



B

How to deal with questions and interruptions

Briefing

Here we look at how to answer questions *during* and *at the end of* a presentation, and how to deal with interruptions.

To answer questions, use the Four Answers technique:

- 1 Thank
- 2 Repeat
- 3 Answer
- 4 Check

Why use the Four Answers?

Thanking the questioner is polite and makes them feel good. Repeating the question gives you time to think. It also allows you to rephrase the question to make sure you have understood it correctly. It also gives you the opportunity to make sure everyone in the audience has heard the question. When you have answered the question, ask if the question has been answered sufficiently.

How to stop interruptions

If someone interrupts you and you want to finish your sentence, politely ask them to let you finish what you want to say first. Keep control of your presentation. Don't let members of the audience take control.

What to say when you don't know the answer

If you are part of a team, refer the question to a member of the team who does know the answer. If more information is available on your website, refer the questioner to the website. Offer to get back to the questioner later with an answer.

Listening



1

Listen to the question and answer session at the end of the presentation you heard in 4A. Which of these things does the presenter do?

Question 1

- Thank ☐
- Repeat ☐
- Answer ☐
- Check ☐
- Refer to team or website ☐
- Offer to contact questioner ☐

Question 2

- Thank ☐
- Repeat ☐
- Answer ☐
- Check ☐
- Refer to team or website ☐
- Offer to contact questioner ☐



2

Listen to the question and answer session again, and answer these questions.

- 1 The questioner interrupts. How does the speaker stop him interrupting?
- 2 How does the questioner indicate he wants to ask a supplementary question?
- 3 The speaker isn't sure she has completely understood the second question. What phrase does she use to indicate this?
- 4 How does she express regret that she doesn't know the answer?

Business practice



1

Listen and repeat the sentences.

Thanking and
repeating

Thank you for the question.
The question was ...
If I understand, you want to know ...
If I understood correctly, the question was ...

Answering and
checking

The answer is ...
Does that answer your question?

Dealing with
interruptions

Please, just let me finish.
If I could just finish what I was going to say.
Can I answer that question at the end of the presentation?
Could we deal with that at the end of the presentation?

Saying you don't
know the answer

I'm afraid I don't have the answer to hand.
Can anybody in my team answer that question?
Can I refer you to our website?
If you give me your details after the presentation, I'll get back to you.

2

Test yourself. Cover the sentences above and then complete these sentences.

- 1 If I have correctly, the question was this.
- 2 I'm I don't have the answer.
- 3 If you give me your email address, I'll get to you.
- 4 Could I you to our website?
- 5 Can anyone in my help me here?
- 6 Could we with that at the end?

**3**

You are at the end of your presentation and ready to take questions. Listen and respond. Then listen to the model conversation.

You: Say you have finished. Ask if there are questions.

Questioner: Yes, I have a question about costs. How can you be sure you can keep to budget?

You: Thank, repeat question, answer it and check.

Questioner: Well, I'm not convinced. I think you'll go over over budget.

You: Offer to make information available to audience member after the presentation is over.

Questioner: Thanks. That would be very useful. I have another question.

You: Acknowledge the question.

Questioner: What happens if you do go over budget?

You: Say you are confident that will not happen. Check you have answered the question.

Questioner: Yes, thanks.

Business writing

The Three Ss technique you saw in 4A can also be applied to short reports. However, we use different titles.

Introduction	Title, what the topic is about, summary of main points and / or recommendations.
Main points	Three main points; introduce sub-points if you wish. Allow a new paragraph for each new point. If there are a lot of sub-points, start each new point with a heading.
Conclusion and recommendations	Summarize the points you have made, say why they are important, include recommendations.

Writing task

1

Read the report opposite.

- 1 What are the main points
- 2 Which paragraphs explain the main points?
- 3 What is the conclusion?
- 4 Is the report clear?



Helping migrant workers harmonize relations in the workplace

Summary of project update

Summary

The project committee wishes to source funding to provide support for management and human resources to help new workers from other countries work successfully with local staff. Three things will help us do this: research, training and training materials.

Research

We propose to research the problems of migrant workers in six key industries and sectors: transport, health, food and drink, education, construction and manufacturing. From this we will be able to identify key issues we need to address in training and training materials.

Training

We propose two types of courses. The first is a workshop for staff to meet each other in order to discuss and harmonize differences. The second is a train-the-trainer certificate that trains teachers and human resources managers to use the training materials and deliver the training.

Training materials

We propose to produce a self-study set of training materials to help both local and new migrant staff understand and harmonize the differences between them. We suggest the best way to do this is to produce a video of typical situations, a training manual and a trainer's manual to help colleagues understand typical problems and resolve them. We also plan to have an online programme for staff who cannot attend face-to-face training sessions.

Conclusion and recommendations

Research shows that the number of migrant workers will increase significantly in the next few years. It is important for companies to train their staff in how to work best with new workers from other countries. To do this we propose the following training programme and training materials:

- 1 Research into six key industries / sectors
- 2 Development of a training programme and certificate for trainers
- 3 Development of video and print training materials for face-to-face and online training

- 2 Use this model to write a short report on a business activity you have been involved with in the last six months.**

Key take-aways

Write down the things you will take away from Unit 4 and how you will implement them.

Topic	Take-away	Implementation strategy – How?	Implementation time frame – When?
The Three Ss technique			
Common phrases for presentations and questions			
How to deal with questions			
How to deal with interruptions			
How to adapt the Three Ss technique to a written report			



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