

# Talk the talk



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# Week 1: Getting started

## Introduction

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Welcome to *Talk the talk*. This course will provide you with the language and strategies to deliver talks with a difference. It will boost your confidence and turn public speaking into a valuable experience.

First, watch the following video, in which Marshal Anderson introduces the course.

Video content is not available in this format.



Marshal Anderson will be your guide through the course. An Open University Associate Lecturer and occasional stand-up comedian, Marshal has years of experience presenting himself both online and offline. He'll introduce each week, reminding you of what you've learned and mentioning the highlights of the week ahead.

Each week's work is designed to take about three hours. This includes engaging with the course material online and working on your own talk – but if you want to develop your oral presentation skills you may well spend longer than this. Even just a short introduction can take a while to get right.

Before you start, The Open University would really appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations of the course. Your input will help to further improve the online learning experience. If you'd like to help, and if you haven't done so already, please fill in this [optional survey](#).

## 1.1 Leaving an impression

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Quite convincing, isn't he? But how exactly does he do it? Would you like to be able to talk like Martin Bean, former Vice-Chancellor of The Open University?

Over the next few weeks you will discover the ingredients needed to give effective presentations that leave a lasting impression on your audience. You will watch and analyse presentations, and you will prepare and give one yourself. Are you up for it?

## 1.1.1 Why are you here?

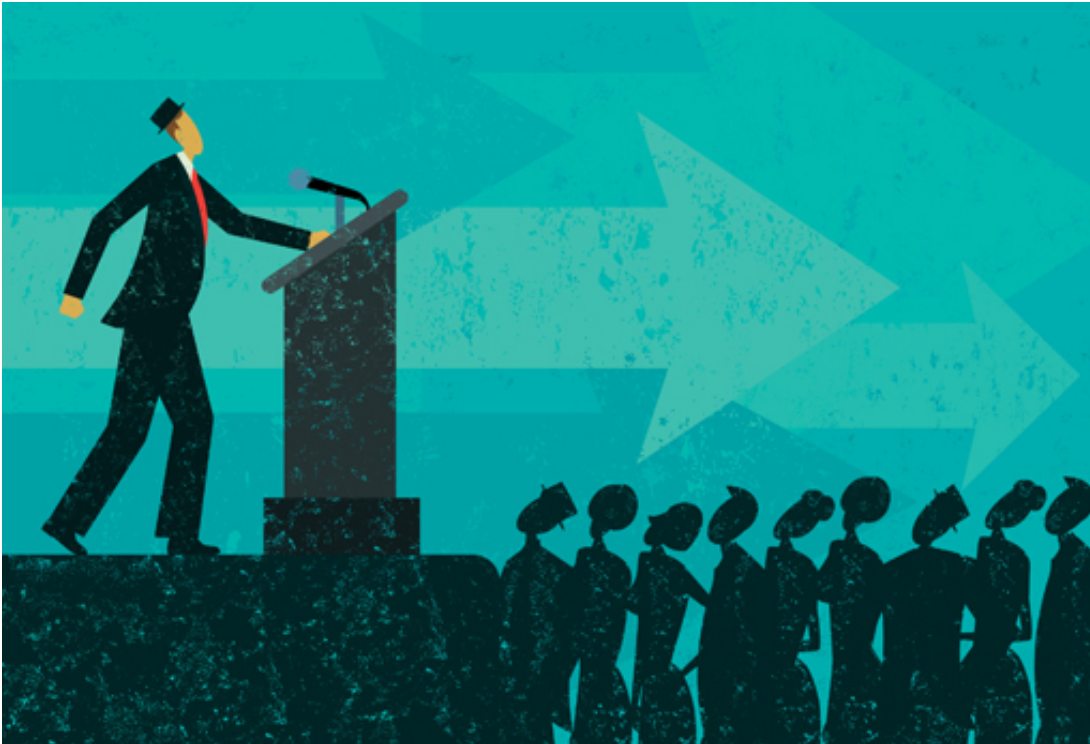


Figure 1

Why have you signed up for *Talk the talk*? What do you hope to get out of it?

Consider these questions:

- In what situation might you want to give a talk?
- What sort of content might you present?
- Is there a specific aspect of your oral presentation skills you would like to develop?

## 1.1.2 What are talks for?



Figure 2

Talks are used to inform, instruct, inspire, persuade and much more. Consider a speech or presentation you have witnessed and see if you can come up with examples of different talks that have had different purposes.

- How were the purposes of these talks made clear to you?
- What elements of those talks made them successful?
- Can you identify what contributed to the failure of less effective talks?

TED Talks have built quite a reputation for finding good speakers on important subjects, so it's a good place to look for examples of well-constructed and delivered talks. If you visit [TED's browse page](#) you will see that talks have been classified to some extent by purpose; use the drop-down menu labelled 'Rating' and you will see categories like fascinating, jaw-dropping and ingenious.

Think about any rules you may have come up with to identify different kinds of talk and how they succeed or fail.

