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JOB APPLICATION LETTER

Applying for a job is one of the most important landmarks in your professional career. There are a number of writing and communication tasks involved in applying for a job. This unit will discuss some of the main steps in some detail.

One of the first steps you will take, after selecting your preferred job, company, etc., is to write a letter or e-mail applying for the job. An application letter may be of two types:

Solicited applications are written in response to advertisements which appear in newspapers.

Unsolicited applications are written not in response to an advertisement, but when a candidate comes to know of a vacancy from a reliable source.

The application letter acts as a covering letter for the résumé (which is discussed in the next chapter). So ideally, a résumé should be sent along with the application letter. The letter should introduce you and give details about the qualifications and skills that may not be apparent in your résumé. The main object of an application letter is to get you an interview. Therefore, it is essential that your letter stimulates prospective employers' interest in your skills and accomplishments and gives them a clear idea about how you can satisfy the needs of their organisation.

An application letter should follow the basic format of a typical business letter. This includes:

- a contact section
- salutation
- information why you are qualified for the job
- a closing, and your signature.

Your Name → **Your contact information**

Address

City, State, PIN Code

Phone Number

Email Address

Date

Name → **Employer contact information**

Title

Company

Address

City, State, PIN Code

Dear Mr/Ms Last Name, → **Salutation**

Re: Application for XYZ position → **Subject line**

Body of Cover Letter

First Paragraph

The first paragraph of your letter should include information on why you are writing. Mention the position you are applying for and where you found the job listing.

Middle Paragraph(s)

The next section of your cover letter should describe what you have to offer the employer. Mention specifically how your qualifications match the job you are applying for. Remember you are interpreting your résumé, not repeating it.

Final Paragraph

Conclude your cover letter by thanking the employer for considering you for the position. Include information on how you will follow up.

Yours sincerely,	→	Complimentary Close
Put your signature	→	Signature
Résumé	→	Enclosure

A job application email will have the following components:

Recipient e-mail ID	→	Company contact information
Re: Application for XYZ post	→	Subject line

Dear Mr/Ms → **Salutation**

Body of e-mail

First Paragraph

The first paragraph of your letter should include information on why you are writing. Mention the position you are applying for and where you found the job listing.

Middle Paragraph(s)

The next section of your cover letter should describe what you have to offer the employer. Mention specifically how your qualifications match the job you are applying for. Remember you are interpreting your résumé, not repeating it.

Final Paragraph

Conclude your cover letter by thanking the employer for considering you for the position. Include information on how you will follow up.

Yours sincerely,	→	Complimentary Close
Put your signature	→	Signature
Résumé	→	Attachment

Remember to attach a PDF of your résumé when you send the e-mail. The attachment should be properly named so that there is no confusion as to what it is. Titles such as "Rohan.pdf" will not

be acceptable. Ideally the attachment should be titled something like "Rohan K_CV_2020.pdf"

Look at the following examples of job application letters:

Namith Shetty
3, Jalnagar Colony
Mangalore - 575 003
0824 23342233
Mobile - 0 98345 16434

11 June 2020

The Manager
Orient Print and Publications
M.G. Road
Pune - 411 032
020 25343455

Dear Sir/Madam,

Subject: Application for the Post of Junior Accounts Officer

Further to your advertisement in the *Deccan Herald* of 10 June 2020 for the post of Junior Accounts Officer, I would like to present myself as a suitable candidate for the post.

I have completed my B.Com. degree this year and topped my class in several subjects. I am willing to work hard and learn from seniors. I have attached my CV for your perusal.

I hope you will give me an opportunity to work in your company.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

(Namith Shetty)

Flat No. 36
C Wing
Sea Breeze Apartments
Beach Road
Goa 346 087

18 November 2020

The Personnel Manager
Hotel Malabar Palace
M. G. Road
Mumbai 400 001

Dear Sir/Madam,

Subject: Application for the post of Assistant Manager,
Reservations

This is with reference to your advertisement in *The Hindu* dated 16 November 2020 calling for applications for the above post in your hotel.

I am 26 years old and I am a graduate in hotel management from the College of Vocational Studies, Mumbai. Although I belong to Madhya Pradesh, I am working at present in Hotel Surya, a three-star hotel in Goa, as a sales executive in the reservations department. One of my main duties here is to liaise with travel agents and private companies and get business for the hotel. I have been with Hotel Surya since September 2016.

