

Material Imprimible

Presentaciones formales

## Módulo 2

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## Signposting language

### Ordering points

The following organizers can be used at the beginning of a section of a presentation to show order: “first/firstly”, “first of all”, “to begin with”, “in the first place”.

- "First" and "firstly" mean the same but the latter is formal and, according to some grammarians, superfluous.
- "First and foremost" is another connector that gives emphasis to the first point on a list and it means most importantly.
- "At first" means in the initial stage or stages or what happens just after something else has happened.

The following organizers can be used to introduce other points: “next”, “then”, “second”, “third”, etc.

- "After" and "afterwards" mean "later" but they are not used in the same way. "After" is not used as an adverb. "Afterwards" is an adverb and cannot be followed by a noun or pronoun. It can be placed at the beginning or between two clauses. "Afterward" is more common in American English and "afterwards" in British English.
- "Another", "other" and "the other" can also be used to organize points. The first one is followed by a singular noun; the second one by a plural noun and the third one by a singular noun when it is clear that there are only two options, persons, things, etc.

The following organizers can be used to close a topic or section: “to conclude”, “finally”, “last”, “in conclusion”. These organizers should not be confused with the following ones:

- "At last" means that something you have been hoping for for a long time has happened.
- "Eventually" means that something happens after a long delay, dispute or number of problems.
- "Lastly" means in the last place when you want to introduce the last point or action of a series of them.
- "In the end" introduce the last result of a series of events or your final conclusion after considering everything.
- "At the end" refers to the end point of a physical location or a period of time.
- "Ultimately" means after a process or series of events has ended.

### **Adding ideas**

The following words are used to add ideas or information: "besides", "moreover", "furthermore", "in addition", "plus", "what's more", "also".

- "Moreover" and "furthermore" are formal words.
- "As well" can be at the beginning, middle and end of a sentence.

### **Introducing other points**

Some connectors of reference, which can be used to introduce other points, are: "in connection with", "in relation to", "in reference to", "in respect of", "in regard to", "regarding", "concerning", "about", "as regards", "with respect to". The last two are formal.

### **Emphasising**

Speakers can add emphasis to a point or statement by:

- using verbs: “emphasise”, “stress”, “highlight”, “underline” and “underscore”. The last two are used especially for a fact that is already known.
- starting a sentence with the word “what”.
- asking listeners to reflect on a point that speakers want to highlight.
- using adjectives such as “important”, “key”, “significant”, “remarkable”.
- using non-gradable adjectives, which describe qualities and cannot be graded, such as “terrible”, “enormous”, “fascinating”, “terrifying”, “tiny”, “unique”, “formidable”, “impossible”.
- using superlatives, which are used to describe something which is at the upper or lower limit of a quality.
- using adverbs such as “importantly”, “surprisingly”, “interestingly”, “obviously”, “primarily”, etc.

### **Talking about complicated issues**

The following verbs can be used to talk about problems:

- “identify”, “consider”, “analyse”, “discuss”, “look into”
- “address”, “attack”, “handle”, “tackle”
- “deal with”, “overcome”, “solve”
- “alleviate”, “ease”, “reduce”

### **Explaining terms**

The following phrases can help speakers explain terms: “that is”, “in other words”, “what I mean”.

To explain abbreviations and acronyms, “stand for” is the right choice.

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### **Digressing**

Speakers digress when they leave the main subject temporarily to mention something else. They typically say "I would like to digress/digress to say that...".

The words "incidentally" and "by the way" can also be used to digress.

After the digression, speakers may indicate their intention to go back to the main point with phrases like "going back to what we were discussing before..." or "anyway, back to what I was describing...".

If a speaker forgets what they were saying before the digression, they can say "Sorry but I lost track of what I was saying. Where were we?"

### **Referring back**

It is about going back to something that a speaker has mentioned before. Speakers refer back when they want to relate what they are saying to something they mentioned before or when they forgot to mention something previously.

### **Referring forward**

When speakers refer forward, they preview what they are going to cover later.

### **Analysing a point**

Some typical phrases to analyse a point, are: "look into a point in detail", "develop a point further", "elaborate on a point", "zoom in on a point", "zero in on a point".

Questions like "where does that lead us?" and "what does this mean for our field?" can also be asked when a speaker wants to examine a point or topic.

### **Rephrasing**

When a speaker's idea or explanation does not come across well, the speaker may rephrase with phrases such as "to put it more simply", "simply put", "to put it another way" and "that is to say".

If a speaker wants to rephrase an explanation that was too technical, a phrase like "in plain English" shows the speaker's intent to rephrase using simpler words.

