

# **BSBCRT401**

# **Articulate, present and debate ideas**

**Release 2**

**Learner guide**

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**Articulate, present and debate  
ideas**

Release 2

**Learner guide**

Aspire Version 1.1

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BSBCRT401 Articulate, present and debate ideas, Release 2

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# Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBCRT401 Articulate, present and debate ideas*, Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au).

## How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Icon	Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
	Learning content	Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
	Examples	These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
	Practice tasks	Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
	Video clips	Where QR codes appear, you can use a smartphone or other device to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: <a href="http://www.aspirelr.com.au/help">www.aspirelr.com.au/help</a>
	Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
	Learning checkpoints	There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

## Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considers opinions of others to improve and enhance own learning</li> </ul>
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulates ideas and requirements clearly and creatively, using techniques appropriate to audience and environment</li> <li>Participates in a verbal exchange of ideas and elicits the view and opinions of others by listening and questioning</li> <li>Uses a range of persuasive responses and makes comparisons which show an understanding of topics and concepts</li> </ul>
Interact with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates sophisticated control over oral, visual and/or written formats, drawing on a range of communication practices to achieve goals</li> </ul>
Get the work done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognises opportunities to develop and apply new ideas and select ideas for implementation</li> <li>Considers key themes and ideas to be explored, and identifies ways to respond to and use diverse perspectives</li> <li>Uses features and functions of digital tools and technologies to store and present information</li> </ul>

## What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Analyse ideas for communicating with others	1A Clarify key themes, messages and positions	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Communicate ideas for different purposes and people	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Identify skills and attributes needed to effectively discuss ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 2: Provoke response and reaction	2A Use different techniques to engage an audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Use storytelling to communicate ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Solve communication challenges in innovative ways	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2D Take risks when presenting ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2E Provoke and encourage a response from your audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3: Debate and discuss ideas	3A Present and argue substantiated positions on ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Be open to critical analysis of ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Participate in conversations about concepts, approaches and ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3D Use views of others to refine ideas and embrace new ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident





## Topic 1

# Analyse ideas for communicating with others

***Being able to articulate, present and debate is a skill you can use in many areas of life. Creative techniques can be used to provoke response, reaction and critical discussion.***

Whether you are launching a new product or service, explaining a new process, or pitching an idea, you need to be able to communicate your ideas clearly, confidently and concisely, and tailor your content and style to your target audience.

To create effective debate and discussion, all parties must express themselves clearly and listen actively. If you want the audience to understand and accept your idea, consider the different ways you could present your ideas to others. Adapt to suit the context, and adjust your communication style to match.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Clarify key themes, messages and positions
- 1B Communicate ideas for different purposes and people
- 1C Identify skills and attributes needed to effectively discuss ideas

Watch the unit introduction video here.



# 1A

## Clarify key themes, messages and positions

### *Communication should be a two-way process.*

Two-way communication occurs when:

- a sender clearly conveys a message
- that message is received by the listener or audience
- the receiver acknowledges or responds to the message.

When the receiver is engaged, the two-way process is working well, but creating engaging communication requires careful planning, preparation and practice. Good communication will have a single, clear and strong message. For example, it should answer one or more of the following:

- What's great about your idea?
- How does it solve the problem?
- What distinguishes you from others?
- Why is your solution the most practical one?

The starting point of any presentation is knowing your audience. You may be presenting to an investor, a potential customer, client, supplier, trainee, colleague or business partner. Every audience is different. Find out what they are looking for and tailor the content of your presentation to meet their needs. To be successful, you need to convince your audience that they will benefit from hearing what you have to say.

Before communicating your ideas to others, consider your key themes, messages and positions. This helps to clarify your thoughts, identify your scope, and form a clear presentation objective.

We will revisit thinking about your audience in section 1B.



## Plan the presentation

### *Presentations are an important part of communicating an idea.*

A well-planned presentation will make a good impression, and careful preparation is the key to successfully communicating your message. When preparing, consider the following:

- Who is the target audience?
- What is the theme?
- What is the objective of the presentation?
- What will the presentation include?
- How will it be presented?

Here are some steps to follow when planning to communicate your ideas.

## Step 1

**Analyse the audience**

- Know your audience and understand why they want to listen to your presentation and what they are expecting to hear.
- Learn more about your audience by obtaining some information about their backgrounds, values and interests.
- Consider how your audience views the world, and keep this in mind while developing your idea. The better your presentation fits into their needs and perspectives, the greater your odds of successful communication.

## Step 2

**Select a theme**

- The theme or topic of your presentation is the central idea you wish to present to the audience.
- Analyse your key themes and messages so you can explain and interpret them effectively.
- Think the idea through from beginning to end, and consider all possibilities, steps, complications and interdependencies.

## Step 3

**Define your presentation objective**

- Once you have identified your key theme, write the objective of the presentation in a single concise statement.
- The objective should specify exactly what you want your audience to learn from your presentation.
- A presentation objective keeps you focused as you research and develop your presentation content.

## Step 4

**Prepare the content**

- After defining the objective of your presentation, determine how much information you can present in the time allowed.
- Structure the presentation into an introduction, body and conclusion.
- Use your knowledge about the audience to prepare a presentation with the right level of detail.
- Use current data and facts, expert quotes, personal experiences, customer testimonials or other evidence to illustrate and support your ideas.
- Provide a variety of information types so your audience stays focused and engaged throughout your presentation.

## Step 5

**Select a presentation method**

- After you have prepared your content, select a presentation method that is appropriate and meets the communication needs and expectations of the audience.
- Identify the visual aids, tools or technology you could use to enhance your presentation.
- Select a venue and familiarise yourself with the facilities.
- Ensure you can safely access and use any necessary equipment.
- Determine the financial or other resources you need to ensure the presentation is successful.

## Step 6

**Practise delivering the presentation**

- Practise your presentation to improve your communication style, fine-tune your content and ensure you make your most important points in the allocated time.
- Consider how you want to deliver the information and what aids may help to keep you on track, such as notes, palm cards or an electronic presentation.
- Rehearse your presentation on a colleague, family member or friend, and ask for feedback.
- Develop a list of questions that may be asked during the presentation, and be prepared to answer them.

## Key themes and messages

*Key themes and messages are essential to communicating your ideas.*

The key theme or subject of your presentation is the idea, product, service, process or other creative work you want to express. Too many key themes will dilute your message, so focus on just one.

The key messages are specific examples of that theme or idea in action; for example, how the product solves the customer's problem.

In a marketing context, key messages are sometimes called the 'takeaway', 'master narrative', 'elevator pitch' or 'essence' of what you want to communicate. They should be succinct, and clearly sum up what you do, what you can offer, how you are different, and what value you can bring.

Key messages should be as follows.

**Concise**

Use statements of one to three sentences or under 30 seconds when spoken.

**Strategic**

Highlight the points of difference, benefits and value of your ideas.

**Relevant**

Balance the amount of information you could provide with what your audience needs to know.

**Compelling**

Provide meaningful information designed to stimulate action.



**Simple**

Communicate in easy-to-understand language, avoiding jargon and acronyms.

**Memorable**

Use language and words that are easy for the audience to recall and repeat.

**Real**

Communicate in an active rather than a passive voice, avoiding the use of slogans and clichés.

**Tailored**

Communicate effectively to different target audiences by adapting language and depth of information where necessary.

## Key positions

### *What makes you different? Why does the marketplace need your product, service or idea?*

Key positions are what make you different to other people, competitors, brands, products and/or services. Successful products and ideas often have a unique technology, feature or quality that sets them apart. This is sometimes known as a unique selling point (USP). Introduce your key positions early to let your audience know how your idea is different and why they should listen to your presentation.

You can use positioning to capture your audience's attention by defining their problems or needs, and then explaining how you can solve these problems with what you are offering.

Performing a positioning exercise prior to preparing your presentation is very helpful. This part of your presentation must be very clear and to the point.

In a sales and marketing context, you can perform a positioning exercise by following the steps below. While these steps are specific to sales, many of the principles are the same in other contexts. For instance, your 'customer' might be a colleague, trainee, management team, community group or seminar audience.

**Step 1****Define the primary customer**

Your primary customer may be the same or different from the person who is using the product or service. For example, if you are launching a technology product, you may have many users, but your primary customer is the person driving the purchase of the product.

**Step 2****Define the customer's problem**

From the customer's point of view, what is their problem? Think it through from their perspective. Don't miss out on unique insights by relying on your own perspective.

What is the impact of the problem? Does it affect more than one area? List all the areas affected by the problem and understand how the audience is impacted.

**Step 3****Frame the customer's problem**

Use a distinct point of view to help you uncover the underlying problem. When choosing a point of view to adopt, look for extreme cases or the users who stand out most. It is likely that their issues apply to a larger audience.

Consider the emotions of the primary customer as they think about the problem. What is the main feeling associated with the problem? For example, being confused about how to use a product or being frustrated by slow customer service.

**Step 4****Define target market characteristics**

The different characteristics of a target market may be geographic, demographic, psychographic (activities, interests and opinions), behavioural or product-related.

Break down the characteristics of your target customers. What do they buy? How do they buy it? Where do they live? What kind of lifestyle do they have? Answering these questions helps you to create a more specific presentation.

**Step 5****Identify your competitors**

Who is competing with you for customers? Understanding your competition will help you to succeed. Determine who your key competitors are and identify their customers. What do your competitors offer in terms of cost, service and technology? This generates useful insights about who your target customers engage with to solve similar problems.

**Step 6****Develop your elevator pitch**

An elevator pitch is a brief and persuasive summary used to quickly and simply define a product, service, process or other idea, and its value proposition. You should be able to deliver a summary of your idea in the time it takes to travel in an elevator – 30 seconds to two minutes.

Succinctly describe the customer, their problem, and how you solve it differently from anything else on the market. Provide just enough information for the audience to want to know more.

Target the message to your primary customer and bring their emotions into the pitch.

**Step 7****Map your competitive position**

How is your offer different? How do you create value for your target market?

List your competitors and their strengths and weaknesses in comparison to what you are offering.

Use a positioning map to identify where your product or service fits in the current market in terms of price and quality.

Condense all your research and analysis into the one thing you want to be known for, and design your long-term strategy to achieve it.

Once you have a competitive positioning strategy in place, communicate it and solidify your value every time you present to the market.

## Clarify your idea and key messages

*Spend time exploring, reflecting on and refining your ideas.*

When thinking about your idea, reflect on what problems and challenges may arise from it. Other people can help to clarify and expand on your idea, so aim to simplify your key messages before you present to your audience.

Strategies you can use to focus your ideas or refine your key messages include:

- mind mapping
- brainstorming
- research.

By using strategies such as these, you can improve the structure, scope and detail of your presentation.



### Mind mapping

*Mind mapping is a highly effective way of clarifying your thoughts and planning your presentation.*

It is a creative, visual and logical means of arranging your ideas. Ordering your thoughts using an organised diagram of circles and branches helps to refine your presentation messages and structure your content.

You can make a mind map by following these steps.

1. Draw a large circle in the centre of the page and write the topic of your presentation inside as the central idea; for example, your product name.
2. Identify sub-themes of your main idea and draw branches to them from the centre. For example, your product's purpose, uses or features.
3. Use colour and very short phrases or single words.
4. Add images to evoke thought or communicate the message.
5. Think of at least two main messages for each sub-theme you created and create branches out to these. Main messages may be how the product is used to solve a particular problem.
6. As you brainstorm, add lines to connect related circles.

Watch this video to learn more about mind mapping.

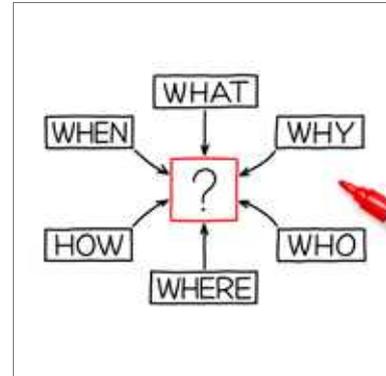


## Brainstorming

***Once you have identified your target audience, start thinking about your content.***

Brainstorming is a way to generate ideas within a group. It involves jotting down words and ideas that come to mind when thinking about a certain topic.

Brainstorm ideas about what content to include in your presentation. Instead of using full sentences, list keywords, being as bold and creative as you like. When brainstorming, there are no right or wrong answers. The brainstorming environment should foster an uninhibited, non-judgmental burst of ideas where all contributions are valid. The key to a successful brainstorming session is to share as many ideas as possible without evaluating them.



Tips for creative brainstorming:

- Choose a moderator to guide the brainstorming session.
- Identify the brainstorming goals by briefly stating an overview of the central idea or topic.
- Set a time limit so everyone knows that the goals must be met by a certain time.
- Invite everyone to participate.
- Encourage the expression of lots of creative, different ideas.
- Do not criticise, judge or evaluate ideas – prioritise quantity over quality.
- Accurately record all ideas and contributions during the session, e.g. using a flip chart or whiteboard.

## Research

***Sometimes it is hard to know how much research to do before presenting an idea to others.***

Depending on your idea, its size and your target audience, research could take anywhere from a few hours to a few months, or even a few years.

Figure out whether your target audience is going to be interested in your idea before you pitch it to them. Presentation content should be determined by research and facts, not assumptions. Strong research will make your presentation more effective by helping you to:

- understand your audience's needs and expectations
- persuade your audience using evidence, facts and data
- assess your competitors or alternative ideas and approaches
- anticipate counter arguments.

Here are some research strategies to help you develop your presentation content, and deliver relevant and valuable messages to your target audience.

### Research your audience



Researching and analysing your target audience is the key to understanding their needs and behaviours. It shows you how they:

- seek information
- make purchases or use services
- engage with your competitors
- respond to certain ideas.

Research tactics include:

- basic internet searches
- tracking trends with social media
- gathering feedback from others, such as customers or colleagues
- using computer-generated analytics.

Whatever strategy you use, researching your audience helps you put together a profile, identify their problems, and tailor your presentation to their needs.

### Research your competition



A competitor analysis involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of your current and potential competitors. You can then establish what makes your idea unique and identify what you need to emphasise in your presentation.

Research tactics may include:

- internet searches of your competitors' websites
- obtaining industry analyst reports
- following your competitors on social media
- attending trade shows and conferences
- conducting surveys
- speaking to potential customers or service users.

Assessing your competitors allows you to identify opportunities they may or may not have capitalised on, and any potential threats to your own ideas.

### Research market trends



A trend is anything that alters the market or industry you operate in. Understanding how your industry is influenced by market trends is essential to staying competitive and meeting the needs of your target market. By analysing the current and future needs and interests of your consumers or users, you can ensure your ideas, product or services are forward-thinking.

Assessing trending topics online is one of the most useful tools you can use to analyse market trends. For example, Twitter trends identify topics that are currently popular on the platform and can reveal what people's interests and intentions are in real time.

Real-time monitoring of trending topics online is a great place to start if you are looking to brainstorm ideas for new marketing content that are relevant and important to your audience.

To monitor long-term trends, you use reports from industry associations and publications such as industry-specific magazines.

### Research the media



A media assessment can be used to identify the top online media and influencers in your industry. It can help you understand how to create the best content for your presentation. With this knowledge, you can choose and amplify content that resonates with your audience.

A media assessment may include:

- analysing relevant industry publications
- recognising the social influencers in your space
- analysing the channels and outlets through which content performs well in your industry.

## Structure content

*Structure your content logically for maximum impact.*

Once you have developed your idea, considered your key messages and done your research, you need to structure your content to make it easy for the audience to understand and retain the information. Many industries, agencies, departments and organisations use the same general structure for presenting information.

A standard presentation structure consists of:

- introduction (including an overview of the presentation)
- body (including evidence and arguments)
- conclusion (including a reminder of the key points you've made).

### Example

## Reaching a target audience

Anna is the marketing and communications assistant at a large suburban shopping centre. Part of Anna's role is to organise promotional events and marketing campaigns that attract potential retail tenants to lease a store within the centre.

Anna's manager asks her to prepare a 10-minute promotional video that can be used to target youth fashion retailers. Anna needs to develop a solid elevator pitch to allow her to express exactly what the shopping centre can offer potential tenants. Anna asks five colleagues to attend a creative brainstorming session to come up with some keywords and phrases she can use in the video.

After a two-hour session, the group agree that repeating the words 'youth culture' in the video should grab the attention of potential youth fashion retailers, as this phrase describes the way young people live, and the norms, values and practices they share. By capitalising on the shopping centre's close proximity to movie theatres and restaurants, Anna believes she can make a compelling presentation to pique the interest of her target audience and convince them to lease a retail space in the centre.