## 1.1.3 Example talk 1: Bill Davenhall

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In this video, Bill Davenhall, a health and human services expert, presents his ideas about the way in which our location (where we live and work) affects our health.

As you watch this video, make notes about the elements which make it effective. Think about:

- the structure of the talk
- the kind of language he uses
- the words he chooses
- his body language
- the tone, pitch and volume of his voice
- the speed at which he speaks
- his level of preparation
- the images he has selected
- his belief in what he is saying.

Of course, there may be some parts of his talk that you think are weaker and could be improved; note those down too.

## 1.1.4 Building a talk



Figure 3

Using your notes from the previous section, try and answer these questions:

- How did Bill Davenhall signal which part of his talk he was in?
- How did he make the transition from one part of his talk to the next?

## 1.1.5 What will your talk be about?



Figure 4

One of the main outcomes of *Talk the talk* is that you should create your own 5-minute talk.

You will start the process now, by deciding what you are going to talk about. This can be about anything at all that interests you and it can be for any purpose.

You may want to:

- explain a process
- argue for a cause
- wake people up to a particular thing that interests you

Decide now what that will be and what effect you want your talk to have.

## 1.1.6 Search



Figure 5

You should have decided on the subject and purpose of the talk you're going to give.

- Explore the [TED website](#) (or any other online resource, such as [Pathé speeches on YouTube](#) for historical speeches from the Pathé news archive) and find at least one talk that gives you some ideas on how to proceed.

For instance, if you were going to talk about the economic effects of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, you might identify talks about things that impact economies. What you probably would not do is look for any talks on, say, predicting tsunamis. Straight away you can see that the chosen examples need to be more closely linked to the structure or kind of outcome the talk requires.

## 1.2 Making a good impression

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The introduction to your presentation will often be the most important part. You need to draw in your audience and get their attention.

### 1.2.1 Getting their attention



Figure 6

Think back to how Bill Davenhall started his TED talk earlier this week. He used a very dramatic narrative device (as he compared his heart attack to a train crash), but what was the effect of this on his audience?

At this point, it's important to be critical, which is not the same as simply criticising. Think of the story he told and ask yourself:

- Is that the sort of information you would want to hear from a complete stranger?
- Bill comes across as a very authoritative figure; but what exactly gives him that authority?
- Do you think he tailored it directly to the TED audience?
- How else might Bill have started his talk?

## 1.2.2 What makes a good introduction?



Figure 7

Everyone will have different opinions on what makes a good introduction.

Building on your thoughts from the previous section, write a short guide on what you think makes for the best opening for a talk.

Remember:

- There aren't any hard and fast rules for introductions.
- What might suit one speaker's presentation style may not work for everyone.
- You might want to think about Bill Davenhall's talk or the one you will present yourself to give some focus.

## 1.2.3 From text to speech



Figure 8

You will have seen how an introduction is affected by the way it is delivered, but now it's your turn to experiment with introductions:

- Go back to the [TED browse page](#) and find another talk that interests you, but don't play the video immediately.
- Open the transcript and silently read the introduction.
- Read it out loud.
- Try reading it again but vary your tone, speed or pitch to see how it affects the effectiveness of the presentation.
- You might also like to think about the kind of body language you'd expect to be used.

Now play the video. How does it differ from your expectations? Can you see why the speaker had a different approach from yours? Do you think that a text – a script for a talk – can be written in such a way that it is 'obvious' how it should be delivered?

Before you start sketching out your introduction in the next section, let us summarise what you have been learning about introductions:

- It is usual to introduce yourself when you give a presentation, perhaps by saying who you are and what your interest in the topic of your talk is.
- You can encourage people to be interested in what you are going to say by 'hooking' them in – ask a question, pose a problem to get your audience thinking, or tell a short personal story.
- Use a phrase to state your purpose when starting a presentation, such as 'I'm going to report on', 'I'm going to take a look at', or 'I'm going to discuss'.

## 1.2.4 Start work on your talk



Figure 9

Earlier this week you decided on a subject for your talk. Now you need to start assembling ideas for your talk.

Your talk should eventually be between 3 and 5 minutes long, so you probably don't want to spend any more than a minute of that time on the introduction.

Using what you have learned in the course so far, think about your talk, the subject and the audience you are aiming it at. Will you need to introduce yourself? What sort of strategy will you use to get the talk going?

You don't need to write a script for your introduction. The most important thing is to make notes on what your introduction is going to contain and how you will link your ideas together.

Spend some time now practising what you want to say in your introduction, out loud.



## 1.3 Week 1 quiz

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Check what you've learned this week by taking the end-of-week quiz. Open the quiz in a new window or tab and come back here when you're done.

[Week 1 quiz](#)

## 1.4 Week 1 summary

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Figure 10

So, this week you've had a chance to look into the world of professional speakers, and examined Bill Davenhall's talk on human health.

You've also chosen a topic for your own talk and practised reading it aloud.

You've also looked at grabbing your audience's attention and experimented with ways of delivering a talk. Next week you'll start preparing the content for the rest of your talk.

