

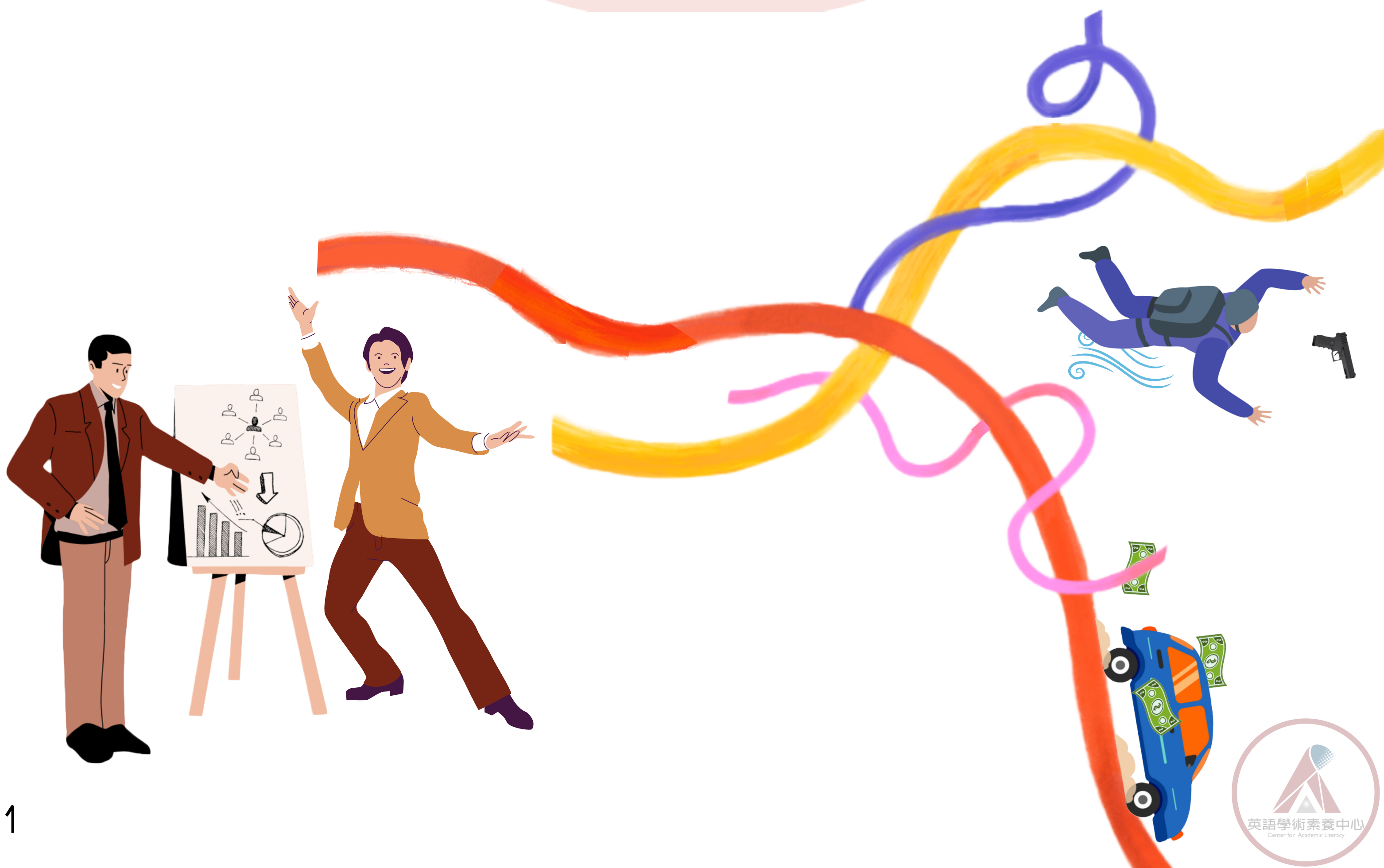
English for Oral Presentations

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What's This About?

