪ To add to this are some adjectives that some of my staff and student workers volunteered: *dynamic, entertaining, dedicated, multifaceted, innovative, funny,* and *really smart.* ⑫ It is my immense pleasure to welcome our first speaker, James Hilton.
>
> (Introduction by Monika Dressler, with slight modifications.)

*U.S. university professors are distinguished by being given a position that has the name of a former outstanding scholar or contributor.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Discussion Questions

1. What information is included in this introduction? What details about the speaker interested you?
2. How is the introduction organized?
3. Did the speaker use any connecting devices? Explain and give examples and locations.
4. Explain how this introduction takes into account the purpose and the audience.

Notice that the speaker depends less on chronological order than on classification to organize information. Categories she highlights are current teaching responsibilities and awards, research and publications, and praise from colleagues and students. The speaker generally relies on listing to organize information within categories. She uses the connecting device, *to add to this* in Sentence 11.

Task 8: Introducing a Guest Speaker

At a yearly lecture, Abigail Stewart, Director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at the University of Michigan, gave this introduction* of an invited speaker from Cornell University. Read the introduction and then, working in small groups, answer the questions on page 15.

> I'm Abby Stewart, Director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. My special job and pleasure is to welcome Joan Brumberg to Ann Arbor and to tell you a little bit about her before she tells us about *The Body Project*. One indicator of the range and breadth of Professor Brumberg's knowledge and expertise is the fact that she is currently the Steven Weiss Presidential Fellow and Professor of History, Human Development, and Women's Studies at Cornell University.
>
> She's taught at Cornell since completing her education at the University of Rochester, Boston College, and the University of Virginia. Most of us in this room know Professor Brumberg as

*Abridged from MICASE, with minor changes.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

the author of *The Body Project, An Intimate History of American Girls*. She has truly distinguished herself as an authority, both on the experience of adolescence among girls and the particular developmental vulnerabilities girls face. The hallmark of her work is the combination of rich psychological insight, acute social analysis, and creative historical research with a beautiful writing style.

Professor Brumberg has been recognized by a Guggenheim Fellowship and grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Rockefeller Foundation. She has worked on a number of public history projects—she's consulted on a film project on the history of the Girl Scouts, an exhibit on the history of asylums in New York state, and an historical site interpretation for museum educators. She's currently working on a project on girls' diaries.

Linda Kerber was correct when she wrote on the book jacket [of *The Body Project*] that Joan Jacobs Brumberg tells a stunning and troubling story. What is even more important, though, is that she has some important ideas about how we might do better in providing what adolescent girls need to survive. So, now I'd like to welcome her to the lectern so you can hear what she has to say.

Discussion Questions

1. What's the specific purpose of this event? How are the goals of the event in Task 7 different?
2. What's different about the invited speakers?
3. Is the audience the same or different from the audience in Task 7? Explain.
4. In this presentation, what topics does the introducer cover? How are they similar to or different from the topics covered in Task 7?
5. The introduction in Task 7 is about two-thirds as long as the introduction in Task 8, which was originally twice as long, but has been abridged. Why is this introduction so much longer? Does it have to do with the invited speaker, the audience, or the purpose of the event?
6. Discuss how the purpose of an event determines how an introduction is designed and what information is included.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

The event in the Task 7 focuses on teaching through technology, one area of the guest speaker's expertise. The audience members are faculty members—in other words, the speaker's colleagues. To increase interest in the speaker, the introducer lists some of his appealing qualities. The event in Task 8 is a yearly lecture given by a well-known scholar from another university. Her extensive research on adolescent women is, in part, demonstrated by the book she will discuss. The audience members, who likely have heard of the speaker or have read her work, may include students and faculty from the Women's Studies Department as well as members from other departments and local citizens. The information included in both introductions is linked to the purpose of the event. The length of the presentation in Task 8 likely has to do with the goals of the introducer—to honor the speaker and to acknowledge and offer evidence of the speaker's standing and expertise.

Task 9: Introducing a Speaker at a Conference

Imagine that you have been asked to introduce a well-known professor at your university or an internationally known speaker from your field of studies. In preparing your speech, you may include things like

- degrees
- recent work history and current work
- current research interests
- publications
- awards and other accomplishments
- praise from others about the speaker

Before concluding your introduction, be sure to include the title of the speaker's presentation.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Task 10: Overcoming Nervousness

Everyone is somewhat nervous when speaking before a group for the first time, but nervousness will diminish as you have more opportunities to make presentations. Place a check mark (✔) next to the concerns from the list that you have now. Throughout the course, you will be able to address these concerns with your instructor and other members of the class.