## Further resources

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[Pathé speeches](#) - YouTube has many speeches and presentations available. 'Pathé speeches' is a good resource of historical speeches from the Pathé news archive.

[Note taking](#) - It may be a long time since you worked with notes. By developing your note taking techniques you can make sure that the time you spend on taking notes is really worthwhile.

[TEDMED 2009: Bill Davenhall - Your Health Depends on Where You Live](#)



# Week 2: Stitching things together

## Introduction

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This week, you will look at how to conclude your talk, as well as the middle part, which will make up the bulk of your talk. You'll also look at how to connect the parts of your talk together with linking words and phrases.

## 2.1 Guiding listeners through the main part of your talk



Figure 1

With written text, it is usually easy for the reader to refer back to things from earlier in the text.

In a talk, however, what has been said only exists in the memories of the listeners, so you have to take much more care in making sure it is clear where you are in terms of what has gone before. You need to use a lot of signposts that point both back and forward in your talk to keep listeners with you.

Look again at Bill Davenhall's talk and observe how he uses linking phrases to make it clear how one part of his talk relates to another.

Rewatch the three short segments from the middle part of Bill's talk listed below and read the relevant parts of the transcript.

Which parts of these do you think are designed to link the paragraph with the earlier parts of the talk? Note down the key words or phrases and see if you can identify what common elements there are. If you can think of similar words or phrases, note those down too. These will all be useful as you develop your own talk.

### **From 2:04 to 2:19 on the timer**

This is my life. These are my life places. We all have these. While I'm talking I'd like you to also be thinking about: How many places have you lived? Just think about that – you know, wander through your life thinking about this – and you realise that you spend it in a variety of different places. You spend it at rest and

you spend it at work, and if you're like me, you're in an airplane a good portion of your time travelling some place.

**From 2:52 to 3:21 on the timer**

Now I'm going to take you on a little journey here. I started off in Scranton, Pennsylvania. I don't know if anybody might hail from north-eastern Pennsylvania. But this is where I spent my first 19 years with my little young lungs. You know, breathing high concentrations here of sulphur dioxide, carbon dioxide and methane gas, in unequal quantities – 19 years of this. And if you've been in that part of the country, this is what those piles of burning, smouldering coal waste look like.

**From 3:21 to 3:53 on the timer**

So then I decided to leave that part of the world, and I was going to go to the mid-west. Okay? So I ended up in Louisville, Kentucky. Well, I decided to be neighbours to a place called Rubbertown. They manufacture plastics. They use large quantities chloroprene and benzene. Okay, I spent 25 years, in my middle-age lungs now, breathing various concentrations of that. And on a clear day it always looked like this, so you never saw it. It was insidious, and it was really happening.

Now that you've seen how Bill guides his audience through the main part of his talk, start preparing the middle part of your own talk.

## 2.2 Multiple connections



Figure 2

In a written text, the title and the introduction can give you a clue as to what the theme of the piece is going to be. Each sentence in the piece will support this theme, and make a point.

In oral presentations, it is also important to think about connecting information by supporting themes with points, and by telling your audience what is coming next.

As you will have noted in the previous section, Bill Davenhall uses a variety of strategies to do this – mostly narrative but also including the use of questions. Bill Davenhall used the phrases, ‘Just think about that...’, ‘Now I’m going to take you on a journey...’, and ‘So then I decided to...’ to keep the listeners on track.

Below is a list of phrases that you could use in your presentations to move from one point to the next one:

- ‘Let me turn now to...’
- ‘Let’s move on to...’
- ‘Turning to...’
- ‘Next...’
- ‘Now let’s look at...’
- ‘I’d now like to...’.

You might like to keep these phrases in mind and try to use them in your talk.

To summarise, in a talk you must use additional links to help the listener keep track of the content and feel a sense of progression through your presentation.



Try writing two sentences and joining them together with linking words or phrases. The second sentence could be:

- an opposite idea (on the other hand, on the contrary, however, but...)
- a consequence (consequently, as a result...)
- a cause (because...)

Do you think the linking phrase you have chosen is effective? Is there a more effective phrase you could use?