I enclose copies of my school and college certificates as well as a testimonial from the Manager, Reservations, at Hotel Surya.

I would be grateful if you could consider me for the advertised position.

Yours faithfully,

(Asif Ahmed)

encl. 1. copies of certificates
2. testimonial

Points to Note

An effective covering letter should have the following features:

- The tone of the letter should be friendly but formal.
- Keep the covering letter to a single page—three paragraphs is ideal.
- Do not use the same covering letter while applying at different places.
- The style and layout are very important. Avoid grammatical and spelling errors. Use good quality paper and printing. Take care not to crumple the edges or stain the paper. Your letter should not appear overloaded with information. Leave enough white space, so that it looks appealing to the eye.
- The covering letter is a kind of persuasive, goodwill message. Show genuine interest in the organisation and a keen interest in the position that you are seeking.
- Omit personal information that is not relevant to the job.
- Remember that you should highlight only the qualifications, skills, and experience that are relevant to the job that you are applying for.

EXERCISES

- A. There is an advertisement for positions in a university abroad and you think you have the required qualifications. Write a convincing letter to the university board.*
- B. There is a vacancy in a primary school. How would you apply for it?*
- C. A firm requires a professional photographer. What are the points you would talk about in your letter?*

2

RÉSUMÉ WRITING

A résumé is a document typically sent with a job application. It is similar to what we generally refer to as a CV, or 'curriculum vitae'. Thus, it is a brief account of a person's education, qualifications, and jobs previously done or posts held in the past. The purpose of writing a résumé is to highlight the features of one's personality, education and experience, and to prove one's suitability for a job.

When a person's résumé is found to be satisfactory or appealing, the prospective employer calls the applicant or candidate for an interview. In other words, a résumé is a marketing piece aimed at presenting a person in the best possible light. However, it is different from an application.

It is evident from the description given above that this is a document having a lot of importance in one's career and professional life. The ability to write and design a good résumé goes a long way in painting a positive and factual picture of a person. It sets a positive tone for the interview. At the same time, it provides adequate clues to the employer or interviewer as to what questions they can ask in the interview.

Let us now consider the steps one should take in order to write a good résumé.

- The first thing to do is to choose a job target or 'Job Objective'. If you can be specific about the target, and can mention the job title, it would bring better results. It is not a smart thing to prepare a generic résumé and use it for every job application indiscriminately.
- There should be no attempt to list everything that the applicant has ever done. Employers are looking for people who know what they can do and what they want.

- Once the target job is identified, it becomes easier to find out what skills, knowledge and experience are required to do that job. This information is most likely to be available in job ads, in the job description given by the employer or from people already working in that field. One should seek this crucial information before writing your résumé.
- The next step is to match the skills, abilities and knowledge level required for the job with your strongest skills, abilities, etc. There should be a close correspondence between the target job and the relevant skills that you claim to possess. For instance, a job concerning customer service would require verbal skills, problem solving and computer skills, as well as some experience in the field of customer care. Skills like personnel management, budgeting or financial planning, supervision, etc., would be appropriate for a managerial job.
- The next step is to illustrate these key skills by referring to your accomplishments from your past work history. These fact-based achievements have to be supported by certificates and documents enclosed as evidence. Each achievement should be described in an action statement with a focus on the results achieved. It should not be vague or uncertain. Examples of action statements are:
 1. Advised callers on how to make connections.
 2. Designed and presented weekly orientation plan for members.
 3. Assembled materials and reports.
 4. Developed an improved filing system which saves precious time.
 5. Streamlined the working by re-scheduling the office routine.
- The next step is to make a list of the jobs previously done and the posts held in chronological order. List your most recent job first, then the earlier ones. Include unpaid work if it helps to showcase your skills and experience. This part of your résumé should appear substantial, particularly if you are young and have limited work experience. Employment details may be given in terms of years. If there is little variation in the kind of jobs you have done, make sure to include the jobs you did additionally or the experiences you had when you

were self-employed. Mention the job title and list the specific assignments, accomplishments and the experience you gained once you joined.

- If there are gaps in your work experience, these should be gracefully filled by indicating your work other than office jobs. For instance, parenting, family management, and a short-term course may be indicated as work done during a period generally construed as a 'gap'.
- An account of your training and education should also be given in the résumé, but it should be brief. In case you have had no training or if the target job does not require previous training, this section may be omitted. Usually, the name of the course or training with the years or period followed by the name of the institution or university is enough for the résumé.