_____ 1. I'm worried that other students won't understand me because of my pronunciation.

_____ 2. I think I'll forget what I want to say when I stand in front of a group.

_____ 3. I feel uncomfortable making eye contact with the audience.

_____ 4. I think the other students will be bored because I speak slowly in English.

_____ 5. I've been told I talk too fast.

_____ 6. I am afraid that I will not be able to express myself clearly.

Write one or two other concerns you have and share them with a partner or small group.

_____ 7. _____

_____ 8. _____

Tips for Overcoming Nervousness

- Practice your speech so that you feel in control of the contents.
- Ask a friend or family member to listen to your speech and give feedback.
- If possible, set up the classroom the way you would like it. Stand where you can see all the members of the audience.
- Keep your hands free so that you can gesture. Gesturing helps you look and feel more confident.
- If you are worried that you will forget information, put a small piece of paper with notes in your hand or on a table next to you. Quickly review it before your speech.
- Distract yourself by thinking of something unrelated to your speech, such as what you ate for breakfast.
- Take several deep breaths before starting.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

- Begin at a slow pace. Don't rush.
- Project your voice. A strong voice can give you confidence and convince the audience that you have control over your topic.
- Act confident. Maintain eye contact and a friendly attitude toward the audience. Try smiling when you start your introduction.
- If you are really nervous, you may get some relief by telling the audience that you are nervous, especially if you are in an informal setting with your peers.

Non-Verbal Behavior

Because of your concerns about speaking in front of an audience, you may unknowingly engage in behavior that detracts from your speech.

Avoiding eye contact with the audience

- ❒ looking at the ceiling, out the window, at the floor, or at the camera
- ❒ staring at one member of the audience or at only one section of the room
- ❒ looking at notes to avoid eye contact with the audience

Avoiding friendly facial expressions

- ❒ maintaining a serious, unchanging facial expression

Making distracting body movements

- ❒ pulling on your sleeve
- ❒ pacing back and forth or shuffling your feet
- ❒ moving your hands in and out of your pockets
- ❒ slapping your hand on the side of your leg
- ❒ playing with objects in your hand (paper, pens, keys, etc.)
- ❒ touching your hair or face

Avoiding the use of hand gestures

- ❒ grasping your hands behind your back or in front of you
- ❒ keeping your hands in your pockets or "glued" to your side
- ❒ holding something in your hand, such as a pen, large piece of paper, or pointer

Other distracting behaviors

- ❒ laughing nervously
- ❒ chewing or snapping gum

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Tips for Improving Non-Verbal Communication

- Hand gestures will be discussed more fully in Unit 4. In the meantime, keep your hands empty of unnecessary objects and avoid grasping or hiding your hands. By doing so, your hands will be left free to gesture naturally.
- If you think you may have trouble establishing eye contact with the audience or tend to focus on only one or two listeners, try dividing the audience into three or four groups. Move your eyes from one group to another, making sure to include the groups to your far left and far right. If you feel uncomfortable looking directly at people's eyes, look at another part of their face, such as their nose.
- Try to maintain a friendly, relaxed relationship with your audience. Listeners will respond positively to your show of confidence.

Task 11: Preparing and Delivering Your Speech

Read these approaches to preparing and delivering your speech. Choose the ones you would use to help you prepare and deliver a speech. Discuss your responses with a partner.

_____ 1. Checking the accuracy of your information

_____ 2. Writing your speech word for word

_____ 3. Reading your speech

_____ 4. Memorizing your speech word for word

_____ 5. Preparing notes on a small note card and using the note card if you forget what you were going to say

_____ 6. Practicing your speech once in advance, assuming you'll do a good job when you get to class

_____ 7. Practicing your speech silently in your head

_____ 8. Rehearsing and timing your speech five to six times in front of a mirror

_____ 9. Recording your speech before class and then evaluating yourself

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

The Importance of Practice

Practice your speech three times orally, standing in front of a mirror. Then record it one or two times and evaluate yourself. Make changes and practice again. Ask a colleague or friend to listen to you and give you feedback. Practice will help you feel better prepared and thus more confident. You will have fewer pauses and will be able to remember the contents of your speech better, making it possible to speak with no notes or a small note card. Practice will also help you avoid translating from your native language.