Great presentations typically have one thing in common with action films—they tell a compelling story, with a beginning, middle, and end. In the same way, your oral presentation will consist of an opening, body, and conclusion. This handout will introduce some of the strategic phrases you can use at each stage of your presentation to get across your message clearly.



How to Open a Presentation?

When you begin your presentation, typically you will greet your audience. You can say phrases like:

- How's everyone doing today?
- I am so excited to be here today.
- Thank you so much for having me today.
- Hi everyone, good morning/good afternoon.



Depending on where you are giving your presentation—in class, at an academic conference, or a presentation to your lab group—another option to open your presentation is using what's called a hook. A hook is simply an interesting statement that is used to get your audience's attention. Note, however, a hook is usually reserved for more informal situations; in other words, if it is a situation where you would feel comfortable telling a relevant joke, it is probably acceptable to open with a hook.

A few easy ways to create a hook include: telling a story, sharing an unusual statistic, using humor, or relating a famous quote.

The hook should be related to the content of your presentation. For example, in Ric Elias' TED talk about the three life lessons he learned when his plane crashed, he opens with the following hook: Imagine a big explosion as you climb through 3,000 ft. Imagine a plane full of smoke. Imagine an engine going clack, clack, clack, clack, clack, clack. It sounds scary. Well, I had a unique seat that day. I was sitting in 1D (Elias, 2011).

TED presentations are a great resource to reference. Below are more examples of different styles of hook—storytelling, humor, and more—that presenters use to start off their speech.



[Link to the Clip](#)

Storytelling

“When I was seven years old and my sister was just five years old, we were just playing on top of a bunk bed...”

“When I was nine years old, I went off to summer camp for the first time and my mother packed me...”



Humor

“So ladies and gentlemen, at TED we talk a lot about leadership, and how to make a movement. So let’s watch a movement happen from start to finish in under three minutes and dissect some lessons from it. [Shows funny video of man dancing in a public park]. First, of course, you know, a leader needs the guts to stand out and be ridiculed...”

Rhetorical Questions

“Do you think it’s possible to control someone’s attention? Even more than that, what about predicting human behavior? I think those are interesting ideas if you could, I mean for me that’d be the perfect superpower. Actually, kind of an evil way of approaching it. But for myself, in the past I’ve spent the last 20 years studying human behavior from a rather unorthodox way: picking pockets.”

Shock Statement

“Okay, now I don’t want to alarm anybody in this room, but it’s just come to my attention that the person to your right is a liar. [Laughter] Also, the person to your left is a liar. Also, the person sitting in your very seats is a liar. We’re all liars. What I’m going to do today is I’m going to show you what the research says about why we’re all liars, how you can become a liespotter and why you might want to go the extra mile and go from lie spotting to truth seeking, and ultimately to trust-building.”

Next in your opening, introduce yourself to the audience. You can use this as an opportunity to share your background or credentials, reinforcing your qualifications to give this presentation. Then, follow with an overview of the structure of your presentation.

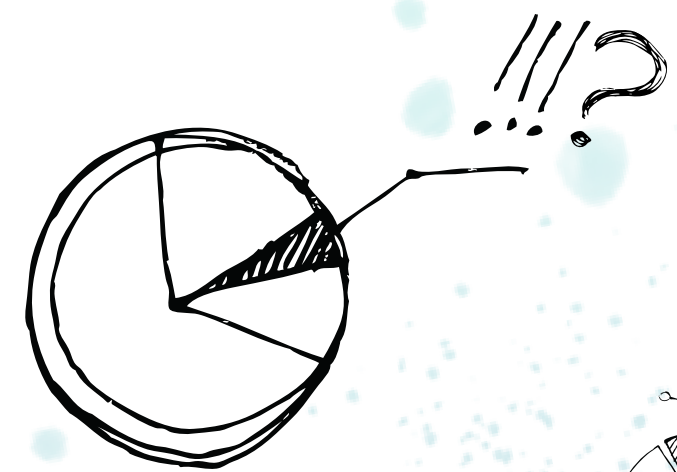


Body: Transitioning between Ideas

Using transitions is critical to remind your audience of the big picture or goal that you are trying to share. Transitions fall under many categories, each with a different purpose. Below are a few common transition types with examples of each.

