59 Conference presentations

A The structure of a presentation

Conference (or congress) presentations are typically divided into IMRaD sections (see Unit 57).

If the presentation has a different form, the speaker may start by outlining its structure. This helps to orientate the audience:

I'll begin by ...
First of all, I'll ...
I'll then ...
Secondly, I'll ...
Finally, I'll ...

Many speakers like to start a new section with a **signal**:

Now, ...
Moving on to X, ...
As far as X is concerned, ...

An alternative technique is to use a question:

How did we investigate this problem? (to introduce Method)
What did we find? (to introduce Results)
How does this compare with previous studies? (to introduce Discussion)

B The introduction

A formal way of beginning is:
I'd like to present to you the results of our research into ...

Many speakers prefer to begin in a less formal way:
When we first began to look into the question of X, we thought ...

You may wish to begin with a generalisation or reference to shared knowledge:
It is well known that ...
Many studies have shown that ...
X has established clearly that ...

C Signalling

Other signals that you may wish to give include:

Emphasizing
- **I'd like to emphasize ...**

Listing points
- **Firstly, ...**
- **Secondly, ...**

Referring to slides
- **This slide shows ...**

Giving examples
- **For instance ...**
- **... such as ...**

Contrasting
- **On the other hand ...**
- **In contrast ...**
- **However, ...**

D The conclusion

It is important to end well, for example by summing up the main conclusions.

So, **In conclusion,** **To sum up,** **Finally,**	we can see ... I'd like to say end by ... these studies show ...

59.1 Here are some extracts from a presentation on carbon monoxide poisoning. After announcing his topic, the speaker talked about the pathophysiology of CO poisoning, then the possible sources of the gas, and finally diagnosis and treatment. Put the extracts in the correct order.

1 There is, however, no evidence at all that giving steroids in pharmacological doses is of any proven prophylactic value. ...
2 How do we diagnose it? The early clinical appearances of carbon monoxide poisoning can be very non-specific. ...
3 So, the actual diagnosis of the condition can be very difficult. ...
4 I'd like to tell you about some of our experiences in relation to carbon monoxide poisoning. ...
5 On the slide here, you'll see that there are a variety of sources of carbon monoxide, such as car exhausts, fires, and so on. ...
6 First of all, I want to concentrate on smoke from fires as one of the most important sources of carbon monoxide. ...
7 Now, in relation to the treatment of carbon monoxide poisoning, 100 per cent oxygen administered through a tight-fitting face mask or endotracheal tube is essential. ...
8 I think it's important to emphasize that the presence of cherry-red mucous membranes is a very, very poor sign. ...
9 Now, you will remember that carbon monoxide strongly binds with haemoglobin to produce carboxyhaemoglobin. ...
10 The only accurate way of detecting whether the patient has been exposed to carbon monoxide is to measure carboxyhaemoglobin in, usually, the venous blood. ...

59.2 Write the word or phrase used by the speaker in the presentation in 59.1 above next to its function. Look at B, C and D opposite to help you.

Emphasizing	
Listing	
Exemplifying	
Contrasting	
Summing up	
Changing topic	
Referring to a slide	
Announcing the topic	

Over to you

What makes a good presentation, in your opinion? Think about:

- loudness of voice
- speed of delivery
- use of emphasis and pausing
- eye contact with the audience
- body language – posture and gestures
- visual aids.

PART 2

You will hear an announcement about a competition. For questions 9–18, complete the sentences.

THE IDEAS COMPETITION

The money given to the winner is not a _____ 9 _____.

The winner might be _____ 10 _____ with a plan for improving a water supply.

The winner might have an idea about how to help the _____ 11 _____ in the world.

If you enter the competition by phone you must explain your idea in a maximum of _____ 12 _____.

One of the categories is for people who want to start a business that provides a _____ or _____ 13 _____ that currently doesn't exist.

One of the categories is for people who want to take part in a project that is _____ 14 _____.

One of the rules is that _____ 15 _____ for the competition are not allowed.

Before you phone, it may be a good idea to prepare a _____ 16 _____.

To win, you must show that you have a lot of _____ 17 _____ for your idea.

Judges will listen to the ideas presented by _____ 18 _____ people.

TEST 4

PART 3

You will hear five different people talking about how they felt when they received an award. For questions 19–23, choose from the list (A–F) how each person felt. Use the letters only once. There is one extra letter which you do not need to use.

A relieved

B worried

C proud

D exhausted

E grateful

F confused

Speaker 1 ☐ 19

Speaker 2 ☐ 20

Speaker 3 ☐ 21

Speaker 4 ☐ 22

Speaker 5 ☐ 23