## 2.3 Reaching the end

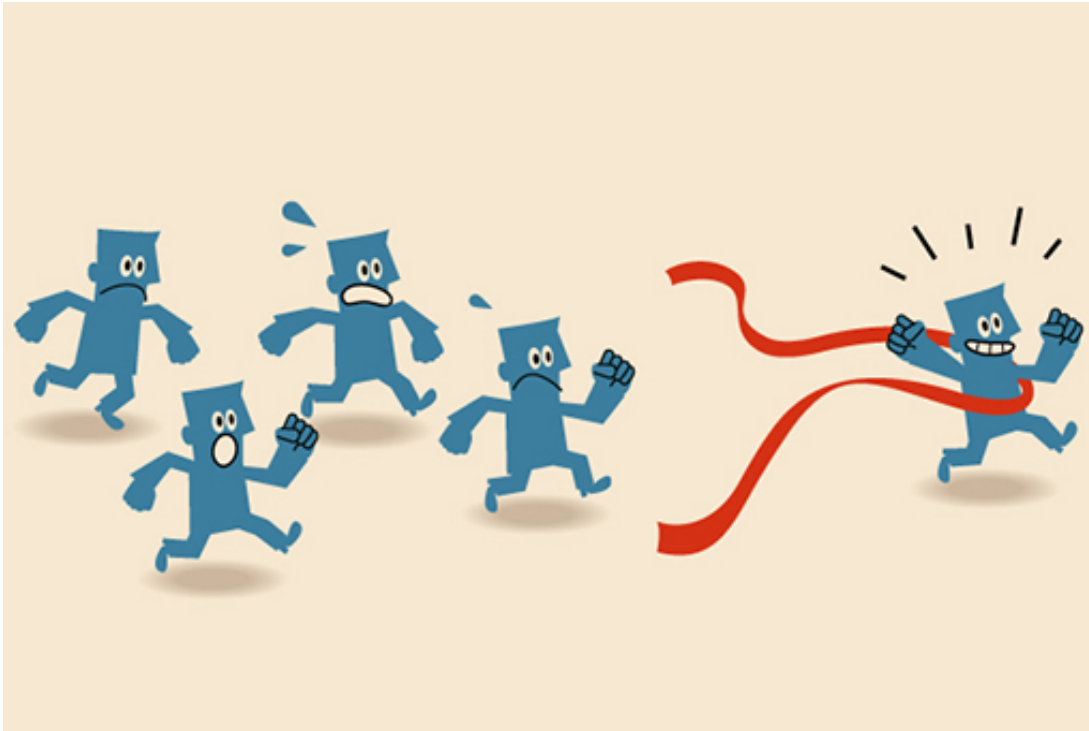


Figure 3

When you reach the end of a written assignment, you summarise what you have said in the rest of the text and draw your main points together. Do you think you have to do the same in the conclusion to an oral presentation?

Observe how Bill Davenhall concludes his talk (from 9:07 to 9:20 on the timer). He says:

So with that, I'll leave you that in my particular view of health, geography always matters. And I believe that geographic information can make both you and me very healthy. Thank you.

Note that this is probably shorter than a conclusion you would write in an assignment. In the talk that you are preparing your conclusion shouldn't last more than a minute.

In his talk, Bill is clearly making a case and wants something to happen in the future, but he doesn't end his talk particularly passionately. It's worth considering the point of view of your audience – Bill's audience aren't in a position to actually go out and make something happen. He's not asking them to 'man the barricades!' or 'bring 'em back, dead or alive!' It is more likely that he is trying to plant a seed that he hopes will grow later.

So, what sort of language might you use to signal the end of your talk? Here are some suggestions:

- 'Let's recap, ...'
- 'I'd like to sum up now...'
- 'Let me summarise briefly...'
- 'Allow me to remind you of some of the key points...'
- 'If I can just summarise the main points...'

These all work in a fairly formal context, but you don't need to stick to them; you might add humour, drama or passion and that will depend on the purpose of your conclusion.

Consider your talk, and make notes about how you want it to end. Just what is it you want your audience to be thinking and feeling when you finish? How will you achieve it? What sort of language will you use? You should refer back to these notes when you prepare your talk.

## 2.4 Covering all bases



Figure 4

Now you can have a go at preparing for your talk.

### Activity 1

The list of headings below is designed to help you prepare for giving a talk. Each main heading is linked to some questions designed to guide you in the process of preparation. Match the headings to the relevant group of questions.

Aims

Audience

Mode of delivery

Prepare the presentation

Practise the presentation

Deliver the presentation

Review the presentation

Match each of the items above to an item below.

Are you giving the talk to inform a group of people? To persuade the audience to support an idea or a plan? To inspire and motivate people? To entertain a group of people?

Who will be listening to your talk? What is the benefit to them of listening to it? What do they already know about the subject?

Will the talk involve a visual or audio mode of delivery? Will it be live or recorded? What technology will you have available?

What are you going to say? How will you introduce the topic? How will you explain the purpose of your talk? How will you explain the background to your talk? How will you organise the talk? What form of notes will you use? What examples will you use to illustrate your points? How might you conclude the talk?

What strategies might you use to keep calm before the talk? How might you keep a check on the time during the talk?

How will you evaluate the talk you have given? Can you persuade someone to listen to you and give feedback? Will you record yourself and play it back?

What do you think went well? What might you want to improve next time? What did other people think? How do their views match yours?

## 2.5 Example talk 2: Jennifer Golbeck

Watch Jennifer Golbeck's talk, 'The curly fry conundrum: Why social media "likes" say more than you might think'. Pay particular attention to:

- the introduction (language, topic, how she relates to audience, etc...)
- the middle of part of the talk (where does it start, where does it end)
- the conclusion (what it includes, how it ends)
- the linking phrases you hear throughout the talk
- the tone, style, body language, visuals used.