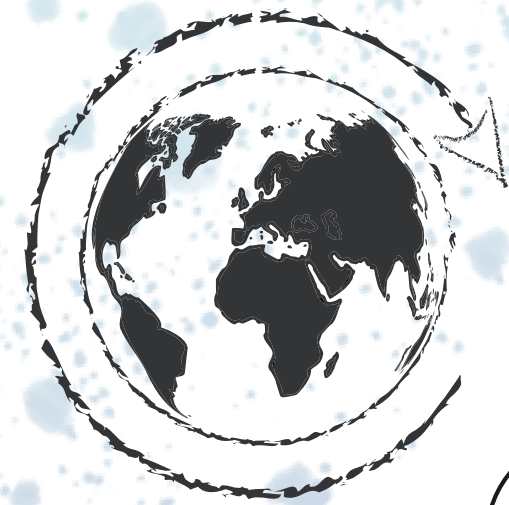
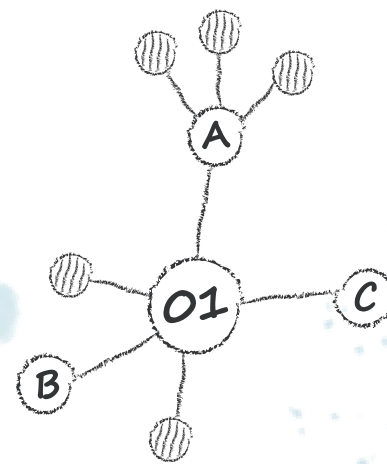
Stating a Problem

- It all boils down to...
- The central problem is...
- But, there's a problem...
- What all this means is...
- The reason why this doesn't work is...



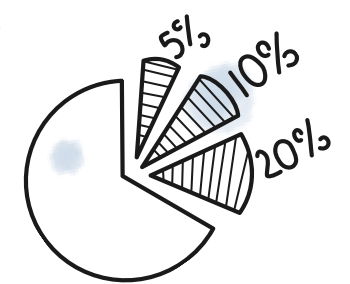
Moving on to the Next Point

- Now, let's consider...
- Now, let's take a look at...
- Let me begin by giving you some background...



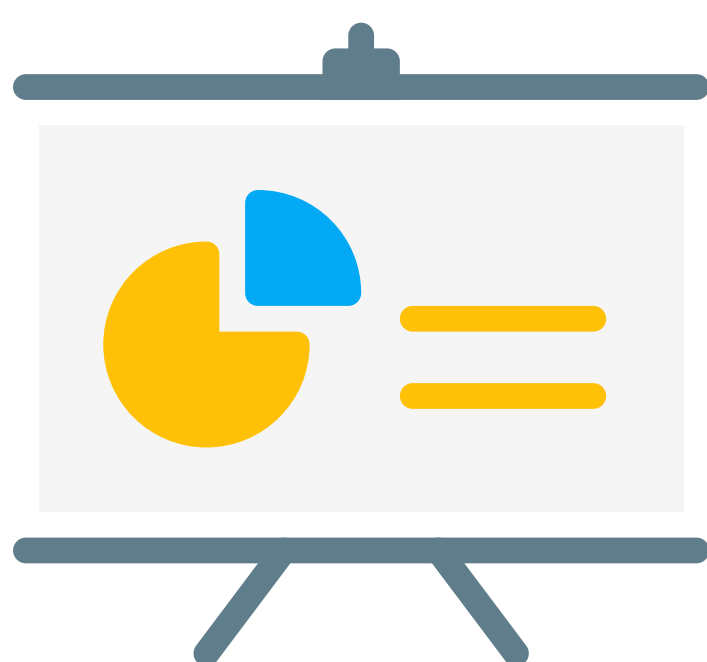
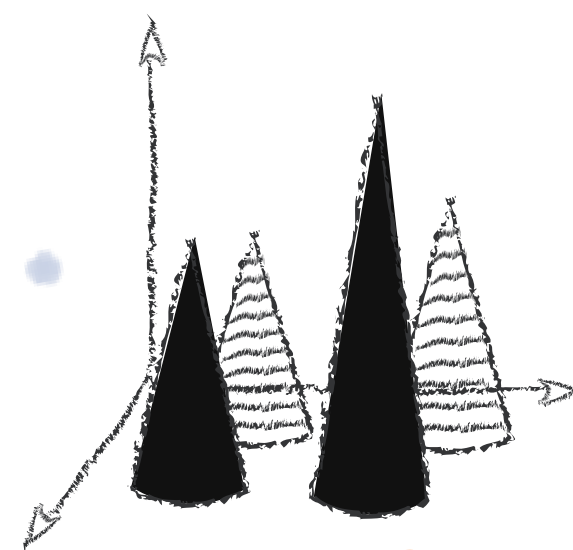
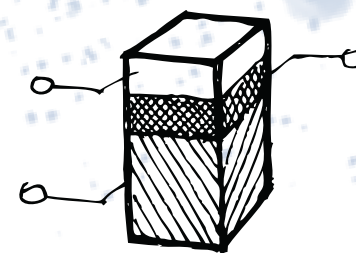
Providing an Example