## Practice task 1

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding of how to prepare for a presentation to an audience.

### Question 1

Preparing for a presentation helps you to consider your key themes, messages and positions.

Number each step from 1 to 6 in the order you would follow when planning to communicate your ideas to others.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Select a theme.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Define your presentation objective/s.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Select a presentation method.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Analyse the audience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Practise delivering the presentation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare the content.

### Question 2

When distilling your key themes and messages, you need to ensure your information is provided to the audience in a certain way. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- |  |      |     |
|--|------|-----|
| a) Information must be simple, concise and relevant to the audience.   | *Yes | *No |
| b) Information must be real, compelling and memorable.   | *Yes | *No |
| c) Information must be misleading and ambiguous to inspire creativity.   | *Yes | *No |
| d) Information must be tailored to the audience.   | *Yes | *No |
| e) Information must be communicated in a passive voice rather than an active voice, and use jargon and slogans to engage the audience. | *Yes | *No |
| f) Information must be strategic and address the benefits or value of your proposition.  | *Yes | *No |

### Question 3

Which of the following are steps you can take to express your key positions? Select yes or no for each option.

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) Define the primary customer and their problem/s from their point of view.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| b) Disregard the customer's problems and views. Base your ideas only on your own knowledge and opinions.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| c) Define target market characteristics such as geographic, demographic, psychographic, behavioural and product-related characteristics. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| d) Develop a complex and lengthy elevator pitch to give your opinions about your product, service or idea.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

# 1B

## Communicate ideas for different purposes and people

*As a presenter, your role is to communicate with the audience and control the presentation.*

Now that you have worked out what you want to present, plan how to communicate this information for different purposes and to different people. When preparing your presentation, keep the following in mind:

- Be aware of the context and resources you will have access to.
- Consider the purpose of your presentation – it will dictate how you prepare it and the style you use.
- Consider the characteristics, experiences, knowledge and values of your audience – this will affect the way they receive the message.
- Use different ways of communicating to suit this audience to make it a more successful and effective presentation, e.g. use different tools, facilities and equipment, and different styles of presenting.



### Prepare your presentation

*A successful presentation starts with good preparation.*

Keep your audience in mind when preparing your presentation. Knowing your audience will help you to contextualise the presentation and make the content suit their needs.

Questions to ask yourself when preparing your presentation:

- When and where will you deliver the presentation?
- Will you be giving the presentation in a setting you are familiar with or somewhere new?
- Will you be giving the presentation in a formal or relaxed setting?
- Will you be presenting to a small group or to a large crowd?
- Are you familiar with the audience or is it a new audience you are speaking to for the first time?
- What equipment and technology will be available and what will you be expected to use?
- What is the audience expecting to learn from your presentation?
- What actions do you want the audience to take after listening to your presentation?
- How will you adjust your communication style and techniques to meet the needs of the audience?

## Different purposes

### *Decide on a general purpose to help focus your presentation.*

Whether you are introducing a new product or service to potential customers, pitching a creative idea to potential investors or introducing a proposal for change in an organisation, your objective is always the same: to communicate the message clearly and concisely to the audience.

Here are some different purposes for presenting information to others.

---

#### **To inform**

The purpose of your presentation could simply be to give someone facts or information – to tell them something they may find beneficial. For example, you may be asked to announce a colleague's promotion or retirement; or to let existing customers know about an improvement to a service. This type of presentation is usually short, to the point and concentrates on the facts of the situation. The information presented should be simple, and the audience should fully comprehend the subject matter just by listening to you speak about it.

---

#### **To instruct**

The purpose of your presentation could be to instruct others on how to do something. Instead of just providing information, you may need to give specific directions, instructions or orders. For example, you may need to instruct employees on how to use a new record management system in the workplace. This type of presentation is usually longer than an information speech. Cover your topic thoroughly so your audience absorbs the instructions and develops a new skill in the process. Try to provide opportunities for the audience to practise the new skill during the presentation.

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#### **To inspire**

The purpose of your presentation may be to inspire or motivate people. Some people inspire others by talking about how they personally triumphed over hardship. Others may provide motivational speeches that encourage people to change their behaviour. For example, you may present a new staff fitness program in your workplace that motivates workers to adopt healthy lifestyles. These types of presentations should be delivered in a way that helps your particular audience to respond positively.

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#### **To activate**

The purpose of your presentation may be to stimulate the audience to take action. A presentation designed to activate presents ideas, suggestions and arguments in such a way that the audience believes and accepts the information, and carries out the suggestions. For example, you may need to make a fundraising presentation to potential donors to convince them to contribute to your cause. In these situations, get people to act on your ideas by telling them what to do and emphasising the importance of them taking action. For this type of presentation to be effective, be firmly convinced that the course of action you are urging is the right one.

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#### **To persuade**

A persuasive presentation offers a solution to a controversial problem, presenting sufficient logic, evidence and emotion to convince the audience to accept your idea. For example, launching a new product that solves a customer's problem more efficiently and effectively than anyone else. These types of presentations should cause the audience to willingly accept your proposal through logic, evidence and emotion.

## Different audiences

*Consider your prospective audience before preparing content or selecting delivery techniques for your presentation.*

When preparing your presentation, think about the following:

- Who is your audience?
- What do they need to hear?
- Why should they care?
- What do they know about the topic already?
- How can you connect with them?
- Are there any special communication needs to consider, such as language level?



It is likely that your audience is made up of people from different cultures and with different beliefs. The earlier you understand and embrace the diversity of your audience, the better you can communicate your message.

Figure out the unique characteristics of your audience and use that information to customise your message.

Try to build trust and rapport by crafting your message to your specific audience. Be aware of your audience's needs and differences to help you connect and make the greatest impact.

Here are the factors about your audience to consider when planning your presentation.

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### Size

How many people will be attending your presentation?

It might be just one individual, a small group of colleagues or a large group of potential investors. The size may affect your formality, style of delivery, and use of technology.

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### Age

What is the age range of your audience members?

A presentation aimed at young people is quite different from one aimed at older people. The age of your audience may affect the language you use, any cultural references and the formality of your style.

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### Communication needs

What are the cultural and linguistic differences of your audience?

For example, if there are audience members who have limited English skills, you might need to use the services of an interpreter, create a more visual presentation or use simpler language. You may need to avoid technical words, slang and jargon. Some audience members may need further support, such as communication aids or special equipment.

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### Interest

Were the audience members directed to attend the presentation, or was it an open invitation to the public?

If they are reluctant, you may need to be especially persuasive and engaging.

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**Knowledge**

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Will the audience know anything about your idea already or will it be totally new to them?

For example, it may be a new service that complements an existing service already being used by the audience members. It can be boring to listen to basic information that you are already very familiar with. If the audience's knowledge is high, be prepared to answer questions at that level.

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**Beliefs and values**

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What are the likely beliefs, values and attitudes held by your audience?

For example, when speaking to a unique group of people, learn the culture, terminology and appropriate norms.

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When considering any of these factors, you should take care to avoid stereotyping your audience. This can lead to assumptions or sweeping statements that may alienate or offend them.

## Different ways to communicate ideas

*There are many ways you can communicate your ideas to others.*

Once you have identified your key ideas, presentation purpose and target audience, decide how you are going to communicate these ideas.

Communicating your ideas involves:

- using the appropriate methods of communication and presentation
- delivering your message in an effective and persuasive way
- understanding the different ways that people receive information
- influencing how people respond.

Using a variety of communication methods may be appropriate – some people will respond best to a visual presentation that uses images and diagrams, while others will prefer written hand-outs or simply listening to verbal information.

When deciding how you will communicate your ideas, take into account the following key aspects.

**Facilities, tools and equipment**

Identify and familiarise yourself with the venue or online platform you have chosen to conduct your presentation. Consider what facilities, tools or equipment are available to aid you in engaging with and communicating your message to the audience; for example, visual aids, sound systems and webinar hosting tools.

**Audience**

Consider the audience in terms of size and familiarity with you, and the topic of your presentation. If it is a large formal event, use slides, videos, or other visual aids that capture the audience's attention. If it is a small informal event, you could opt for a one-page handout or infographic that summarises your key messages.

### Experience as a presenter

If you are an experienced presenter you may be more familiar with your own strengths and weaknesses, and may be able to tailor your preparation and communication style to suit. If you are inexperienced or have never presented before, use notes or palm cards that help to jog your memory and maintain the flow of your presentation.

### Knowledge of the topic

The more you know about the topic, the fewer notes you will need to read from during the presentation. If you are familiar with the idea you are communicating to others, you could simply have an outline of what you want to say with some brief reminders, and speak conversationally with the audience.

### Personal preferences

Know your own abilities and decide how best to present your idea in a clear, confident and concise manner. When you first start presenting your ideas to others, you may feel more confident with detailed notes in front of you. As you become more experienced you may find that you can deliver more effectively without a script.



## Practice task 2

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding of the ways of communicating ideas for different purposes and to different people.

Imagine you are meeting with a bank or potential investor to ask for a loan for a new range of T-shirt designs you want to launch and sell. Which of the following statements about your audience are likely to be accurate? Tick all that apply.

- Size – you will not be addressing a large audience.
- Sex – you should expect to be presenting to a male audience.
- Knowledge – your audience is unlikely to know much about the specifics of textile design.
- Age – your audience is likely to be quite young.
- Interest – your audience might be reluctant and need to be persuaded.

## Communication methods

*Choose a method of communication that suits your idea, purpose and audience.*

Communication can be written, oral or nonverbal. A presentation may use a combination of these. For example, face-to-face discussion might be predominantly oral, but supported by written slides or handouts, and complemented by nonverbal body language.

For example:

- If your purpose is to inform or instruct, written communication methods might help your audience to remember your key messages.
- If your purpose is to inspire, you might use lots of visual elements, persuasive language or even music.
- If your audience is young, you might consider a bigger focus on technology to communicate.
- If your idea is creative, you might want to invite audience participation or use physical objects to engage them.



Face-to-face discussion is being replaced by faster, cheaper virtual communication methods. Virtual communication allows people from anywhere in the world to connect in the one place. However, face-to-face presenting can be more persuasive. For example, audience members may be more likely to respond and participate in discussion; whereas during an online presentation a listener may find it easier to tune out or log off if they are bored.

### Different ways to communicate ideas include:

- face-to-face to a group
- over the phone
- live streaming over the internet
- open or closed forums
- one-on-one meetings
- video conferencing
- webinars
- teleconferencing
- chat/instant messaging
- discussion boards
- streaming audio or video
- narrated slideshows
- video presentations
- blogs
- social media.

## Presentation methods

*When selecting a presentation method to communicate your ideas to others, consider the needs and preferences of your audience.*

Some people may prefer to meet you face to face; however, most people now have access to various online platforms that save time and money. You then need to match your presentation tool to the purpose of your communication.

Oral presentations are a good way of sharing information with a large group of people at the same time, but they tend to allow the audience to be passive. Using other methods to complement oral communication will help to engage your audience, such as electronic or audio-visual presentations. Here are examples of presentation methods used to communicate ideas in the marketplace:

- web conferencing and webinars
- live streaming
- social media
- narrated slideshows.

Watch this video to learn about various methods used during presentations.



### Web conferencing

- Enables live audio/video communication between two or more locations.
- Useful for conducting meetings or presentations via the internet.
- Saves on time and costs.
- Flexible and engaging method of communication.
- Examples of web conferencing platforms are Skype, Slack, HipChat and VoIP.

### Webinars

- Typically one-way, i.e. the speaker is watched by a remote audience and there is limited interaction.
- Allow audience members to submit questions to be addressed by the presenter.
- Allow the presenter to switch between screens so they can use slideshow presentations as well as their oral presentation.

**Live streaming**

- Live streaming or webcasting is a live or on-demand presentation.
- Streamed over the web via audio and/or video presentation.
- Can reach large audiences.
- Provide a way of broadcasting over the internet.
- Can have just one presenter.
- Immediate and engaging.
- Useful method for giving demonstrations, launching products and hosting live events.
- Allows the presenter to answer real-time audience questions.
- Strong method for building relationships with customers or followers.

**Social media**

- Enables users to create and share information and content.
- Allows participation in social networks.
- Brings like-minded people together.
- Connects people from all over the world.
- Provides instant communication.
- Works in real time and constantly updated.
- Provides opportunities to reach global markets.
- Cost-effective method of sharing ideas, launching products and services, persuading and informing audiences.
- Examples include: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

**Narrated slideshows**

- More up-to-date method of slide presentations.
- Wider capabilities than the traditional, dated PowerPoint-style presentation.
- Enable a more creative approach to slide presentations.
- Can include or complement oral or face-to-face presentations.
- Can incorporate various features such as videos, images and audio.
- Examples include: Keynote, Prezi and Google Slides.

## Delivery

*The message and content of your presentation is the most important element.*

However, the way in which you deliver that message is also critical to the audience's understanding. The audience will respond to your posture, gestures, eye contact, movements and facial expression, and to the variation of pitch and pace in your voice.

Natural body movements and gestures can strengthen and enhance the message, but repetitive, unnecessary movements can distract from delivery. You can use your body to communicate positively with the audience. You could also use visual aids to help the audience understand and process the information being presented.

Here are some presentation delivery techniques you can use.

<b>Gestures</b>	<p>A gesture is a form of nonverbal communication. Actions can communicate particular messages, either to complement spoken information or in place of words. For example, you may count off points on your fingers, point with your full arm extended to an object or direction, or outline sizes and shapes. You can also use gestures to show emphasis.</p> <p>At all other times during your presentation you should hold your hands at waist height and put your notes or other objects on a lectern so your hands are free to move.</p>
<b>Body movement</b>	<p>The movement of the body conveys many specific meanings to an audience, but can be misinterpreted in a multicultural setting. Use your body to communicate positively with the audience. For example, lean into the audience to show that you are interested in engaging with the audience. Avoid crossing your arms in front of you as this can be interpreted as confrontational. If you are listening to a question from the audience, stand still without movement and make eye contact to show your interest.</p>
<b>Posture</b>	<p>Your posture conveys your attitude and a sense of certainty regarding the idea you are presenting. It also works to clarify and emphasise key messages in your presentation. Proper posture during a presentation includes standing tall and straight with your feet apart and your shoulders squared. This conveys confidence and authority to your audience.</p> <p>Avoid slouching or leaning on objects such as tables, as this distracts listeners from what you are saying and makes you seem as though you lack confidence, are too casual or are not interested.</p>
<b>Facial expressions</b>	<p>The movements of your eyes, mouth and facial muscles can help you connect with your audience. If used incorrectly, they can also undermine your key messages. Making eye contact with audience members is very important as it communicates sincerity and credibility. Other elements of facial expression can convey your feelings, from passion for the idea to empathy for the audience. Smiling is a useful way of creating a positive connection with your audience. If your face is blank, you may end up conveying nervousness or lack of interest.</p>

<p><b>Proxemics</b></p>	<p>Proxemics is the study of how people use and perceive physical space around them. The space between the sender and the receiver of a message influences the way the message is interpreted. The perception and use of space varies significantly across cultures.</p> <p>When making your presentation, ensure your voice is loud enough to be heard by all members of the audience. Make sure they can see you and any supporting visual materials you use. Consider strategies for making the space between you and your audience seem more social. For example, moving among the audience while you are speaking can make participants feel as though you are having a conversation with them. Determine whether seating is fixed in one direction or moveable so you can plan any audience activities in small group presentations. You can also use the formation of chairs to suit your presentation; for example, a circle will seem less formal than sitting in rows, and it may encourage further audience participation.</p>
<p><b>Interaction</b></p>	<p>An effective presenter is one who engages and interacts with the audience. Use verbal and nonverbal audience interaction to keep your audience engaged and involved with your presentation. The more involved and engaged your audience is, the more likely they are to pay attention to you and connect with your messages. Directly ask the audience questions that relate to the subject matter, then incorporate those answers into the rest of your presentation. You may agree with what the audience members say, or you could use the opportunity to counter their responses. Interaction will strengthen your key themes and messages, and engage the audience.</p>
<p><b>Voice pitch and volume</b></p>	<p>Your voice plays a critical role in your success as a presenter. Use changes in volume and pitch to prevent your voice from sounding monotonous. Always speak loudly enough so everyone in your audience can hear you. Change your volume when you are changing an idea or an approach.</p> <p>Vary your pitch throughout your presentation to establish and reinforce your message. Pitch is the frequency of the sound waves you produce. It is about hitting high or low notes with your voice. For example, statements should end in a level or slightly lower pitch; questions will end with a slightly higher pitch. Before you can refine your voice for your presentation, you should first know how you sound to others. Try recording yourself speaking to get a clear idea of your vocal strengths and weaknesses.</p>
<p><b>Visual aids</b></p>	<p>Visual aids play an important role in how the audience understands and processes the information you present. There are many different types of visual aids, such as handouts, videos, slide presentations or models. Visual aids can be used to help audiences understand the topic being presented. Only show the audience what you are presenting at that moment so they don't read ahead and get distracted by the content to come. Incorporate handouts into the presentation and only distribute materials when they are going to be used.</p>

Watch this video to learn about different presentation delivery techniques.