Look at the following sample demonstrating how a résumé should be written:

Post applying for: Credit Administrator

Sudeepa Soren

35, Harinath Road, Kendra, Jharkhand

Home: 2331234, Cell: 000-123-2345

Email: soren.sudeepa84@gmail.com

Objective

Seeking administrative level position with a multi-national financial institution overseeing corporate loans and commercial loans

Career summary

Over 3 years of experience with various multinational financial institutions dealing specifically with the mortgage and commercial loans for corporate, real estate and individuals

Summary of skills

- Considerable amount of experience in banking and lending areas with an in-depth knowledge of mortgage lending
- Proficient in writing different type of reports
- Excellent communication skills
- Adept in managing multiple tasks with superb organisational abilities
- Proven negotiation and presentation skills
- Dexterous in handling relevant software applications
- Ability to build rapport with customers with different backgrounds
- Complete knowledge on pricing and the underwriting procedures in the mortgage industry

Professional experience

2008–Present: Loan Officer, JBO Mortgage Corporation, Ranchi

Responsibilities

- Developed the marketing and promotional strategies for JBO's loan products
- Devised promotional strategies in the form of incentives targeted towards loan customers
- Created a sales plan to match the sales targets set by the department
- Guided and assisted the processing staff in loan processing procedures

Educational Profile

- Post graduate degree in Business Administration, University of Ranchi (2008)
- Bachelor's Degree in Economics, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Orissa (2006)

References available on request

Points to Note

- Keep your sentences short and simple.
- Do not include unnecessary information such as hobbies, extra-curricular activities, etc., unless they have a direct impact on the job you are applying for.
- A résumé is always shorter and more to the point than a CV. A CV is usually arranged in a chronological format whereas a résumé focuses on the relevant skills and work experience of the applicant.
- Make sure you proofread and edit your document carefully. Making grammatical or language errors will create an unfavourable impression on a prospective employer or interviewer.

EXERCISES

- You have done your summer project with a leading car manufacturer in the PPC (Production Planning and Control) department. Another car producer has advertised for recruitment. Prepare a résumé highlighting the issues in your project and apply to the company with a covering letter.*
- Using the sample résumé as a model, prepare one for an older relative or friend who is employed. Now consider experimenting with the layout of the résumé, making it more creative and eye-catching.*
- You are the editor of the college campus magazine. A leading newspaper has advertised for trainee journalists with a technical background. Prepare a résumé specifying your suitability for the job. Also enclose two pieces of writing that you had done for the magazine.*

3

GROUP DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Once you have sent in an application letter and a résumé, you will most likely be called for a face to face interaction with your prospective employer. This is the next stage in the selection process. These interactions can be of two types. The first is a personal interview where you would be asked questions about your experience and knowledge about the field for which you are applying. The other type is a group discussion where three or more candidates are put in a group and are asked to discuss certain topics.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW

An interview is a formal meeting where one or more persons ask a candidate several questions. The purpose is to find out whether the candidate is suitable for a job or a seat in an educational institution. In an interview you could either have a one-on-one session or be interviewed by a panel of people.

Preparing for an interview

Preparing well for an interview helps you face the panel of experts with confidence. Remember the following points when you are preparing for an interview:

- Brush up on the subject or the area related to the interview and update yourself on recent developments.
- Prepare answers to some general questions you think the interviewers will ask. Some of these could be:

- Tell us a little about yourself.
- Why do you want to be with us?
- Could you tell us why you want to change your job?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Would you be willing to travel?
- How do you expect to contribute to the field/institution?
- Neatly arrange in a folder the papers and certificates that you may be asked to produce. Check the interview call letter sent to you to see if there is anything you have missed.
- Wear something formal and comfortable for the occasion.
- Plan to reach the place of the interview a little early as this will give you time to familiarise yourself with your surroundings and to relax.
- Think positive, pleasant thoughts and try to regulate your breathing to remain calm.

