



Present Yourself

SECOND EDITION

Most people put giving a presentation high up on their top-ten “most feared” list. This is understandable as standing in front of an audience can be a nerve-racking experience, even for native speakers.

Teacher-author Steven Gershon expands on some practical presentation tips he included in the *Present Yourself* series.



① MANAGING ANXIETY - Being nervous before a presentation is normal, but don't let stage-fright paralyze you. Manage your anxiety with these simple tips:

- ◆ Take a few slow, **deep breaths**
- ◆ Imagine the audience looking **interested & engaged**
- ◆ Just begin with a **smile**, a greeting and introduce yourself to the audience
- ◆ **Don't apologize** for being nervous

② MAKING NOTE CARDS - **Practice** several times on your own and don't memorize every word of your presentation. **Use note cards** when you're presenting. Here are some **tips to prepare your note cards**:

- ◆ **Index cards** (postcard size) are best
- ◆ **Use only one side** of each card
- ◆ **Write large** so your notes are easy to see
- ◆ Include just the **main points**
- ◆ **Bold, CAPS or color** the key words
- ◆ Remember to **number the cards**

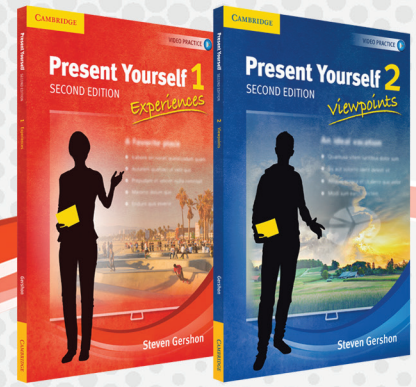
③ EYE CONTACT - Making eye contact is important to connect with the audience one-to-one. Here are a few simple tips to help you use eye contact effectively:

- ◆ **Focus on the spaces between people** when you're thinking of what to say next, don't look at the floor or ceiling
- ◆ **Divert your focus point** at someone for few seconds when you begin the next sentence
- ◆ **Look at all sections** of the audience at random. Don't be a lighthouse!



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4 BODY LANGUAGE - In a presentation, your message comes across from your words and your body language. Here what you should do to convey your self-confidence, knowledge of the topic, and feeling toward the audience:

- ♦ **Stand straight but relaxed** with your feet 30 to 45 centimeters (shoulder-width)
- ♦ **Avoid swaying** from side to side
- ♦ **Don't lean** on a table or desk while speaking

5 SPEAKING FROM NOTES - Here are some key points when you need to read from note cards:

- ♦ **Hold your note cards in one hand at chest level** when you need to read from them
- ♦ **Look at your card quickly and smoothly** so that you don't break eye-contact with the audience for too long
- ♦ You can also **keep your thumb next to the line** on your note card you need to say next

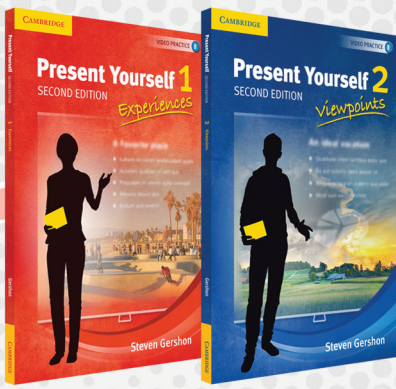
6 USING YOUR HANDS - In front of the audience, use your hands to support and emphasize your key points, not to distract or confuse the audience.

- ♦ **Make your gestures slowly and clearly**
- ♦ Don't exaggerate them too much, **they should look natural**
- ♦ **Avoid crossing your arms** in front of your chest
- ♦ When not gesturing, **keep your hands by your side with elbows loose**
- ♦ **Don't touch your face or hair when speaking**
- ♦ **Don't put your hands in your pocket** - it looks too casual and informal

7 USING POWERPOINT - Adding a visual element to your presentation with PowerPoint can help the audience stay focused and interested in the content. However, when designing your slides, following a few simple tips can make all the difference:

- ♦ Do use a **large sans-serif font** (e.g. 32pt Calibri, Arial, or Helvetica)
- ♦ Do use **key words and short phrases**
- ♦ **Don't put too much information** on a slide (maximum of 6 bullet points)
- ♦ **Don't use too many** different fonts and colors





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⑧ VOICE POWER - When you're presenting, make sure your message comes across loud and clear. Here are few a simple reminders:

- ♦ **Speak up!** Speak one and a half times louder than normal conversation. However, don't shout!
- ♦ **Slow down!** We usually speak faster when we're nervous
- ♦ **Try to avoid fillers** (uh, um, well, you know, etc). It makes you sound unprepared and the presentation loses impact

⑨ PHRASING WITH EMPHASIS - Speaking for several minutes in a flat, steady voice at the same pace is a sure way to put an audience to sleep.

- ♦ Keep your audience's attention by **varying intonation and pace or speed**
- ♦ **Emphasize content words** (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) by saying them a little louder and longer
- ♦ Remember to **pause briefly** to separate complete thoughts, phrases and at the end of a sentence
- ♦ **Record yourself** when you practice

⑩ USING VISUAL AIDS - When presenting data or other numerical information, a graph, chart, table, or diagram can show how the numbers relate to each other and form a pattern. However, it's important to make sure that the information you're showing really is: **V**ery Clear

Informative and interesting
Simple to explain
Understandable
Atttractive
Large enough for everyone to see

⑪ ANSWERING QUESTIONS - Here are 5 tips to help make any Q&A successful:

- ♦ **Welcome the questions** - let people know that their questions are important
- ♦ **Repeat the question** to make sure you understand it correctly and everyone can hear it
- ♦ When answering a question, **speak to the whole audience**, not only to the questioner
- ♦ Keep your answers **short and simple**
- ♦ **Be honest** if you don't know the answer, then promise to find out