## Different ways people receive information and ideas

*There are four different ways that people receive and process information: visual, auditory, auditory digital and kinaesthetic.*

While members of your audience process information using all four of these approaches at different times, each individual tends to rely on one of these approaches more than the other three to receive and remember information. Your use of language also helps the audience to remember and engage with your presentation.

Here are four key learning styles used in presentations that influence how your audience receives and processes information and ideas.

### Visual



These individuals memorise and learn by seeing images, and are less distracted by noise than others. Visual learners may have difficulty remembering and become bored listening to long verbal presentations.

Visual learners are interested in how your presentation looks, and like it when you use words such as 'see', 'look', 'imagine' or 'picture' in your presentation, as these words encourage them to visualise what you are trying to say.

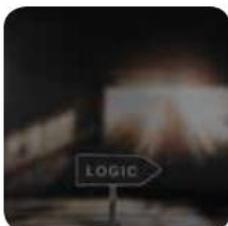
### Auditory



These individuals learn by listening and are easily distracted by any noises occurring during your presentation. Your vocal tone and quality is very important with these learners.

Auditory learners respond when you use words such as 'listen', 'hear', 'sounds like' or 'resonate'.

### Auditory digital



These individuals memorise and learn by using words and language to process logical steps, procedures and sequences. They want to know that your presentation makes sense.

Words that are effective with these people include 'sense', 'experience', 'think', 'decide', 'understand' and 'motivate'.

### Kinaesthetic



These individuals learn by physically doing a task and are much more oriented towards their feelings than people in the other three categories. They learn by actively doing something and getting a feel for it. They are more interested in a presentation that instinctively 'feels right'.

Words that are effective with these audience members include 'feel', 'touch' and 'grasp'.

## Different ways people respond to information and ideas

*Your audience may accept or reject your idea, or may need more information to make a decision.*

As a presenter, you should:

- understand the reasons why people may oppose and reject your idea
- prepare a presentation that maximises the chances of your idea being accepted
- deliver your presentation effectively.

Here are some reasons your audience may reject your ideas.

### Poor idea

Any idea that does not address or deal with the audience's problem effectively, is impractical, or does not take into consideration all the relevant factors may be opposed.

If your idea does not fit the problem or has unacceptable side effects, you should not be proposing it. This is why you need to define your key themes, messages and positions before presenting your ideas to others. This helps you to identify any holes in your idea, and where you can make improvements.

### Poor presentation

You can create opposition by not presenting your ideas and information effectively.

If you do not identify the benefits sufficiently to outweigh the disadvantages, this may appear like you haven't considered the side effects and risks associated with your idea.

Providing inadequate information or not communicating your idea effectively may cause the audience to misinterpret it, or make them unable to evaluate your solution.

### Nature of the problem

When the audience is significantly affected by the problem you are proposing to solve, they may look at it more closely. Similarly, if the audience have a good knowledge of the problem or aspects of the solution, your idea may also receive close scrutiny.

Any aspects of your idea that do not conform to the expectations of your audience may be opposed simply because of differences of opinion. Anticipate any questions the audience may ask and have some informed responses ready to answer them.

### **Lack of audience interest**

A lack of interest in your idea can create opposition when the audience feels that you are wasting their time by getting them involved.

Lack of knowledge of your idea, or the problem you are trying to solve, can also create opposition.

Convince your audience that what you are offering is what they are looking for, and use persuasive language and presentation techniques to keep them engaged throughout your presentation.

### **Audience needs and expectations**

The individual needs and expectations of your audience can impact how they perceive and react to your idea.

A person who has a strong need to feel independent may oppose any solution that increases collective responsibilities or encourages group work.

A person who has a grievance against an existing work process may oppose your new process if it doesn't align with the way they think things should be done.

Research your audience and tailor your content in a way that addresses their specific needs and expectations.

### **Resistance to change**

Some people are strongly resistant to change, especially in the workplace.

A solution that involves considerable change may meet strong opposition from the audience, even when it is viable and presented well. For example, your organisation may not have the structure or resources to accommodate major change; therefore, senior management may oppose your ideas or solutions.

Emphasise the advantages of any proposed changes and give specific examples of how your audience members can benefit both individually and as a group.

### **Mistrust of the solution**

Many people are suspicious of ideas that are highly innovative, or yield high rewards by a simple method that seems too good to be true.

Clearly explain how your idea, product, service or process works, and provide relevant evidence to support your reasoning. However, remember not to confuse your audience by providing them with too much information or data using terminology that they don't understand.

Clarify your thoughts and structure your content in a way that is persuasive, convincing and easy for the audience to understand. Be prepared for tough questioning.

### **Unsolicited ideas**

If you have decided to solve a particular problem or exploit an opportunity, and have not mentioned this to the people involved or affected, your idea may come as a complete surprise and be received by the audience in a number of ways:

- They may be interested without having any intention of taking action or implementing your idea.
- They may feel that you are interfering with or criticising the way they currently do things.
- They may refuse to listen at all.

Don't force your ideas on others. Be honest and upfront about your intentions at the start of your presentation and invite the audience to participate in the conversation by asking questions.

### Interpersonal conflict

Your relationship with the people you are presenting your ideas to and their perceptions of you can have a profound effect on how they react to your solution.

If you have criticised or opposed someone's ideas in the past, that person may still feel resentment and may try to oppose your idea.

Build trust and rapport with your audience before you try to sell your idea. Identify the audience's problem, show empathy towards them, and convince them that what you are offering is exactly what they need to solve their problem.

## Influence how people respond

### *Everyone reacts differently to information and ideas.*

Each person's responses are filtered through their own culture, life experiences, knowledge, personal beliefs and values.

An audience brings with them expectations, knowledge and attitudes about the occasion, the topic and the speaker. Factors that may influence how your audience responds include:

- age
- sex
- culture
- religion
- ethnicity
- sexual orientation
- occupation
- education.



Here are some ways that you may influence your audience to accept your ideas and information.

### Contextualise your presentation

Contextualise your content to the audience's needs and expectations. This means preparing your presentation so that your audience can relate to it, using points of reference they are likely to understand. Providing a context will help your audience connect with your message and keep them engaged.

Use case studies, stories or real-life examples to bring the audience into your space and incorporate them into your presentation.

### Appeal to self-interest

Appealing to the needs and expectations of your audience members is a powerful way of gaining their acceptance, provided your idea does fulfil what you are offering.

Explain how members of the audience can individually benefit from your solution compared to the current situation.

Motivating factors you can use include power, pride, self-respect, recognition, security and reward. For example, a new work process could be sold on its greater efficiency, leading to reduced workload for employees.

### **Involve the audience**

In a one-way conversation, the speaker can dominate the narrative without really acknowledging or interacting with the audience. In a two-way conversation, the speaker directly connects with their listeners.

A two-way conversation is a dialogue where the presenter speaks and listens to the audience, responding to their reactions and questions.

To gain the respect of your audience and encourage them to accept your idea, involve them in your presentation. For example:

- Plan a question and answer time.
- Give audience members a role in the presentation.
- Organise activities so that audience members can contribute to implementing your idea.

For people to accept and be fully committed to the successful implementation of your idea, they must listen and fully understand the implications of the situation.

### **Prepare to listen to objections**

There is usually a person or group who may oppose or challenge your idea. Don't try to suppress objections. If you don't give people the opportunity to explain their objections you can create the impression that you are covering up flaws in your idea and deny yourself the opportunity to clarify the information. Don't argue with audience members or try to embarrass them in front of others. Your earlier research and analysis should have prepared you to anticipate and overcome most objections.

### **Present your idea effectively**

The key to a successful presentation depends on the way you explain and deliver your ideas and solutions.

Make your content easy to understand, show that it has been well thought out and that it is the best solution available under the circumstances.

Be prepared to vary your presentation to accommodate for individual needs, particularly those of people who are required to take action or provide resources for implementing your idea.

Show enthusiasm and passion for your idea – the audience can tell if you are unsure or uncertain about any aspects.

### **Consider linguistic style**

Everything you say must be said in a certain way – using the right tone, speed and volume.

Linguistic style refers to a person's speaking pattern, which is unique to them. It is made up of culturally learned signals that are used to communicate and understand meaning. A person's style might include:

- the pace, number and length of pauses
- word choice
- the use of humour, stories and questions.

Your own linguistic style and the style of your audience members influences how they respond to your ideas.

### **Be prepared to negotiate**

One way of encouraging acceptance of your idea is to make concessions on certain points. This is particularly important when people expect negotiation.

To prepare, identify the aspects of your proposal that are not essential to achieve your objective. You can trade these for others that are essential to the success of your idea.

## Example

## Accessing a large audience with a live streaming presentation

Marcus is the owner of a start-up tech company that is about to release a new app for consumers. The app allows them to compare the prices of one product across a broad range of online retailers. The app is an independent source of information and the company does not receive payment from retailers to endorse one product over others.

Marcus mostly uses social media to connect with his target audience. He plans to launch the new app by live streaming his presentation on YouTube. This enables the public to watch the event virtually, and allows Marcus to reach a large global audience.

Marcus prepares his presentation using anecdotes about his own shopping experiences to engage the audience, and pitches the app as a simple, easy-to-use solution to these problems. He has prepared a range of interesting and comical audio and visual props to reinforce his ideas and solutions.

Marcus sets up the necessary equipment early and tests everything to make sure it works. Before going live, he checks that the location lighting is ideal and eliminates any background noise that could distract viewers. Marcus uses a lapel microphone to ensure viewers can hear him clearly and that his hands are free to gesture. He rehearses his presentation a number of times to identify any gaps in information and make improvements where necessary.

Marcus delivers an entertaining and informative presentation, which includes a demonstration on how to use the app correctly. He interacts with the audience by answering viewer questions in real time, and refers to each person by name.

After one week, Marcus's app is listed as the third most popular online shopping app available in Australia.



### Practice task 3

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding of the different ways an audience receives and processes information.

Which of the following are ways you could influence your audience to accept your ideas and information? Tick all that apply.

- Contextualise your presentation to the audience's needs and expectations, and use real-life examples to keep them engaged.
- Involve the audience and foster a two-way conversation to gain their respect and help them accept your idea. Ask questions and listen to responses.
- Anticipate objections and people who oppose or challenge your idea. Argue with them if necessary to convince them that you're right.
- Present your idea effectively and demonstrate how it is the best solution available to meet their needs. Show passion and enthusiasm for the idea.
- Consider linguistic style and speak very loudly and slowly if there are audience members who are from different cultures.

# 1C

## Identify skills and attributes needed to effectively discuss ideas

*Discussion is a powerful mechanism for sharing ideas and information.*

Effective discussion:

- recognises different points of view
- uses different skills
- creates an inclusive environment
- ensures everyone feels comfortable contributing
- promotes group interaction and engagement.

Once you understand which skills and attributes are needed for effective discussions, you can practise using them yourself. When you have acquired these skills and attributes, you can encourage others to participate in discussions. This will help you to hold discussions about your own ideas and also learn from others.



## The difference between skills and attributes

*Although they are similar, skills and attributes are two different things.*

Skills are technical capabilities that can be learned through education or training. These may be techniques, processes or practices required to perform a job role.

Attributes are personal or interpersonal qualities that cannot necessarily be measured, but still have an effect on a person's job performance.

Examples of skills	Examples of attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading</li><li>• Writing</li><li>• Numeracy</li><li>• Language skills</li><li>• Technical skills relating to job role</li><li>• Technology skills</li><li>• Administration skills</li><li>• Financial skills</li><li>• Oral presentation skills</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication</li><li>• Decision-making</li><li>• Time-management</li><li>• Teamwork</li><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Planning and organising</li><li>• Technology and digital literacy</li><li>• Problem-solving</li><li>• Innovation and creation</li></ul>

## Identify skills and attributes

*Many people find it difficult to explain their own skills and attributes.*

Here are several ways to identify your own or others' skills and attributes. Focus on the skills and attributes that are needed to communicate and discuss ideas effectively.

### Assess strengths and weaknesses

Conduct a personal SWOT analysis to understand your strengths and weaknesses.

For example:

- Are you a good listener?
- Do you think outside the box?
- Do you lack confidence speaking in public?
- Is your memory unreliable?

By understanding your strengths, you can uncover opportunities that you would not otherwise have identified.

By understanding your weaknesses, you can manage and eliminate threats that may otherwise hinder your ability to move forward.

If you look at your own skills and attributes using the SWOT framework, you can start to understand what makes you different from your peers. You will be able to develop the talents and abilities you need to achieve your goals.

### Analyse skills and attributes

Conduct a self-assessment exercise to identify and develop any skills you feel are important to plan your future. Give yourself a score for each of the skills and attributes listed, and develop a skills profile about yourself. Consider how you approach tasks and interact with others. If you have a clear understanding of the skills and attributes you need to perform a job role or vocation, this helps you become more confident at what you do.

### Conduct a skills gap analysis

Take the following steps to conduct a skills gap analysis:

- Create a list of the skills and attributes required to perform a job role, carry out a task or master a technique.
- Observe people completing the work to confirm this list.
- Rate these people as entry level, intermediate or expert.
- Conduct interviews, focus groups or use surveys to gather the information you need.
- Interpret the data and make recommendations. For example, you may prepare a training plan to address any gaps in the skills you identified.

## Skills and attributes required to communicate and discuss ideas

*Communicating ideas and information accurately, clearly and as intended is a vital skill.*

Interpersonal communication skills are needed in both your personal and professional life to discuss your ideas face to face with a wide variety of people. These skills include:

- using effective body language
- using a wide vocabulary
- tailoring your language to your audience
- listening effectively
- presenting your ideas appropriately
- writing clearly and concisely
- working well in a group.



Many of these skills are essential to being successful in the workplace. They are particularly important when articulating and presenting ideas to an audience.

### Skills and attributes of an effective presenter/facilitator:

- Clear verbal and nonverbal communication
- Energy and enthusiasm about the topic
- Audible and easy to understand
- Confident and self-assured
- Credible, convincing and believable
- Having a strong, captivating presence
- Focused on the idea or topic at hand
- Knowledgeable and well-informed
- Organised, structured and in control
- Logical, succinct and reasonable
- Interactive and engaging with the audience
- Successful in producing the desired result

## Facilitate effective group discussions

*To engage your audience in a two-way conversation, you need to facilitate effective debate and discussion.*

It is no use trying to solve a customer's problem, deliver a new service or improve a work process if you are not prepared to receive feedback from the end users.

A well-facilitated discussion will allow participants to explore new ideas, and recognise and value the contributions of others.



Here are some tips for how to effectively discuss ideas with others.

### **Create an inclusive environment**

- Consider your audience. What are their unique characteristics, experiences and perspectives? Use inclusive language and treat all participants with respect and consideration.
- Be aware of any barriers to communication (e.g. cultural or linguistic differences) and have strategies in place to overcome them.
- Provide sufficient time and space for participants to listen to the idea, gather their thoughts and contribute to discussions.
- Provide opportunities for participants to ask questions or share their feelings, concerns or objections.
- Ask for clarification if you are unclear about a participant's intent or question.

### **Encourage participants to contribute**

- Encourage people to contribute to discussions by:
  - inviting them to ask questions
  - asking them to clarify something they've said
  - asking them to elaborate on a point
  - bringing past contributions into the discussion.
- If presenting face-to-face to a small group, write participants' comments on a board for everyone to see; this helps participants feel that their contributions are valued. Encourage others to add their responses or ideas, or to build on someone else's comments.

### **Maintain positive and constructive discussions**

- Clarify your goals at the beginning of the session and outline your expectations for group participation.
- Provide equal opportunity for everyone to contribute. Avoid letting one or a few dominant people run the discussion, and do not criticise the contributions of others.
- Ensure everyone feels safe and encouraged to participate so a broad range of thoughts, feelings and ideas can be considered.
- If the group starts to become negative, ask the participants how they would like to address this, and redirect the conversation back to the topic.

## Example

## Facilitating group discussions and resolving communication problems

Joanna has been asked by her manager to facilitate a discussion with her team about a new work process. Joanna supervises a team of 10 staff who are responsible for carrying out the finance functions of the organisation. The new process outlines how staff should utilise new accounting and business management software recently acquired by the company.

