

Communication

Outcome 3: Oral Communication

[INTERMEDIATE 2]

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What this section is about

This study is one of three that together cover all of the skills required to complete the SQA National Unit Communication (Intermediate 2). This Study Section focuses on Outcome 3, that asks you to produce and respond to oral (spoken) communication.

Outcomes, aims and objectives of this section

Communication (Intermediate 2)

Outcome 3: Produce and respond to oral communication.

Performance criteria

- Use of vocabulary and a range of spoken language structures is appropriate to purpose and audience.
- The communication conveys all essential information, opinions or ideas with supporting detail, accurately and coherently.
- Skill in sequencing and linking information, opinions and/or ideas is shown.
- Delivery takes account of situation and audience.
- Responses take account of the contributions of other(s).

Aims

This Study Section aims to:

- Address any concerns you may have about meetings, discussions and presentations
- Help you to identify the skills needed to speak in meetings, discussions and presentations
- Help you to prepare for a meeting, discussion or presentation.

Objectives

By the end of this Study Section, you should:

- Understand how to speak effectively to small groups of people
- Be able to prepare for meetings, discussions or presentations
- Be ready to take part in a meeting or a discussion or to deliver a presentation.

Approximate study time for this section

This Study Section will take you approximately 6–8 hours to complete. This time will vary from individual to individual, depending on other circumstances. Additional time will be required to complete the assessment.

Other resources required for this section

There are no other resources required for this Study Section. However, your tutor may be able to arrange for you to attend presentations or to watch meetings or discussions done by other students.

PART 2**How you will be assessed for this section**

Assessment for Outcome 3 of the unit Communication (Intermediate 2) requires you to take part in a discussion in which you contribute and interact with one or more people. Alternatively, you may prepare and deliver a presentation of at least four minutes, with additional time for questions. The details of the assessment will be discussed with you by your tutor.

When and where you will be assessed for this section

Assessment for this Unit should normally be done under supervision in your school or college.

What you have to achieve for this section

This Study Section is made up of a mix of the following:

A

Activities. Activities ask you to do something – for example read an article or apply the skills you’ve just learned to a text. Responses to these activities are often given on the following page.

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Self Assessed Questions. SAQs enable you to check your understanding of the information that you’ve just read. You should try all SAQs before moving on to the next part of the Study Section, as they allow you to monitor your own progress. Answers to SAQs are included at the end of the Study Section.

T

Tutor Assignments. Tutor assignments require you to submit work to your tutor, who will mark it and give you feedback. These assignments are important, as they pull together all of the skills covered in the Study Section, and give you a feeling for the main summative assessment(s) associated with the outcome covered in the Study Section.

As you work through this Study Section, you’ll come across a mix of these. You should try all Activities, Self Assessed Questions and Tutor Assignments. Only by working through all of these will you have full understanding of the tasks set.

Opportunities for reassessment for this section

You are normally allowed one opportunity to be reassessed if you don't meet the performance criteria at your first attempt. You should discuss this with your tutor.

Oral communication in study and work

Schools and colleges

As a student, you may be asked to take part in various types of activities where oral communication skills are important.

Group activities

Many tutors like to ask students to work together on projects or activities. For example, you may be asked to prepare a project for a subject that requires some research. Rather than each person doing all of the research alone, you can work as a group to gather information together. To do this effectively, however, you must be able to communicate well in a group situation.

Group discussions

When you're discussing topics in class, you may be asked to work in groups. For example your tutor may give you a topic to discuss, and ask the group to come up with some conclusions. Alternatively, you may be asked to discuss a problem in the group, and come up with some solutions. Again, being able to communicate well in a group situation is going to be of benefit to you.

Deliver a presentation

In some subjects, you may be asked to deliver a presentation (a solo talk). For example, your tutor may ask you to present the conclusions of your report to the rest of the class, or you may be asked to talk about your experiences on a work placement. Good oral communication skills are crucial to your success.

Work and work placements

In work (or when you're on work placement), you may be asked to:

Work in a team

Team working is a large part of most jobs. You will quite often be asked to work in a team, and good oral communication skills will help you to be an effective team member, by being able to express yourself well and being able to respond to others.

Attend meetings

Like them or not, meetings are also a big part of many jobs. Being aware of the conventions of meetings and how to use appropriate language and style will help you to express yourself better and to respond to other people's contributions.

Deliver a presentation

As an employee you may be asked to deliver a presentation. Some presentations may be very formal (e.g. explaining a new project to the manager) and some may be informal (e.g. explaining a point during a meeting, or presenting a short talk to your peers about something that you're responsible for). Again, being aware of how to use language and style to express yourself will stand you in good stead.

Don't panic!

For assessment for this unit, you'll be asked to do one of the following tasks:

- A presentation of at least four minutes
- A discussion (e.g. taking part in a meeting where you debate or discuss an issue).

DON'T PANIC! Many people feel very anxious at the thought of performing these tasks. One of the things we'll do in this Study Section is examine why people feel like that, and then look at ways of addressing such anxieties.

After we've done this, we'll then go on to look at some of the skills that you as a speaker need to deliver a presentation or take part in a meeting.

Finally, this Study Section shows you how to prepare for and contribute to meetings and discussions, and how to prepare and deliver a presentation.