- Take the case of...
- This is shown in...
- A great example of this is...
- Let me illustrate this through an example...



Referring to Visual Aids

- As you can see here...
- I'd like to point out...
- I'd like to draw your attention to...
- This slide/image/diagram/figure indicates...



Sharing Results Impactfully

The key to sharing data and results in a way that the audience will comprehend is to tell a story with your data. Focus on the practical implication of your results, and not just the details. The following phrases are useful for translating your data into words.

- What this all means is that...
- What's interesting here is that...
- What I'd like for you to note is that...

Bringing the Presentation to a Close

Here, as you come to a close, remember to refer back to your original big picture, your goal for the presentation. Try out the following phrases to highlight the takeaways you want the audience to leave with.

- To summarize...
- Today, we discussed...
- I want to conclude with...
- After listening, I hope you learned...
- So, if you remember one thing from today...
- That's all I have for today, thank you for your attention...



Sample Presentation Script

Finally, let's look at how to put all the elements we discussed in this handout together into an oral presentation script. The sample topic we will use is, "Preventing Cyberbullying in the New Media Age."

Opening

Hook (Rhetorical Questions)

Did you know? In April 2020, the month that the Covid-19 lockdown began in the US, there was a 70% increase in Internet bullying and hate speech. And this is from children and teenagers alone.

The issue of cyberbullying has always been a major issue, now more than ever, in the age of digital and remote education. *That brings me to the topic of today's talk, "Preventing Cyberbullying in the New Media Age."*

Introduction

Hello everyone, my name is Sal, I'm a fourth-year student at National Taiwan Normal University. I'm here today to share some of my findings from a recent research project in online hate speech in educational forums.

Body

Stating a Problem

The most commonly given advice for concerned parents and educators is, talk with your teen first to understand what is happening, then take action together to block the perpetrator. *But, one of the reasons why this doesn't work* is that young people are often using different language to describe the bullying. They may be using words like "drama" instead to talk about gossip, mean comments, pranks, or even threats.

Sharing Results

What this all means is that parents, teachers, and other concerned members of the community need to take a step back and redefine how we look at cyberbullying, especially when dealing with social media.

Closing

Conclusion

So, if you remember one thing from today—cyberbullying in the media age comes in many forms. To protect the safety of your loved ones, it's important to increase your digital awareness and stop the bullying before it's too late. That's all I have for today, thank you for your attention.



The following is not a complete list of references. We encourage you to perform your own research or book a one-on-one session with one of our CAL tutors to discuss speaking and writing strategies tailored to your own oral presentation needs.

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