At the beginning of the session, Joanna provides each participant with a handout of the new process. She invites team members to participate in a constructive discussion about the process and asks everyone to listen to and respect each other's contributions. Joanna uses a laptop and projector to demonstrate how staff should use the new software, and together they discuss each step in detail.

Thomas has been working in the finance team longer than anyone else, including Joanna. During the session, Thomas interrupts other team members and criticises them for asking irrelevant questions. He challenges Joanna as to why the new process is even necessary and asks why they can't continue doing what they have always done, saying, 'If it isn't broken, don't fix it.'

Joanna listens to Thomas's concerns and invites the group to develop a list of pros and cons about the new process. Thomas continues to object and, after some time another team member, Harini, becomes so frustrated that she walks out. Joanna is losing control of the discussion. She apologises to the group and asks to take a break. She then brings Thomas and Harini together to resolve their conflict so a constructive group discussion can continue. Thomas sees how his behaviour is affecting the group and thanks Joanna for pointing it out. When the group reconvenes, Thomas takes a back seat and listens to other people's ideas, and Harini feels more comfortable to participate.





## Practice task 4

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding of the skills and attributes needed to effectively discuss ideas.

### Question 1

Which of the following statements about the skills and attributes of an effective presenter or facilitator are correct? Tick all that apply.

- Uses clear verbal and nonverbal communication
- Energetic and enthusiastic about the topic
- Egotistical, selfish and argumentative
- Confident and self-assured
- Credible and convincing
- Focused on the idea or topic at hand
- Knowledgeable and well-informed about the topic
- Arrogant, cynical and pessimistic
- Organised, structured and in control
- Shy, distracted and apologetic
- Logical, clear and reasonable

### Question 2

Which of the following statements about skills and attributes are correct? Tick all that apply.

- Reading, writing and numeracy are skills.
- Communication, decision-making and teamwork are attributes.
- Leadership, planning and organising are problem-solving skills.
- Administration, technology and financial capabilities are skills.

### Question 3

Which of the following are ways you can effectively discuss ideas with others? Tick all that apply.

- Create an inclusive environment.
- Encourage participants to contribute.
- Maintain positive and constructive discussions.
- If you are unclear about a participant's intent or question, just continue with your presentation.
- Let one dominant person run the discussion.



## Summary

- The key theme or subject of your presentation is the idea, product, service, process or other creative work you want to discuss. The key messages are specific examples of that theme or idea in action; for example, how the product or idea solves the problem.
- Successful products, processes or ideas are uniquely positioned, setting them apart from others. Introduce this aspect of your idea up front to let your audience know how your idea is different and why they should listen to the rest of your presentation.
- Whether you are introducing a new product or service to potential customers, pitching a creative idea to potential investors, or introducing a proposal for change in an organisation, your objective is always the same: to communicate the message clearly and concisely to the audience.
- When thinking about your idea, consider what problems and challenges may arise from it. Seek feedback from other people to help clarify and expand your idea before presenting to your audience so your key messages are simplified.
- Identify the unique characteristics of audience members so you can communicate more effectively.
- When selecting a presentation method, consider the needs and preferences of your audience, then match your presentation tool to the purpose of your communication.
- There are four different ways that audience members receive and process information: visual, auditory, auditory digital and kinaesthetic. Each individual tends to rely on one of these approaches more than the other three.
- Everyone reacts differently to information and ideas because these are filtered through their own background, culture, life experiences, knowledge, personal beliefs and values.
- Discussion is a powerful mechanism for sharing ideas and information. Effective facilitation of a discussion involves recognising and employing different perspectives and skills to create an inclusive environment.
- A well-facilitated discussion allows participants to explore new ideas while recognising and valuing the contributions of others.



## Learning checkpoint 1

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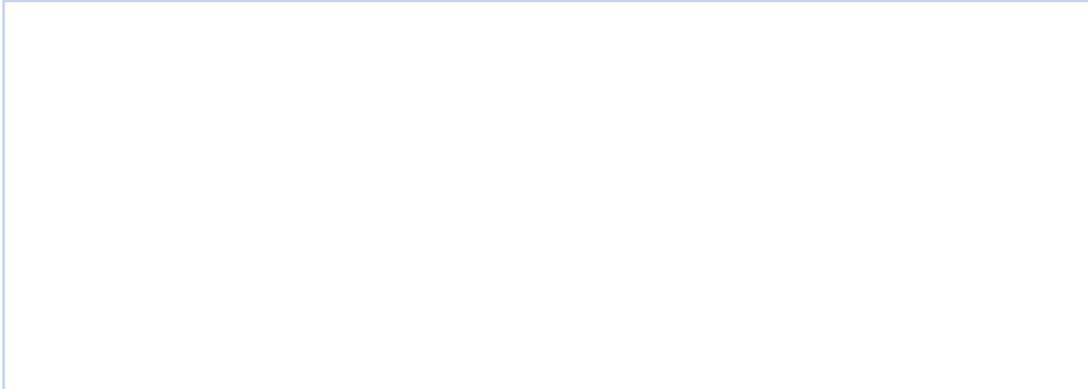
This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge when analysing ideas and communicating to others.

1. Why is it important to clarify key themes, messages and positions when planning your presentation?

2. Why should you consider different ways of communicating ideas to different people and for different purposes?

3. Briefly explain the **four** key learning styles that individuals use to receive and respond to information and ideas.

4. Give **two** examples of skills and attributes that individuals need to effectively participate in discussions and debates.





## Topic 2

# Provoke response and reaction

*Use creative techniques and innovative approaches to provoke response, reaction and critical discussion.*

Persuasion is the key to presenting ideas. Your target audience must be convinced to buy your products or services; colleagues to follow new work processes; and investors to donate to your cause. As well as the need to communicate effectively, it is vital that you inspire and engage your audience to win them over.

By harnessing the power of emotion in your presentation, you can motivate your audience to take action, whether it be making a purchase, hiring your services, or supporting your cause. No matter what the purpose of your presentation is, appealing to human emotions can help you to achieve your goal.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Use different techniques to engage an audience
- 2B Use storytelling to communicate ideas
- 2C Solve communication challenges in innovative ways
- 2D Take risks when presenting ideas
- 2E Provoke and encourage a response from your audience

## 2A

## Use different techniques to engage an audience

*To be an effective and convincing presenter, you need to build content that is engaging and powerful.*

You are probably familiar with the business-as-usual approach to communicating ideas, perhaps using PowerPoint slides or word-processed documents. However, these are not always the most effective method for engaging communication. As part of articulating and presenting your ideas, you should try to connect with human emotions by telling a compelling story.

Explore and use a range of creative techniques to engage, fascinate and involve your audience in the process of communication and exchange. Remember that any technique you use must be appropriate and tailored to the needs of your audience.



### Engage others

*Audience engagement is an essential part of a successful presentation.*

You only have a few minutes to pique the interest of your audience. It is critical that you establish a connection with them before saying anything important. Once you have your audience's attention, you can convince them to make a rational decision.

Here are some tips for engaging your audience.

#### Overcome nervousness

It is understandable that you may be a little nervous before an important presentation. In fact, a bit of nervous energy will help you to do your best. However, signs of nervousness can send the message that you lack confidence or enthusiasm in your topic.

Here are some tips to overcome nerves:

- If your hands tend to shake, avoid holding notes. Keep your hands steady on a lectern or hold them together in front of you.
- If your voice tends to tremble, take some slow deep breaths before you begin and try not to talk too fast. Your voice and breathing will settle as you carry on.
- Stand up straight with your weight evenly placed. It may be appropriate to walk around the room a little, but try not to pace.
- Try to keep your audience focused on your key message rather than worrying about delivering a perfect pitch.
- Prepare ahead of time and practise what you want to say so you can give your presentation with confidence.

### **Use handouts**

If you plan to share detailed information relating to your idea, create a report, handout or another resource people can take with them. Your audience is better equipped to review and understand your idea if it is written in a readable and attractive format. However, avoid reading from the handouts and giving exactly the same information verbally. You should also avoid giving the audience a hard-copy version of the entire presentation as it can cause them to look at the paper rather than at you and engaging with your nonverbal cues.

### **Slow down**

If you feel nervous, anxious or stressed about your presentation, you may speak too quickly. Remember to slow down your speech, enunciate your words and make eye contact with your audience. When you are calm, you are less likely to stumble over words, make mistakes or become flustered by distractions. Taking time to breathe before speaking will help you keep a steadier pace.

### **Communicate clearly**

Use verbal and nonverbal language that is appropriate and tailored to the needs and expectations of your audience. Only use words and terms that your audience can understand. If you use extensive vocabulary or industry jargon that the audience is not familiar with, they won't understand what you are saying.

Remember that short periods of silence can be effective in underlining a point. Don't feel the need to speak continuously as this may betray nervousness. Pause for breath at suitable points, such as between slides.

### **Be authentic**

Be open with your audience. This means being yourself, and using open and welcoming body language. If you come across as closed, your audience may perceive you as defensive or arrogant. An authentic presenter is proactive and concise – state a definitive opinion, recommendation or idea. Choose words that sound natural when you speak them so you come across as believable.

### **Be vulnerable**

Sharing a personal story can allow you to immediately connect with your audience. By showing others that you are human, people can relax and relate to you. Storytelling resonates with audiences. Don't be afraid to share a story about how you failed at something and what you learned in the process. Talking about an emotional experience builds trust. Open up and let the audience get to know the real you.

### **Captivate people**

People's attention spans can be very short. It is therefore critical that you capture your audience's attention within the first few moments. Even if they forget much of what you say, people often remember stories that best illustrate a point. Keep your stories short and relevant. Maintain eye contact with the audience – looking down or avoiding eye contact will make you seem less confident. Scan the faces of the audience around the room so you're not just staring at one person.

**Tell jokes sparingly**

Humour can be a powerful way to engage your audience when appropriate. Never use jokes that target a specific person or group of people. Jokes should be fun and should maintain a professional tone, but must never be offensive.

**Encourage interaction**

Sometimes it may be appropriate to start a dialogue rather than give a straightforward presentation. Allow your audience members to ask questions. Organise small group discussions or activities and encourage feedback. This helps keep your audience to be engaged and involved throughout your presentation.

**Address issues**

Identify what your audience's problems or challenges are and address them in your presentation. First demonstrate an understanding of your audience, define their particular problem and the impact it has on them, then provide potential solutions.

## Fascinate others

*Fascination is a powerful way to influence decision-making.*

Fascination is more persuasive than marketing, advertising or other forms of communication. When presenting your ideas, it helps to know how to fascinate your audience.

In her 2014 book *How the world sees you*, Sally Hogshead identifies seven advantages to fascinating and captivating an audience. Here is a summary of those advantages and examples of how you can use them to fascinate your audience.

1

**Power**

Power means using authority to command and control, dominate, reward, and punish. If you exhibit strong leadership, your audience will be captivated. Humans are attracted to power. Utilise power by projecting certainty and taking control of the situation.

Use power in your presentation by:

- giving clear and straightforward instructions
- handling questions and objectives authoritatively.

2

**Passion**

Passion sparks a craving for sensory pleasure or experience. It stops people thinking and encourages them to feel, makes the ordinary emotional and uses all five senses. Utilise passion by creating a total sensory experience.

Incorporate passion into your presentation by:

- creating a welcoming and pleasing presentation environment
- use professionally designed multimedia and handouts.

3

### **Mystique**

Mystique is a quality of mystery, glamour or power associated with something. Mystique is alluring and compels people to want to find out more. It provokes curiosity with unanswered questions, builds mythology and limits access.

Incorporate mystique into your presentation by:

- using a presentation title that creates curiosity
- telling stories that create suspense.

4

### **Prestige**

Prestige increases respect within a group. Prestige is usually built up before your presentation – it is your brand. Prestige is what makes people want to hear you speak, regardless of what you have to say.

You can build your prestige by:

- publishing your ideas and thoughts online; for example, using a blog
- collecting testimonials from every presentation you make and displaying them on your website.

5

### **Alert**

Alert creates a sense of urgency; for example, due to a threat of negative consequences, deadlines or distress. It focuses not only on the most likely crisis, but also on the crisis most feared. Alert speaks to our survival mechanisms so that people feel compelled to take action.

Elicit the alert advantage in your presentation by:

- clearly outlining what is at stake
- emphasising the consequences if people don't take action.

6

### **Innovation**

Innovation encourages a creative approach or rebellion against rules; for example, by creating taboos, leading people astray, going against established rules and customs, or saying things that other people would not dare to say. Innovation is about being straightforward, and telling it like it is. Some people find this compelling and become strong supporters of your cause.

You can incorporate innovation into your presentation by:

- saying what others are afraid to say
- using language to take the audience by surprise.

7

### **Trust**

Trust builds loyalty by creating a sense of stability and predictability. When your audience trusts you before you start talking, they become fascinated by what you have to say.

You can build trust in your presentation by:

- developing rapport with your audience
- being consistent and repeating your key messages.

Watch this TEDx talk by Sally Hogshead about how to fascinate.



## Involve others

*When presenting your ideas to others, give careful thought to audience involvement.*

The biggest challenge for presenters is connecting with all the people in the room. In order to connect, you must make the audience the focal point for your references, and deliver your presentation in a confident manner. The most successful presenters are able to make their presentations feel like a conversation with the audience.

Audience involvement should add value. To build meaningful rapport, you need to overcome any barriers that prevent viewers from becoming part of the action.

Here are some tips for successful audience involvement.

### Choose your technique

Audience involvement incorporates a broad range of activities – from a simple show of hands, to requests for personal contributions, to role-playing and small group exercises. Choose a technique that fits your objective and the allotted time for your presentation.

### Plan ahead

Be clear about your purpose and how audience participation helps you communicate your message. You want audience input to be meaningful and to help you make your point. Think about what you can say if you don't get the expected responses.

### Use inclusive framing

Ask your questions in a way that allows most audience members to respond. For example, 'Tell me about your last experience as ...' is something that most audience members can respond to. Make people feel valued, competent and encouraged to contribute. Inclusive questions are useful for building a shared identity among the audience.

### Allow time for response

Be clear about whether your questions are real or rhetorical. Sometimes audience members are unsure, so it helps to use phrases like 'Who here ...', or 'Who in this room ...' to elicit real responses. Even if your questions are rhetorical, allow time for audience members to consider the question and think about how they would answer. You could pause for a moment to let the audience digest your point.

### Acknowledge contributions

Always recognise an audience member's contribution before moving on to the next point or participant. Simply saying 'Thank you' shows gratitude for their contribution and makes them feel valued in the experience. As you become more comfortable with audience participation, you can frame the responses to fit your point and refer back to participants' contributions later in your presentation.

## Techniques to engage, fascinate and involve others

*Communicate using a variety of methods to inspire and engage with all listeners.*

The way you connect with your audience depends on the complexity of your idea, the size of the group, and their individual needs, expectations and differences. Always research your prospective audience carefully, so the communication and techniques you use are appropriate and will help you achieve your objective.

There are different ways to engage your audience and involve them in a critical discussion. Use a variety of communication methods to stimulate the senses, and enhance creativity and critical thinking.

Here are some communication tools that will help you to engage, fascinate and involve others when presenting and discussing ideas.

### Multimedia presentations

Multimedia presentations are especially helpful for visual learners and thinkers. The most recent presentation tools, such as Keynote and Prezi, allow you to combine slides, images, videos, documents and sound to create interactive and engaging presentations. These can be made at minimal or even no cost, and can be easily and instantly shared online with your target audience.

### Blogging

Blogging is a popular online marketing tool used to share and discuss your ideas with others. For blogging to be effective it needs to be updated regularly (usually several times a week). The success of blogging comes from having people return, and they only return when there is new information to read. It takes time to build up a readership and momentum.

### Social media

Social media, including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, is affordable and allows you to reach a large audience instantly. With the popularity of digital marketing and networking, many individuals and businesses use social media to promote their ideas, products and services to both potential and existing audiences. You can build relationships with your audience, directly interact with them, and receive feedback to help you improve how you manage, operate or market your business, and to communicate your ideas.

### **Viral marketing**

Viral marketing techniques use social networking services and other platforms to increase brand awareness or achieve other marketing objectives. It is called 'viral' because of the speed with which a message spreads. This can be by word of mouth or, more commonly, through social media (such as sharing or retweeting a post). The goal is to create a message that appeals to individuals with high social-networking potential, who are likely to spread the message to others in a short period of time. Viral advertisements may be launched on a company website or directly on social media. Consumers receive the page link from a social media network or copy the entire ad from a website and pass it along via email, a webpage or social media.

