

4.2. SPEAKING: SMALL TALK, MINI PRESENTATIONS

SMALL TALK

Small Talk is an informal kind of discourse. It is a polite conversation mostly about unimportant topics. It is actually an ice breaker. Small talk we do sometimes with people whom we don't know.

Small talk on weather starts with

Isn't it a gorgeous day?

Isn't it hot?

Can you believe how rainy it has been?

Small talk on location starts with

Are you going to park/zoo/library/museum or walking down the streets where are you at?

Which exhibit do you like the most in museum?

Are you travelling for business or for pleasure?

Small talk on your plans:

Smoothly introduce a conversation.

Do you want to grab coffee or a drink?

I can't believe it is already time for vacation.

Job

What do you do for work?

How long have you been doing this job?

Small Talk

Ask open questions like Yes or No questions?

Have you planned for any trips?

Tel me about your trip to Hawaii?

People who love talking will continue small talk.

Don't embarrass people who don't like to talk further.

Give a small talk on any one of the following topics before your class:

- 1) Latest hit movie
- 2) Mobile phones
- 3) Weekend plans
- 4) Semester exams
- 5) i-pods
- 6) Canteen food
- 7) Hostel restrictions
- 8) Cricket mania
- 9 Nano cars
- 10) Corruption

MINI PRESENTATIONS

Professionals need to make oral presentations in many formal occasions such as meeting Conferences, panel discussions, seminars, etc. while working in an organisation. Also, there may arise occasion in which one will have to present reports and express opinions/ decisions about certain Viewpoints. Though we feel more at ease in spoken communication, than in written communication, presentations in formal contexts demand conscious effort and careful preparation. In fact, thorough preparation is the antidote for nervousness.

Before making an oral presentation, the following points should be given due attention.

(i) Analysing Audience and Locale

(a) Awareness of your audience (Who are they?) What are their needs or interests? What do they expect from you? Only then you can make sure what you say is interesting and relevant to your audience.

(b) Awareness of the Locale (A prior visit to the place of presentation will help the presenter get an idea about the ambience and he can also make some modifications in certain things like lighting, visual aid, arrangement of chairs etc., if necessary.

ii) Organising Contents

The presentation should have a clear structure with a proper introduction and a conclusion. The contents should be organised with a sense of time in such a way as to give due importance to each and every part. There should be a clear connection between different parts or ideas. This can be done by using linkers or sequence words.

(iii) Preparing an Outline

An outline helps one to organise the contents in a clear and comprehensible format. Familiarity with the outline helps the presenter to present the ideas without forgetting, in a sequence. In addition, it will also prepare the listeners by giving them an idea about what they are going to listen.

(iv) Visual Aids

In using visual aids these points have to be paid attention:

- (a) Use of relevant graphical illustrations like pie chart, bar chart, tables, graph, pictures, etc.
- (b) Familiarity in handling the equipment OHP, LCD etc.
- (c) Coherence between the visual aid and the text.
- (d) Checking for proper lighting and clarity.

should not use too many ideas in a single slide.

(v) Understanding Nuances of Delivery

In delivering the presentation, using both verbal and non-verbal skills in correct proportion is essential.

Verbal Skill: Use of clear, simple and natural spoken language with appropriate intonation and pauses for emphasis.

Non-Verbal Skill: Use of eye contact with the audience, formal attire, strong, clear gestures for emphasis, positive, confident and relaxed posture.

Points to remember for an effective presentation:

- Analyse the audience whether he is a lay man or a man with the technical know-how.

- Choose words according to the situation.
- Use brief, simple, comprehensible words.
- Time the delivery in a logical sequence and back up with actions, visuals and if possible, include three-dimensional models in motion.
- Take care to exhibit positive body gestures like facial expressions, eye contact, etc.
- Encourage audience participation making. Allow the audience to ask questions and sometimes allow them to answer also. When you have to reply, do it with confidence in a clear way.

TASK

Prepare on the following topics and make a technical presentation before your class.

- (a) Global Warming and its Adverse Impacts.
- (b) The Prospects of Nuclear Energy.
- (c) Bio fuels
- (d) Ethical Hacking
- (e) Alternative construction materials
- (f) Artificial Intelligence