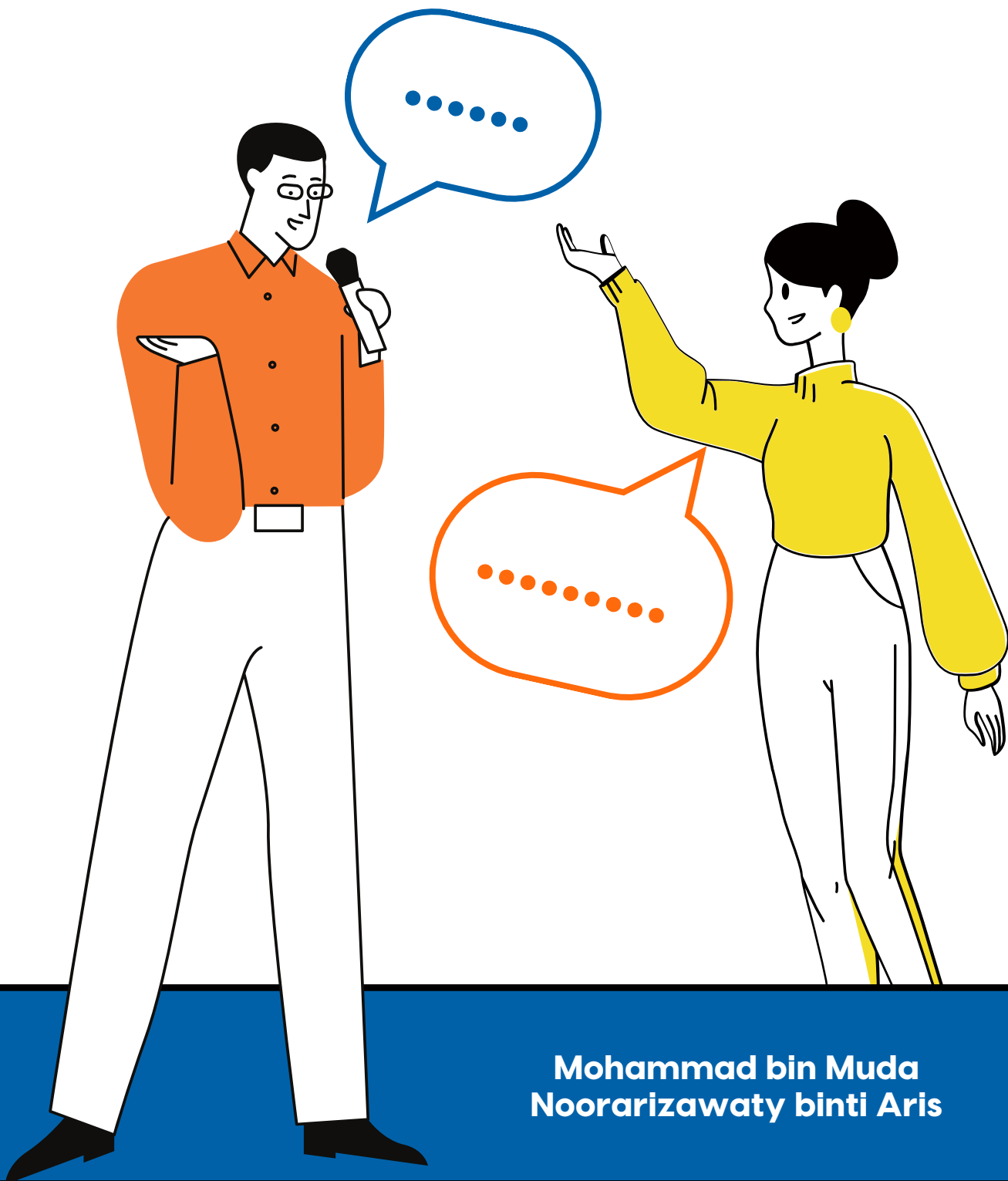


COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH 1

DUE10112



POLITEKNIK SULTAN IDRIS SHAH

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DUE10112

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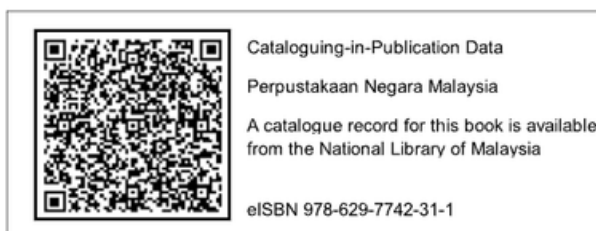
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PREFACE

- In today's rapidly changing world, effective communication in English is essential for academic success, professional growth, and everyday interaction. As English is widely used in education, business, and digital communication, students need to develop confidence and competence in using the language in meaningful contexts.

Communicative English 1: DUE10112 is designed to help students build practical communication skills for academic and workplace settings. The book focuses on three key areas: Social and Communication Skills, Reading Skills, and Oral Presentation Skills, enabling learners to become more effective speakers, readers, and presenters.

This book provides engaging and practical learning experiences through exercises, real-life situations, and interactive tasks. Students will learn to participate in discussions, express ideas clearly, understand texts, and deliver presentations with confidence.

It is our hope that this book will support students in improving their English proficiency and inspire them to become confident communicators and critical thinkers in a modern, technology-driven world.

SYNOPSIS

- Communicative English 1: DUE10112 is a practical module designed to strengthen students' English communication skills for academic, professional, and everyday use. It helps learners build confidence and fluency through meaningful activities and real-life applications.

The book is divided into three sections: Social and Communication Skills, Reading Skills, and Oral Presentation Skills.

The first section focuses on effective participation in discussions, including expressing opinions, giving suggestions, and using appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication.

The second section develops reading skills such as skimming, scanning, identifying main ideas, and understanding context.

The final section guides students in delivering effective presentations, from organizing ideas to presenting confidently and handling questions.

With clear explanations, practical exercises, and relatable examples, this book serves as a useful guide for improving English communication skills and preparing for future academic and career success.

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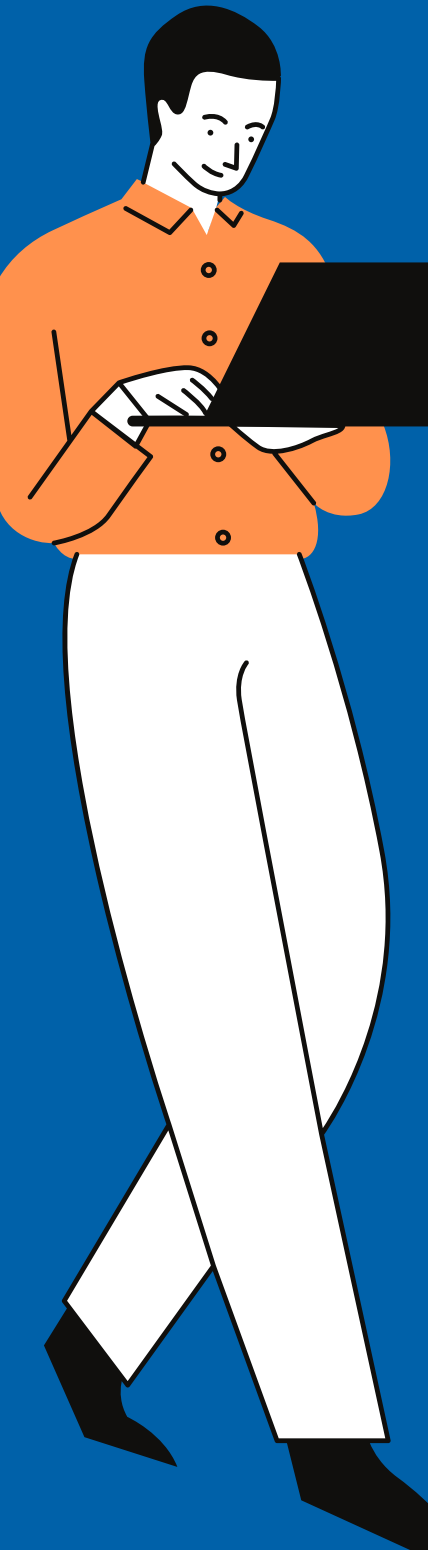


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Topic 01

Social & Communication Skills

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal communication in group discussions.
- Show confidence and professionalism when speaking in group discussion.
- Respond to questions and feedback with clarity and respect.



Share Ideas & Information in Group Discussion

● Introduction

In today's interconnected world, the ability to share ideas and information effectively in group discussions is more essential than ever. Whether in academic settings, professional environments, or community gatherings, individuals are increasingly required to communicate their thoughts clearly, listen actively, and collaborate meaningfully with others. Group discussions are not just platforms for exchanging information—they are dynamic processes that shape understanding, encourage critical thinking, and foster decision-making.

- Promotes Collaborative learnings

- Exchange of Ideas
- Improves Communication Skills
- Develops Problem-Solving Skills



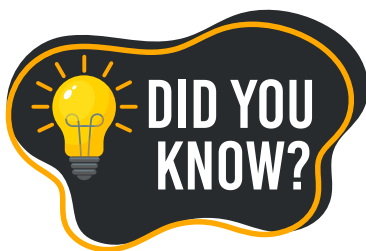
People engage in group discussions for several reasons.