For examples of successful viral marketing campaigns go to:  
[aspirelr.link/viralmarketing](http://aspirelr.link/viralmarketing)

### **Videos**

One of the latest marketing tactics is video – both pre-recorded and live streaming. Videos are an effective way of provoking an emotional response in viewers. To create effective emotional videos, determine what you want your audience to feel. Choosing the right feeling is half the battle. If you can't bring that emotion out during the video planning, production and editing process, your audience will respond the way you want them to.

Use a compelling story to capture your audience, then present your message in such a way that viewers hear, understand and remember it.

### **Press releases**

Unlike pitches, which are targeted to a specific audience, press releases are mass communications intended for the largest audience possible. Press releases are used to launch new products, services or ideas to a large audience for maximum exposure.

They are often distributed via companies that specialise in emailing to hundreds or thousands of readers, along with algorithms that place the release on the most relevant sites and in the most important trade publications. These sites know how to code these documents so the information you send out ends up in search engines. Posting press releases on social media sites makes the greatest impact.

### **Storytelling**

Storytelling is one of the most powerful ways to express an idea. Sharing stories can give your products, services and ideas an identity. It can take your audience on a journey they want to experience and help them to imagine themselves using your idea. Your audience can form a personal connection with an idea or brand if the stories are authentic, creative and inspirational.

When you tell a story about everyday human challenges, you create an experience that engages, fascinates and involves your audience.

## Tailor comments to particular audiences

*Different audiences require different communication styles and content.*

You may need to use different language or examples to emphasise the parts of your message that are of most interest or urgency to various sub-groups. Sub-groups are people with similar interests or of similar:

- ages
- incomes
- backgrounds
- cultures
- occupations.



Tailoring your comments and messages requires audience research. This may include reviewing the information you already have about your audience (see Topic 1) or conducting further research about sub-groups within your audience.

Researching and analysing your audience helps you to better understand:

- their basic level of understanding about your subject
- what makes them tick and who they are as a collective group
- their individual needs, expectations and communication preferences.

### **How to tailor your comments to a particular audience:**

- Be concise: Only include the relevant information about your topic and avoid unnecessary information or irrelevant examples.
- Be thorough: Where appropriate, provide detailed information to your audience to make your points clear.
- Be considerate: Think about the impact that your message may have on the audience and how you can help them to deal with this.
- Be accurate: Double check your facts before you deliver them and make sure they are in a suitable format for the audience.
- Be clear: Use language that is easy to understand so that your audience is clear about what you want them to do, and what the desired results are.
- Be courteous: Show respect to the audience, and establish trust and rapport by being appreciative, thoughtful and respectful to them.
- Be appropriate: Tailor your message to the audience and always attempt to communicate in their preferred style, not your own.

## Communicate appropriately

*Diversity among your audience members can make it a challenge to present your ideas appropriately.*

Communicate in a way that takes account of individual and cultural differences. Clear and effective communication requires strong empathy. This means:

- understanding and being aware of cultural differences
- reading reactions in the audience
- responding to the emotional cues in different cultures and environments.

Understand how your audience members perceive certain interactions; for example:

- the amount of personal space between you
- shaking hands
- maintaining eye contact
- nodding or shaking the head
- physical touching.

You can read more about how to handle cultural differences in section 2C. You might also consider preparing your presentation in a variety of formats to suit individual preferences.

Your ability to understand diverse perspectives will quickly create positive relationships with your audience.



### Communication tips:

- Use active listening skills and verbal encouragement to show you are listening.
- Ask questions to clarify information.
- Ensure your body language shows audience members have your full attention, and that it is appropriate according to cultural preferences.
- Be patient and polite.
- Use suitable terminology, and avoid jargon or colloquial language.
- Build rapport by showing empathy, interest and understanding.
- Accommodate for language differences by using an interpreter or technology to translate communications.
- When interacting with a particular group, avoid stereotyping as this could lead to false or negative assumptions about the group.
- Be aware of any bias you may have and make a conscious effort to learn more about a particular group.
- Where appropriate, seek input from people from diverse groups or perspectives when preparing your presentation.



## Practice task 5

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding of how to engage, fascinate and involve your audience, and tailor your communication to particular audiences.

### Question 1

Which of the following are techniques you can use to engage, fascinate and involve others in the process of communication and exchange? Tick all that apply.

- Use handouts you can give to the audience.
- Use passion, power, prestige and mystique to elicit fascination.
- Discourage interaction during and after your presentation.
- Captivate people with stories and/or videos.
- Tell a lot of jokes to engage people with humour.
- Acknowledge all audience member contributions.

### Question 2

Which of the following statements are about communicating effectively with particular audiences? Tick all that apply.

- Be concise and avoid giving unnecessary information.
- Rely on stereotypes when communicating with particular audiences.
- Be vague about your information so the audience is forced to think creatively.
- Build rapport by showing empathy, interest and understanding.
- Be considerate about how your message and comments may affect your audience.

# 2B

## Use storytelling to communicate ideas

### *Storytelling helps to link your ideas with emotions.*

Telling stories is an effective way of reaching out to people because it creates an emotional connection. People feel moved and inspired by stories because they typically contain personal, emotional experiences that others can relate to. Telling a story, rather than merely listing features and benefits of an idea, relaxes the audience and puts them in a state of attentiveness. It helps to overcome barriers and allow you to convey your message more effectively.

You can weave a lot of information into the story, and provoke your audience's emotions and energy.

Watch this video to learn about how to use storytelling techniques in your presentation.



## Telling a good story

### *Stories describe how and why life changes.*

Stories are everywhere and have been used for thousands of years. There is no real formula for a good story, but there are some useful guidelines. For example:

- The beginning sets the scene and introduces the main character or hero.
- The middle introduces a problem or obstacle that must be overcome, a challenge or difficult decision.
- The end resolves the problem, presents a solution and leaves a strong message.

In a presentation, keep your stories short and simple. Your audience may not need all the background to understand the problem or message. Be yourself and draw on your personal experiences.

Here are some tips for using storytelling to communicate ideas.

---

#### **Make it about people**

---

Focus your story on its characters to give people someone to connect with. Even if your presentation relates to changing a process or helping an organisation to be more productive, people are still driving the action.

---

#### **Give the characters a voice**

---

Stories should be relatable for your audience. Give distinctive voices to your characters and make them interact with one another so the dialogue is believable and sincere. Provide enough detail to bring your characters to life.

---

### **Make it interesting**

---

Find ways to grab the attention of your audience and keep it for long enough to communicate your message. Say it quickly and say it well. Begin your story with the end in mind. Decide what you want the audience to take away from your presentation so you can tailor your story accordingly. Try to engage the audience and make them wonder what will happen next. As the characters in your story pursue their goal, they must run into opposition, surprises or something that makes the audience pay attention.

---

### **Harness emotions**

---

Your story should stir the audience's emotions to break through the white noise of information and deliver the key message: that your idea is worth listening to. If you can harness imagination you can get your audience to react the way you want them to.

It is not just the words and characters that give a story power; it is also the connection between you and your audience. Work to solidify that emotional connection and you will open their minds to receive your message.

---

### **Develop a conflict**

---

Your story must have a conflict to encourage the audience to continue listening so they discover the outcome. The main character of your story should be struggling to do something, or have a problem they need to overcome. Make sure the conflict is relevant and relatable to your audience.

Stories should represent the problem they face, and your idea should be the solution.

---

### **End with a positive takeaway message**

---

The most effective presentations not only have a conflict and a climax, but also a positive resolution. The 'moment of truth' is when the conflict of the plot is resolved.

The key takeaway message should be packaged into a short, memorable phrase. There is no point to a story that leaves the audience feeling the same after listening to it. The moment of truth is the part that convinces the audience to accept, agree with, or invest in your idea.

---

### **Use multimedia**

---

If possible use multimedia to keep your audience interested. Use videos, images, graphs and other visual forms in your presentation. Novelty, which is the presentation of something that is new and unexpected, is a key element of grabbing and maintaining your audience's attention.

## **Key storytelling techniques**

*Stories give people the space to discover the implied meaning of what is being said.*

Stories enable the audience to learn, discover and own what they need to do for themselves. When the final line is spoken, your audience should know exactly why they took this journey with you. It should leave them feeling inspired and motivated.

Here are some storytelling techniques or structures you can use to communicate your ideas to others.



---

**Monomyth ('the hero's journey')**

---

The hero sets out on a difficult journey to an unknown place where they meet a great threat or challenge. They overcome it and return home with a reward or newfound wisdom.

Useful for:

- explaining what brought you to the idea or wisdom you wish to share
  - showing the benefit of taking risks.
- 

**The mountain**

---

Sets the scene, then presents a series of small challenges, rising to a climax and conclusion.

Useful for:

- showing an audience how you overcame a series of challenges
  - slowly building tension
  - delivering a satisfying conclusion.
- 

**Nested loops**

---

Contains three or more storylines, with the most important story (core message) in the middle, and other stories around it to explain the main message. The first story starts first and finishes last; the second story starts second and finishes second last.

Useful for:

- explaining the process of your inspiration
  - showing how you came to a conclusion
  - using analogies to explain the main message
  - showing how a piece of wisdom was passed on to you.
- 

**Sparklines**

---

Compares the way things are with the way they could be done in the future, drawing attention to a problem.

Useful for:

- fuelling a desire for change
  - inspiring action
  - creating hope and excitement
  - generating a following.
- 

**In medias res ('in the midst of things')**

---

The narrative begins in the middle of the action, then goes back to the start to explain how you got there, without giving away too much of the action.

Useful for:

- grabbing attention from the start
  - creating suspense
  - hooking the audience
  - focusing on a pivotal point in your story.
-

---

### Converging ideas

---

Different strands of thinking come together to form one idea. Similar to nested loops, but instead of one central message, each story is of equal importance.

Useful for:

- showing how great minds or ideas come together
  - explaining the birth of a movement or key point in history
  - showing how symbiotic relationships have formed.
- 

### False start

---

Starting with a predictable story, but unexpectedly disrupting it and starting over.

Useful for:

- luring your audience into a false sense of security
  - engaging your audience by surprising them
  - talking about a time you failed and had to start again
  - demonstrating lessons learned or innovative solutions.
- 

### Petal structure

---

Organises multiple speakers or stories (like the petals of a flower) around one central concept, but always returns to that central point.

Useful for:

- several unconnected stories that relate to a single message
- showing lots of evidence to support your idea
- conveying the importance of your central message.

Adapted from: Lindsay, F, 2014, *8 Classic storytelling techniques for engaging presentation*:  
[www.sparkol.com/engage/8-classic-storytelling-techniques-for-engaging-presentations/](http://www.sparkol.com/engage/8-classic-storytelling-techniques-for-engaging-presentations/)

## Example

### Using storytelling to engage, fascinate and involve others

Richard Turere is a youth living in Africa, and uses a simple storytelling technique to engage with the audience and present his information. His story involves solving the problem of frequent lion attacks through trial and error, leading to eventual success: his invention of solar-powered 'lion lights'. His invention has now been adopted by other communities in Africa and has provided Richard with an education and new career aspirations.

Watch the following video to see how the storytelling technique can be used to engage, fascinate and involve others in the process of communication and exchange:

<http://aspirelr.link/richardturereteditalk>



## Practice task 6

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding of the role and benefits of using storytelling to communicate ideas and engage your audience.

Read what each person says about using storytelling to communicate ideas, and select true or false for each one.

### Question 1



People feel moved and inspired by stories that contain personal, emotional experiences they can relate to. Once you have their interest and trust, you can pitch your message more effectively.

\* True

\* False

### Question 2



Here's a tip: never include conflict or problems in your stories. People have enough things to worry about in real life. They don't want to hear about a person who is experiencing conflict and they won't care what happens to that character. They'll lose interest quickly and stop listening to your presentation.

\* True

\* False

### Question 3



Don't use multimedia such as videos, images and graphics when telling a story. It only distracts the audience from your key ideas and they will lose your main message.

\* True

\* False

## 2C

## Solve communication challenges in innovative ways

*Physical audiences and virtual audiences bring about different communication challenges.*

Body language is a key component of communication and tells a lot about what others are thinking. When you need to gauge what a person is thinking through their body language or facial expressions, a face-to-face encounter is the best approach.

Despite this, many individuals and businesses use some form of virtual communication to engage with their target audiences. This is because virtual platforms are affordable, have a wide reach and allow for immediate decisions to be made across vast distances.

Consider whether your audience is physical or virtual (or both) when selecting techniques to communicate and discuss your ideas. Develop innovative approaches to different communication challenges, and be prepared to take risks in the way ideas are presented. Remember, ensuring the audience is engaged, inspired and informed is a top priority.



### Challenges of communicating with a virtual audience

*Identify potential challenges of presenting to a virtual audience and develop strategies that overcome these.*

Here are some challenges you may face when communicating with a virtual audience.

#### Technical difficulties

Whenever you communicate using technology, you may face technical difficulties. Anything from a weak internet connection, mismatched audio, lagging video, to total loss of video or audio can have a negative impact on how you and your ideas are received by your audience.

These issues are even greater when live streaming because you are relying solely on the internet to connect you with your audience. Where possible, have a back-up plan and the contact details for any technical support available.

#### Weaker personal connection

While some virtual communication tools such as webinars, live streaming, and videoconferencing, allow you to see the faces of your audience, it is not always the case. When you present to small audiences, such as meetings, you can interact closely with your audience. However, the larger the audience, the less likely you will be able to make a personal connection with everyone.

If the audience can't see you, they are less likely to trust you and believe in what you are saying. You may need to work harder to compensate for this and maintain a personal connection.

**Divided attention**

It is difficult to maintain your audience's attention using virtual communication tools.

When presenting your ideas to an online audience, audience members may try to multitask or become easily distracted. They may miss important information that could compromise their understanding. It is difficult to prevent this as your audience may be tuning in from home, work, a cafe, university or another place where there are countless distractions. Increasing opportunities for interaction may help to bring their attention back to you.

**Audience size**

While webinar platforms offer registration forms that can provide you with an accurate audience count, it is almost impossible to know how many people are actually tuning in. You could be talking to thousands of people or fewer than 10. This may not affect your presentation, but it is helpful to know how many people are actually listening to you and receiving your message. Again, use audience involvement to get a sense of your real audience size.

**Audience feedback**

During a virtual presentation, there is often no way of knowing whether your audience is enjoying your presentation, or even engaging with you at all. Include interactive portions during your virtual presentation so the audience can participate, provide you with feedback, contribute to discussions and feel actively involved.

## Challenges of communicating with a real audience

*Minimise the challenges of presenting to a physical audience by rehearsing your presentation and eliminating any potential distractions.*

Solid preparation will assist you to deliver an engaging and successful presentation.

Here are some of the challenges you may face when communicating with a physical audience.

**Audience diversity**

Audiences are made up of different people with different beliefs, values and backgrounds. Be aware of your audience's diversity, what you say, and how you say it to build trust and rapport. The better you understand and embrace the diversity of your audience, the better you can communicate your message. Welcome diversity and cultural differences and embrace the opportunity to share messages in a new and unique way.

### Distractions

It's very hard for people to focus on a speaker when they are not physically comfortable. Ensure the environment is at a comfortable temperature, has adequate lighting, appropriate seating and access to facilities so the audience members feel calm, relaxed and ready to receive your message.

As well as environmental distractions, also eliminate repetitive phrases and gestures that could annoy the people watching you. Rehearse your presentation and make sure you do not fidget. This distracts the audience from hearing what you are saying.

People in the audience can also distract others, e.g. by using their phones, whispering to each other, walking in and out of the room, or fidgeting. If someone is acting inappropriately you may need to address it. Address each occurrence sensitively and reasonably.

It may be appropriate at the beginning to ask for phones to be turned off, and to let people know at what point you will be taking a break.

### Visibility

Make sure every audience member can see you and your multimedia presentation clearly from their seat. If people can't see you, they are less likely to listen or fully understand what you are trying to say. The audience needs to connect with you in order to connect with your ideas.

Being able to make eye contact and see your body language and facial expressions helps the audience to make that connection.

When you are delivering with the help of a multimedia presentation, avoid facing the screen to read directly from it. If you need to refer to it, use your own papers or a laptop in front of you so you continue to face the audience.

## Overcome communication barriers

*There is a range of potential barriers to effective communication.*

Barriers can be overcome by adjusting your communication style. Trust your instincts and respond intuitively and empathically, adjusting your personal communication style to meet the individual needs of your audience members.

Here are some common barriers to effective communication and ways to overcome them.