Interview etiquette

- Wait for your name to be announced, and knock or seek permission before you enter.
- Greet the people in the room formally, but in a pleasant manner.
- Do not sit down until you are asked to.
- Look at the interviewers.
- Remember not to interrupt the interviewer and allow them time to finish speaking before you respond.
- Listen carefully to the interviewers' questions and comments, and speak clearly and at a moderate pace to avoid having to repeat yourself.
- In case you do not hear a question you are asked, or if you do not understand it, you could politely ask for it to be repeated or explained. For example:
 - I'm sorry, but could you repeat the question, please.
 - I'm afraid I'm not sure what you mean. Are you asking me if I . . . ?/Could you clarify the question, please.
- Do not feel embarrassed to say that you do not know the answer to a question. Use expressions such as
 - I'm afraid I don't know . . .

- I'm sorry, but I'm not really certain . . .
- Express your opinions politely, not aggressively, using expressions such as
 - I think . . .
 - I believe . . .
 - In my opinion . . .
- Do not get into arguments or speak negatively or criticise former teachers, colleagues or employers.
- Do not boast or unnecessarily display your knowledge, skills and experience, but if asked, state your achievements simply and honestly.
- Wait for the interviewer to invite you to ask questions in case you have queries. If this does not happen, wait until you sense that the interviewers are done before asking them politely if they could clarify something for you. Examples of the questions you may want to ask the interviewer are:
 - Could you tell me whether the position involves travelling, please.
 - Could I know when I can expect to hear from you, please.
- Wait for the interviewer to tell you that the interview has ended before you get up from your chair. Thank all the people in the room before walking out of the door and closing it softly behind you.
- In case the interview is conducted over the telephone, most of the points above will still be relevant. In addition, be careful about regulating your voice, avoiding long silences and butting in before the interviewer has finished speaking. In fact, if the person at the other end of the line interrupts you, do not drown his or her voice by raising yours, but let the person speak. You can then continue with 'As I was saying . . .', etc.

You can prepare for interviews by holding mock interviews in your class or among your friends. Here are some model interviews for you to look at. You can enact these model interviews as well, taking turns playing the role of interviewer and interviewee.

(Interview for a job)

Candidate: May I come in, please, ma'am.

Manager: Yes, please come in. Good morning.

Candidate: Good morning, ma'am. Good morning, sir.

Assistant Manager: Please sit down.

Candidate: Thank you, sir.

Manager: Could you begin by telling us something about yourself.

Candidate: Ma'am, I belong to West Bengal, but I grew up in Nanded, where my father worked until he retired. I'm married, and I have a baby daughter, who is a year old.

Assistant Manager: I assume you speak both Bengali and Marathi. Am I right?

Candidate: Yes, sir, absolutely. I also speak Hindi.

Manager: Why do you want to join our company?

Candidate: You're one of the leading publishers of law books in the country. With my background and work experience, I hope to be able to contribute to the company and also find here the opportunity to grow further.

Manager: Actually, the vacancy we have is for Lucknow. Would you be open to the idea of being based there?

Candidate: Yes, ma'am. I'm willing to relocate from Mumbai to any part of the country.

Assistant Manager: Could you tell us what kind of salary you expect, please.

Candidate: I'm earning Rs 50,000 net in my present job. Sir, I think anything a little over that should be alright.

Manager: Well, thank you, Mr Shравan Kumar. We'll get back

to you in a week's time.

Candidate: Sure, thank you.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Employers are now increasingly using group discussions (GDs) to evaluate a candidate's performance as a member of a team to arrive at a constructive conclusion on a theme or solve a problem. In a work situation a person is required to interact with a number of people—colleagues or outsiders—share views and arrive at a consensus. Being able to function as part of a team without antagonising your colleagues or being locked out of arriving at a solution is an essential workplace skill. Knowing what to expect from a GD and how to behave in one is an important skill to learn.

How a GD functions

A GD is a leaderless group activity. All the candidates are competitors who have to join the discussion without the presence or participation of an evaluator. The candidates are evaluated on the basis of their knowledge, communication skill, leadership traits and personality (manners, dress, body language, tone of voice, etc.). The purpose of a GD is to elicit the views of all participants and, through intense interaction, evolve a consensus. An avid interest in national and international activities, and knowledge of political, economic, scientific, cultural and sporting events must be cultivated to be able to participate actively in GDs. Each candidate has to voice his/her opinion and offer counter-arguments in turn. He/she has to be sensitive to the dynamics of a group process. The candidates' self-imposed discipline, sense of responsibility and fair play is judged through GDs.