Consider:

- Why is (or isn't) her talk effective?
- What are you able to take away from her talk to prepare your own?

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## 2.6 Week 2 quiz

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Check what you've learned this week by taking the end-of-week quiz. Open the quiz in a new window or tab and come back here when you're done.

[Week 2 quiz](#)

## 2.7 Week 2 summary

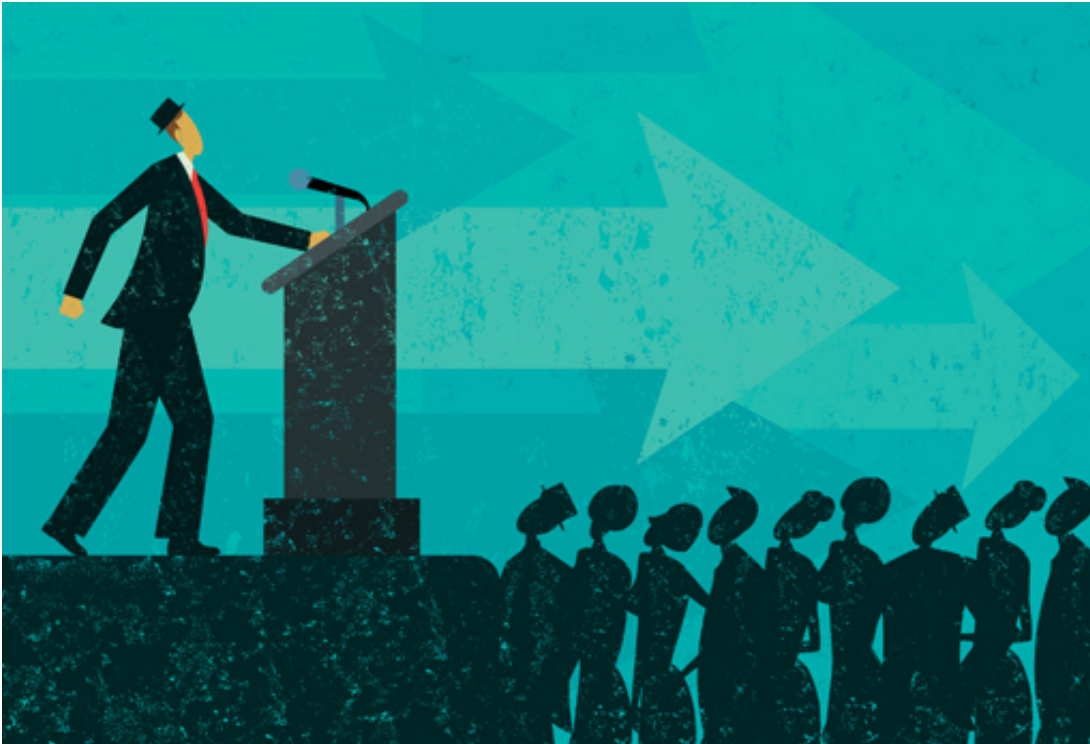


Figure 5

After your work on the introduction to your talk last week, you've spent this week looking at and preparing the middle part and conclusion of your talk.

You should spend the rest of your time this week continuing to work on your talk.

Next week, your focus will shift from what you say to how you say it, as you consider your delivery, body language and audience.



## Further resources

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[TED x MidAtlantic 2013: Jennifer Golbeck](#) - The curly fry conundrum: Why social media 'likes' say more than you might think.



# Week 3: Reaching your audience

## Introduction

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Giving a talk is about more than simply the words which come out of your mouth. This week, you will be studying how you say things, and how you can use non-verbal communication to support the points you are making.

You will also spend some time this week considering your audience. Who are they? How will you keep them engaged in your talk?

## 3.1 Talking with your body

Watch 'In praise of slowness' by Carl Honoré. Carl is shown from a lot of different angles. Sometimes you can see his whole body, while at other times there's a close-up of his head and shoulders. Take this chance to look very closely at how Carl moves. How does he use his body to express himself? How does he use his face to signal how he feels about something? Try and listen to how his voice sounds rather than just what he says.

Can you see a link between the way Carl moves in the talk generally and his movement when he makes specific points? Note that this isn't being held up as a perfect performance; you may feel that there are aspects of his behaviour that don't support his points.

English has a huge number of words that describe what someone is doing when they speak; they might beg, cajole, encourage, enthuse, enthrall, captivate, harangue or a multitude of others. Do these words create mind pictures? For example, do they suggest not only the voice but the whole body, with facial expressions, movements of the arms and so on? Although there is much disagreement about what proportion of communication is non-verbal, there seems little doubt that movement contributes something.

As you watch the video, concentrate on how Carl looks and moves, his tone and his voice. Make notes on the following aspects of what you see:

- use of notes (if any)
- eye contact with the audience
- voice quality - speed of delivery, pausing, volume and pitch
- posture
- hand movements.

Did you think aspects of Carl's non-verbal communication helped him put his point across, or did you think it got in the way?