### Educational barriers

Educational barriers include:

- literacy problems
- numeracy deficiencies
- lack of knowledge about the subject.

Clarify your audience's literacy levels before your presentation. Communicate with the audience on their level and encourage them to ask questions when they don't understand something.

Don't assume that people have a certain level of knowledge, as you may inadvertently discourage them from listening to you. However, at the same time, don't over-explain concepts that people have already grasped, as this could indicate a lack of respect and seem patronising.

### **Psychological and physical barriers**

Psychological barriers may make audience members resistant to change or fearful of consequences.

Psychological barriers include:

- fear of rejection or failure
- an inability to self-motivate
- anxiety
- lack of confidence
- failure to follow through
- fear of public speaking.

Physical barriers relate to the physical abilities of your audience. For example, you may be presenting to people who have:

- hearing loss
- a speech impediment
- vision impairment
- neurological disorders, such as Tourette syndrome, aphasia, dyslexia, ADHD or autism.

Ensure you have the necessary tools and resources to communicate effectively with people who have disabilities. You might even make contact with these individuals ahead of your presentation to see if they require any communication aids.

### **Behavioural constraints**

Behavioural constraints include differences between verbal and nonverbal approaches to communication. People of different cultures interact in different ways. Don't use words or nonverbal cues that could be misunderstood or offensive to certain audience members. Learn what is and is not acceptable before you begin interacting with a particular group.

### **Emotional constraints**

Emotional constraints include differences in what people perceive to be acceptable levels of emotional display. While people of some cultures find certain displays of emotion unacceptable, other cultures may consider them to be a natural part of their communication process. Again, learn what is and is not acceptable before you present your ideas to others, and adjust your communication style accordingly.

### **Information barriers**

Providing too much information can overwhelm your audience. Providing too little information can confuse them and leave your message uncommunicated. Be well informed and equipped to answer any questions, or at least know where to source the information. Don't try to present any information to the audience that you do not fully understand yourself. The audience may be less likely to trust what you say from then on. Confusing the audience only causes them to tune out and stop listening.

### Physical distractions

Physical distractions relate to the environment in which you are presenting. For example, if the environment is too noisy, the information you are trying to present may be lost, misunderstood or not fully received. Move to a quieter and more suitable environment to ensure you can receive the audience's full attention.

If an environment is too hot or cold, the audience may become uncomfortable and distracted. Allow for comfort breaks and refreshments at appropriate intervals. You may also need to check in with your audience occasionally, e.g. to see whether they want a window opened.

## Recognise and respect audience diversity

*Whether you are presenting in your workplace, on a stage, or engaging with people online, remember who your audience is.*

Share your message in a way that is considerate, sensitive, audience-focused and embraces individual differences.

People of different cultures have their own unique ways of communicating. What you consider the usual way to communicate, someone else may consider to be rude. Similarly, certain gestures and body language may be offensive to some.

Here are some examples of cultural differences that help you to overcome communication challenges when presenting to diverse audiences.

### Personal space

Some people prefer to stand at arm's length from the person they are speaking with. If someone enters into their personal space, they may feel intimidated or uncomfortable. However, people from some cultures tend to stand closer and are quite comfortable with little personal space.

### Touch

Different cultures have different rules about who can touch whom. In most cases touching is inappropriate and, unless specifically required (e.g. in an emergency), it should be avoided.

### Eye contact

In some cultures, making direct eye contact is seen as disrespectful, especially if it is prolonged. In other cultures, direct eye contact is used to show respect. Eye contact is an important technique to engage with your audience, but you need to know when it should be avoided.

### Hand gestures

Gestures that you may consider harmless may be considered offensive in some cultures; for example, the 'thumbs up' gesture is considered rude in certain Middle Eastern cultures.

**Nodding**

For some people, nodding the head means 'yes' or 'I understand'. However, in some cultures, it means 'no'. People from some cultures may nod their heads even if they don't understand to avoid appearing disrespectful.

**Smiling**

Smiling can also be misinterpreted. While smiling is generally positive, in some cultures it can be used to demonstrate other emotions such as embarrassment.

**Polite conversation**

Conversation is usually a two-way exchange where each person takes turns at talking and listening. However, in some cultures it is acceptable for people to talk over each other. Different cultures have different conversation styles.

**Agreement**

Some people do not consider it polite to disagree with someone they perceive to be in authority. Questions that have 'yes' or 'no' answers may always get a positive response, regardless of the person's actual preference or understanding.

**Questioning style**

Direct questioning may also be considered impolite. In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, for example, direct questioning is often avoided. An indirect questioning style may be more appropriate. Indirect questions tend to use words and phrases such as 'Can you tell me ...' at the start of the question.

## Accommodate for language differences

*You may need to cater your presentation to meet the language needs of the audience.*

Try to find out whether any of your audience members speak languages other than English, and adjust your communication approach accordingly.

A person may speak English clearly, but may not be able to read complex documents or understand technical terminology. Some people need time to examine the language used or to have someone interpret or translate it for them.



How to accommodate for language differences:

- Check and confirm that the audience has understood the information you want to convey.
- Make sure that people with language differences have equal opportunity to ask questions, express concerns or consult an interpreter, if necessary.
- Write a draft and have a typical audience member read it to check that your meaning is clear.
- Speak clearly and slowly and avoid shouting.
- Be careful not to use jargon, slang or terminology that audience members may not understand – if technical language is necessary, introduce it carefully and explain it first.
- Avoid using slang or expressions that are part of everyday language but do not have a literal meaning; this can be very confusing to a person unfamiliar with colloquial English.
- Consider using videos with subtitles, or presentation slides and handouts in different languages.

## Create innovative approaches to different communication challenges

*Being innovative does not only mean coming up with new ideas and techniques.*

It also means using your imagination to develop ideas that further satisfy the needs and expectations of your target audience. Innovation and risk-taking go hand in hand; you may need to try a different approach to communicate your message.

Being innovative can mean changing the way you currently do things, or adapting to changes in your audience or environment to communicate more effectively.

Create innovative approaches to different communication challenges. For example, you may need to be able to:

- communicate all key messages in a short time
- present on an unfamiliar topic
- respond to impromptu or unexpected situations
- structure information quickly and effectively
- use new and emerging technologies
- combine communication techniques in an unexpected way.

Consider the way others present information and ideas in your industry, sector or craft. Analyse what techniques work when provoking a response from the audience. Can you think of new or different ways of communicating your message that would be just as effective?





## Practice task 7

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding of innovative approaches to different communication challenges.

Match the beginning of each sentence with the correct ending.

- \* Innovation goes hand in hand with
- \* Communication challenges with a physical audience may include
- \* Communication challenges with virtual presentations may include
- \* Educational barriers can be overcome by
- \* communicating with the audience on their level, and encouraging them to ask questions when they don't understand.
- \* risk-taking; you may need to try something new or a different approach in order to communicate your message.
- \* technical difficulties, weaker personal connection, and inability to gauge audience size and attention, or to gather feedback.
- \* environmental distractions, and whether people can see you and your presentation properly.

## 2D

## Take risks when presenting ideas

*As a public speaker, you are a natural risk-taker.*

Many people find public speaking a challenge. By expressing yourself in front of a group of people, you open yourself up to being judged, making mistakes, forgetting your speech, stumbling over your words, misjudging your audience or simply not being liked. Most presenters research, edit and rehearse to minimise these public speaking challenges.

It's important to be prepared, but taking risks can also result in greater rewards. Look out for opportunities to take some chances with your presentations, for example:

- making it more interactive and engaging
- making it more emotional or story-led
- using innovative presentation techniques
- choosing not to rely on a script to make the presentation more conversational.

Risk-taking not only pushes yourself, but can also provoke a better response from your audience when it works. Use risk-taking to maintain your passion, challenge yourself and improve your presentation skills. Your audience will reward you with a higher level of engagement and interest in your ideas. Ultimately you will improve your ability to articulate, present and debate your ideas, and boost your confidence too.

Watch this video to learn about the role of risk-taking when presenting ideas.



## Take risks in the ways ideas are presented

*Be prepared to take risks in the way you present your ideas.*

Thinking outside the box brings out the creativity and innovation needed to get ahead of your competition or minimise resistance to an idea. Prepare to abandon traditional presentation techniques and select tools designed to create interest and pique curiosity.

One way to attract your audience's attention is to create something completely original, with your own personal touch. This could be risky, as you may be trying something that has never been tested on an audience before. Use your creativity and imagination to make your presentation a sensory experience for the audience. Involve them in ways they wouldn't expect, without making them feel uncomfortable.

Risks may involve:

- acknowledging your own limits and difficulties
- asking for help
- breaking out of accepted norms
- revealing personal information or vulnerabilities
- failing and learning from it
- incorporating humour into your presentation
- taking a fun, light-hearted approach.

## Use visual aids to enhance your presentation

*Visual aids enhance your presentation by adding impact and strengthening audience involvement.*

Use visual aids to maintain the audience's interest and assist them to understand your presentation. Do not use visual aids just to show off your technical skills; doing so may distract the audience and compromise your key message.

Here are examples of taking risks when using visual aids to enhance your presentation.

### Immersive photography

Instead of using text-heavy presentation slides, try using stunning, oversized images to drive home a message. Large, captivating background images and video not only help to capture your audience's attention, but also set the tone of your presentation and provide an atmospheric setting that transports viewers to a completely different scene.

### Scrolling presentations

Instead of using traditional PowerPoint slides, provide audience members with access to your slides in the form of a scrolling presentation that looks like a web page. Scrolling presentations allow you to add more interactive and immersive elements, such as videos, surveys or forms. With the widespread use of smartphones, long scrolling is now the preferred option.

### Stock photo alternatives

Overused stock images and photos are neither interesting nor engaging. Try using other forms of visual representation to communicate your ideas in a fresh and appealing way. Use playful graphics in combination with a small amount of text to send a powerful message.

### Creative illustrations

Other effective alternatives to stock photos are hand-drawn elements and custom animations. Design elements that are unique to your presentation can really capture the audience's attention. Giving your presentation media a playful and creative touch allows the audience to connect with you on a personal level.

### Graphics and storytelling

Storytelling not only gets your message across more effectively, but also makes it much more memorable for the audience. This can be even more effective when combined with visuals. Every image or video should perfectly complement each of the carefully chosen phrases and words of your story to have maximum impact on the audience.

Example

## An innovative presentation to celebrate diversity

Steven works for Tall Poppy University and is presenting a talk to a large group of potential students about why they should study at the university. The university's goal is to recruit students from diverse populations and to make the setting and curriculum welcoming and equitable. The university staff believe that this key marketing message will make it stand out from its competitors.

To emotionally connect with his audience, Steven uses a professional cinematographer to create six short, powerful and inspiring films about real students who have overcome personal challenges to succeed, both at university and in life. He uses the petal structure storytelling technique to show the audience how all these key stories are related to each other to convey the importance of his message.

In a bold move, Steven asks the subjects to use their first language in the short films, then inserts the English translation in subtitles. He wants to demonstrate to potential students and their families that language differences are celebrated and encouraged at the university, and that people have the right to express themselves in ways that suit their individual needs and preferences.



## Practice task 8

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding of risk-taking when presenting and debating ideas.

Which of the following statements are correct? Tick all that apply.

- Stick to what you know works, and avoid taking risks in your presentations.
- Be creative and innovative to get ahead of your competition.
- Involve the audience in ways they wouldn't expect; aim to push boundaries and make them feel uncomfortable.
- Use creativity and imagination to make your presentation a sensory experience for the audience.
- Use presentation techniques designed to create interest and pique curiosity.

## 2E

## Provoke and encourage a response from your audience

*Taking your audience on an emotional journey is an important part of presenting an idea.*

Whether you are launching a new product, promoting a service or appealing for donations, it is vital to create an emotional response in your audience. Appealing to the audience's emotions is a way of making your idea memorable, and helps to edge you ahead of the competition.

You may also consider appealing to the needs of your audience. There are theories that suggest people are motivated by unfulfilled needs, such as a need for financial security, success or belonging. Targeting the specific needs of individuals and groups you are presenting to helps you to provoke the desired response or behaviour.



### Types of audiences

*Understand the character and nature of the audience to elicit your desired response.*

Your audience may be made up of a combination of audience types, who may each respond to you in different ways.

Here are some different types of audiences you may encounter and tips for how to respond to them.

#### Uninformed audience

These people are unfamiliar with the topic being discussed.

To respond to an uninformed audience:

- Try to find out their level of knowledge or understanding so you know how much information you should provide them.
- Provide the audience with everything they need to know about the topic.
- Pick and choose key points to help the audience understand the topic.
- Be careful not to provide an overwhelming amount of new information or leave them confused.

#### Neutral audience

These people might be interested in your idea, but are often uncertain and ambivalent. They usually don't intend to take any action in response.

To respond to a neutral audience:

- Remain positive and optimistic that they will accept your idea.
- Remember you have a 50/50 chance of convincing them.

### Hostile audience

These people are in strong disagreement with your idea and you will need to build trust in order to change their mind.

To respond to a hostile audience:

- Come up with a common ground or starting point to relate to your audience.
- Try to think of reasons why people may not agree with your idea or point of view.
- Figure out ways to overcome their points of disagreement.
- Try to build rapport with the audience from the outset.

### Expert audience

These people are already very familiar with what you are telling them.

To respond to an expert audience:

- Avoid giving detailed background to the topic – it can cause them to feel irritated and patronised.
- Appeal to their expertise by encouraging contributions – this will help them get on board with your idea.
- Try to provide them with something new and interesting that they didn't know about.

### Business audience

A business audience will be used to listening to presentations and may also be an expert audience, but may be short on time.

To respond to a business audience:

- Keep your presentation short and to the point.
- Be polite and concise.
- Make sure they understand that you are providing a solution to their problems, not yours.
- Acknowledge any experts and people with experience, and involve them if you can.

## Target audience characteristics

***Your target audience is the intended recipient of your product, service, process or idea.***

In marketing and advertising, your audience will be a particular group of consumers in the target market. A target audience is formed from the same factors of a target market, but it is more specific and susceptible to influence from other characteristics, such as education level, age and cultural background.

Your audience may be made up of individuals who have never met, a small work team or a large audience who share a common interest. It could include colleagues, community members, friends, investors, mentors, panels, peers, students and/or managers.

Audience characteristics can affect communications. Carefully select communication techniques, methods and content to influence a particular audience to respond the way you want them to. Here is a reminder of some of the characteristics already explored in Topic 1.

Factors you need to consider about your audience:

- **Age:** The ages of your audience may affect your communication format or the way you deliver information.
- **Sex:** Tailor your language and communication style so it is appropriate and respectful to both sexes.
- **Education level:** The literacy and numeracy skills of your audience may affect how you prepare and present any written materials.
- **Cultural background:** Write content and design graphics that are appropriate and meet the cultural needs of your audience.
- **Primary language:** If English is not the audience's first language, you may need to have your presentation interpreted or translated into other languages, or use more visual techniques, such as images and videos.
- **Job type:** The types of jobs your audience members have can affect the format of materials and delivery methods available to you.
- **Physical or cognitive disability:** Make reasonable adjustments to your presentation to ensure people of all abilities have equal access to your information.
- **Information sources:** When planning your presentation, it helps to know where people in your audience get the information related to your topic and what sources they trust.
- **Group dynamics:** Make yourself aware of the behaviours, attitudes and opinions occurring in a particular audience so you can facilitate a cohesive discussion.

## Use emotions to encourage and provoke response

*Use positive and negative emotions to elicit responses from your audience.*

Some commonly used emotional triggers that are often effective in provoking response from audience members are trust, fear and belonging. A mixture of positive and negative emotions, such as surprise, anxiety, anger, fear, joy, lust and amusement, also bring out audience engagement.

Mix emotions together to provoke a particular response in your audience. For example, use optimism to inspire and motivate your audience. Let your audience know the benefits of your idea and allow them to anticipate how it would solve their problem. Add in an element of joy by including a cheerful story. This formula should direct your audience to feelings of hope.



## Use needs theories to encourage and provoke responses

*Needs theories attempt to identify internal factors that motivate an individual to demonstrate certain behaviours.*

Needs theories are based on the idea that people are motivated by unfulfilled needs. Needs create internal pressures that can provoke a behavioural response; for example, the physiological need to eat results in hunger and a hungry person will seek out food. The needs a person has can range from weak to strong and can vary based on environmental factors, time and place.

Here are some ways you can account for different needs:

- Account for physical needs of your audience by providing a comfortable venue, making your presentation short, and allowing for necessary breaks to use the bathroom, eat and drink.
- Account for safety needs by providing a safe presentation environment, or by offering an idea or solution that generates income or a sense of wellbeing.
- Address the social needs of your audience by encouraging them to interact with one another, supporting discussion and debate, and allowing them to ask you questions.