Parameters of evaluation

Participants are evaluated along various parameters that include:

- *Extent and quality of contribution* – how much you participate, relevance of your observations, etc.
- *Techniques used for discussion* – critical and analytical skills, using questions wisely, using icebreakers, inviting others to participate, etc.

- *Leadership qualities* – which include questioning techniques, response time, positive aggression, ability to break the ice and moderate the discussion.
- *Communication Skills* – ability to listen, to speak clearly and precisely in grammatical English, positive body language, ability to remember names and points being discussed, being polite, listening actively, etc.

Tips and techniques for effective participation

You can make your GD performances better by:

- *Leading*: The prospective employer is looking for a natural leader who is also a balanced thinker. Leadership is helping each team member achieve his/her full potential in solving the problem at hand. So, leading the team will show you in a positive light. For example, you may have twenty minutes for the discussion and about six to seven members in the group. You could regulate the discussion confidently by suggesting that in the first round everyone should take turns and speak for two minutes and then throw the topic open for discussion.
- *Having confidence*: Observe the personality types present in the group. Greet the group cheerfully. Don't be afraid to state your opinion or take the time to say something. The more confident you are, the better your evaluation will be.
- *Being calm*: Always be calm. If unjustly opposed, use polite expressions to restate your position. Don't be sarcastic or get angry at another participant even if they make personal remarks. Don't get personal either. Not maintaining your composure will affect your evaluation negatively.
- *Quick thinking*: Generally, the topic for the GD is given on the spot. In such cases, quickly plan an extempore speech to fill the time that you may be allotted by the group. You can practice by participating in extempore speaking events in your college or college festivals. This is also where being up to date on current events and having some knowledge of a number of topics unrelated to your field will be useful.
- *Listening*: Listening carefully is very important. Do not talk when another participant is addressing the group and try to remember what each person has said. Do not make faces or

look at your watch while others are speaking. It will indicate disrespect.

- **Time management:** See that the group arrives at a conclusion in the allotted time. Help the group to complete the task in time by active timekeeping. Make sure that you too do not take up too much time while speaking.

Remember that these tips and techniques are to be used in addition to the ones listed in the section on interviews. If you practice these regularly, you will have all the tools you need to navigate an interview or GD in any context.

EXERCISES

A. You have applied for a bank loan to study abroad and have been asked to attend an interview. Think of five questions that you could be asked and write them down along with your possible responses. Exchange questions with your partner and jot down points for your answers to their questions. Enact the interview with a partner.

B. You have to appear for an interview for an entry-level job in a company that offers you a career in your area of specialisation. Prepare yourself for the interview by thinking through and outlining for yourself your skills, your interests and your strengths. This will help you become aware of your plus points, your choice of career and your suitability for the particular job so that you can speak about yourself with clarity and confidence at the interview.

For example:

Skills: Technical skills regarding computer hardware

Strengths: Ability to work in teams, sticking to deadlines

Interests: Accessing inexpensive spare parts and assembling computers

4

PRESENTATIONS

A presentation is a talk giving information about a product, a subject or an idea. Used to present reports, proposals, policy statements and feasibility studies, it has become an important form of oral communication in the spheres of education and work and is closely linked to career and personal growth. Students, teachers, scientists, researchers, managers, sales and marketing executives and administrators all need this skill in the course of their everyday work.

KINDS OF PRESENTATIONS

There are different ways of making presentations:

- overhead projection transparencies (OHPs)
- computer projection (PowerPoint, applications such as Excel, etc.)
- flipcharts or black or white boards, sometimes used as 'scratchpads' to expand on a point
- video or film
- real objects (such as a product or plant specimen)

Of these, PowerPoint is probably one of the most effective and widely used tools today. You will find in this chapter some useful guidelines on preparing presentations and on using language and nonverbal skills to make them effective. Remember though that, like all other skills, you will have to go over your presentation and practise it as many times as you can before you make it. This will not only help you with a particular presentation but will slowly lead to a big improvement in your general presentation skills.