Identifying anxieties

When studying the core skill of communication, Outcome 3 is without doubt the one that people feel most concern about. It's also the outcome that most people say they got the most out of after they've completed it.

Delivering a talk or taking part in discussions is difficult for a variety of reasons. However, with some preparation, some practice, and knowing how to do it, you'll soon feel confident and able to do it.

Why are people anxious? Well, a large part of anxiety is connected with not knowing how to do something. Can you remember the first time you were asked to dance, or the first time you rode a bike? Did you feel anxiety then?

Of course you did, and now you can do these things without feeling anxious about them.

So, what has changed?

Well, the 'tasks' haven't changed. Dancing is still dancing and riding a bike is still riding a bike. What has changed is that you now know how to do them, and so you feel confident about doing them.

This means that anxiety is not associated with the 'task' (i.e. dancing or riding), but with knowing how to do it.

At the moment, you may not know how to do it. This Study Section is going to show you exactly how to go about preparing for presentations and meetings, and taking part in them.

By working through this Study Section:

- You can identify your anxieties
- You can learn how to be deliver presentations
- You can learn how to take part in discussions with others
- You can feel confident
- You can prepare for your own presentation or discussion
- You can enjoy the experience!

Let's start off by looking at some common concerns.

Common concerns

I'll dry up or I'll forget what to say

This is probably the commonest concern. You don't need to worry about drying up if you've prepared cue cards or notes. If you find yourself getting lost on one point, just skip over it and move on to the next point. During a presentation, it's acceptable to say something along the lines of: 'Give me a minute while I check my notes'.

In meetings you should always have notes with you. These help you to remember the points you want to add, and you can also jot down things other people say, so that when it's your turn to speak you can refer to points made earlier.

My friends will laugh at me

Change your friends! Your teacher/tutor will probably give you the opportunity to choose your own audience. Choose an audience of people you are comfortable with, and pick people who will not make fun. Remind them that they've got the same task to do for assessment – and if they support you then you will support them.

I'll be too nervous

Everyone is nervous before delivering presentations. A certain amount of nervousness can be a powerful driving force. However, this should be manageable, and should definitely not be so bad that you are having sleepless nights! The real answer to this problem is to prepare well. Remember what was said earlier: that most nervousness is about knowing how to do a task rather than the task itself. Once you've read through this Study Section you should feel that you know how to take part in meetings and presentations. You then simply need to prepare and rehearse. Try to rehearse with a small audience if you can – your mate, your partner or your mother!

I get really embarrassed when people look at me

Many people say this, but they also report that this feeling goes as soon as they start to talk. Starting is the worst part, but then most people feel fine. Embarrassment is easy to overcome, however. If you don't want people to look at you, distract them. Use visual aids of some sort – overhead projector, *Powerpoint*, whiteboard or flip chart, etc. Using visual aids means that your audience is not looking at you.

Good preparation and rehearsals help. Some people say that it helps to look at the audience before you begin, take a deep breath, and imagine that they are all sitting there naked. Naked people are not very threatening really – they have more reason than you to feel embarrassed!

I don't know what to talk about

This is often one of the causes of anxiety in preparing for talking. Deciding on a subject early on can be a useful way of removing some of the anxiety – at least then you don't have to worry about what to talk about. You should pick a subject you're interested in, and spend

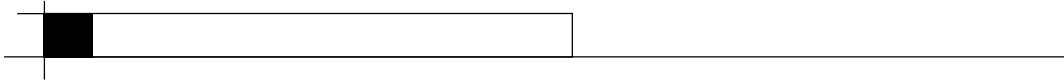
some time gathering information and organising your thoughts. Many students use the subject that they studied for their report or essay (in Outcome 2), as they've already done the research and know a lot about the subject.

I don't know how to deliver a presentation or take part in a meeting

That's the purpose of the remainder of this Study Section! Read on, and don't feel scared of discussing any issues or problems with your tutor. They can offer you a lot of support and help – but only if you tell them first!

Summary: overcoming anxiety

- Most people feel some anxiety about taking part in discussions, meetings and presentations
- Most anxiety is about knowing what to say and do, rather than the actual doing of it
- Choose a good audience
- Use visual aids if you feel this will help you
- Choose a subject you know about – this will be easier to talk about.



Being understood

When you speak it's important that you get the ideas that are in your head into the heads of the people you're talking to. What seems clear to you doesn't always seem clear to others. You need to ensure that you give them enough information in the right order to make sense of what you are saying. Remember, they don't have access to all of the knowledge and information that you hold in your brain – they only have the information that you give them.

Sometimes, of course, people do know what you're talking about, and there's no need to give them a lot of extra information that they already know. So, for example, if you were having a discussion about violence on television, you wouldn't have to tell everybody that *Eastenders* is a soap opera. You can assume that the audience you're talking to would have heard of it (unless they're from another country or another planet!).

At other times, you may need to introduce what you're talking about by providing extra information. For example, if you were delivering a presentation about looking after pets, it may not be appropriate merely to say that dogs should have a good diet. You should explain what a 'good diet' actually means.

Try to distinguish between 'facts' and opinions too. If you're giving your opinion, say so. Don't pretend it's a fact – someone's sure to know it's not!

Ordering your talk

When you're talking you need to ensure that you give information in the right order. There's no use in giving a superb example to support your point, before you make the point! A presentation needs to have information sequenced carefully, and you should use linking phrases to show how different parts are connected, and to 'signpost' to your audience what you are saying and where your talk is going.