### **Getting stuck**

When a speaker can't remember a word, the following phrases may come in handy:

- "My brain has just frozen and I can't find the word I wanted to use".
- "What's the word in English? It's on the tip of my tongue. Just give me a minute".

If a phrase is on the tip of your tongue, you know the word but you can't remember it.

An approximation can also be given to the audience with phrases like "it's kind of" or "it's a sort of".

Another option is to try to explain the use of the word, with the phrase "you use it to" and then a verb.

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## Exemplifying

Examples are provided to clarify complex ideas or to give additional information, with phrases such as "as an illustration", "to illustrate this concept", "by way of example", etc.

- Another option is to use the phrase "for example", which is followed by a comma and a full sentence.
- "Like" is used to introduce examples.
- "Such as" means the same as "like", but it is more formal. A comma is usually placed before it when a list of examples is introduced. If only one example is provided, the comma can be omitted.
- "Namely" introduces exact information about something that has been said or a list that is exhaustive, in other words, a complete list of names, things, places, etc.

## Giving opinions

There are different ways to express what one thinks. Some of those phrases are "in my opinion", "as I see it", "in my view".

## Making suggestions or recommendations

"Could" and "should" can be used to make suggestions or recommendations. "Could" is softer and more indirect than "should".

Questions that start with "why don't...?", "how about...?" and "what if...?" can also introduce suggestions or recommendations.

## Making generalisations

A generalisation, which is statement about all the member of a group that may be true in some situations, can be made by using the following phrases:

- “as a general rule”, “by and large”, “for the most part”, “more often than not”, “in most cases”, mean “usually”.
- “broadly speaking”, “overall” and “basically” mean that something is true in the most important aspects.
- “on the whole”, “all things considered”, “on balance”, “all in all” mean “generally”
- “generally” can be combined with other words such as “regarded”, “accepted”, “known”, “recognized”, etc.

## Contrasting

The following words and phrases are used to express contrast:

- “unlike”, “in contrast to”, “as opposed to”. All of them are followed by nouns.
- “although” means “despite” and it is followed by a subject and then a verb. It can go at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence.
- “whereas” and “while” mean “although” but the contrast is not surprising. They can go at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. “Whereas” is more formal than “while”.
- “despite” and “in spite of” mean “although”, but they can be followed by a noun, a gerund or a pronoun, but not by a subject plus verb unless the connectors are followed by “the fact that”.



- “on the other hand” introduces a statement that contrasts with the previous one mentioned by the speaker.

### **Giving good news**

The typical phrases to give good news are: "I am more than happy to tell you that...", "Fortunately...", "You'll be pleased to learn that...".

In relation to the word "news", it should be pointed out that it is uncountable, so it can only be followed by a verb conjugated for the first person of the singular form.

### **Giving bad news**

The typical phrases to give bad news are: "I am sorry to say that...", "I am afraid...", "Unfortunately...", "I regret to announce...". These phrases go from the least to the most formal.

Other possible phrases are "there seems to be a problem", "in spite of our efforts", "there's no easy way to say this, so I'll cut to the chase".

To “cut to the chase” is to talk about the important parts of a subject and not waste time.

### **Techniques to keep listeners' attention**

- analogies: used to compare similar characteristics of things or situations that are not similar.
- metaphors: describe things or actions in a way that is not literally true to explain an idea or make a comparison.
- similes: comparisons of different things with words such as "like" and "as".

- contrast between two things starting with the negative one.
- rule of three: present ideas or concepts in a group of threes
- repetition of key words or phrases: for emphasis
- worst-case scenario: the possible worst scenario is introduced first and then the ideal scenario is mentioned.
- asking a volunteer to interact with the speaker
- asking listeners to interact with one another
- asking listeners to guess information
- presenting games for listeners to play with the speaker

## Preparing slides

### Steps

- Create an outline on paper helps clarify ideas of the information to include in the slides
- Include one idea per slide to keep the audience focused
- Concentrate on the text (title and content) to include in each slide. Avoid long sentences and keep full sentences for quotations. Only include essential information and select the shortest word forms.
- Avoid bullets on every slide. There should not be more than six bullet points per slide and no more than two levels of bullets per slide. Use the same phrase structure on lists. No comma should be at the end of a bullet point.
- Select only one background for the whole slide show.
- Select the font type, size and colour. There should be no more than two font types in a presentation and the

recommended size is not less than 24 points. Colours should contrast to improve readability.

- Select images and creates graphics to help listeners understand information.
- Edit and proofread. It involves deciding if the slides have too much text, if there are unnecessary slides and if slides follow a logical sequence. It also entails detecting grammar and spelling mistakes.