Share Ideas & Information in Group Discussion

● Why Focus on Sharing Ideas and Information?

Effective participation in group discussions is a skill that does not come naturally to everyone. For some, speaking up in a group can be intimidating. For others, knowing how to express ideas concisely or support a point with appropriate evidence can be a challenge. Moreover, in diverse groups with members from various backgrounds, misinterpretation and communication breakdowns are common. Therefore, honing the ability to share ideas clearly is not just helpful—it is crucial.

Moreover, group discussions play a pivotal role in decision-making processes. From classrooms to boardrooms, solutions often emerge not from individual brilliance alone, but from collective brainstorming and debate. In this way, the ability to articulate and communicate your ideas can significantly influence the direction and success of a team or organization.



Group discussions can increase communication skills by up to 40% compared to individual study sessions.

● The Importance of Group Discussions in Various Contexts

Academic Setting

- In classrooms, group discussions help students engage with course material actively. Instead of passively receiving information from lecturers, students analyze content, voice their interpretations, and consider alternative viewpoints. This process reinforces learning and cultivates critical thinking and collaborative skills. Group assignments, case study discussions, and seminar presentations are common examples where effective idea-sharing is vital.

Professional Environment

- In the workplace, group discussions are the cornerstone of teamwork and innovation. From daily team meetings to strategic planning sessions, employees are expected to contribute insights, propose solutions, and support organizational goals through clear communication. The ability to speak up confidently and respectfully during such discussions can influence career progression and workplace harmony.

Community and Civic Engagement

- Beyond academics and the workplace, group discussions are fundamental in community development and public discourse. Town hall meetings, volunteer committees, and focus groups all rely on open dialogue to address local concerns, plan events, or advocate for change. The effectiveness of these efforts often hinges on the inclusiveness and clarity of the shared ideas.

Cont...

● Core Principles of Effective Idea Sharing



The core principles include:

- **Clarity:** Ideas must be expressed in a way that others can easily understand.
- **Relevance:** Contributions should be connected to the topic or goal of the discussion.
- **Respect:** All participants deserve to be heard and acknowledged, regardless of differing viewpoints.
- **Structure:** Well-organized ideas, supported by evidence or examples, are more persuasive and impactful.
- **Engagement:** Active participation, through both speaking and listening, is essential for collective success.

These principles are not rigid rules but guiding values that support productive and respectful interaction.

● Roles in a Group Discussion

Every participant in a group discussion tends to adopt one or more roles, whether consciously or unconsciously. These roles influence how they contribute and interact with others. Some common roles include:

1. Initiator

The person who introduces new ideas or proposes fresh perspectives. Initiators help get the conversation started or redirect it when it stalls.

2. Information Giver

This participant offers facts, data, or expert knowledge to support ideas. Their role is crucial for grounding discussions in reality.

3. Information Seeker

Asking questions and probing for clarification, this role encourages deeper thinking and understanding.

4. Clarifier or Summarizer

They interpret or paraphrase what others have said, helping to clear up misunderstandings and ensure everyone is on the same page.

5. Harmonizer

These individuals mediate conflict and foster a positive group atmosphere. They encourage respectful dialogue and collaboration.

6. Gatekeeper

A gatekeeper ensures equal participation by inviting quieter members to speak or managing dominant speakers.

7. Devil's Advocate

This person challenges ideas constructively to test their strength. While sometimes seen as argumentative, this role helps refine and strengthen group thinking.

8. Observer or Silent Member

Though less vocal, this person observes the discussion and may contribute when they feel it is most necessary or safe to do so.

Cont...

EXERCISE: Scan the QR code. Match the roles with their correct definitions



What might each of these person say in a discussion?

1. Initiator

2. Information Giver

3. Information Seeker

4. Clarifier or Summarizer

5. Harmonizer

6. Gatekeeper

7. Devil's Advocate

8. Observer or Silent Member

EXERCISE: Group the sentences correctly to the role.



● Giving Suggestions and Making Counter-Suggestions

A. The Importance of Suggestions in Group Discussions

- Suggestions are the fuel that drives forward-thinking and decision-making in group settings. They represent possible solutions, creative ideas, or actions that a group can consider. Giving suggestions invites participation and shows initiative, while counter-suggestions help refine proposals through healthy scrutiny.
- In effective group discussions, suggestions are welcomed, not imposed. The way they are presented and responded to plays a key role in maintaining a respectful and productive atmosphere.

B. Characteristics of a Good Suggestion

To be well received and valuable, a suggestion should be:

- **Relevant:** Clearly related to the topic or objective.
- **Constructive:** Aimed at solving a problem or improving an idea.
- **Clear:** Easy to understand and not overly vague.
- **Respectful:** Framed in a way that invites dialogue, not conflict.
- **Supportive:** Ideally backed by reasons, examples, or data.

Badly delivered suggestions can derail a discussion or hurt group cohesion. For example, blunt or dismissive statements like “That won’t work—here’s what we should do” can alienate others, even if the idea is valid.

Cont...

C. Useful Phrases for Giving Suggestions

Using polite and inclusive language is essential. Some effective expressions include:

- “How about we consider...?”
- “What if we tried...?”
- “I’d like to suggest that we...”
- “Maybe we could look at it this way...”
- “One possibility is to...”
- “Perhaps we should think about...”

These openers create space for others to respond thoughtfully and avoid sounding forceful.

D. Making Counter-Suggestions

A counter-suggestion offers an alternative to an existing idea, helping to broaden perspectives or point out limitations in the current proposal. The goal is not to reject others’ ideas harshly, but to enhance the decision-making process.

Steps to Make a Constructive Counter-Suggestion:

1. Acknowledge the original idea to show respect.
2. State your alternative clearly.
3. Explain your reasoning.
4. Invite further discussion.

Example:

“I see your point about finishing the report this week. However, would it be more realistic to extend it to early next week, given the data we still need to collect?”

Cont...



Useful Phrases:

- “That’s a good idea, but what if we also considered...?”
- “I understand your point, though another approach might be...”
- “Can I suggest a slightly different direction?”
- “I’d like to add another option for us to think about.”

E. Encouraging Suggestions from Others

To ensure a well-rounded discussion, participants should also create space for peers to share ideas:

- Ask open-ended questions: “What do you think about this?”
- Affirm input: “That’s an interesting suggestion—can you expand on that?”
- Pause to give others time to speak.
- Avoid dominating the discussion.

When everyone feels safe and valued, the quality and creativity of suggestions improves significantly.

● Agreeing or Disagreeing with Suggestions Courteously

A. Why Courtesy Matters

Group discussions often involve differing opinions. Disagreements are natural and even necessary for robust problem-solving. However, how you agree or disagree determines whether the discussion remains respectful or devolves into conflict.

Courteous responses:

- Keep discussions focused and collaborative.
- Encourage more participation.
- Prevent defensiveness or hostility.
- Demonstrate emotional intelligence and professionalism.

B. Agreeing Politely and Effectively

Agreeing with someone can help build consensus and strengthen ideas. However, it's more impactful when agreement is specific and thoughtful rather than vague or automatic.

Examples of Polite Agreement:

- "I completely agree with your point about..."
- "That makes sense. I was thinking along the same lines."
- "You've raised a strong point—I support that approach."
- "Exactly, and I'd like to add to that..."

Agreements can also build momentum when they incorporate follow-up ideas or reinforcement.

Example:

"Yes, I agree with your suggestion to hold the event outdoors. We could also add tents to prepare for weather changes."

Cont...

C. Disagreeing Respectfully

Disagreement should not be avoided—it's a valuable part of dialogue. What matters is **tone, intention, and framing**.

Here are strategies to disagree courteously:

1. Acknowledge the other person's view
 - This shows you have listened and understood.
2. Use neutral, non-blaming language
 - Avoid personal attacks or emotional phrases.
3. Focus on the issue, not the person
 - Keep the conversation centered on ideas, not personalities.
4. Offer reasoning and alternatives
 - Be constructive, not dismissive.
5. Invite discussion
 - Ask questions or request input on your counterpoint.

Respectful Disagreement Phrases:

- "I see what you're saying, but I wonder if we've considered..."
- "That's an interesting idea. I have a slightly different take..."
- "I'm not sure I fully agree—can I explain why?"
- "I think there might be another way to look at it..."
- "You've made a good point. However, we might also think about..."

Cont...

D. Managing Strong Disagreements

Sometimes disagreements can become tense, especially if the issue is sensitive or if group members are personally invested. Here's how to manage this:

- Stay calm even if others become emotional.
- Use "I" statements to own your opinion: "I feel that..." or "I believe..."
- Avoid absolute language like "always," "never," or "obviously."
- Agree to disagree when necessary, and move forward:
- "We may not see eye to eye on this, but let's focus on our next steps."

In academic or professional contexts, maturity is shown not by winning arguments but by resolving disagreements with tact.

E. Mediating Conflicting Suggestions

If you notice that two group members are in conflict, and you're not directly involved, you can play a mediating role. This is part of being a collaborative team member.

You might say:

- "Both of you have made valid points. Is there a way we can combine these ideas?"
- "Let's take a step back—what's our main objective here?"
- "Maybe we can test both approaches and see what works best."