If you are changing from one topic to another, say so. For example the italicised words in this excerpt from a talk make up a linking phrase:

'Bullying can be very harmful in schools. It harms children, their education, and their future prospects. Some children have even been known to go to desperate lengths – cases of self-harm and suicide, although rare, have been recorded.

However, there is another area in which bullying is a problem – the workplace. Bullying in the workplace usually takes a different form from the school playground, and usually the threat of physical violence isn't present. Workplaces bullies prefer to rely on the power of the spoken word to cause stress and anxiety, or to make people take on unrealistic workloads.'

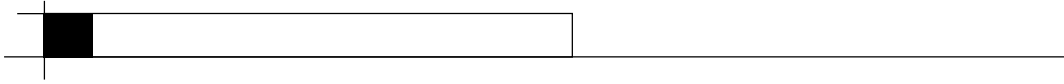
Look carefully at how this linking phrase works here – can you see that without it the talk would appear to have moved abruptly from one subject to the next?



Write a linking phrase between the two parts of this talk so that the presentation goes more smoothly.

'London was probably the highlight of my holiday. I spent several nights going to see shows, and during the day there were so many museums and shops to go to that I never had a day with nothing to do.

Birmingham had a lot to offer, but in different ways. Birmingham has long had a bad name, and many people dismiss it as a holiday destination. When I was there, though, I was surprised by the things the city offered, and also by the wealth of historical features within a very short travelling time.'



PART 7

Purpose

When you talk, you need to be sure what your **purpose** is, and then you need to make sure that you prepare and deliver your talk in a way which meets the purpose. When you're taking part in meetings, you can never be sure what other people are going to say, and you need to be ready to respond in new ways if required.

Situation

You also need to think about the location that you are going to be talking in. If you are delivering a presentation to a group of people, you must ensure that the person who's farthest away can hear you as well as the person who is nearest you.

Partly this depends on the room you're using, and partly this depends upon the way that the room will be set out. Seating should be arranged so that everyone can see you, and so that everyone will be facing the front. It can be very distracting talking to the back of someone's head! If you have a small audience, try to arrange everyone so that they are all sitting close to each other. A small audience sitting in different parts of a large room makes it harder for you as a speaker.

Taking part in a meeting requires the same thought – how will the chairs be arranged? Where will you sit? Will you be able to see everyone else? Generally, you should arrange the seating so that everyone can see everyone else comfortably.

Vocabulary

The language that you use must be appropriate to the purpose that you have in talking. For example, if the purpose of your talk is to discuss euthanasia, you would probably not want to use a lot of humour. It might not be appropriate. But if you were talking about your holiday experiences you probably would use humour.

The same is true of the use of formal or informal language. Some topics require formal language. For other topics, you can use a more informal tone.

You can vary the language that you use to suit the changes occurring in the meeting, or to meet your audience's needs. You should also try to use some specialist vocabulary if appropriate. Don't overdo this, and be prepared to explain technical or specialised words to audience members who may not understand.

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Which of these word pairs is more suitable for an informal meeting/presentation? Which is more suitable for a formal meeting/presentation? Tick the relevant column, and then check your answers against those at the end of this Study Section.

Word or phrase	Formal (√)	Informal (√)
a) Great fun	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) Highly enjoyable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) An enjoyable pastime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) A gripping hobby	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Boring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Tedious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Frightening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Scary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Hit the roof	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Became excited	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Tripped	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Keeled over	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Munched as much as we liked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Ate an unlimited amount of	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Created it quickly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Chucked it together	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Cash	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Overly expensive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Daylight robbery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Five points to consider

Regardless of the type of talk you're delivering, here are five things you must consider.

Be heard

When talking, whether in a meeting or a presentation, you must be sure that everyone can hear you. As a general rule talk using a volume that allows the person farthest away to hear you. There's no need to shout, but you should practise speaking in a loud voice, particularly if you are usually softly spoken.

Pace

Pace refers to the rate that you speak at. Generally, when you are speaking to your friends in informal situations you speak more quickly than you would when taking part in a presentation or meeting. A steady pace, not too hurried and not too slow, makes it easy for others to follow you.

Speaking too fast has two problems – you finish too soon, and your audience finds it harder to understand you. They can't keep up.

Speaking too slowly has two problems as well. You take too long to finish, and your audience can become bored.

Tone

Tone refers to the 'mood' that you set in your talking. The tone that you speak in should be appropriate to your purpose – don't use a happy, chirpy or jokey tone for a serious discussion. Similarly, don't use a sombre, serious, gloomy tone when you're talking about less serious subjects. If you use an inappropriate tone, people will either find it difficult to take you seriously, or they might think that you are overly sombre about a less serious subject.

Modulation

Modulation refers to the way that voices rise and fall as we speak. Speaking in a monotone can be very hard for others to follow. You should modulate your voice to help achieve your purpose. We all do this as we speak naturally, but some people find that they stop doing so when taking part in a meeting or presentation. Changing the volume of your voice, and emphasising words by speaking in a higher or lower voice can be a very effective way of getting your message across.