Video content is not available in this format.



If you want to examine these ideas in more depth you could watch part of this talk again with the sound off, or listen without watching. Or you could do the same with a different talk: watch first without the sound, then listen, and see how well you were able to get the gist of what was being said.

## 3.2 What are your audiences?



Figure 1

All audiences are made up of a mix of ages, genders and cultures. Below are all the aspects you need to be aware of when you make a public address.

### Use of language

Depending on who you are talking to, you will have to adjust the language and level of register you are using (a register is a variety of language used for a particular purpose or social setting). It is unlikely that an audience made of children will understand many metaphors, similes or other figures of complex speech. You may also find that an audience made up of non-native English speakers might struggle with the comprehension of idiomatic expressions or humour. So whatever figures of speech, register or style you decide to use, you need to be sure that a good proportion of the audience understands them.

### Age

The age of an audience dictates the developmental pitch of a talk. Different age groups will have different levels of understanding, different abilities to process ideas and different concentration spans. However, there are other, more subtle differences to be taken into account in preparing a talk: experiences members of the audience have had, events they have lived through and their cultural reference points.

## Gender

Gender differences vary widely from country to country, among political and religious communities and within different age groups. At the most basic level, no talk should make assumptions about life experiences, biases or preferences on the basis of gender.

## Culture

A speaker needs to take into account possible cultural norms of an audience. What is the respectful and appropriate approach to a particular country or region's culture? If a speaker tends to be very physically demonstrative for example, will an audience sit up and take notice or will they just be embarrassed?

## Religion

Closely linked to culture, religion might dictate the very subjects a speaker may or may not speak about if they wish to avoid causing offence. Some kinds of language may be unacceptable, some words or images forbidden. It's very important to know these things before giving a talk.

## Affiliation

A talk on the environment addressed to a group of science graduates will be different from one given to the interested public, or to oil executives or politicians. Similarly, a political leaning in an audience will affect the way content is delivered. A talk needs to keep people interested even if they don't agree with the message.

## Occupation

This may be the very factor that brings an audience together, in which case there's less need to worry about the 'who are they?' question. In every case, however, some knowledge of an audience's work background can affect the way a talk is delivered.

## 3.3 Tailoring to your audience

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Figure 2

During the preparation time for your talk, you will need to spend some time researching your audience. You will need to gather basic facts about the people you are going to address. Essentially, who they are and why they are coming to listen to your talk.

You will also need to reflect on the aspects discussed in the previous section. You need to ask yourself how you will make yourself understood and you need to spend some time thinking about the level of your pitch, making sure it's not too simplistic or too difficult.

Think about the aspects covered in the previous section (use of language, age, gender, culture, religion, affiliation and occupation) and ask yourself which are causing you the most concerns. How are you going to tackle these aspects in your talk?



## 3.4 Interacting with your audience



Figure 3

In the previous sections you've looked at the age, cultural background and gender of your audience. You also need to consider their expectations and how to keep them engaged in your talk.

### Engage the audience

One feature of effective presentations is that they are interesting and they engage the audience. A skilled speaker can attract people's attention and make a subject appealing by demonstrating its relevance to them, by structuring their talk clearly and, where appropriate, by using visual and audio aids effectively.

### Create an impact

Skilled speakers can also create an impact through the quality of their voice, the use of body language and the creation of a sense of connection, or rapport, with their audience.

### Know your audience

If you can, it is important to find out about audience expectations and their reasons for coming to your talk. In doing so, you will be prepared for unexpected questions and preconceived ideas some of your listeners might have. It's also important to have some ideas of an audience's motivation and the extent to which their attendance is voluntary.

This will dramatically affect the way you should deliver the talk, as well as the level of audience engagement and the likelihood of meaningful questions at the end.

Audiences may already know you and this can lead to expectations – both high and low. An audience may also come with ideas about you based on information they've picked up prior to your talk. A speaker needs to think about strategies that will meet positive expectations and counter negative ones. Whatever your image, whether you come across as a New Age guru, a suited corporate manager or an eccentric academic, beware of straying beyond your own fundamental personality or you may appear false, manipulative or insincere.

## Know the setting

The size of the audience will dictate to some extent the level of intimacy that can be produced. A small crowd might allow for a lot of flexibility, while a large crowd might require a speaker to be formal and stay on track. With experience, you can get a feeling from an audience of any size but what may change is the ability to interact, with questions such as, 'raise your hand if...', or similar.

The type of occasion and where it takes place will dictate the level of formality and the angle from which a speaker approaches a subject. A speech given in the evening may require a different energy from one given first thing in the morning. Some occasions may be solemn, others up-beat.

Finally, a speaker needs to look at the room itself. How comfortable are the chairs? How good is the lighting? Does it feel too hot or too cold? These are important factors when it comes to judging how long an audience will be comfortable for. It is also very important to check the equipment in the room and make sure that you have all the necessary audio and visual materials to deliver your talk.