This neutral, solution-focused attitude helps maintain progress and group harmony.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Scan the QR. Use the phrases you learned to indicate your agreement or disagreement on the statements given by providing your reason/s. Ask your group members whether they agree or disagree with you.



● Expressing Ideas Clearly in Group Discussions

A. Justify Opinions Through Elaboration of Main Points and Supporting Details

In any group discussion, it is not enough to simply state what you believe —you must also explain why you believe it. This process of justifying your opinions makes your contribution credible, convincing, and useful to the group.

1. Why Justification Matters

Justifying your opinion helps:

- Build your **credibility** within the group.
- Show that your views are based on **evidence**, not emotion alone.
- Encourage **critical engagement** from others.
- Advance the **quality of discussion** beyond surface-level input.

2. Components of a Justified Opinion

To justify an opinion effectively, include:

- **A Clear Main Idea.** State your opinion directly and without ambiguity.
- **Explain the rationale behind your position.** Why do you believe what you believe?
- **Supporting Evidence or Examples.** Use facts, statistics, experiences, or analogies to back up your reasoning.

Cont...

3. Example of Elaboration

Unjustified Opinion:

"I think we should do a presentation instead of a written report."

Justified Opinion:

"I believe we should do a presentation instead of a written report because it allows us to demonstrate our communication skills and engage more actively with the audience. For example, during our last project, we received more positive feedback when we presented our findings visually. It also encourages collaboration since each member can take a speaking role."

Notice how the elaborated version explains the reasoning and supports it with past experience.

4. Useful Phrases for Elaboration

- "The reason I believe this is because..."
- "Let me explain further..."
- "For example..."
- "Based on my experience..."
- "Research suggests that..."
- "To support my point..."

The more you develop your points with detail, the more impactful your contributions will be in group discussions.

● Ask for and Make Clarifications

Group discussions often involve complex ideas, unfamiliar vocabulary, or conflicting viewpoints. To ensure shared understanding, participants must feel comfortable asking for and offering clarifications.

1. Importance of Clarification

- Prevents misunderstandings or confusion.
- Encourages precise and thoughtful communication.
- Shows engagement and active listening.
- Builds confidence to participate further.

Asking for clarification is not a sign of ignorance—it's a sign of curiosity and commitment to understanding.

2. When to Ask for Clarification

- You did not fully hear or understand what was said.
- The speaker used unfamiliar or technical terms.
- A point was vague or lacked explanation.
- You believe others may also need more information.

Polite Phrases to Ask for Clarification:

- "Sorry, could you explain what you meant by...?"
- "I didn't quite catch that—can you repeat it?"
- "Do you mean that...?"
- "Can you clarify what you just said about...?"
- "Just to make sure I understand, are you saying that...?"

These questions should be asked with a respectful tone and body language. Avoid interrupting or sounding confrontational.

Cont...

3. Offering Clarification

If you sense confusion or have been asked to clarify, your goal is to restate or explain your idea more clearly.

Tips for giving clarification:

- Use **simpler language** or analogies.
- Provide **additional examples**.
- Break complex ideas into smaller parts.
- Ask if your explanation is now clear.

Example:

“Let me put that another way—what I mean is that if we start the survey next week, we’ll have enough time to analyze the data before our presentation.”

Useful Phrases for Giving Clarification:

- “Let me rephrase that...”
- “In other words...”
- “What I meant was...”
- “To put it simply...”
- “Here’s another way to look at it...”

Encouraging clarification not only enhances understanding but also promotes inclusiveness, especially in diverse or multilingual groups.

● Make Interruptions Politely

In group discussions, there are moments when you may need to interrupt:

- To correct a factual error.
- To ask a question while the point is still fresh.
- To steer the discussion back on track.
- To respond urgently before the conversation shifts.

Interruptions are natural—but if done rudely, they can damage group dynamics. When done politely, they contribute to effective communication.

1. Principles of Polite Interruption

- **Be respectful** and choose your timing carefully.
- **Use polite phrases** and soft tone.
- **Acknowledge the speaker** before making your point.
- **Keep it brief** so the flow isn't disrupted.

2. Situations That May Require Interruption

- When clarification is needed immediately.
- When the speaker has gone off-topic.
- When time is limited and the discussion needs to progress.
- When someone is being unfairly excluded.

It's also important to read **non-verbal cues** (like a pause or eye contact) to find the right moment to speak.

Cont...

3. Polite Interruption Phrases

- “Sorry to interrupt, but may I add something here?”
- “Just a quick point, if I may...”
- “Excuse me for jumping in, but I think this connects to what you’re saying.”
- “Can I interject for a moment?”
- “If I could just add to that quickly...”

These phrases help you insert your thoughts without sounding aggressive or dismissive.

4. Responding to Interruption

If you are the one being interrupted, respond gracefully:

- Allow the point if it’s relevant: “Go ahead.”
- Ask to continue after the point: “Let me finish this thought and then I’d love to hear your input.”

If an interruption feels rude or unjustified, address it calmly:

“I’ll get to your point in a moment—can I just finish what I’m saying?”

This balance of firmness and courtesy preserves respect in the group.

EXERCISE

Task 1.0

Instructions: Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What is a key benefit of justifying your opinion in a group discussion?

- A. To dominate the conversation
- B. To avoid giving examples
- C. To support your idea with clarity
- D. To disagree with others easily

2. Which phrase is appropriate for making a counter-suggestion?

- A. "That's not right."
- B. "That won't work."
- C. "Have we considered another option?"
- D. "We should ignore that."

3. What should you do before offering a suggestion?

- A. Interrupt the speaker
- B. Wait until someone else agrees
- C. Understand the topic and the group's needs
- D. Raise your voice

4. Which of the following is the most polite way to interrupt?

- A. "Let me speak now."
- B. "Can I just add something here?"
- C. "Stop for a second."
- D. "You've talked enough."

5. A good suggestion should be:

- A. Vague and brief
- B. Aggressive and direct
- C. Relevant and constructive
- D. Passive and quiet

EXERCISE

Cont...

6. Which of the following best describes elaboration in group discussions?

- A. Repeating your idea several times
- B. Using examples and reasons to explain your point
- C. Interrupting to get attention
- D. Avoiding difficult topics

7. Which is a good phrase for giving a suggestion?

- A. "You should do this."
- B. "How about we try...?"
- C. "I already decided."
- D. "That's your problem."

8. What does it mean to clarify a point?

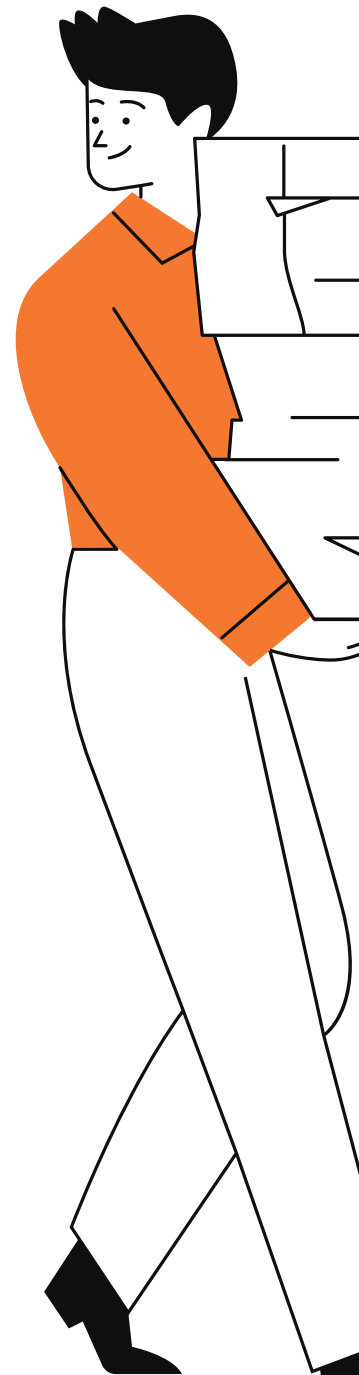
- A. To change the topic
- B. To explain an idea more clearly
- C. To criticize someone's idea
- D. To ask for help

9. When is it acceptable to interrupt during a discussion?

- A. Anytime you have a thought
- B. Only when the speaker pauses
- C. When clarification is urgently needed
- D. Both B and C

10. What is an example of a respectful disagreement?

- A. "You're wrong."
- B. "I completely disagree with that."
- C. "I understand your view, but I see it differently."
- D. "Let's just stop talking."



EXERCISE

Cont...

11. What is the role of a harmonizer in a discussion?

- A. To argue against ideas
- B. To create conflict
- C. To maintain peace and encourage respectful communication
- D. To dominate the conversation

12. What should you do if you don't understand what someone said?

- A. Ignore it
- B. Ask for clarification politely
- C. Wait until they leave
- D. Change the subject

13. Which of the following contributes to effective group discussion?

- A. Speaking non-stop
- B. Listening actively
- C. Ignoring others' ideas
- D. Being sarcastic

14. How can you justify your opinion?

- A. Provide examples and reasons
- B. Speak louder than others
- C. Insist you are right
- D. Say "because I said so"

15. Which is a polite phrase to ask for clarification?

- A. "What are you talking about?"
- B. "Repeat that!"
- C. "Could you please explain what you mean?"
- D. "That makes no sense."