Meeting the needs of the audience

When talking, as well as meeting your purpose, you need to be sure that you meet the needs of the people you are speaking to. In a presentation, try to think what the audience already knows and what they need to know. Also, try to think about what they expect out of the presentation. In meetings and discussions, try to think what the others already know, and think what your contribution is going to add to the discussion. Your purpose is to add to the discussion and to help to move the discussion on. In this way, you are helping the meeting or discussion to be successful, and everyone in attendance benefits.

Silent communication

Non-verbal communication (NVC) refers to the silent ways that we communicate when delivering a talk or taking part in a meeting. Body language and eye contact are the two areas that you need to be aware of.

Body language

Body language refers to the way that you hold yourself, sit at a table, stand, and so on. Good body language should look natural and relaxed. When standing, people often find it difficult to know what to do with their hands, for example. If you find this, try to give your hands something to do. Hold a pen to use as a pointer, or hold your notes. Whatever you do, don't stand with your hands in your pockets. This is bad body language, as it looks as if you are slouching – so most people perceive it as an example of bad body language.

In meetings, sitting around a table, examples of bad body language would include sitting with arms crossed (looks defensive) or sitting side on or with your back to some people (looks uninterested). Try to sit upright. Again, perhaps a pen in your hand and some paper on the table can give your hands some purpose. You will look much more interested in the meeting – people will think that you are trying to participate.

Eye contact

Eye contact is vital in good communication. When you are delivering your presentation, don't look only at your notes. The purpose of notes is to guide you through the talk, so you should simply glance down at them, and then look at your audience.

Everyone in the audience is important, and everyone deserves eye contact. When you are speaking to a small group, you should try to have eye contact with each person individually. For larger audiences, look in each general area at some point. This helps your audience to feel that they are part of your talk, and not simply bodies who have been brought along to make up the numbers.

In meetings and discussions, the same points apply. You should look at the others as you talk. Moreover, when others are speaking, you should look at them. It's very off-putting when talking to find that everyone is looking elsewhere. If you don't look at the person speaking, you are not helping the speaker, and not helping the meeting, to proceed. Looking at people can often tell you about what they think and feel as well. You can get a lot of information from reading other people's NVCs. Equally, they can read a lot of information in your NVC!

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We've just talked about delivering your communication and using non-verbal communication. To check your understanding of these, answer the questions below. My responses are listed at the end of this Study Section, and you should check your answers against mine when you've finished.

1. When you're talking to a group of people, at what volume should you be speaking?
2. During a presentation, why is it important to speak at an appropriate pace – neither too fast nor too slow?
3. Why is the correct tone important when you are taking part in meetings or presentations?
4. What does it mean if we say that you are varying the modulation of your voice? Why is this useful?
5. Why should you consider the needs of your audience when you're speaking?
6. Give some examples of good body language.
7. Explain why eye contact is important in meetings and presentations.

Listening as well as talking

Oral communication is about more than just talking – it's about listening too. You need to respond to others.

Responding during presentations

During presentations, it's often a good idea to tell your audience that you will take questions at the end. This allows you to deliver your presentation without interruptions. Also, if you have the opportunity to complete your presentation uninterrupted, you may find that you have covered the point that an early questioner is asking.

It is important to make time for questions. You should allow your audience a chance to seek clarification about what you were saying.

Use your questions as a means of developing what you're saying – don't give the short *yes/no* style of answers, but try to recap on what you've said, or develop the points that you made. Sometimes people will ask questions, and you know that you provided the answer in your presentation. There's no need to get annoyed at this – simply repeat what you said before, explaining it in a bit more detail. Maybe they didn't understand the first time because you hadn't explained it in a way that they understood.

If you don't know the answer to a question, simply say so. 'I don't have the information on me at the moment' is a good way to deal with questions you are not prepared for. Politely inform the questioner that you will find out for him/her and let him/her know when you can.

Responding during meetings

During meetings, you will need to respond to others. There are two aspects to this. Firstly, you must listen to the points that others are making, and respond to them. To do this you should ask questions, or voice your agreement/disagreement. There is no need to get into an argument – put your point across politely, and explain why you feel the way you do.

Secondly, you will be asked questions by others. You must listen to what is being asked, and be sure that you respond in a constructive way. Again, try to avoid the *yes/no* style of answers, and try to justify your proposals. This doesn't mean that you have to defend your point to the bitter end – if someone makes a point that causes you to change your own point of view, it's fine to say so. You may need to explain your point again, or give further information to help the other person to understand your point. Alternatively, you may simply want to agree to disagree.

Keep your responses positive – meetings are not intended to be fights or arguments. The purpose of a meeting is to allow everyone to have their say. Even if you disagree with what is being said you must allow others to voice their opinions.



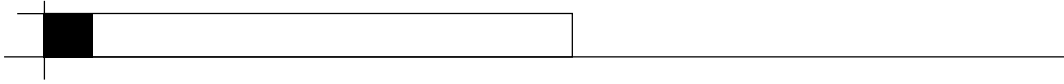
We've just talked about responding to others in presentations and meetings. Answer these questions, and check your answers with those at the end of this Study Section.

1. You are delivering a presentation, and someone asks you about a point that you have already discussed. What are you going to say?
2. You have delivered your presentation, and someone asks you a question that you don't know the answer to. What do you say?
3. In a meeting, someone challenges your ideas, and says that they are rubbish. What are you going to say?
4. In a meeting, someone says something that you totally disagree with. What are you going to say?

