



Designed by vectorjuice / Freepik

# Academic Speaking: Presentation (2)

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By completing this worksheet, you should be able to:

1. Persuade your audience in an academic presentation
2. Employ appropriate body language
3. Handle the Q&A session

*Part 1. Persuading your audience*

In academic presentation, one of your goals may be to persuade your audience to accept your point of view on a particular topic, which is mostly related to a problem and/or a solution. In order to achieve this purpose, you will be providing various persuasive evidence to make your arguments sound. Here are some common strategies that you can prepare as one of the evidences – some of them may be more useful depending on your disciplinary studies.

- Results of research studies / tests
- Questionnaires, surveys, and other collected data
- General knowledge, facts
- Observations
- Description of feelings
- Anecdotal or experiential evidence
- Physical evidence or pictures

(Reference: Reinhart, S. M. (2002). *Giving Academic Presentations*. The University of Michigan Press.)

**Activity 1.** Watch Video B ([https://dses.eduhk.hk/?page\\_id=1576](https://dses.eduhk.hk/?page_id=1576)) about 'The provision of sports facilities and participation of sports activities in Hong Kong' presented by a student from the Education University of Hong Kong. Can you find any persuasive evidence? Write them down in the spaces below.

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**Activity 2.** Write a paragraph (around 100 words) to illustrate a problem from any topic related to your major studies and provide an evidence to support it.

Topic:

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Problem:

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## *Part 2. Employing appropriate body language*

Apart from the verbal language (i.e., words that you speak), body language also plays an important role to deliver messages in your presentation. Your hand gesture, your posture, eye-contact and facial expression are usually considered when discussing body language. Do you know what are the proper body language to be employed in an academic presentation?

### Hand gesture

It is often challenging to grasp the 'just-right' hand gesture – you may either performed as if you are an introvert, or as if you are conducting an orchestra. Therefore, before you decide to perform any hand gesture, remember to ask yourself whether this movement has any meaning, such as to help the audience to understand your point on the slides, or to show that you are happy to answer questions, etc. The most efficient way to manage hand gesture is to practice with your peers and ask for their comments about the movements you have taken.

### Posture

In most of the academic presentations, you will be standing in front of your audience. Therefore, it is vital to make sure that you stand in a well-balanced way, otherwise you may rock backwards and forwards or from side to side. This regular movement is quite distracting for the audience. By keeping your feet a small distance apart (depends on your height) and balancing your weight equally between them, you should be able to stand at ease and move as needed.

### Eye-contact

Eye-contact is particularly important when you are conveying a message to your audience. A proper eye-contact can make your messages sound more trustworthy. Try to maintain an eye-contact with different people in different parts of the room. This will let your audience know that you are trying to engage with them, even though you have missed some of them.

### Facial expression

Facial expression has often been considered as inappropriate in formal presentation because it may seem too casual to express your emotions. However, your facial expression can actually help deliver your message. For example, you will slightly nod your head when you agree on someone's point. Therefore, a proper use of facial expression can help your audience understand better the idea that you are presenting. A smile is the easiest and most commonly seen expression that you can make, as it suggests friendliness, contentment and shared experience, which are all important components of a successful presentation.

(Reference: Van Emden, & Becker, L. M. (2016). *Presentation skills for students* (Third edition.). Palgrave.)

**Activity 3.** *Decide if it is appropriate to do the following in an academic presentation.*

	Yes / No
1. Read directly from the script.	
2. Stare at your audience.	
3. Try to maintain eye-contact with your audience.	
4. Stand stiffly.	
5. Put your hands into your pocket / cross your hands.	
6. Guide your audience to read the presentation slides with your hands.	