EXERCISE

Cont...

16. Why is it important to make interruptions politely?

- A. To show dominance
- B. To create confusion
- C. To maintain respect and flow in conversation
- D. To challenge the leader

17. What is the best way to respond to someone who disagrees with you?

- A. Argue louder
- B. Listen and respond respectfully
- C. Walk away
- D. Ignore them

18. What helps ensure everyone understands a discussion point?

- A. Speaking quickly
- B. Avoiding explanation
- C. Offering clarification when needed
- D. Disagreeing with everyone

19. Which of the following phrases is suitable for building on someone's idea?

- A. "That's wrong."
- B. "That reminds me—maybe we can also..."
- C. "Forget what they said."
- D. "Let's move on."

20. What is one sign of active listening?

- A. Nodding or making eye contact
- B. Using a phone while others talk
- C. Talking while someone else is speaking
- D. Not responding at all

EXERCISE

Task 1.1

Instructions: Write a brief answer for each question.

1. What are two characteristics of a good suggestion in group discussions?

2. How do you justify your opinion in a group conversation?

3. Give two polite ways to disagree with someone's point.

4. Why is elaboration important when giving your opinion?

5. Provide an example of a phrase to use when making a clarification.

6. What should you do if you didn't understand a term used during the discussion?

7. Write two useful phrases to politely interrupt a discussion.

EXERCISE

Cont...

8. How can making counter-suggestions contribute to a discussion?

9. What role does tone of voice play in expressing agreement or disagreement?

10. Provide two reasons why asking for clarification is a positive action.

11. What is the impact of interrupting rudely in a group discussion?

12. What steps can you take to prepare before giving a suggestion?

13. Give an example of elaborating a main point using a real-life situation.

14. How does making clarifications help in preventing misunderstanding?

15. What should you do after interrupting someone to add a point?

EXERCISE

Task 1.2

Instructions: Write **T (True)** if the statement is correct, or **F (False)** if it is incorrect.

1. ___ Giving suggestions in a group discussion means forcing others to accept your idea.
2. ___ It is important to provide reasons and examples to support your opinions.
3. ___ Interrupting someone in the middle of their sentence is always acceptable in group discussions.
4. ___ You can ask for clarification when you do not understand something in the discussion.
5. ___ A counter-suggestion is used to completely reject another person's opinion.
6. ___ Elaborating your main points helps others to better understand your message.
7. ___ It is not necessary to listen actively when others are speaking in a group.
8. ___ "What if we tried another approach?" is an example of a polite counter-suggestion.
9. ___ Clarifying your point can help avoid misunderstandings in group discussions.
10. ___ You should always agree with others in group discussions to avoid conflict.

EXERCISE

Cont...

11. ___ Non-verbal cues such as eye contact and nodding show that you are listening.
12. ___ Being polite and respectful when interrupting makes group communication more effective.
13. ___ It is rude to ask for clarification during a group discussion.
14. ___ Group discussions are more productive when only one or two members participate actively.
15. ___ Making suggestions is a way to contribute constructively to group decision-making.
16. ___ Saying "I disagree, and here's why..." is a courteous way to express a different opinion.
17. ___ Elaborating a point means giving extra, unrelated information.
18. ___ Good group discussion skills include giving, responding to, and refining suggestions.
19. ___ People with different communication styles can contribute effectively if group norms are respected.
20. ___ Using examples is not necessary when sharing ideas in group discussions.

EXERCISE

Task 1.3

Instructions: Dialogue Practice (**Role Play**). The objective is to help learners practise giving suggestions, responding respectfully, justifying opinions, asking for clarification, and interrupting politely in realistic discussion settings.

Scenario 1: Giving and Responding to a Suggestion

Context: Your team is planning a class fundraising project. One member (Student A) has a suggestion for the project idea.

Roles:

- **Student A:** Suggests holding a bake sale.
- **Student B:** Responds (agree or disagree politely) and elaborates.
- **Student C:** Builds on the idea or gives a counter-suggestion.

Objective: Practice giving a clear suggestion and responding respectfully with reasons or alternatives.

Scenario 2: Asking for and Giving Clarification

Context: During a group discussion about a science project, one team member uses a term or explains something in a way that others don't fully understand.

Roles:

- **Student A:** Explains a technical idea (e.g., "renewable energy sources") using jargon.
- **Student B:** Politely asks for clarification.
- **Student A:** Responds by simplifying the explanation.

Objective: Practise how to request clarification respectfully and restate ideas clearly.

EXERCISE

Scenario 3: Making a Counter-Suggestion Respectfully

Context: The group is discussing where to hold the next club meeting. One member suggests a local café.

Roles:

- **Student A:** Suggests the café.
- **Student B:** Politely offers a counter-suggestion (e.g., library).
- **Student C:** Mediates and tries to find a compromise.

Objective: Learn how to offer a different idea while maintaining respect and teamwork.

Scenario 4: Interrupting Politely

Context: A group member is speaking for a long time. Another member wants to briefly add a relevant point before the topic changes.

Roles:

- **Student A:** Speaking and explaining their view.
- **Student B:** Politely interrupts to contribute a quick point.
- **Student C:** Observes and gives feedback on tone and timing.

Objective: Practise how to interrupt constructively without cutting off others or being rude.

Scenario 5: Resolving Disagreement with Courtesy

Context: Group members have different views about how to divide tasks for a group assignment.

Roles:

- **Student A:** Believes in equal division of work by task.
- **Student B:** Thinks the work should be divided by strengths.
- **Student C:** Helps resolve the disagreement.

Objective: Practise resolving differences respectfully while keeping the discussion productive.

Topic 02

Reading Skills

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this chapter, you will able to:

- Identify different types of reading strategies.
- Recognize the main idea and supporting details in a text.
- Understand the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues.



Demonstrate understanding of current issues/ topics of interest

● Introduction

In the information age, people are constantly exposed to news, trends, and debates about various social, economic, environmental, and political issues. “Current issues” refer to important events, problems, or discussions happening in society at the present time. Examples include climate change, online privacy, artificial intelligence, mental health awareness, inflation, and education reform.

Meanwhile, “topics of interest” are issues or themes that are personally, professionally, or academically relevant to an individual or group. These may include global issues or niche subjects related to fields such as science, business, culture, or technology.

● Why Understanding Current Issues Matters

Understanding current issues is essential for several reasons:

- **Academic success:** Many essays, discussions, and presentations require analysis of contemporary topics.
- **Critical thinking:** Engaging with real-world issues fosters the ability to evaluate sources and form informed opinions.
- **Effective communication:** Being well-informed enhances your ability to speak and write persuasively.
- **Civic responsibility:** Understanding societal problems helps individuals become responsible global citizens.
- **Career relevance:** Employers value candidates who are aware of developments in their field or industry.

● Sources of Information on Current Issues

Reliable sources help readers access accurate and balanced perspectives. These include:

Credible News Platforms:

- BBC News, The Guardian, CNN, Al Jazeera
- Local newspapers and online portals

Academic Journals and Magazines:

- JSTOR, ScienceDirect, Time Magazine, National Geographic

Official Websites and Reports:

- Government websites (e.g., WHO, UN, Ministry of Health)
- NGO reports (e.g., UNICEF, Amnesty International)

● How to Demonstrate Understanding

Understanding an issue involves more than repeating information. It requires processing, interpreting, and presenting what you've read or heard.

A. Summarizing the Issue

- Condense the key ideas into a few sentences
- Avoid unnecessary details
- Mention the source if possible

B. Identifying Stakeholders and Perspectives

- Who is affected?
- What are the different viewpoints?
- Are there cultural, economic, or political dimensions?

● Skimming and Scanning Texts

Reading is not always a slow, detailed process. In today's fast-paced world, students, professionals, and lifelong learners must process large volumes of information efficiently. Two essential reading strategies for doing so are **skimming** and **scanning**.

A. What Is Skimming?

Skimming is a **reading technique used to get the general idea or main points** of a text without reading every word. It is useful when you want to get an overview, preview a topic, or decide whether a text is relevant.

When to Skim:

- To get the gist of a news article
- Before a lecture to preview reading material
- When you're selecting relevant sources from search results
- To decide whether a document is useful for research

How to Skim Effectively:

Read the title and subheadings

- These give clues about the content and organization.

Read the introduction and conclusion

- These parts often summarize the key points

Glance through the first sentences of each paragraph

- Known as "topic sentences," they often carry the main idea.

Notice bold, italic, or underlined words

- These usually indicate important terms.

Observe visuals like charts, bullet lists, or diagrams

- They can provide summaries or highlight relationships.

Cont...

B. What Is Scanning?

Scanning is a **targeted reading technique used to find specific information** such as dates, statistics, keywords, or names. You don't read every word—you move your eyes quickly across the text to locate a particular detail.

When to Scan:

- Looking for a specific figure or fact
- Finding the definition of a term
- Searching for a name, date, or quotation
- Extracting evidence for a report

How to Scan Effectively:

Know what you're looking for

- Have a keyword or question in mind (e.g., "When was the first vaccine introduced?").