## Other ways to provoke and encourage audience responses

*Promote and foster discussion and sharing, and encourage a response when presenting your ideas to others.*

Here are some other ways you can provoke the desired response from the audience.

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### Offer serious value

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Ensure that your product, service, process or idea helps other people. Create valuable content that makes a positive impact on the lives of your audience members.

Valuable content:

- provides something useful or functional for your audience
- shows them how to do something or provides a solution to a problem
- offers insight
- compels audience members through a strong, unique and genuine voice
- speaks directly to specific people or groups
- demonstrates that you are an expert on the topic.

---

### Serve your audience

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Serve your audience, not yourself. If your ideas do not align with what your audience needs or wants, you won't capture their attention, let alone provoke the desired response. Your content must respect who the people in the audience are, and the stories, ideas and problems they want to talk about.

You can serve your audience by:

- considering the perspectives, attitudes, beliefs and values of your audience when preparing your presentation
- being open and honest about your motives and goals
- delivering your own stories, experiences, ideas and thoughts in an authentic and meaningful way.

---

### Create meaningful content

---

If you want to increase audience engagement, create engaging and meaningful content. Your ideas must provoke an emotional response if you want audience members to engage with you and your message.

To be meaningful, your content should:

- provoke thoughtful questions
- encourage discussion and debate
- provide joy, interest, optimism and trust
- offer solutions to complicated and specific problems.

---

**Make it easy to understand**

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Your audience may want to connect with you, share your content and participate in the discussion, but they won't do this if you make it difficult for them to do so. Empathise with your audience. Determine how they may receive your message and adjust it so it is easy to understand. Make a strong finish and encourage audience engagement by making it clear what the next step is for those who want to be part of your journey.

You can make your presentation easier to understand by:

- identifying and overcoming communication challenges
  - using appropriate verbal and nonverbal language that meets the needs of your audience
  - using visual aids to support what you are saying or demonstrate how something works.
- 

**Example**

## Appealing to emotions and needs to encourage a response

Helen manages a team of customer service staff at her organisation. Helen and her team are responsible for managing the relationships between the organisation and its customers. They provide sales support to customers, handle complaints, requests for refunds and other feedback. The senior management team has asked Helen to implement a new process for receiving and handling customer complaints. It is a difficult topic to address, as some of Helen's team members don't like dealing with conflict.

Helen wants to present the new process to her team in a calm and positive way so they respond with optimism and a willingness to change. Helen focuses her presentation on how the new process will help staff to resolve customer complaints promptly and effectively, bringing joy and satisfaction to both the team member and customer. During the meeting, Helen appeals to her team members' need for esteem by allowing them to ask questions, participate in a group discussion, and provide their own ideas regarding how the new process can be improved or adapted.





## Practice task 9

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding of ways to provoke and encourage a response in particular individuals or groups.

Which of the following statements are about provoking and encouraging individuals or groups to respond to your presentation or ideas? Tick all that apply.

- Use communication techniques and content to influence the audience to respond the way you want them to.
- The character and nature of audiences is the same – they just want information.
- There is no point in appealing to the emotions of your audience – they will only engage with facts and figures.
- Target the specific needs of individuals or groups, and use these to bring out desired responses and behaviours.



## Summary

- Audience engagement is an essential part of important presentations. You only have a few minutes to get the interest of your audience and it is critical that you establish a connection with them as early as possible.
- Using alternative communication methods can stimulate audience members, and enhance creativity and critical thinking.
- Learn how to tailor your message to the specific audience it is aimed at and determine how to communicate effectively to all sub-groups in the audience.
- Knowing the challenges of presenting to a virtual audience helps you to plan your presentation and develop strategies that overcome each pitfall that can arise.
- Storytelling helps to unite your ideas with emotions. You can weave a lot of information into the story and provoke the audience's emotions and energy.
- Being innovative means using your imagination to develop ideas that further satisfy the needs and expectations of your target audience. Innovation goes hand in hand with risk-taking; you may need to try something new in order to communicate your message.
- Instead of taking the safe route with your presentation design, be bold and unexpected. Give your audience an experience that keeps them engaged and hanging on your every word.
- Audience characteristics can affect communications. Carefully select communication techniques, methods and content that can influence a particular audience to respond the way you want them to.
- Appealing to emotions helps to make your idea memorable, and usually edges you ahead of the competition.
- Needs theories suggest that people are motivated by unfulfilled needs. Targeting the specific needs of individuals and groups in the audience helps you to provoke your desired response.



## Learning checkpoint 2

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This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge about provoking a response or reaction from an individual or audience during a presentation.

1. Why is it important to explore and use different techniques to engage, fascinate and involve others when communicating ideas?

2. Give **two** examples of how you could tailor comments to particular audiences.

3. Explain how storytelling can be used to communicate ideas.

4. Why is it important to use innovative approaches to different communication challenges?

5. Why should you be prepared to take risks when giving presentations and debating ideas?

6. Give **two** examples of ways you could provoke and encourage a response in particular individuals or groups.



## Topic 3

# Debate and discuss ideas

*If you want to share your ideas with others, be prepared to engage in critical discussion and debate with confidence.*

A discussion is a detailed conversation between two or more people that is centred on a particular topic. A debate involves two or more people who are intent on proving their own statements. They may also argue against any statement or assertion they are opposed to.

You may need to discuss and debate ideas with colleagues, partners, investors, and existing or potential consumers to receive critical feedback about why your idea does or does not work, and how it could be improved to better meet the needs of the end users.

Participating in discussion and debate is a learned skill. Argue your point of view with evidence to support it, participate in conversations that challenge and explore new and different concepts, and be prepared to respond to questions with relevant information.

Reflect on and appraise the views of others to help you refine your own ideas, and embrace new ones.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Present and argue substantiated positions on ideas
- 3B Be open to critical analysis of ideas
- 3C Participate in conversations about concepts, approaches and ideas
- 3D Use views of others to refine ideas and embrace new ideas

## 3A

## Present and argue substantiated positions on ideas

*There's no point presenting your idea to others if you can't provide evidence to support it.*

A substantiated idea is one backed up or supported with evidence. Develop a substantiated position after researching and developing your understanding of the topic. Gather persuasive information from a range of sources to help you justify your position to the audience.

Before you present an idea to others, decide why you believe it is an idea worth sharing. If you want someone to support your cause, accept your concept or follow your process, you need to back up your position and deter others from theirs.

Substantiated positions may be:

- grounded in appropriate research
- the result of rational and logical thought
- subjected to the analysis of others through peer review
- supported by relevant evidence.



## Gather evidence

*When you present your position on ideas, it will only be convincing if you use evidence to support your argument.*

A new product or service must be tested so that there is evidence to show how it works or how it benefits the end user. Similarly, a new process must be planned and monitored to demonstrate how it works or how it improves an existing process. A creative work must be critically reviewed and analysed to determine whether it goes beyond initial appeal and provides value.

There are many different kinds of evidence you can use. Always choose types of evidence that are appropriate for your particular audience.

The following table shows some of the aspects to consider when gathering evidence.

Aspect to consider	Some possibilities	Examples
Where does the evidence come from?	Personal experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your own reflections and opinions</li> </ul>
	The experience of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testimonials and opinions of others</li> <li>• Feedback received from existing users or customers, such as surveys</li> </ul>

Aspect to consider	Some possibilities	Examples
What format is it in?	Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic and general publications</li> </ul>
	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internet research</li> <li>Social media research</li> </ul>
	Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conversations</li> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Meetings</li> </ul>
What is its purpose?	Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbooks</li> <li>Journal articles</li> <li>Research papers</li> </ul>
	Non-academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>News media</li> <li>Magazines</li> <li>Online articles</li> </ul>
What is the source?	Primary sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative works</li> <li>Statistical data</li> <li>Eyewitness accounts</li> <li>Results of experiments</li> <li>Video recordings</li> </ul>
	Secondary sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sources presenting facts or descriptions about events that were not directly observed</li> <li>Scholarly books and articles</li> </ul>

Adapted from: First Year Experience Series @ 2000 Learning Centre, University of Sydney:  
[http://sydney.edu.au/stuserv/documents/learning\\_centre/developingargument.doc](http://sydney.edu.au/stuserv/documents/learning_centre/developingargument.doc)

## Write your positioning statement

*Your position is your starting point for presenting a convincing case for your idea, and is usually expressed in the form of a positioning statement.*

You may find that your position in any argument depends largely on the amount of evidence available to support it.

Once you have done enough research on an idea:

- determine the range of positions put forward by others
- make judgments about which ones are the most valid
- decide your own position and write a positioning statement.

Make your positioning statement meaningful, important and convincing.

To be effective, the wording of your positioning statement must contain:

- the target market
- the idea itself
- the point of difference
- the frame of reference
- reasons to believe in the idea.

#### Things to keep in mind when writing your positioning statement:

- Keep it simple, memorable and tailored to the target audience.
- Provide a clear picture of your idea that differentiates it from other ideas.
- Make your idea sound credible, i.e. that you can deliver on your promise.
- Make sure your idea has a unique position in the market.
- Consider whether your position is consistent with decisions already made by your target audience.
- Give your position room for growth.

Adapted from: Stayman, D. (2015), *How to write market positioning statements*, Cornell University: <http://blog.ecornell.com/how-to-write-market-positioning-statements>

Here are some examples of positioning statements:

- ‘For all employees, the new Company Ltd social club will bring staff members together from different departments because it will promote a diverse range of activities.’
- ‘For eco-conscious parents, the Pre-Potty Botty Bum is the fastest drying reusable nappy in Australia because it is made from the right balance of cotton, bamboo and microfibres.’
- ‘Young people aged 15–18 years with a previous criminal conviction will learn new, practical work and life skills when they attend the community service program, because the teaching staff have all had similar life experiences.’

A good positioning statement helps you to maintain focus on your idea and its value. For more information on positioning statements, refer to Topic 1.

## Develop your argument

***Once you have chosen the position you will take, you need to develop an argument using the evidence gathered to support it.***

Don't just summarise the evidence you have gathered; use it to back up your position and develop your argument.

When developing your argument, keep the following things in mind:

- Base your argument on a logical structure in order to be persuasive.
- Try using a sequence of points that describe your own way of seeing the topic.
- Choose key messages that are useful to support your position.
- Show the inadequacies of other ideas that contradict your position.



You can prepare your argument by following these steps.

- 1 Identify your position**  
If you haven't already done so, write a positioning statement that clearly identifies what you are arguing, or the point you are trying to prove.
- 2 Know the main points in your argument**  
Break down your argument into steps. Focus on several different things that led you to deciding on your final position.
- 3 Structure your argument**  
Link the points in your argument by discussing them in a logical order, and drawing connections between them wherever possible.
- 4 Use evidence**  
To argue convincingly, draw on the evidence you have gathered to support each of your points. Without evidence, all you have is an unsupported claim.
- 5 Consider counterarguments**  
Consider the possible counterarguments. This allows you to address potential objections before they are raised.
- 6 Have a clear conclusion**  
Show how your position is supported by the evidence you have presented. Don't just summarise your argument. Instead, try to explain how each point works with the others to contribute to your argument as a whole.

## Present and argue your position on ideas

*When it comes to the critical presentation phase, decide how you can present and argue your position so it is clear and straightforward, while also being persuasive.*

While presenting your argument, you must also earn the support of your audience members.

Tips for presenting and arguing your position on ideas:

- Rehearse your presentation out loud several times, if possible in front of a listener who can give you feedback.
- Time your presentation and adjust it to fit your allotted time – listeners are likely to become distracted or annoyed if you go overtime.
- Use digital tools and technologies to store and present the information.
- Clearly state the structure and main points of your argument at the outset of your presentation.
- Articulate your ideas and requirements clearly and creatively using techniques appropriate to the audience and environment.

- Give the audience enough time throughout the presentation to absorb the information, look at your presentation slides or write down notes.
- Don't be afraid to restate or repeat your position, especially when a point is complicated.
- Include some pauses at pivotal moments that give listeners a chance to take it important points.
- Invite your audience to contribute, then listen to and consider their opinions.
- Conclude your presentation with a question if you want to facilitate a discussion on a particular issue.

## Present to an unfamiliar audience and setting

*There may be situations when you need to present your ideas and position to an unfamiliar audience and setting.*

This may be a business audience, a creative audience or an older audience. An unfamiliar setting might bring further challenges and involve more risk-taking (see Topic 2 for more information). For instance, you may be in a venue you've never been to before and find that the conditions are different from what you expected, such as the seating arrangements and size of the room. Be prepared to adjust your presentation accordingly. If your audience is larger than you thought, you may need to speak louder than usual or find a microphone.

Regardless of the audience or setting, the principles remain the same, but you may feel more nervous. To overcome nerves when giving your presentation:

- try not to speak too fast, and remember to pause for breath
- try to be genuine and authentic
- communicate clearly and confidently.

Here are some reminders about how to engage and persuade any audience.

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### **Prepare for your audience**

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Research the audience before your presentation and understand what is different about them and how they compare to your usual audience.

Be prepared to improvise – if you are unfamiliar with the audience you may have to think on the spot.

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### **Don't make assumptions**

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Don't make assumptions about your intended audience. Don't stereotype or try to guess what they like, or the beliefs, values and attitudes they hold. Try to understand the audience before you present to them so you can prepare appropriate content.

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### **Know your purpose**

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Be clear on who you are, what you do and what you can offer. Your key message and positioning statement should be clear, impressive and convincing. It should make people want to take action.

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### **Make it personal**

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Engage with the audience on a personal level. Choose presentation techniques and tools you think the audience will remember and enjoy.

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## Practice task 10

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding of effective ways to present and argue substantiated positions on ideas.

### Question 1

Which of the following statements are about presenting ideas clearly and creatively to an audience? Tick all that apply.

- Rehearse your presentation out loud and in front of a listener who can give you feedback.
- Time your presentation and always exceed your allotted time so your presentation is more memorable.
- Use digital tools and technologies to store and present the information in an interesting way.
- Articulate your ideas clearly and creatively using techniques appropriate to the audience and environment.
- If you want to facilitate a discussion on a particular issue, end your presentation with a question.
- Clearly state the structure and main points of your argument midway through your presentation.

### Question 2

Which of the following statements are correct? Tick all that apply.

- When you present your position on ideas, it is only convincing if you use evidence to support your argument.
- Substantiated positions are the result of rational and logical thought.
- To argue convincingly, draw on the evidence you have gathered to support each point you make. Without evidence, all you have is an unsupported claim.
- When presenting your ideas, you can make up facts and statistics to reinforce your position.
- Substantiated positions are supported by relevant information.
- Evidence to support your ideas is not necessary and only confuses your audience.

### Question 3

There may be situations where you need to present your ideas and positions to an unfamiliar audience and setting. Which of the following statements are correct? Tick all that apply.

- Research who your audience is before your presentation.
- Choose presentation techniques and tools appropriate for the audience.
- Make assumptions and rely on stereotypes about your intended audience.
- Be clear on who you are, what you do and what you can offer.
- Ensure your key message and positioning statement are confusing to make the audience think.

#### Example

### Crafting an effective positioning statement

Tony is preparing a social media marketing campaign for his client, Bookshelf.com. His purpose is to convince internet users that Bookshelf.com provides the best online retail book experience for customers. Tony does his research and discovers that the website has two main competitors in terms of cost and delivery times. However, what sets Bookshelf.com apart is that it promises to refund customers in full if their order is not fulfilled and received within five business days. This is regardless of whether they receive the goods or not.

Tony develops the following positioning statement: 'For avid online readers, Bookshelf.com is a retail bookseller that provides easy-to-access eBooks for over 2 million titles. Unlike regular bookstores, Bookshelf.com provides the perfect blend of convenience and discount prices for an extensive selection of titles'.

Tony begins developing his social media marketing campaign, using the positioning statement as the key to attracting a new customer base for Bookshelf.com. The campaign will also include video testimonials from real customers who have switched to Bookshelf.com from its competitors.



## 3B

### Be open to critical analysis of ideas

***A critical analysis is a task that requires you to summarise and evaluate an idea.***

To effectively debate and discuss ideas, you must be open to critical analysis of your ideas, and know how to review and evaluate the ideas of others.

Conducting a critical analysis requires you to listen to and understand an idea in detail, and learn about similar ideas so you can present a fair and reasonable evaluation of the first one.

Being critical does not always mean being negative. Critical analysis involves questioning the information and opinions of others, and presenting your evaluation or judgment constructively. To do this, you must understand the idea from different perspectives and in relation to reliable evidence.