Summary

Here is a summary of what you have learned about the importance of good delivery:

- Provide the appropriate level of information for your purpose and to meet the audience's needs
- Deliver your talk in a sequenced way
- Use linking phrases to help your audience to understand your train of thought
- Always remember what your purpose is in talking, and work towards meeting that purpose
- Use language which has the appropriate tone and level of formality
- Be heard, use an appropriate pace and modulation
- Be aware of your body language
- Make sure you have eye contact with your audience
- Answer questions and respond to issues raised
- Listen to others, and respond to their input.



Using visual aids

A visual aid refers to something that helps you to get your message across. Visual aids include things such as: leaflets; posters; charts and diagrams; overhead slide projectors; whiteboards; flip charts; models; *Powerpoint*, etc.

Visual aids are useful in presentations. They can help to make your message easier to understand, and they can add to the points you are making. You can use visual aids to do the following:

- Provide pictures of what you're talking about
- Summarise the points you're making
- Simplify complicated ideas
- Present additional information, etc.

Visual aids help the audience to remember what you're talking about. A spoken communication stimulates the sense of hearing. A spoken communication with visual aids stimulates two senses – seeing and hearing. This makes it easier to understand and easier to remember – and more interesting too!

And remember: a picture is often worth a thousand words.

Different forms of visual aids work in different ways.

Leaflets

If you're talking about a place you've visited, you could use leaflets about that place in your presentation. Similarly, if you were doing a presentation about a local youth club or a health facility, you could bring in leaflets about those venues.

Posters

In a presentation, you could use posters which you've produced yourself or which you've collected from somewhere to illustrate your point. Posters work best if you can display them on the wall. You can then refer to them or point to them during your presentation.

Charts and diagrams

Charts and diagrams can be very effective in getting information across to people. Statistical information can be presented as graphs or pie charts, for example. Drawings and diagrams work well for technical issues where it's important to show people how things work. For example, a drawing of a faulty heart valve or a circuit diagram of a microchip would both help to make the verbal message easier to understand. Charts and diagrams work well in both meetings and presentations.

Overhead projector

An overhead projector (OHP) allows you to project a large image of your slide onto a suitable surface. This can produce very striking and effective pictures because of the size of the image. OHPs are more appropriate for presentations than meetings.

Whiteboard

The whiteboard (or blackboard) is useful for allowing you to write things down as you talk. For example, you can write bullet points as you deliver your presentation, or you can use the whiteboard to write down ideas that you get from your audience. Using the whiteboard probably works better in presentations than in meetings.

Flip chart

Flip charts have the same advantages as the whiteboard, but you can also prepare flip chart pages in advance. This has the advantage that you can reveal different pages as you work through your presentation – tearing off one page to reveal another underneath.

Powerpoint

Powerpoint, and similar presentation packages, can be very useful in allowing you to introduce pictures, bullet points, charts and so on into your talk. Powerpoint makes your presentation interesting by introducing colour and graphics.

But remember: visual aids can be a distraction. If you give your 'audience' leaflets or anything else to look at while you're talking, they will look through them and not listen to you. So introduce your visual aids at the right time.



Think about using visual aids in meetings and presentations, and answer these questions.

1. You are delivering a presentation about euthanasia. What visual aids will you use, and why?
2. You are taking part in a discussion on the subject of homelessness. Explain what visual aids you'd use, and why.
3. What are the advantages of using the OHP? What are the advantages of using the whiteboard? Which would you prefer? Explain why.

Meetings and discussions

If you are attending a meeting, then you will know in advance what the subjects for discussion are. You should prepare, by considering what you want to say on the subject.

Many people feel that they can just turn up, and voice their opinions spontaneously. This works for some people, but some meetings and discussions then go off at tangents, and it's easy for points to be missed out. If you've prepared notes, then it's easy for you to help to bring the discussion back to the issues.

Also, notes help you to remember what you want to say. Some meetings and discussions become quite noisy and heated, and it's easy in such circumstances to forget what you wanted to say.

You can also take notes during meetings and discussions. This is really useful when someone says something that you feel you must respond to. By writing down what was said, you can easily refer back to it when it's your turn to talk.

Below are some notes prepared by a student who was preparing to attend a discussion about video games. As you can see, this student was arguing that video games are not good for children.

Notes: Video games, good or bad?

- Video games – violent, most feature killing
- Addictive – some children play for many hours per day
- Expensive – consoles are expensive, some games cost as much as £59.95
- Bad for health – epilepsy, and discourages kids from playing traditional sports and games
- Encourages rivalry – children need to have the right consoles and the right games
- Stops children doing homework

Presentations

If you are going to be delivering a presentation, then preparing what you want to say is going to be crucial to your success.

Unlike meetings or discussions, you will be doing all the talking yourself, so you won't have time to stop and think. You really need to prepare all that you have to say in advance.

Delivering a presentation is not the same as reading a story from a page of paper. You must talk and look at your audience at the same time. This is where notes or cue cards are useful – they contain an outline of what you're going to say, but not the whole talk.

Your talk should last for about four minutes, so you need to be able to talk for this length of time referring to notes or cue cards. Use your notes and cue cards to remind you of the topics that you are going to be talking about.

If you use cue cards, each card should contain a series of words or phrases to remind you what you are going to say, and the order in which you're going to say things.