Use visual cues

- Look for numbers, capital letters, bold fonts, or bullet points.

Move your eyes quickly down the page

- Don't read every word—just glance.

Focus on signal words

- Words like "in contrast," "for example," "however," may point to important facts.

Scanning Practice Example:

Text Excerpt:

"According to a 2023 UN report, nearly 68% of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2050, up from 56% today."

Scanning Task:

Q: What percentage of people will live in cities by 2050?

Cont...

C. Differences Between Skimming and Scanning

Feature	Skimming	Scanning
Purpose	Get the main idea	Find specific details
Reading style	Fast overview	Focused eye movement
Coverage	Large sections or whole text	Small part of the text
Outcome	General understanding	Precise information
Used for	Pre-reading, summaries	Fact-checking, test prep

D. Why Skimming and Scanning Matter in Understanding Current Issues

Both techniques are vital for efficiently handling the massive flow of information in modern life. When studying current issues:

- **Skimming** helps you quickly identify articles that are relevant to your topic.
- **Scanning** helps you locate data, quotations, and statistics to support your analysis.

Example:

You are researching “youth unemployment in Southeast Asia.”

- **Skim** several reports to find the ones most relevant to Malaysia and the Philippines.
- **Scan** those reports to find unemployment rates, government responses, and expert opinions.

● Identifying Appropriate Meaning of Words as Used in Context

Understanding vocabulary in context is a critical reading skill, especially when dealing with current issues and complex texts. This section will help learners identify the correct meaning of words based on their usage, which improves overall comprehension, analytical skills, and accurate communication.

A. Importance of Vocabulary-in-Context Skills

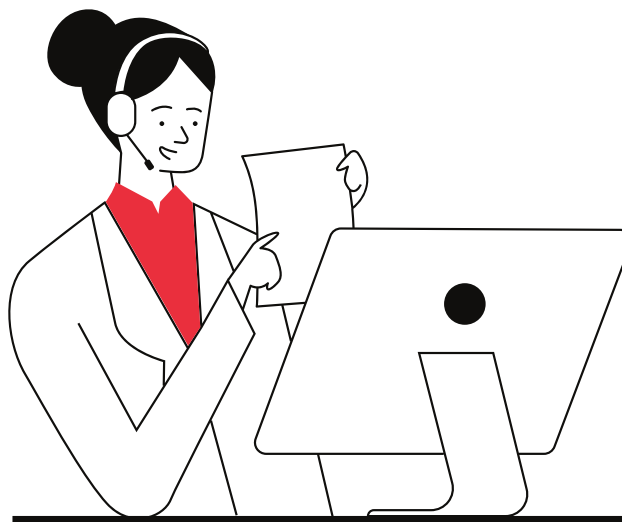
Words can have multiple meanings, and their exact meaning often depends on the context. Being able to identify the appropriate definition:

- Enhances comprehension of articles, essays, and news reports
- Helps readers avoid misunderstandings
- Builds academic and professional vocabulary
- Develops confidence in interpreting unfamiliar texts

Example:

"The minister addressed the pressing issue of inflation."

- Here, "pressing" means urgent, not something related to ironing.



Cont...

B. Techniques for Understanding Words in Context

Readers don't need to check a dictionary for every unfamiliar word. Instead, they can use strategies such as:

1. Using Context Clues

Context clues are hints found in surrounding words, sentences, or paragraphs.

Types of context clues:

Definition Clue: The meaning is given directly.

- "Ecosystems, or natural communities of plants and animals, are affected by climate change."

Synonym Clue: A similar word is used.

- "The policy was detrimental, or harmful, to small businesses."

Antonym Clue: An opposite word shows contrast.

- "Unlike the transparent government, the previous administration was secretive."

Example Clue: Examples help explain the meaning.

- "Renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric, are growing rapidly."

Inference Clue: The reader must guess the meaning from the overall context.

- "He was so frugal that he reused tea bags."

2. Breaking Down Word Structure (Morphology)

Understanding prefixes, suffixes, and root words can help:

- Un- (not), pre- (before), -less (without), bio (life), tele (far)
- Example: "Unpredictable" = not able to be predicted

● Identifying Significant Points of Current Issues/Topics of Interest

A. Understanding Main Ideas and Supporting Details

When reading about current issues, it is essential to distinguish between the main points and the details that support them. The main idea reflects the author's central message or argument, while supporting details include examples, data, and explanations.

B. Strategies to Identify Key Points

- Focus on the introduction and conclusion
- Look at topic sentences of paragraphs
- Highlight repeated themes or terms
- Take notes and annotate as you read

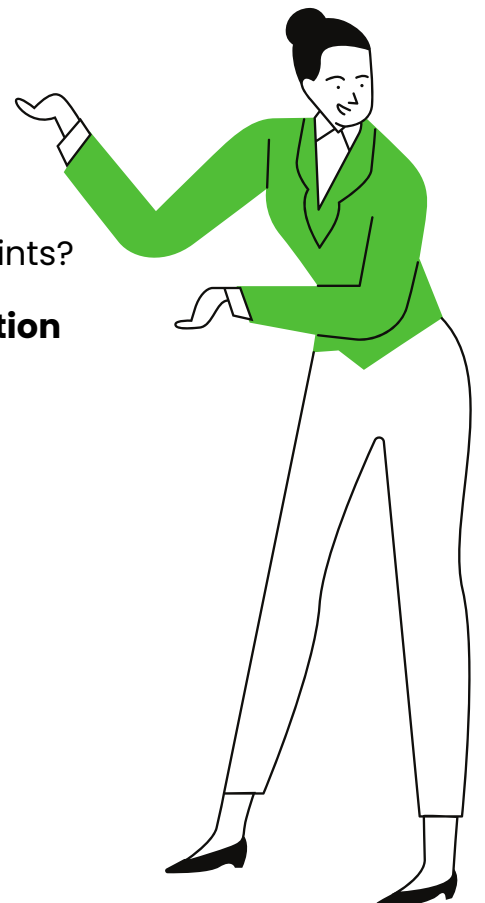
C. Practice Identifying Main Points

Read a short article and answer:

- What is the issue being discussed?
- What are the author's main arguments?
- What evidence is used to support those points?

D. Tools for Summarising Significant Information

- Bullet point summaries
- Paragraph synthesis
- Timelines for historical issues
- Visual tools like charts or tables



Cont...

● Making Logical Predictions or Suggestions for Solutions

A. Predicting Outcomes Based on Trends

Readers should use facts and evidence from the text to make logical predictions about what might happen next. Clues include:

- Statistical trends
- Political or social movements
- Economic indicators

B. Formulating Solutions

When suggesting solutions, ensure they are:

- Realistic
- Based on evidence
- Respectful of stakeholders

C. Sentence Starters for Predictions or Solutions

- "If this trend continues, then..."
- "One possible solution could be..."
- "To address this issue, authorities might..."

● Writing in Response to a Stimulus

What Is a Stimulus? A stimulus could be a text, image, question, graph, or quote that prompts a written response. Responding to a stimulus requires:

- Understanding the key message
- Forming an opinion or analysis
- Structuring a response clearly

Depict values from text/ stimuli

● Identifying Causes, Effects, and Values in Texts

A. Cause and Effect Relationships

Understanding cause and effect is essential for analyzing current issues in any text. This relationship explains why something happens (cause) and what happens as a result* (effect). Being able to identify this relationship helps readers interpret the consequences of actions, events, and decisions.

Why It Matters:

- Helps understand the sequence of events
- Aids in drawing conclusions and making predictions
- Enhances comprehension of arguments and reasoning in texts

B. Expanded Examples of Cause and Effect

Example 1: Environmental Issue

“Due to deforestation in tropical regions, many animal species have lost their natural habitats.”

- **Cause:** Deforestation in tropical regions
- **Effect:** Animal species lose their natural habitats

Example 2: Social Issue

“The lack of affordable housing has led to an increase in urban homelessness.”

- **Cause:** Lack of affordable housing
- **Effect:** Increase in urban homelessness

Cont...



Example 3: Economic Issue

“The government's decision to cut fuel subsidies resulted in a sharp rise in transportation costs.”

- **Cause:** Cutting fuel subsidies
- **Effect:** Rise in transportation costs

Example 4: Education Issue

“Because schools were closed during the pandemic, many students experienced learning loss.”

- **Cause:** School closures during the pandemic
- **Effect:** Students experienced learning loss

C. How to Identify Cause and Effect in a Text

- Step 1: Highlight signal words that indicate a cause or effect
- Step 2: Ask: What happened? Why did it happen?
- Step 3: Look for supporting evidence (data, expert opinion, examples)
- Step 4: Summarize the relationship in your own words

Cont...

● Using Appropriate Vocabulary to Describe or Depict Values

A. Key Vocabulary for Values

Being able to articulate values accurately is crucial when discussing social, ethical, and cultural topics. This section introduces useful vocabulary that expresses different types of values clearly and appropriately in both written and spoken communication.