When you practice, keep in mind that minor grammar errors generally don't interfere with the audience's ability to understand you. Also, if you forget to include a few details, the audience probably won't be aware of those omissions.

Pronunciation

Pausing

During their speeches, some presenters speak too slowly and haltingly, while others speak too quickly. Both of these problems can be avoided with proper pausing.

- **Speaking too slowly.**
  When presenters pause too often, they seem unprepared because their presentations are slow and choppy. This may be because they pause after every word or two. If you think you pause too much, one helpful suggestion is to practice more. When practicing, try to say a group of several words before pausing. That way, the speech flow will seem smoother to the listener. The more confident you become, the less you will pause and the longer your groupings will be. Some natural groups of words include time expressions, subject + verb + object, prepositional phrases, longer noun phrases, and main and subordinate clauses.

Example	Grouping
Now,*	time expression (adverb)
John's studying business	subject + verb + object
at the University of Michigan	prepositional phrase
His major area of interest	noun phrase
[is] managing non-profit corporations	noun phrase
Before John went to college,	subordinate clause
he traveled around the world for two years	main clause

*Speakers may find it useful to pause slightly after adverbs that function as connecting devices, such as *currently*, *consequently*, *however*, and *nevertheless*.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

What is pausing? In this section, pauses are defined in two ways.

1. **When the speaker makes a complete stop.** Speakers may come to a complete stop at the end of a sentence, for example, to take a breath or to begin a topic shift, as in

   John's major area of interest is managing non-profit corporations. (Pause stop) *Before John went to college, he traveled around the world for two years.*

2. **When the speaker rests, slows down, or lingers at a particular point, such as at the end of the word grouping.** Because the speaker slows down but does not stop, the word before the pause is linked to the word after the pause, as in

   Before John went to college (pause slow down)*, he traveled around the world for two years.*

   In this example, the speaker slows down at *college* and then links it to the next word, *he.* The word *college* is slightly extended or lengthened and then flows into *he* (*collegehe*).*

Read this passage out loud. Slow down after the groupings marked with //. Link the word before the pause to the word that follows. Make a complete stop after groupings marked with ///. Try to minimize rather than eliminate other pauses.

Right now, // John's studying business // at the University of Michigan. /// His major area of interest // is managing nonprofit corporations. /// Before John went to college, // he traveled around the world for two years. ///

- **Speaking too quickly.**
  Presenters who speak too quickly have a tendency to forget to pause at the end of natural word groupings in English. This puts extra demands on listeners who need time to absorb information. Speakers who speak too quickly can modify their speed by consciously pausing at the end of a word grouping.

*In American English, the *h* is not generally pronounced when *he* is unstressed.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Task 12: Using Pauses in Your Introduction Speech

Fill in the blanks with information about yourself. Mark the places where you will slow down (//) or stop (///). Then practice saying the information out loud with a partner.

Hi. My name's _____ and I come from _____.

Right now I'm studying (working as) _____

in the _____. My main area of

interest is _____.

Before I came here, I _____

_____. My future plans

are to _____

_____.

Task 13: Evaluating Pauses

At home, practice and record the paragraph in Task 12. Evaluate yourself. Indicate where you paused. Do you think that you paused too little or too much? If you think you paused too much, practice grouping words together and pausing after each grouping. Try to minimize rather than eliminate pauses. If you think you spoke too quickly, add pauses after natural word groupings and say the sentences again. If you still find yourself speaking too quickly, try taking a breath or saying "pause" to yourself at natural breaks before continuing. Come to a full stop, especially when making a topic shift. Record yourself again and compare the two performances.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Task 14: Introduction Presentation

Prepare a short three- to four-minute formal introduction of a new partner. First, interview your partner. Then decide what information you would like to include in your speech. Be sure to find out how you can contact your partner in case you need additional information.