If, in a four-minute talk, you use eight cue cards, then you can see that each cue card will carry you through approximately thirty seconds of your talk.

If you have five cue words on each card, you only need to talk about each idea for a very short time, before glancing back down to your cards and moving on to the next idea.

Notes work in the same way – but they are usually written on one piece of paper rather than on separate cards.

Below are two cue cards used as part of a presentation about learning to drive. Each card only contains cue words/phrases. From these, the student remembered enough to be able to talk about the subject effectively.

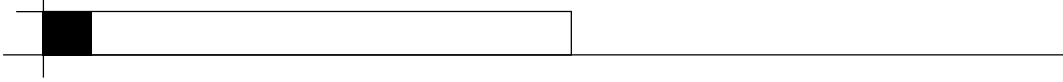
My first driving lesson
 8pm at night – dark
 Instructor – Mr Brown – grumpy
 The emergency stop story
 Stalling on all the hill starts
 Crunching the gears

Improvements in driving
 Began to master hillstarts
 Difficulty in parking
 Difficulty in reversing around corners
 Mr Brown turned out to be OK
 Day of the test arrived!

Summary

Here is a summary of what you have learned about the effective use of visual aids and notes in the delivery of good spoken communication:

- Visual aids can add interest and detail to your talking
- Visual aids come in many forms – some are more suited to meetings/discussions and some are more suited to presentations
- Visual aids help your audience to remember
- Notes are useful in meetings to help you remember what you want to say
- Cue cards or notes help you to structure your presentation
- Cue cards or notes ensure that you cover all of the points you need to cover.



Meetings and discussions

If you've decided to take part in a meeting or discussion for the assessment associated with this outcome, then you now need to start to prepare.

1. **Arrange a group**

Obviously you can't take part in a meeting or discussion without other people! As a general rule a group of 4–6 is probably a good size. This is enough people for a range of opinions to be expressed, and small enough for everyone to be able to contribute. Work with people with whom you feel comfortable. This will make it easier to talk and respond.

2. **Decide on a topic**

You've picked your group, and now you should agree with the others what you are going to talk about. Your tutor will be able to give you some ideas. After you've chosen a topic, everyone needs to prepare for the meeting.

3. **Decide what you're going to say**

Everyone should spend some time thinking about what s/he wants to say. It's a good idea to write some notes so that you remember what you want to say. Your tutor may require you to submit these afterwards as evidence.

4. **Prepare the venue**

Decide where you're going to have the meeting and arrange the furniture so that everyone can see everyone else. If you're holding a meeting with a chairperson, s/he will normally sit alone at the head of the table.

5. **Hold the meeting or discussion**

Hold the meeting. Your tutor may give you a time limit. Even if not, it's often a good idea to agree how long the meeting is to last before you start.

6. **Having your say**

You must contribute to the meeting or discussion. You should give your opinions or ideas, and react to what others say. Remember to make your points calmly and confidently. Make sure too that you give all the information required, making your points in the proper order.

7. **Responding to others**

Question people if you're not sure what they're saying, and answer questions when you are asked. Also, try to draw people into the conversation as well – a prompt such as: 'What do you think, Kirsty?' is a good way of inviting quieter people into the discussion.

8. **Concluding the meeting or discussion**

The chairperson of a meeting should pull the meeting together and have a vote on any proposals if required. At the end of a discussion, it's a good idea to round off by having everyone summarise his/her point of view. The meeting may not end with everyone agreeing, but hopefully everyone will have heard and understood different points of view.

Presentations

If you've decided to prepare and deliver a presentation for the assessment associated with this outcome, then you now need to start to prepare.

1. **Choose a topic**

Decide what it is you want to talk about. This can be a hobby; something you want to express your opinion about; a work placement you've been on; a holiday you've had or something that you've got experience of, etc. The subject of the report or essay you wrote may also be suitable. If you are unsure, your tutor can give you ideas.

2. **Be clear about your purpose**

Having picked the topic for the presentation, you need to be clear about your purpose. Purposes can include: giving information; expressing opinions; showing people how to do something, etc.

3. **Plan the order of the talk**

Your talk should have a beginning, a middle and an end. You should give information in a clear and logical order. Remember as you prepare your talk that you have a purpose, and that the information in your talk should help you to meet that purpose.

4. **Decide on using visual aids**

If you are using visual aids, you need to decide what type is most appropriate. Think about your purpose and the content of your talk. Some subjects are very visual, and things such as photographs work well. Other subjects are not very visual and your visual aids might be things such as bullet points or graphs, etc. Make sure that your teacher/tutor knows in advance if you need an OHP or flip chart, etc.

5. **Write your cue cards**

Prepare cue cards to remind you of what you want to say. Postcards or some card cut into appropriate sizes are ideal for use as cue cards. Prepare these as discussed earlier in this Study Section.

6. **Practise**

Practise, either on your own (in front of a mirror may be a good idea) or with someone you trust well. Practise your timings, and think about moving on from one point to another. Also, practise using your visual aids.

7. **Perform**

Delivering a presentation is like performing – act the part of the successful presenter and you will be a successful presenter. Many people are very hard on themselves, and they worry about small mistakes. Most audience members don't notice, and a few minor slip-ups and *umms* and *ahhs* are acceptable anyway.