<u>Value</u>	<u>Useful Vocabulary</u>
Respect	courteous, considerate, tolerant
Honesty	truthful, transparent, sincere
Responsibility	accountable, dependable, trustworthy
Fairness	impartial, just, unbiased
Compassion	empathetic, kind, supportive
Cooperation	collaborative, team-oriented, helpful
Perseverance	determined, committed, resilient
Integrity	principled, ethical, moral
Loyalty	devoted, faithful, reliable
Courage	brave, fearless, bold

B. How to Use Value-Based Vocabulary in Sentences

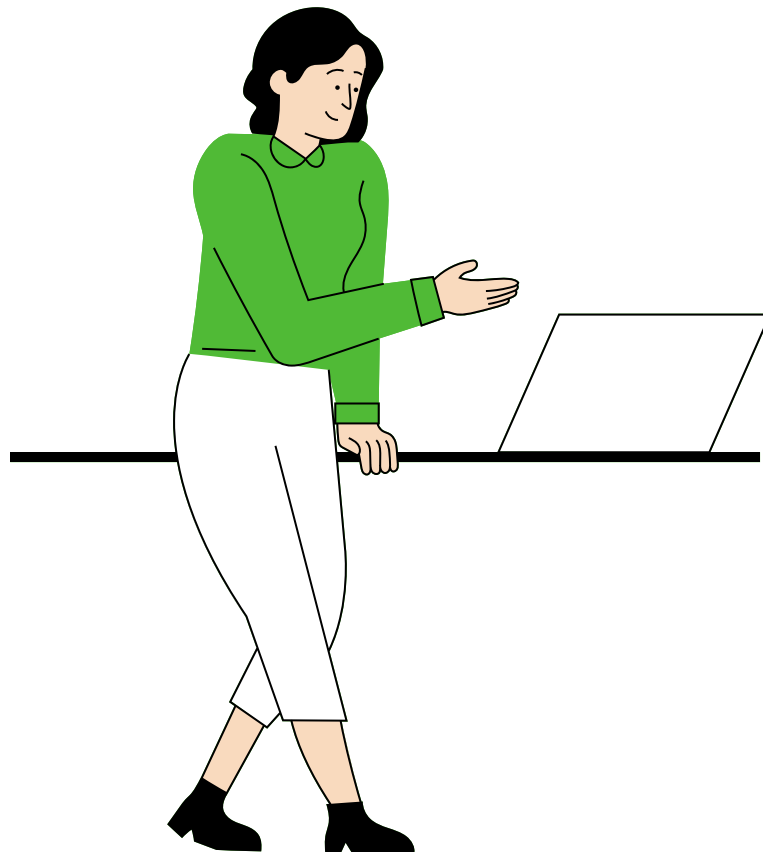
Using appropriate vocabulary allows learners to convey values clearly and powerfully. Here are some examples:

- “The student was **accountable** for completing her group assignment on time.”

Cont...

- “Despite the challenges, the team remained resilient and focused.”
- “The leader acted with integrity, making fair decisions for all involved.”
- “Her empathetic nature helped calm the worried children.”
- “The community worked together in a collaborative effort to clean the park.”

Using precise and appropriate vocabulary to describe values enriches communication and strengthens critical thinking. It enables learners to discuss personal beliefs, societal norms, and ethical dilemmas with clarity and conviction. These skills are especially valuable in discussions, presentations, writing tasks, and interpreting texts that address moral or social concerns.



EXERCISE

Task 2.0

Instructions: Read the questions carefully and answer all questions.

1. What is scanning?

2. What is skimming?

3. Looking through a Google search list is an example of ...?

4. Looking up the meaning of a word in the Dictionary is an example of...?

5. Looking through a magazine to check what articles to read is an example of...?

6. Scrolling through Instagram to see what's popular is an example of...?

7. Looking where to buy Avengers movie in a magazine is an example of...?

EXERCISE

Task 2.1

Instructions: Scan the recipe below and answer all questions.

Simple White Cake

Ingredients:

- 1 cup white sugar
- ½ cup unsalted butter
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 ¾ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ cup milk



Note: The image is generated using Canva AI

Method:

- Gather all ingredients. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour a 9-inch square cake pan.
- Beat sugar and butter together in a mixing bowl with an electric mixer until lighter in color and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating briefly after each addition. Mix in vanilla.
- Combine flour and baking powder in a separate bowl. Add the flour mixture to the wet ingredients in batches, alternating with milk, and beat the cake batter briefly after each addition.
- Pour cake batter into the prepared pan.
- Bake cake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 30 to 40 minutes.
- Remove from the oven and cool completely. Frost and enjoy!

Prep Time : 10 mins

Cook Time : 30 mins

Total Time : 40 mins

Servings : 12

Cook's Note

I have also made this cake in a 10-inch round pan and got similar results. You can use this recipe to make 12 cupcakes. They will take less time to bake, about 20 to 25 minutes.

EXERCISE

Cont...

1. How much sugar and butter are required?

2. What is the measure of flour and baking powder used?

3. Is milk included, and in what quantity?

4. At what temperature should the oven be preheated?

5. What is the baking time range, and what's the doneness test?

6. What's the total time for this recipe?

7. How many servings does it yield?

8. What pan sizes are suggested as alternatives?

EXERCISE

Task 2.2

Instructions: Scan the recipe below and answer all questions.

Lemon Herb Chicken

Ingredients:

- 2 (5-ounce) skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- 1 medium lemon, juiced, divided
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pinch dried oregano
- 2 sprigs fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish



Note: The image is generated using Canva AI

Method:

- Place chicken in a bowl; pour 1/2 of the lemon juice over chicken and season with salt.
- Heat olive oil in a medium skillet over medium-low heat. Place chicken into hot oil. Add remaining lemon juice and oregano; season with black pepper. Cook chicken until golden brown and the juices run clear, 5 to 10 minutes per side. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read at least 165 degrees F (74 degrees C).
- Garnish chicken with parsley to serve.

Prep Time : 15 mins

Cook Time : 10 mins

Total Time : 15 mins

Servings : 2

Nutrition Facts (per serving)

265 Calories

11g Fat

2g Carbs

37g Proteins

EXERCISE

Cont...

1. What is the total time required for the recipe?

2. How many servings does the recipe yield?

3. How many chicken breasts are needed?

4. What oil is used and how much?

5. Which herbs and seasonings are included?

6. How hot should the skillet be?

7. What garnish tops the chicken at serving?

8. How many calories per serving?

EXERCISE




Task 2.3

Instructions: Scan the Malaysian television guide below and answer all questions.

		
<p>19.00 The One Show The One Show team bring viewers the stories that matter from across the country.</p>	<p>19.00 Escape to the country A couple from Wimbledon want to escape the suburbs for countryside living in East Sussex.</p>	<p>19.00 Top Gear The team sets out to end the chaos that snowfall brings to Britain every year.</p>
<p>19.30 Waterloo Road Sambuca enlists Lauren and Finn's help to track her father down in Blackpool.</p>	<p>19.30 Springwatch Iolo Williams takes to the water to reveal puffins at their best - diving for fish.</p>	
<p>20.27 BBC News and Regional News The latest national and international news stories from the BBC, followed by the weather.</p>		<p>20.00 Great Movie Mistakes Robert Webb uncovers the clangers and gaffes in Hollywood's biggest blockbusters.</p>

EXERCISE

Cont...

		
<p>20.30 In with the Flynnns Liam and Caroline work extra shifts, but who is looking after the kids?</p>	<p>20.30 Springwatch Unsprung Kate Humble, Chris Packham and Iolo Williams answer audience questions.</p>	
<p>21.00 The Apprentice Lord Sugar instructs the teams to build junk collection businesses.</p>	<p>21.00 Wonderland Film that climbs aboard with four families as they</p>	<p>21.00 Cannabis: What's the Harm? Exploring the world of organised crime linked to the supply of cannabis in the UK.</p>
<p>22.00 BBC News at Ten Latest national and international news, with reports from BBC correspondents worldwide.</p>	<p>22.00 The Apprentice: You're Fired This week's task of making money from rubbish ended with someone being dumped.</p>	<p>22.00 Kill Bill: Vol 2 The assassin, The Bride, concludes her ruthless quest for revenge against her nemesis.</p>

EXERCISE

Task 2.4

Instructions: Skim the text below and answer all questions. You are given 3 minutes to complete the task.



Note: The image is generated using Canva AI

Pulp Friction

Every second, one hectare of the world's rainforest is destroyed. That's equivalent to two football fields. An area the size of New York City is lost every day. In a year, that adds up to 31 million hectares -- more than the land area of Poland. This alarming rate of destruction has serious consequences for the environment; scientists estimate, for example, that 137 species of plant, insect or animal become extinct every day due to logging. In British Columbia, where, since 1990, thirteen rainforest valleys have been clear-cut, 142 species of salmon have already become extinct, and the habitats of grizzly bears, wolves and many other creatures are threatened. Logging, however, provides jobs, profits, taxes for the government and cheap products of all kinds for consumers, so the government is reluctant to restrict or control it.

1. The main idea of paragraph one is:

- A) Scientists are worried about New York City.
- B) Logging is destroying the rainforests.
- C) Governments make money from logging.
- D) Salmon are an endangered species.

EXERCISE

Cont...