**Activity 4.** *Watch Video A ([https://dses.eduhk.hk/?page\\_id=1576](https://dses.eduhk.hk/?page_id=1576)) about 'The provision of sports facilities and participation of sports activities in Hong Kong' presented by a student from the Education University of Hong Kong. Identify all the inappropriate body language employed by the speaker. Write them down in the spaces below.*

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*What should the speaker do to improve his body language? Give some suggestions for him.*

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### *Part 3. Handling the Q&A session*

Presentation can be scripted – you can prepare a script for it. However, the impromptu nature of the Q&A session makes many presenters feel nervous as there is no script for it. While it is true that there is no script for the Q&A session, it doesn't mean that you cannot prepare for it. Let's learn the three steps to plan your Q&A.

#### Brainstorm questions

List out frequently asked questions (FAQs) based on your knowledge of the topic and your previous experience.

Ask someone who shared a similar background of your audience to listen to your practice presentation and come up with questions.

#### Prepare answers

Prepare a response to each question on your list: acknowledge the concern behind the question and make your point in a clear and succinct way.

There may be questions you didn't anticipate so you need a stock response like, "That's a good question. In order to answer it fully, I'd need to consider it more carefully and get back to you," (don't say this unless you intend to). Or you can simply respond, "I don't have the answer right now, but it is certainly something I have to consider."

There are times when you know the answer but can't share it with the audience. For these situations, prepare a response that acknowledges the question and lets them know when the information will be available in the future.

#### Practice with your peers

Practice the presentation and the prepared questions and answers with your peers. You should be able to improve the performance every time after practice.

(Reference from: <https://speakingaboutpresenting.com/audience/how-to-prepare-for-a-qa-session/>; <https://www.gildabonanno.com/howtoprepareforqanda>)

**Activity 5.** Watch Video B ([https://dses.eduhk.hk/?page\\_id=1576](https://dses.eduhk.hk/?page_id=1576)) about 'The provision of sports facilities and participation of sports activities in Hong Kong' presented by a student from the Education University of Hong Kong. Can you think of at least 2 questions for the presenter?

Question 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Question 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 6.** Think about the topic you proposed in Activity 2. Can you prepare at least 2 questions and answers for your presentation?

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Question 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Question 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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### **Vocabulary in the video**

1. **cramped (adj.)** /kræmpt/ - not having enough space or time
2. **treadmill (n.)** /'tred.mɪl/ - an exercise machine that consists of a moving strip or two step-like parts on which you walk without moving forward
3. **demotivate (v.)** /,di:'məʊ.ti.veɪt/ - to make someone less enthusiastic about a job
4. **disrupt (v.)** /dɪs'rʌpt/ - to prevent something, especially a system, process, or event, from continuing as usual or as expected
5. **discourage (v.)** /dɪ'skʌr.ɪdʒ/ - to make someone feel less confident, enthusiastic, and positive about something, or less willing to do something

### **Further study**

#### Links

- **How to prepare for your Q&A session** by Olivia Mitchell:

<https://speakingaboutpresenting.com/audience/how-to-prepare-for-a-qa-session/>

- **How to prepare for Q&A** by Gilda Bonnano:

<https://www.gildabonanno.com/howtoprepareforqanda>

#### Reference

Reinhart, S. M. (2002). *Giving Academic Presentations*. The University of Michigan Press.

Van Emden, & Becker, L. M. (2016). *Presentation skills for students* (Third edition.). Palgrave.

Answers:

**Activity 1.**

Persuasive evidence used:

Anecdotal experience (0:06 – 0:26)

Questionnaire data (1:19 – 1:42)

**Activity 3.**

	Yes / No
1. Read directly from the script.	No
2. Stare at your audience.	No
3. Try to maintain eye-contact with your audience.	Yes
4. Stand stiffly.	No
5. Put your hands into your pocket / cross your hands.	No
6. Guide your audience to read the presentation slides with your hands.	Yes

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Possible responses:

**Activity 4.**

Inappropriate body language:

little eye contact with the audience, cross his hands, put his hands into the pocket, read directly from the script and the presentation slides

**Activity 5.**

-Have you ever encountered a similar situation (i.e., unable to find places for doing sports)?

-What would you suggest the government to do to solve this issue?