1. Carefully organize your speech, using one or more of the organizing patterns you've studied.
2. Use connecting devices and topic shift indicators to link parts of your speech to each other and make smooth transitions.
3. Plan a short introduction and conclusion. In your introduction, you may first wish to tell the audience your partner's current academic or professional position and then discuss the events that led to it.
4. Follow general statements with specific details that enhance audience interest.
5. If you think you will forget your speech, make a small note card with your outline on it. A large piece of paper may distract attention from the audience. Don't read your speech or memorize it word for word. Instead, refer to the note card to help you remember what you are going to say.

Introduction Speech Outline

(Put your outline on a note card about this size.)

6. Practice your speech two to three times by standing and reading it out loud. Pay attention to non-verbal behavior that may detract from or enhance your speech. Then record your speech. Listen to your presentation and decide what sections need improvement. Use the evaluation form on pages 24–25 as a guide. Then practice your speech several more times. Ask a colleague or friend to listen to your speech and give you feedback.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Introduction Speech Evaluation

Listen to your final speech. Then complete the Introduction Speech Evaluation Form. Be sure to provide specific comments in the Comments section. Also, set goals for your next speech.

If you would like to evaluate your speech with one or two partners, discuss your strengths and weaknesses and then complete the evaluation form. If you wish, include feedback from your partners on the form.

A sample completed evaluation is provided on pages 26–27.

Introduction Speech Evaluation Form

Name: _____

	(Make a check in the appropriate column)			
	Good	OK	Needs Work	Comments (include specific problems you noticed)
Topic information Interesting details? Suitable for this audience?				
Introduction Adequate? Attention-getting?				
Organization Clear organizational strategy? Used organization indicator statement(s) when appropriate?				
Flow Smooth, coherent speech flow? Used appropriate connecting devices and topic shift markers?				
Conclusion Adequate? Smooth, not abrupt?				
Eye contact and facial expressions Focus on the audience? Contact with all members of the audience? Friendly facial expression?				

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

	(Make a check in the appropriate column)			
	Good	OK	Needs Work	Comments (include specific problems you noticed)
Gestures and other body movements Hands free and expressive? Body posture relaxed rather than stiff? No distracting body movements?				
Voice Good volume? Confident? Relaxed?				
Pace Not too fast or too slow? Smooth rather than halting or hesitant?				
Pronunciation (specific problems)				
Other comments				
Goals for my next presentation (list 2–3 areas that you want to improve for your next presentation)				

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

Sample Completed Evaluation

Introduction Speech Evaluation Form

Name: _____

	(Make a check in the appropriate column)			
	Good	OK	Needs Work	Comments (include specific problems you noticed)
Topic information Interesting details? Suitable for this audience?		✓		It was pretty good, but I should have given more details about my partner's work experience.
Introduction Adequate? Attention-getting?	✓			Good. I used a little humor.
Organization Clear organizational strategy? Used organization indicator statement(s) when appropriate?	✓			I organized by chronological order and used an organization indicator statement Juan has had two research positions at the university.
Flow Smooth, coherent speech flow? Used appropriate connecting devices and topic shift markers?	✓			I think I successfully used time connectors. I used as for in As for his family.
Conclusion Adequate? Smooth, not abrupt?		✓		Good, but at the end I said, I'm finished. It wasn't necessary.
Eye contact and facial expressions Focus on the audience? Contact with all members of the audience? Friendly facial expression?			✓	I hardly looked at the audience because I was nervous. I looked at my notes even though I didn't need them.
Gestures and other body movements Hands free and expressive? Body posture relaxed rather than stiff? No distracting body movements?		✓		I moved my right hand but kept my left hand in my pocket.

Giving Academic Presentations, Second Edition
Susan M. Reinhart
http://www.press.umich.edu/5060862/giving_academic_presentations_second_edition
Michigan ELT, 2013

	(Make a check in the appropriate column)			
	Good	OK	Needs Work	Comments (include specific problems you noticed)
Voice Good volume? Confident? Relaxed?			✓	My voice was too soft. Both partners said it was a little hard to hear me.
Pace Not too fast or too slow? Smooth rather than halting or hesitant?	✓			I practiced a lot, so I didn't have a lot of pauses.
Pronunciation (specific problems) two thousand (2000) – I said two tousand				
Other comments I wore my jacket during my speech. It wasn't necessary.				
Goals for my next presentation (list 2–3 areas that you want to improve for your next presentation) 1. Include more details to keep the audience's attention 2. Use more eye contact 3. Speak louder				