Much of Canada's forestry production goes towards making pulp and paper. According to the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, Canada supplies 34% of the world's wood pulp and 49% of its newsprint paper. If these paper products could be produced in some other way, Canadian forests could be preserved. Recently, a possible alternative way of producing paper has been suggested by agriculturalists and environmentalists: a plant called hemp.

2. The main idea of paragraph two is:

- A) Canadian forests are especially under threat.
- B) Hemp is a kind of plant.
- C) Canada is a major supplier of paper and pulp.
- D) Canada produces a lot of hemp.

Hemp has been cultivated by many cultures for thousands of years. It produces fibre which can be made into paper, fuel, oils, textiles, food, and rope. For centuries, it was essential to the economies of many countries because it was used to make the ropes and cables used on sailing ships; colonial expansion and the establishment of a world-wide trading network would not have been feasible without hemp. Nowadays, ships' cables are usually made from wire or synthetic fibres, but scientists are now suggesting that the cultivation of hemp should be revived for the production of paper and pulp. According to its proponents, four times as much paper can be produced from land using hemp rather than trees, and many environmentalists believe that the large-scale cultivation of hemp could reduce the pressure on Canada's forests.

3. The main idea of paragraph three is:

- A) Paper could be made from hemp instead of trees.
- B) Hemp is useful for fuel.
- C) Hemp has been cultivated throughout history.
- D) Hemp is essential for building large ships.

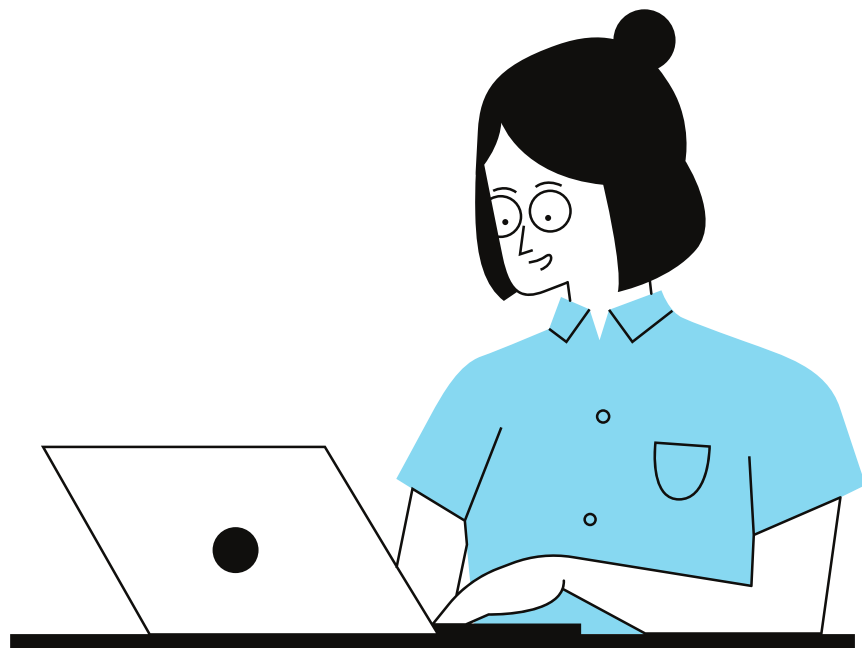
EXERCISE

Cont...

However, there is a problem: hemp is illegal in many countries of the world. This plant, so useful for fibre, rope, oil, fuel and textiles, is a species of cannabis, related to the plant from which marijuana is produced. In the late 1930s, a movement to ban the drug marijuana began to gather force, resulting in the eventual banning of the cultivation not only of the plant used to produce the drug, but also of the commercial fibre-producing hemp plant. Although both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson grew hemp in large quantities on their land, any American growing the plant today would soon find himself in prison -- even though marijuana cannot be produced from the hemp plant, since it contains almost no THC (the active ingredient in the drug).

4. The main idea of paragraph four is:

- A) Hemp is used to produce drugs.
- B) Many famous people used to grow hemp.
- C) It is illegal to grow hemp.
- D) Hemp is useful for producing many things.



EXERCISE

Cont...

In recent years, two major movements for legalization have been gathering strength. One group of activists believes that ALL cannabis should be legal -- both the hemp plant and the marijuana plant -- and that the use of the drug marijuana should not be an offense. They argue that marijuana is not dangerous or addictive, and that it is used by large numbers of people who are not criminals but productive members of society. They also point out that marijuana is less toxic than alcohol or tobacco. The other legalization movement is concerned only with the hemp plant used to produce fibre; this group wants to make it legal to cultivate the plant and sell the fibre for paper and pulp production. This second group has had a major triumph recently: in 1997, Canada legalized the farming of hemp for fibre. For the first time since 1938, hundreds of farmers are planting this crop, and soon we can expect to see pulp and paper produced from this new source.

(NOTE: This activity was written before 2018, when Canada legalized the sale of recreational marijuana.)

5. The main idea of paragraph five is:

- A) Hemp should be illegal because it is dangerous.
- B) Recently, many people have been working to legalize hemp.
- C) Hemp was made illegal in 1938.
- D) Marijuana is not a dangerous drug.



EXERCISE

Task 2.5

Instructions: Read the sentence and choose the correct meaning of the underlined word.

1. "The workers decided to strike after negotiations failed."
 - a) hit something
 - b) find gold
 - c) protest
2. "The article addresses the issue of internet safety for children."
 - a) magazine copy
 - b) topic/problem
 - c) result
3. "He gave a charged response to the criticism."
 - a) financial
 - b) emotional
 - c) electrical

Task 2.6

Instructions: Read each sentence and underline the cause, then circle the effect.

1. "Because of rising oil prices, inflation has increased."
2. "Global warming results in melting glaciers and rising sea levels."
3. "Owing to the new tax policy, many small businesses are struggling."
4. "The protests began due to widespread public dissatisfaction with the law."
5. "Since the education budget was cut, some schools lack basic supplies."

EXERCISE

Cont...

6. "The government's new policy led to a decrease in carbon emissions."
7. "As a result of heavy rainfall, the river overflowed its banks."
8. "Due to lack of training, the staff made several errors."
9. "The increase in screen time among teenagers has caused sleep problems."
10. "Unemployment rose because many factories were closed during the lockdown."
11. "Due to poor road conditions, the number of accidents has increased."
12. "He missed the exam because he did not hear his alarm clock."
13. "Rising temperatures have led to the extinction of certain plant species."
14. "Because the company ignored safety protocols, there was a workplace injury."
15. "As a result of the pandemic, many people started working remotely."
16. "Since demand for electric vehicles is growing, more charging stations are being built."
17. "Owing to a shortage of skilled workers, construction projects are delayed."
18. "The drought led to poor agricultural yields last season."
19. "Due to the introduction of online classes, students are spending more time indoors."

EXERCISE

Task 2.7

Instructions: Complete the Cause or Effect. Fill in the missing cause or effect.

1. **Cause:** The country experienced a severe drought.

Effect: _____

2. **Cause:** _____

Effect: There was a significant drop in tourism revenue.

3. **Cause:** The education system was reformed.

Effect: _____

4. **Cause:** _____

Effect: Traffic congestion was reduced by 30%.

5. **Cause:** A power outage occurred in the area.

Effect: _____

6. **Cause:** _____

Effect: The forest fire destroyed hundreds of trees.

7. **Cause:** The online platform crashed during peak hours.

Effect: _____

8. **Cause:** _____

Effect: The animals fled the forest.

9. **Cause:** The restaurant received excellent reviews.

Effect: _____

10. **Cause:** _____

Effect: The exam results improved across the country.

EXERCISE

Cont...

11. **Cause:** A large donation was made to the hospital.

Effect: _____

12. **Cause:** _____

Effect: The water supply was contaminated.

13. **Cause:** She worked hard throughout the semester.

Effect: _____

14. **Cause:** _____

Effect: The city's crime rate decreased significantly.

15. **Cause:** A global shortage of semiconductors.

Effect: _____

16. **Cause:** _____

Effect: Students were awarded scholarships for their achievements.

17. **Cause:** The museum launched a social media campaign.

Effect: _____

18. **Cause:** _____

Effect: Residents were evacuated from the coastal town.

19. **Cause:** The local council invested in public parks.

Effect: _____

20. **Cause:** _____

Effect: The company experienced record profits for the quarter.

EXERCISE

Task 2.8

Instructions: Practice Activity A: Word Choice in Context. Write the appropriate value-based word in the blank.

1. The teacher praised the student for being _____ when he returned the lost wallet.
2. In times of crisis, _____ among neighbors becomes essential.
3. She was known for her _____ approach to solving conflicts fairly.
4. The fireman showed great _____ by entering the burning building.
5. He remained _____ to his team even when they were losing.
6. The team demonstrated _____ by not giving up after several setbacks.
7. They appreciated his _____ response, even though the truth was difficult to hear.
8. The volunteers acted with _____ as they distributed food to flood victims.
9. Her _____ character made her trustworthy in every situation.
10. The group needed someone _____ to guide the project to completion.

EXERCISE

Task 2.9

Instructions: Match the value-based vocabulary word to the scenario.