A

Overleaf you'll find copies of the cue cards that someone prepared for use in delivering his presentation. This student was asked to talk about something that had happened to him from which he had learned a lesson. The talk was given to a group of peers, and the student's talk was intended to make them feel differently about the issue being discussed. Read the cue cards, and then read the full transcript of his talk on the next page. As you read the presentation, look at the cue cards, and follow them as you read through.

This will help you to see how cue cards are useful in helping you to prepare a presentation.

There is no comment given after this activity.

Eight cue cards for a talk on bullying in schools

1
 Keyword: INTRODUCTION
 Cue words: My name
 Subject: Bullying
 I was bullied, then became a bully

2
 Keyword: PRIMARY SCHOOL:
 Me as victim
 Cue words: New school – no friends
 Andy and the dinner money
 Hitting me, making me do things

3
 Keyword: CONSEQUENCES
 Cue words: Started to miss school
 Mum and the headmaster
 I said nothing – nothing got done

4
 Keyword: SECONDARY SCHOOL
 Cue words: Small kid (Brian) tripped me
 Turned on him – fought with him
 I became part of the bully crowd

5
 Keyword: BRIAN'S PROBLEMS
 Cue words: Suddenly vanished
 Met him one day
 Run away for 3 months

6
 Keyword: EFFECTS ON BRIAN
 Cue words: Brian was ok
 His mum worried, dad not talking
 I felt bad

7
 Keyword: BRIAN'S MESSAGE
 Cue words: Don't do it
 Pain, worry and anxiety I had caused in his family

8
 Keyword: CONCLUSION
 Cue words: It's easy to get into
 Hard to get out of
 Damages people and families
 Invite audience questions

Talk: Bullying in schools

1. Today I'm going to talk to you about bullying in schools. I chose this subject because it's something I've had experience of, both as a victim and also as a bully. I want to try to explain what it felt like to be a victim, and also I want to try to explain why I became a bully.

2. Firstly, I will tell you about my experience as a victim. When I was nine, my family moved to a new area and I had to start a new school. It wasn't easy starting a new school, and I felt that I had no friends. On the first day there, this bigger boy (I'll call him Andy) came up to me and said, 'Give me your dinner money or I'll kick your head in'. Well, I was new to this school, and didn't know what to do.

I could have gone to the teacher, or tried to run away, but I felt alone and didn't know what to do. The world can seem very confusing when you're only nine!

Because I was scared, I gave in and gave him the money. Thinking back, I wonder if I did the wrong thing because he'd identified me as being weak. The bullying had only just started, and it was to go on for the next two years.

The bullying wasn't just about taking money. Andy and his pals used to make me do things like go to the shops for them or bring in comics and things like that. If I said no, I knew I'd get hit by them. They also used to hit me for no reason.

3. Eventually it got to me, and I started to pretend I was sick so I wouldn't have to go to school. My mum knew I wasn't sick, and she tried to ask me what was wrong but I couldn't find any way of telling her. My dad just used to shout at me – he thought I was just 'skiving'.

One day, my mum dragged me crying into school and in to see the headmaster. It was awful – especially as Andy saw me going in, and made a 'cut-throat' sign to me behind my mum's back as we were waiting.

The headmaster asked what was wrong, and asked if it was bullying. I just stared at the floor and said nothing was wrong.

4. It continued like this until I started High School. Then one day, during first year, everything changed. A smaller kid tripped me up, completely by accident, and I turned on him. Suddenly, there was a crowd around us, and I felt that I had to hit this other kid. We fought, and I 'won', and from then on, I was accepted by my bullies. What I didn't realise at that time was that I had become a bully myself.

5. That poor boy – I'll refer to him as Brian – had two years of hell. But only two years, because at the end of two years, he left school suddenly, and no-one knew what had happened to him. I met him a year later down the High Street, and I asked

him why he hadn't been at school. He looked at me and said, 'You mean you don't know?'

I was baffled – and I told him that I didn't know. He told me that he'd been unable to cope with the bullying, and had run away from home because of how bad it was. He'd spent three months living rough in London, until he got lifted by the police one night and brought home. After this he'd tried to commit suicide, and ended up seeing a psychologist for six months. Since then he'd changed schools, and was now getting on fine.

6. Just before he left he looked me in the eye and said, 'You thought you were so clever, showing off in front of your pals, picking on me all the time, didn't you? But look at the damage you've done to my family – my mum is so anxious all the time, always asking me where I'm going. My dad doesn't talk to me much, and I lost a lot of time in class. And why? So you could look big. I hope you think it's worth it.'
7. I said I was sorry, but the look in his eyes told me it was too late. I could see the damage I'd done, and I could see how he felt. The message was clear. I had caused him, and his parents, a lot of pain and worry. The strange thing was he didn't seem angry – he just looked at me as if I didn't matter.
8. In conclusion, I'd like to say that it's too easy to get into bullying, and very hard to get out of it – whether you're the victim or the perpetrator. I couldn't see the humanity of the person before me – he was simply my way of making **me** feel better. I didn't plan on making him run away or attempt suicide. I didn't plan on making him need psychological help. I didn't plan on upsetting his family. But these things happened, and all because of what I'd done.

Are there any questions?

Summary

This Study Section has discussed some of the anxieties that people have about delivering presentations and taking part in meetings.

We've also looked at meeting your audience's needs, and selecting an appropriate delivery method. We've talked about responding to others, and answering and asking questions.