## 3.5 Applying what you've learned

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Figure 4

Watch [Carl Honoré's talk](#) again, keeping in mind the factors you've looked at this week. How could you alter his approach to a few of those factors? Would these changes cause his talk to work better?

## 3.6 Week 3 quiz

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Check what you've learned this week by taking the end-of-week quiz. Open the quiz in a new window or tab and come back here when you're done.

[Week 3 quiz](#)

## 3.7 Week 3 summary

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Figure 5

This week you've examined how you will say things and thought about what your body language says about you as a speaker.

You've also considered the audience that you're presenting to. Who are they? What factors do you need to be wary of when delivering your talk?

## Further resources

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[TEDGlobal 2005: Carl Honore - in praise of slowness](#)



# Week 4: Finishing your talk

## Introduction

Video content is not available in this format.



This week, you will finally put your talk together. Over the previous weeks, you've worked on the introduction, middle and end of your talk, as well as the non-verbal elements of giving a talk.



## 4.1 Finish your draft



Figure 1

This is where you pull together all that you've learned so far and create your talk. So how do you set about it? Let's cover some practicalities.

The duration of your talk should be between 3 and 5 minutes.

You already have the basis for your introduction from Week 2, although you may well want to rework this material in the light of what you've learned since you recorded it.

You don't need to write your talk word for word. Many people find that writing every word breaks their flow and makes the speech sound overly formal. Discover a technique that works for you, whether it's jotting down key words or fragments of sentences or capturing every word.

Think about what you've learned in the course and then finish preparing your first draft. Draft and redraft. Don't expect to start and finish in one go. Remember that you're experimenting here in order to evolve an approach that suits you.

As you create your talk, remind yourself what you've learned in earlier weeks of the course. You might also find it helpful to use the following questions as a checklist.

- What's the subject of your talk? What's its main message?
- Who are your audience? Level of understanding? Any cultural considerations?
- Will you need to introduce yourself?
- What sort of device will you use to get the talk going? How will you create an impact?
- How will you establish credibility and get the audience's attention? How will you make and keep a connection?
- What are the main points of the talk?

- How will you link the main points?
- Do you feel comfortable with your choice of words?
- What message will you leave the audience with?
- How will you bring the talk to a close?

Develop your talk to a level where you feel comfortable that it's reasonably polished. Don't over-work it. Call a halt while you're still enjoyably engaged with the subject, the shape of your narrative and the unfolding of its various parts.

## 4.2 Enhancing your talk

Video content is not available in this format.



In this section of the course you will look at some ways of enhancing your talk.

## 4.2.1 Making effective use of visuals



Figure 2

Many of the talks you've experienced will probably have been accompanied by some sort of images projected alongside the speaker.

You may use visuals to:

- clarify something that would take a long time or be too complicated to explain in just words
- reinforce your key messages
- show graphically where you are in your talk.

You will also, no doubt, have experienced 'death by PowerPoint' – a speaker reading aloud slides full of small-print text, when you could have read it yourself in much less time or taken home a printed copy instead.

Some speakers find it reassuring to follow a pre-prepared script, while others find it easier to talk more freely, using notes or cue cards as prompts. Visual or audio cues, such as graphs, charts, pictures and video or sound clips, can provide structure and variety to a presentation. However, the use of technology requires practice to be effective.

Now watch Bill Davenhall's video again and consider the following points:

- Does he use visuals for his entire talk?
- When does he use the visuals? At which points in his presentation? What are they for?
- What technology does he use? Can everyone see the visuals, do you think?
- What impact do his visuals have on the audience?

## 4.2.2 Adding visuals of your own



Figure 3

In the last section, you examined why you would want to use visuals to support your talk, and looked at how Bill Davenhall used them in his TED talk. You should now consider how you would use visuals to support your talk.

When creating visuals to accompany a talk, you should consider the following:

- Visuals are there for the same reason you are: to get your point across. If they don't contribute to communicating your message, then you can probably afford to remove them.
- Using special effects (dissolves, animations, slow reveals) or clip art can be tempting, but overuse will be distracting or tiring for the audience.
- Consider where you will present. Does the venue support the technology you want to use? Do you need internet access? Can you practise in the venue beforehand?
- There is no law that says a presentation must start with a logo and the title of your talk, nor that it must end with a picture of a sunset!