Scenario	Value Word
A student apologizes and takes ownership after making a mistake.	
A rescue worker enters a dangerous area to save lives.	
A friend refuses to gossip, even under pressure.	
A team shares responsibilities and supports each other in a project.	
A citizen reports corrupt practices to protect public interest.	
A person listens patiently to a friend in distress.	
A leader treats all group members equally and listens to every voice.	
An employee keeps promises and consistently meets deadlines.	

Topic 03

Oral Presentation Skills

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this chapter, you will able to:

- Prepare and deliver a well-organized oral presentation with clear introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Use appropriate voice projection, tone, and body language to engage the audience.



Oral Presentation Skills

● Introduction

In today's academic and professional landscapes, strong oral presentation skills are no longer optional—they are essential. Whether delivering a project report, pitching an idea, explaining research findings, or leading a seminar discussion, the ability to speak confidently, clearly, and persuasively can define a student's or professional's success.

Oral presentations combine language proficiency, critical thinking, planning, creativity, and audience awareness. They are not only about speaking well but also about structuring ideas, supporting arguments with evidence, and using tools effectively to enhance message delivery.

● Brainstorming and Selecting Presentation Topics

A. Why Topic Selection Matters

An oral presentation lives or dies by its topic. Selecting the right topic is the first, and perhaps most important, step in preparing for a successful presentation. A well-chosen topic determines the speaker's level of engagement, the audience's interest, and the effectiveness of the overall message. It is the foundation upon which content, structure, delivery, and audience interaction are built.

A strong topic has several key benefits. First, it motivates the presenter. When speakers are genuinely interested in their subject, their enthusiasm is evident, making their presentation more passionate, energetic, and persuasive. Second, a well-defined topic helps the audience stay focused. A clear and purposeful topic allows listeners to follow the presenter's ideas more easily, reducing confusion and increasing retention.

choosing a relevant and timely topic ensures that the content feels current and meaningful. Presentations on outdated or overused topics may struggle to capture attention or add value. On the other hand, a fresh and well-scoped topic can stand out, prompting curiosity and engagement.

In summary, topic selection is not a trivial task—it is a strategic decision that shapes every aspect of the presentation. A thoughtful choice can elevate a presentation from ordinary to impactful.

● Planning and Organising the Presentation

A well-structured oral presentation doesn't just happen—it is the result of thoughtful planning and strategic organisation. In this section, learners will explore how to prepare their content, sequence ideas logically, and rehearse effectively to deliver a confident and coherent message.

A. Understanding the Audience

Before developing any content, presenters must understand who their audience is:

- Demographics: Age, education level, professional background
- Expectations: What the audience hopes to learn or take away
- Prior Knowledge: How much they already know about the topic
- Cultural Sensitivity: Language, examples, or humour that are appropriate

B. Choosing a Presentation Structure

Different presentations require different organisational patterns. Common structures include:

- Chronological Order: Best for historical topics or processes
- Problem-Solution: Ideal for persuasive presentations
- Cause and Effect: Useful when discussing current issues
- Topical/Categorical: Divides content into themes or categories
- Compare and Contrast: Explores similarities and differences

C. Creating a Detailed Outline

An outline helps to:

- Organise points logically
- Ensure coverage of all key ideas
- Maintain a smooth flow

Sample Outline Template:

1. Introduction
 - Hook
 - Purpose/thesis
 - Overview
2. Main Point 1 + support
3. Main Point 2 + support
4. Main Point 3 + support
5. Conclusion
 - Summary
 - Final message

D. Timing and Allocating Content

Knowing your time limit helps avoid rushing or running out of time. Divide your content proportionally:

- Introduction: 10–15%
- Body: 70–80%
- Conclusion: 10–15%

Practice with a timer to identify sections that need expanding or trimming.

E. Planning for Q&A Sessions

If the format includes questions from the audience:

- Anticipate possible questions
- Prepare short, clear answers
- Use bridging phrases: “That’s a great question. One way to think about it is...”

F. Rehearsing the Presentation

Practice transforms planning into performance. Techniques include:

- Rehearsing aloud multiple times
- Recording yourself and evaluating clarity and pacing
- Practising in front of peers for feedback
- Timing each section to maintain balance

G. Using Cue Cards and Speaking Notes

Use index cards or speaker notes (not full scripts):

- Write keywords or short prompts
- Number them for easy reference
- Highlight transitions and examples

Avoid reading directly—maintain eye contact and natural rhythm.

H. Checklist for Presentation Planning

Before finalising your presentation, ask:

- Have I considered my audience?
- Is my structure clear and logical?
- Are my key points well-supported?
- Did I rehearse with time constraints?
- Am I prepared for possible questions?

With effective planning and organisation, presenters can deliver messages that are engaging, focused, and memorable.

I. Practising Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Skills

An effective oral presentation is more than just words. Both verbal and non-verbal elements contribute to how clearly and convincingly your message is delivered.

Verbal Communication Skills

- **Voice projection:** Speak loudly enough to be heard clearly by everyone in the room.
- **Tone and pitch:** Vary your tone to avoid monotony and emphasize key ideas.

Cont...

- **Pacing:** Maintain a steady pace. Pause strategically to highlight important points.
- **Pronunciation and articulation:** Speak clearly and avoid mumbling. Practice difficult words beforehand.
- **Fluency:** Reduce fillers (like "um", "uh", "you know") through rehearsal and awareness.

J. Non-Verbal Communication Skills

- **Eye contact:** Engage your audience by looking at different people, not just your notes.
- **Facial expressions:** Show enthusiasm, concern, or humour naturally to match your message.
- **Gestures:** Use purposeful hand gestures to emphasise points or illustrate ideas.
- **Posture and movement:** Stand confidently. Move naturally, not rigidly or excessively.
- **Appearance:** Dress appropriately for the context to establish credibility.

Common Pitfall: Avoid turning your back to the audience while referring to slides.

K. Using an Appropriate Conclusion

A well-crafted conclusion leaves a lasting impression. It should do more than just signal the end—it should reinforce the main message and motivate the audience to think, feel, or act.

Components of an Effective Conclusion:

- **Signal the end:** Use clear language cues like "In conclusion," or "To wrap up..."
- **Summarise key points:** Briefly revisit your main arguments or themes.
- **Restate the thesis or central message:** Emphasise the core idea you want the audience to remember.

Cont...

- **Provide a final thought:** Offer a memorable quote, a call to action, a prediction, or a reflective question.

Example: “In conclusion, by switching to clean energy sources, we can protect our planet, reduce costs, and create a healthier future for generations to come.”

Tutor Tip: Practise conclusions with a peer. Ask, “Was the message clear and memorable?”

EXERCISE

Task 3.0

Instructions: Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What is the main purpose of an oral presentation?

- a) To memorize information
- b) To read from a script
- c) To communicate ideas clearly
- d) To entertain only

2. Which part of a presentation includes the thesis statement?

- a) Conclusion
- b) Introduction
- c) Body
- d) Q&A session

3. Which is an example of a signposting phrase?

- a) "Thank you."
- b) "Let me continue."
- c) "Now, let's move to the next point."
- d) "Hello everyone."

4. What is a key function of visual aids?

- a) Distract the audience
- b) Replace verbal explanation
- c) Reinforce key points visually
- d) Increase presentation length

5. Which of the following is a non-verbal cue?

- a) Emphasising with voice
- b) Eye contact
- c) Articulation
- d) Word choice

6. A good conclusion should include:

- a) A new topic
- b) A thesis restatement
- c) Technical jargon
- d) Background research

EXERCISE

Cont...

7. Which is a good reason to rehearse a presentation?

- a) Memorise word for word
- b) Avoid using visual aids
- c) Manage time effectively
- d) Reduce the length of slides

8. A weak presentation topic usually:

- a) Matches the audience's interest
- b) Has a clear scope
- c) Is overused and vague
- d) Offers new perspectives

9. What should be avoided in a presentation?

- a) A clear message
- b) Filler words
- c) Audience engagement
- d) Visual reinforcement

10. Which is NOT a benefit of outlining?

- a) Clarifies ideas
- b) Ensures logical flow
- c) Encourages last-minute changes
- d) Helps rehearsal

11. An effective introduction should:

- a) Contain the conclusion
- b) Read the agenda only
- c) Capture attention and preview content
- d) Explain each slide in detail

12. What is the goal of using cue cards?

- a) Read full sentences aloud
- b) Write the entire script
- c) Prompt keywords and transitions
- d) Memorise timing only

EXERCISE

Cont...

13. Appropriate attire for presentations:

- a) Doesn't matter
- b) Depends on context and audience
- c) Must always be formal
- d) Should match the slides

14. Transition markers are used to:

- a) End the presentation
- b) Move smoothly between points
- c) Make eye contact
- d) Change speakers

15. If you forget a point during your talk, you should:

- a) Panic
- b) Apologise repeatedly
- c) Refer to your notes or visual aid
- d) Stop the presentation

16. One way to reduce nervousness is:

- a) Speaking very quickly
- b) Skipping rehearsal
- c) Practising in front of friends
- d) Reading silently

17. The best way to manage audience questions is to:

- a) Avoid them
- b) Respond defensively
- c) Prepare possible answers
- d) End the talk immediately

EXERCISE

Cont...

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