### Participate in critical analysis

***Analysis is the detailed examination of an item, topic or issue.***

Analysis requires separating the content and concepts of an idea into their main parts, then understanding how these interrelate, connect and influence each other.

To critically analyse an idea:

- consider the idea in question
- understand its content and purpose
- identify its intended audience
- understand why it is designed or structured the way it is.



Designers and manufacturers use product analysis to help them develop ideas for new or improved products, and to analyse the work of other designers. Analysing a product involves asking three key questions:

- Is it fit for purpose?
- Does it meet the needs of the target market?
- How well is it designed and made?

Designers consider these questions when analysing their own designs and the work of others.

Critical analysis of the media is more important than ever. When reading a news item, ask yourself:

- What is the source – is it a reputable, well-known outlet?
- Is the news highly surprising or unbelievable?
- How was the item brought to your attention?
- Why was this item sent or written?
- How would someone with different views interpret this item?
- Whose views are represented or left out?

## Be open to critical analysis

***Being open to critical analysis means being prepared to receive constructive feedback.***

One of the risks you take when presenting an idea is that others may disagree with you and challenge you in a public forum. Be prepared to respond to criticism and different perspectives.

You can help to ensure the success of your idea by inviting others to review and evaluate it. Ask them to make recommendations on how you could improve it or adapt it to better suit the needs of the end user.

How to be open to critical analysis of your ideas:

- Welcome feedback and review from a variety of people, including existing or potential customers, colleagues, partners, investors, family and friends.
- Expose your audience to small parts of your idea at a time, ask questions, then use their feedback to add value to your idea.
- Think of the analysis as an opportunity to improve your skills, ideas and relationships, or to help you meet your employer's expectations.
- Engage in a productive conversation with the people analysing and evaluating your ideas.
- Ask questions to clarify and deconstruct feedback, and share your perspective as well.
- Seek specific examples to help you understand the issues and possible solutions to address them.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting or review so you can articulate what you will do to improve or adapt your idea.
- Don't feel pressured to defend your position immediately if you do not have the evidence to back it up.
- If you disagree with any feedback you receive, develop a well-supported argument as to why you made particular choices or used particular techniques to develop your idea.



## Actively participate in critical debate and discussion

***A critical debate is much more than people arguing about something.***

Engaging in critical discussion allows you to participate in the verbal exchange of ideas, and elicit the views and opinions of others by listening and questioning. It provides an opportunity for you to inform yourself and others on an issue, exchange ideas and formulate arguments on an important decision.

Here are some ways to actively and confidently participate in critical debate and discussion.

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#### Participate in critical debate

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- Seek out high-quality information from a variety of well-respected sources, including those that do not align with your position.
- Use your research to create arguments and use evidence to support your position.
- Use reasoning to show how the evidence supports your conclusion.
- Acknowledge counter-arguments and explain why you believe your position is stronger or more preferable.
- Focus on the arguments and issues at hand, not on attacking those who disagree.
- Listen carefully at all times to understand the arguments of others.
- Share your thoughts and opinions in a non-judgmental way.
- Use a clear and logical structure when presenting your arguments.

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#### Participate in critical discussion

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- Ask questions to start the discussion.
  - Listen to and actively process what you hear.
  - Identify the main ideas being discussed.
  - Pay close attention, focus on what is being discussed, and ensure the discussion remains relevant.
  - Evaluate what is being said and consider how it relates to the main idea.
  - Have an open mind and be willing to hear new ideas and other points of view.
  - Check your understanding by rephrasing what other speakers are saying.
  - Ask other speakers to expand on their points, and to give examples or provide more information to clarify a point.
- 



## Practice task 11

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding about participating actively and confidently in critical debate and discussion.

### Question 1

Which of the following statements are correct? Tick all that apply.

- Use your research to create arguments and use evidence to support your position.
- A critical debate means arguing about something in a negative way.
- Learn to listen and actively process what you hear, identify the main ideas being discussed and ask questions.
- Use reasoning to show how the evidence supports your conclusion.
- Never ask other speakers to expand on their point or provide more information.
- Have an open mind and be willing to hear new ideas and other points of view.

## Question 2

Which of the following statements describe how to be open to critical analysis of ideas? Tick all that apply.

- Think of the critical analysis as a personal attack on you and be ready to argue with those who disagree with you.
- A critical analysis is a task that requires you to summarise and evaluate an idea.
- Conducting a critical analysis requires you to listen to and understand the idea in detail, so you can present a fair and reasonable evaluation of it.
- To effectively debate and discuss ideas, you must resist critical analysis of your own ideas, and refuse to review and evaluate the ideas of others.
- Invite others to review and evaluate your idea, and to make recommendations on ways you could improve it or adapt it to better suit the needs of the end user.
- If you disagree with any feedback you receive, develop a well-supported argument as to why you made particular choices when developing your idea.

### Example

## Being open to critical analysis of ideas

Kym is an independent fashion designer. She designs and makes children's clothing to sell in boutique kids fashion retailers across the country. Kym has just developed a new denim range. She needs to critically analyse the product to determine whether it is fit for purpose, meets the needs of the target market, and how well it is designed and made.

Answering these questions involves an evaluation of the following criteria:

- Does the product measure up to the design specification, based on the requirements of the target market and the manufacturing facilities available?
- Does it address the needs of the target market?
- How suitable is it for use and what are its care requirements?
- What is the quality of the fibres, fabrics and manufacture, including stitching, fastenings and seam allowance?
- What are the product's aesthetic appeal and stylistic qualities, i.e. will people like it and want it?
- Does it provide value for money?
- Does the product meet safety regulations?
- What is its environmental impact?



Kym starts by looking at the work of other designers and analysing the choices they have made. She then considers how successfully her product meets the above criteria and what could be changed to improve it. Kym compares her developing work against the design specifications, and records judgments, improvements and feedback from potential customers.

# 3C

## Participate in conversations about concepts, approaches and ideas

*Participating in conversations that challenge and explore different ideas is essential to help you refine your ideas and generate new ones.*

It is difficult to come up with an idea if you don't consult the people who will use it or benefit from it. What works for one group of people may need to be adapted to suit the needs of another. Having conversations with interested parties or stakeholders helps you to find out about their needs in detail, investigate different ways of doing things, and develop ideas that meet the specific needs of your audience.

You could engage in conversations with a range of people, including:

- existing or potential customers
- colleagues
- partners
- investors
- suppliers
- supervisors/managers
- small groups of people with a common interest
- the general public.



## Respond to questions with confidence and relevant information

*Respond to questions about your ideas confidently and with relevant information.*

This is useful advice for any situation where you communicate, whether you are presenting your ideas to others, participating in a debate or discussion, or having conversations with interested parties.

If people ask you questions – even if the questions appear to be negative or hostile – it is usually because they genuinely want to know the answer. When you have finished answering questions, make sure you have the last word with a strong statement about your key message or point.

How to respond to questions about ideas:

- Set aside sufficient time for questions during or at the end of your presentation, and limit the amount of time available.
- Anticipate the types of questions people may ask and prepare informed responses in advance.
- Treat your audience with respect.
- Listen carefully to the question and repeat it if necessary to ensure everyone in the audience has heard it.
- If you're not sure you understood the question correctly, rephrase or repeat it back to the questioner to check that you have understood it.
- Answer audience questions directly, honestly and succinctly.

- Use a range of persuasive responses, and make comparisons that show your understanding of the idea or topic.
- Never lose your temper or be rude to the questioner – you might offer to talk about their question one-on-one after the presentation or discussion.
- If you don't know the answer, say so and offer to find out more information. Make sure you follow up with the audience member to ensure they receive the information they require.
- If you are speaking to a well-informed audience, consider asking if anyone else would like to respond.

**Example**

## Overcoming problems by exploring new ideas as a group

Priya works for a product distribution company and has been asked by her manager to meet with a group of suppliers to update them on changes to the organisation's ordering process. Priya must convince the suppliers that the changes will benefit them by saving them time when filling orders received from Priya's company.

Priya meets with the group: six managers from six different supplier companies. The attendees have all met before. Although they are competitors, they enjoy getting together to discuss work-related issues and challenges. Priya prepares herself by getting a good grasp of the information to be shared, and anticipating the types of questions she may be asked at the end of the meeting.

One of the managers, Ron, tells Priya that he is concerned about accepting incomplete order forms, and that if all the necessary information is not collected, there may be delays in processing orders. Priya acknowledges Ron's question and then invites the whole group to discuss how they could overcome this problem. As the group members begin to open up, they have a productive and collaborative conversation, and Priya is able to lead them to a resolution that suits everyone's requirements and aligns with the new process.





## Practice task 12

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding about participating in discussions and responding to questions about ideas.

### Question 1

Which of the following describe how you should participate in conversations about different concepts and approaches to generate new ideas? Tick all that apply.

- Be sure of your topic and engage interested parties to ask about their needs in detail.
- Investigate different ways of doing things to meet the audience's needs.
- Engage in conversations with only a small number of people to identify a few manageable goals and needs.
- If you are sure of your idea, there is little value in discussing it with others, in case they try to change your mind.
- Help refine your ideas by having conversations with a range of people.

### Question 2

What should you do when responding to questions about ideas? Tick all that apply.

- Anticipate the types of questions people may ask and prepare informed responses in advance.
- Don't give the audience time to ask questions.
- Listen carefully to the question and repeat it if necessary to ensure everyone in the audience has heard it.
- If you are speaking to a well-informed audience, give an answer that they won't be able to understand.

# 3D

## Use views of others to refine ideas and embrace new ideas

*To get the most out of your ideas, you need to consider the views and perspectives of your audience.*

When debating and discussing ideas, reflect on and appraise the views of others. Assess the value or quality of other people's contributions to help refine your own ideas, or to embrace new ones. When you listen to your audience and welcome their thoughts, ideas and opinions, they may respond more openly and willingly to what you have to say.

Tips for reflecting on and appraising the views of others:

- Show that you understand the opportunities and challenges they are facing.
- Show that you understand their strengths, weaknesses, goals, hopes, priorities, needs, limitations and concerns.
- Demonstrate that you are willing to connect with them on a personal level.
- Consider other people's perspectives, and how their beliefs, values and experiences shape the way they respond or see things.
- Listen attentively and empathetically to the views of others.
- Clarify that you understand what the person has said by rephrasing or repeating it.
- Incorporate feedback and input from others into refining or adapting your ideas.
- Accept and evaluate new concepts and ideas suggested by others.
- Provide people with options that empower them to make decisions.



## Recognise opportunities to develop and apply new ideas

*Feedback is the key to improvement.*

Drawing on a wide range of views helps you to consider aspects of your idea from the audience's point of view. Keep these views in mind to identify where you can refine your ideas in ways that meet individual needs and differences.

Listening to and acting on the views of others:

- provides you with opportunities to develop and apply new ideas
- allows you to investigate different, creative ways to express and communicate your ideas.

Here are some ways you can recognise opportunities to develop and apply new ideas while making a presentation.

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### **Evaluate ideas**

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Have others evaluate and critically analyse your presentation to ensure you can grab and keep your audience's attention, and convince them to act. Ask a colleague to analyse, interpret and evaluate your presentation to help you to understand why they respond to it in a certain way.

Here are some questions you could ask:

- Does your idea grab the audience's attention with an interesting opening statement?
- Is your idea clearly presented?
- Does your presentation explain the audience's need and identify how your idea will fulfil that need?
- Does your presentation explain the benefits/competitive advantage of your idea?
- Can you deliver your presentation with enthusiasm and confidence?

You could also ask your evaluator to comment on your presentation content, nonverbal communication techniques and visual appearance.

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### **Refine ideas**

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After investigating and evaluating your presentation, use the feedback to refine your idea and the way you present it. During any presentation, aim to get to the point in as little time as possible. Even if your presentation contains lots of important information, your audience may find it difficult to sit still and listen for an extended period of time.

You can refine your presentation by:

- removing content, delivery techniques or visual tools that have little impact on the audience
  - making minor changes to content to clarify your thoughts and messages
  - making your presentation easier to understand and more appropriate for particular audiences
  - cutting the length of your presentation so it is as short and succinct as possible.
- 

### **Embrace new ideas**

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Most people find it difficult to receive constructive or negative feedback. When evaluating and refining your idea and the way you present it, keep an open mind to the possibilities of new knowledge, techniques and opportunities that may enhance your presentation and improve the impact you have on your audience.

You can learn to embrace new ideas by:

- listening to feedback from others and resisting the urge to react negatively or take offence
  - making the effort to try things that are out of your comfort zone, or different from the way you've done something before
  - asking questions so you can learn more about a delivery technique or presentation style that may help you connect with your audience
  - not fearing failure – if you try something and it doesn't work, learn from the experience and try to do it differently next time.
-

## Example

## Using research to gain and reflect on the views of others

Regina is the marketing assistant at a company whose brand is known for the quality and luxury of its products. Regina has been asked by her supervisor to conduct research that will go towards the marketing efforts of a new product range targeting consumers who are aged 50 years and over.

To gain insight into the purchasing habits and preferences of consumers, Regina hosts a focus group with a diverse group of people, and studies their reactions to the new products.

From the session, Regina discovers that the product range appeals to people aged 30 years and over, rather than 50 years and over. This discovery opens up a new opportunity for the company to sell more products by focusing its marketing campaign on a larger target audience. Regina and other members of the marketing team begin investigating creative ways of advertising the new product range to attract a younger target market.



## Practice task 13

Click icon to complete interactive version

Check your understanding of reflecting on and appraising the views of others to refine idea or embrace new ones.

### Question 1

Which of the following statements are tips you could use to reflect on and appraise other people's views so you can refine your ideas or embrace new ones? Tick all that apply.

- Listen attentively to the views of others and show that you understand the opportunities and challenges they are facing.
- Show that you understand their strengths, weaknesses, goals, hopes, priorities, needs, limits and concerns.
- Take a businesslike approach to their views and only consider facts, not feelings.
- Direct people to make progress according to your terms and conditions.
- Consider how their beliefs, values and experiences shape the way they respond or the way they see things.
- Provide people with options that empower them to make decisions.

## Question 2

Which of the following statements describe what you could do to evaluate and refine ideas? Tick all that apply.

- Critique your own presentation to ensure you can grab and keep your audience's attention, and convince them to act.
- Ask someone to evaluate your presentation content, nonverbal communication techniques and visual appearance.
- Avoid asking a colleague or peer to analyse, interpret and evaluate your presentation because it is a waste of time.
- Use feedback to refine your idea and the way you present it.
- Improve your presentation by adding more and more content or visual tools to overwhelm the audience.



## Summary

- When you present your position on ideas, it will only be convincing if you use evidence to support your argument.
- To be persuasive, your argument must be based on a logical structure or sequence of points that describes your own way of seeing the topic.
- There may be situations when you need to present your idea and position to an unfamiliar audience and setting.
- To provoke interest and response, it is critical that you understand your topic, are confident in your position, and have sufficient evidence to support your argument.
- Invite others to review and evaluate your idea, and make recommendations on ways you could improve or adapt it to better suit the needs of the end user.
- To prepare yourself for a presentation, be familiar with the topic being discussed, and be prepared to confidently put your argument forward.
- Identify and recognise the diverse range of perspectives held by the audience, and adjust your language and communication style to meet their needs and preferences.
- Participate in conversations that challenge and explore different concepts and approaches by understanding the beliefs, values, interests and norms of other stakeholders.
- If people ask you questions, even hostile ones, it is usually because they genuinely want to know the answer. When you have finished answering questions, make sure you have the last word with a strong assertion of your key message or point.
- When debating and discussing ideas, reflect on and appraise the views of others. Assessing the value or quality of other people's contributions helps you to refine your own ideas, and embrace new ones.
- For real influence, you need to consider the views and perspectives of your listeners. When you listen to your audience and welcome their thoughts, ideas and opinions, they respond more willingly and openly to what you have to say.
- Drawing on a diverse range of views helps you to consider aspects of your idea from the end user's point of view, and identify where you can tweak your design to accommodate for individual needs and differences.



## Learning checkpoint 3

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This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in debating and discussing ideas.

1. Briefly explain how to present and argue substantiated positions on ideas.

2. Why is it important to be open to critical analysis of your ideas and the ideas of others?

3. Why is it important to participate in conversations that challenge and explore different concepts and approaches in relation to ideas?

4. Give **two** examples of how you should respond to questions about ideas with confidence and relevant information.

5. Why is it important to reflect on and appraise the views of others?

6. Give **two** examples of how you can use the views of others to refine ideas or embrace new ideas.