

Tips for Giving a Presentation in English for ESL Students

A. Language Skills

1. Speak slowly (but not too slowly) and use short, simple sentences.
2. Make pauses at appropriate places in a sentence.
3. Pronounce sounds as precisely as you can.
4. Check the pronunciation of key words in a dictionary or by asking a native speaker.
5. Write key words and any new terms on the blackboard.
6. Use simple words and avoid technical jargon unless you have already explained it
7. Say important ideas several times in different ways.
8. Avoid words or types of sentences that cause problems.
9. If you think someone might have difficulty understanding an important term:
 - Give the more general category in which the term belongs
 - Say the term with a commonly associated word (salt and pepper)
 - Give a specific example if the word is a general term
 - Use a synonym
 - Contrast the term with an opposite

B. Delivery Skills

1. Speak loudly enough that someone at the back of the room can hear you.
2. Vary your pace when you speak, but don't speak too quickly or too slowly.
3. Use eye contact often—look into listeners' eyes for several seconds before looking away.
4. Look into listeners' eyes when answering questions—blink or look away every few seconds.
5. Use legible, well-organized, well-labeled visual aids and point and refer to them as you speak.
6. Have a relaxed posture—keep your feet slightly apart and move as you speak.
7. Use hand gestures to signal important relationships (i.e. first, three, up, wide).
8. Smile, use facial expressions, and move your head to show your emotions and reactions.
9. Put energy into your voice, posture, and movements—this shows self-confidence and enthusiasm.
10. Speak and act naturally—do not read or memorize your presentations.

C. Content & Organization

1. Know the material well and organize and prepare your presentation before you give it.
2. Anticipate and prepare responses to questions and prepare a few questions to ask the audience during the presentation.
3. Tell the audience why material is important and how it relates to prior material or experiences they may have.
4. Visually and verbally outline the presentation for your audience.
5. Distinguish clearly between main and subsidiary points.
6. Emphasize and spend more time on the main ideas.
7. Summarize each section of a presentation before continuing.
8. Signal transitions between parts of a presentation and main ideas.
9. Use analogies and concrete examples to illustrate key concepts and principles—use the audiences' experiences when possible.