### 4.2.3 Tips for an effective talk

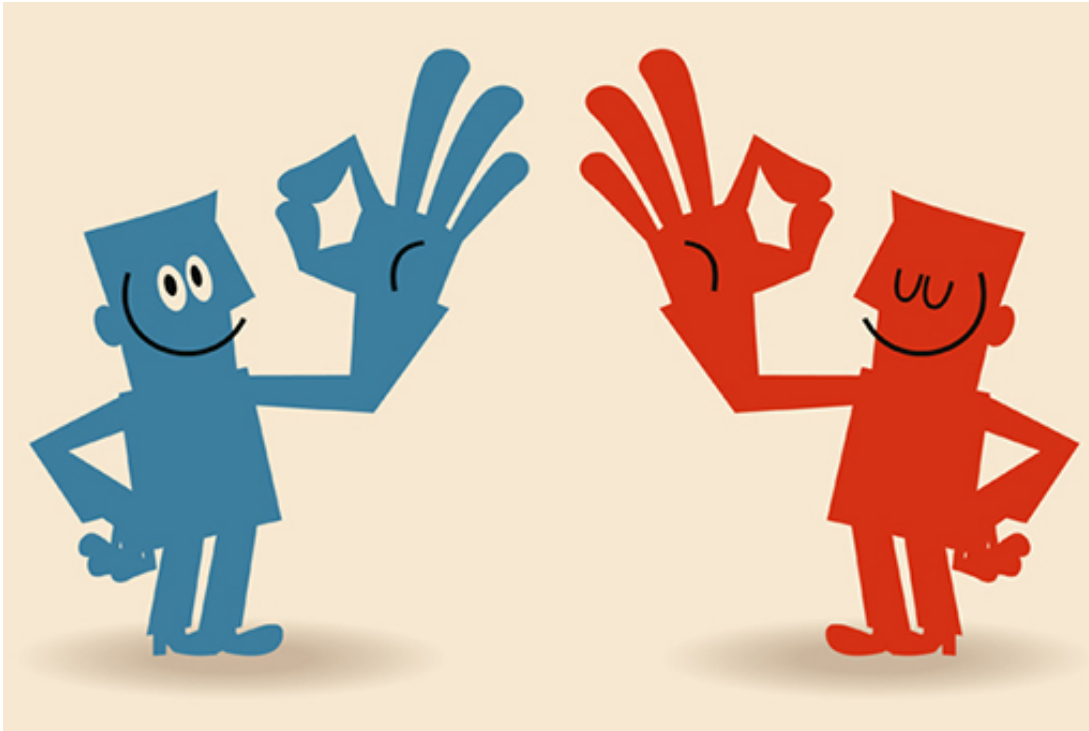


Figure 4

As you look towards giving future talks, bear in mind these final tips to try and make your talk the best it can be!

#### Engage the audience

One feature of effective talks is that they are interesting and they engage the audience. A skilled speaker can attract people's attention and make a subject appealing by demonstrating its relevance to them, by structuring their talk clearly and, where appropriate, by using visual and audio aids effectively.

#### Create an impact

Skilled speakers can also create an impact through the quality of their voice, the use of body language and the creation of a sense of connection, or rapport, with their audience.

#### Be prepared

Good advance preparation and practice are key to maintaining your confidence and coping strategies during a talk. Good presenters, whether amateur or professional, appear prepared and quietly at ease. This enables them to cope better with unexpected occurrences, such as a reduction in the time allocated to their contribution, challenges to their ideas or technical problems.

## Practice makes perfect

Before giving a talk, it is a good idea to practise it a few times. This can involve giving the talk in front of a mirror, on a recording, or in front of a friend. When you practise, you can make sure that your talk is within the given time limit, and you can check that you feel comfortable saying all that you have planned. If you are unsure how to pronounce any words, check how they are pronounced and practise a few times.

## Using notes and visual aids

Some speakers find it reassuring to follow a prepared script, while others find it easier to talk more freely, using notes or cue cards as prompts. Visual or audio cues, such as graphs, charts, pictures and video or sound clips, can provide structure and variety to a talk. However, the use of technology requires practice to be effective.

## Expected the unexpected

Some people will find it easy to adapt their intended talk to an unexpectedly shorter or longer time frame. Others could find this unsettling. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon to omit some elements of what you planned to say, whether intentionally or not, and to insert new ones, such as examples, or perhaps a little humour.

## Relax

It is normal to feel nervous at the beginning of a talk, but the ongoing feedback from other people – smiles, nodding and other indicators of their positive attention – can ease such anxiety as you progress through it. Similarly, their acknowledgement at the end, whether in the form of clapping or comments, can contribute to a sense of validation and relief.

## Learn from experience

It is important to reflect on what you did well, and to learn from anything that didn't go as intended. You could ask one or two people for specific feedback to help you with this reflective process. You may also be able to give other people support and encouragement with their talks in the same way.

## 4.3 What did you learn?



Figure 5

You should now reflect on what you have learned from the course. When answering these questions, consider your responses from Week 1.

- Why did you decide to study *Talk the talk*?
- What is the most important thing you have learned from this course?
- What is the one thing you will do differently when you next prepare for and give a talk?



## 4.3 Week 4 quiz

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Check what you've learned this week by taking the end-of-week quiz. Open the quiz in a new window or tab and come back here when you're done.

[Week 4 quiz](#)

## 4.4 Week 4 summary

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Figure 6

Congratulations for completing this course – with the experience and skills you’ve gained over the past 4 weeks, there is no doubt that you will be much better prepared to talk the talk!

We would love to know what you thought of the course and what you plan to do next. Your feedback is anonymous but will have massive value to us in improving what we deliver. Take our [Open University end-of-course survey](#).

## Acknowledgements

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