We've looked at non-verbal communication, and using visual aids, notes and cue cards.

Finally, we summarised the whole process, to encourage you to get 'into action'.

You should now complete the tutor assignment overleaf and then discuss your progress with your tutor, who will help you to decide if you're ready for the assessment.

T₁

Complete this form, and send it to your tutor.

Your name _____ ID No. _____

To _____ Date _____

I have completed Study Section 3 of Intermediate 2 Communication.

I am now ready/not yet ready* to undertake the assessment.

I have the following concerns _____

_____ (Describe any concerns that you have, but complete the rest of this form anyway.)

When I do the assessment, I would prefer

to deliver a presentation/take part in a meeting/take part in a discussion*.

I would prefer the topic to be _____

_____ (Describe your topic.)

I intend to say the following _____

_____ (Provide a brief resume of what you want to say.)

The purpose of this spoken communication will be _____

_____ (Describe what you hope to achieve in the communication.)

I will use the following visual aids _____

_____ (Describe the visual aids, if any, that you intend to use.)

* Delete as applicable

PART 18**? 1: Answers**

This talk was aimed at non-experts. The speaker gives a lot of basic information about the different parts of the computer. For example, he tells us that the mouse is 'the pointing device which allows the user to control various things on screen'.

This level of detail wouldn't be required for people who had worked with computers.

? 2: Answers

Some possible linking phrases are:

- I also spent a few days in Birmingham.
- After I'd been to London I travelled north and visited Birmingham.
- On the way back home, I stopped off in Birmingham for a few days.

These are only examples, and you probably came up with something different. The important point is that the information in the linking phrase helps the two parts of the talk to fit together better, and it makes it easier for the speaker to move from one subject to another.

? 3: Answers

- a) You should arrange the tables and chairs so that everyone can easily see everyone else. This allows you to have good eye contact with the others, and allows everyone to feel that they are part of the meeting.
- b) You would want all the people in the audience to be facing you, so the chairs should all face the position you're going to be speaking from. If it's a big room, you'd want to arrange the audience so that they are sitting fairly close together, and not at the far end of the room from you. This makes it easier for you to maintain eye contact with the audience, and it's easier to talk to people who are sitting close to you.

? 4: Answers

Here are my ideas. Some of these you may disagree with, and some words can be classed as formal or informal according to how you use them.

Word or phrase	Formal (✓)	Informal (✓)
a) Great fun		✓
a) Highly enjoyable	✓	
b) An enjoyable pastime	✓	
b) A gripping hobby		✓
c) Boring	✓	
c) Tedious		✓
d) Frightening		✓
d) Scary	✓	
e) Hit the roof		✓
e) Became excited	✓	
f) Tripped	✓	
f) Keeled over		✓
g) Munched as much as we liked		✓
g) Ate an unlimited amount of	✓	
h) Created it quickly	✓	
h) Chucked it together		✓
i) Money	✓	
i) Cash		✓
j) Overly expensive	✓	
j) Daylight robbery		✓

? 5: Answers

1. You should speak at a volume which allows everyone to hear you – speak as loudly as the person farthest away requires of you.
2. If you speak too quickly, the audience will find it difficult to take in all of the points you're making. Speaking too slowly, you may lose the interest of the audience as you talk.
3. Your tone should be appropriate for the subject being discussed so that you don't seem too flippant or too serious.
4. Modulation refers to the way that your voice rises and falls as you speak. This is useful as it allows you to emphasise different words and phrases, and also makes for a more interesting talk for your audience.

5. Your audience may not know a lot about the subject you're talking about, and so you may have to give extra information so they can follow you. Also, the audience may have certain expectations of your talk, and if you don't meet these, then, in the audience's eyes, you will have failed.
6. Good body language includes standing comfortably but in an alert manner, sitting upright at meetings, and not slouching or putting your hands in your pockets.
7. Eye contact is important as a way of including people in your talk or making them feel part of the meeting. It lets people know that you are talking to them – not just to the room as a whole.

? 6: Answers

These are some possible answers to the questions. You may have given other acceptable answers.

1. You should repeat the point you made earlier, perhaps explaining it in a bit more depth or detail.
2. You should say you don't know the answer and offer to find out and get back to them later.
3. You should avoid confrontation, and go over your ideas again, explaining why you hold the views you do.
4. You should put some questions to the person, and offer your views. Again, there is no need to get into a heated debate.

? 7: Answers

Your answers will be quite different to mine – there are no right or wrong answers here.

1. I would probably use an OHP or flip chart to present lists of bullet points for and against euthanasia. I'd prefer to use this form of visual aid, as I'd be giving a lot of arguments for and against, and it would be useful to summarise these for the audience.
2. I would use photographs of homeless people living in difficult circumstances. This would have the effect of showing what it's like to live on the streets. I would also use leaflets from some of the agencies who work with homeless people, so that I could show what help is available.
3. The OHP projects a large image onto the screen. This works well with some photographs and diagrams, particularly where you want to point out details. The OHP also works well with bullet points, and can be used to summarise what you say as you are saying it, without breaking up the flow of your talk. The whiteboard has the advantages that you can write as you talk, and you can ask your audience to contribute and then write down *their* ideas. Which you prefer – OHP or whiteboard – is largely a matter for you to decide. Your decision will depend in part on the subject you're talking about.