Preparing for a presentation

- The first step in planning your presentation is to decide on its subject. This, of course, is usually given to you, but when it is not, choose a topic that suits the occasion and the audience.
- Begin preparing the content of your presentation by putting down its objective or purpose: is it meant to inform, persuade or report?
- Think of who your audience is going to be; the level of your content, formality and style will depend on this.
- Next, list the main points you want to make in your presentation in the order in which you think of them. Read the points again. You may want to omit some, add more, combine points or split them. It is important not to pack too much content into a presentation because this will diffuse its effect. For example, a presentation of about twenty minutes should not have more than five main points. After you have a final list of points, arrange them in a logical sequence.
- Think of subpoints that could come under your main points. It is best to put only the main points and the subpoints on slides (or flip chart or transparencies) and speak briefly on each of these. Prepare graphs, tables or pie charts that you want to put on slides.
- Write down what you want to say on each point and practise saying it over and over again, until you are confident that you will be able to speak without looking at the written script. To make you feel surer of yourself, you can prepare cue cards, which are numbered cards with key words and phrases related to what you want to say on each point in your presentation. These cues should be so chosen that they are sure to remind you of what you have to say. Remember to mark on your cards the visual aids that go with them so that the right OHP or slide is shown at the right time.
- Practise with the cue cards to make sure that the cues work. Look at an example of a cue card to help you speak when a main point and a bar graph are being displayed.

- compare
- stagnation vs steady growth
- reasons
- plan of action

Structuring content

All presentations, like other forms of oral and written communication, must be complete in themselves, with a beginning, a body and an end.

- The first part must consist of greetings, a brief, clear statement of the subject and purpose of the presentation and an outline.
- The second part must have the main content of the presentation, which will have its own internal structure.
- The last part must have a brief recap or a summary of the most important points, followed by remarks made to conclude the presentation and to thank the audience, and a brief session for questions and clarifications.

Also structure your main content in a logical way so that it would be easy for the audience to follow the presentation. For instance, you could begin by talking about a problem, go on to offer solutions, then discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each of them and finally recommend one of them.

Make sure that you make your content interesting and easy to understand with examples and visuals.

Visual aids

You must learn to prepare good visual aids, such as slides and transparencies, and use them effectively. Remember that they are 'aids' to a presentation because they form the framework that supports it. Note the following points about visuals:

- All the visuals you put up or show on screen must be related to your talk.
- Make sure the slides, charts or transparencies are in the right order, matching the sequence of points in your presentation.
- Do not put in too much information on one visual. It will make the slide unreadable, or your audience will spend time reading the slide rather than listening to you. It is always better to have two visuals in place of one that looks crowded.
- Written matter on slides and transparencies should be in the form of key words or phrases, points or short sentences. Try to limit the words per slide to a maximum of ten. You can expand on each of the points when you explain the visual.
- Edit the text on your slides carefully to avoid errors in spelling, punctuation and typeface.
- Prepare your slides in such a way that the audience sees only one visual or point at a time. If the slide has more than what you will talk about, the audience may get distracted and not listen to you. To give information gradually, you can use a sheet of paper to cover what you do not want to show immediately on a transparency. If you are doing a computer presentation, it is easy to reveal information gradually using software that allows phrases, points or graphics to appear on the screen slowly, one by one.
- Before you show a slide or a transparency, tell the audience a line or two about it. After it is put on screen, explain it more fully.
- Do not move from one visual to another without giving the audience time to absorb the information on it.
- Practise moving forwards and backwards within your presentation. You or someone in the audience may want to look at an earlier slide.
- It is useful to give the audience handouts at the end of your presentation—they will be able to watch the slide show and listen to you without having to worry about taking down notes.
- Visuals should be designed with care so that they are simple, clear as well as appealing. The layout should be clear and well designed, and the letters large enough for people even at the back of the room to read easily. A complicated design or too

many effects may confuse or distract your audience. Choose the colours for the background and the lettering carefully to create visuals that are pleasing to the eye and easy to read. This is because some colours such as yellow, though attractive, are not good options from the point of view of clarity.

- Use a minimum 20-point Times Roman or any other friendly typeface that can be read from the back of a room.
- Before you start, check if the projector you will be using works and is kept in the right position. Make sure your laptop or device on which you have your presentation is compatible with the projector. Also make sure that the room is neither too bright nor too dark.

The language of presentations

Presentations are a form of oral communication, and so you should use spoken, not written, language when making one. Here are some expressions you can use when making a presentation.

Opening remarks

- Hello, everyone. (specially appropriate for an informal presentation for a small group of people you interact with every day)
- Good morning/Good afternoon/Good evening. Welcome to . . . (name of organisation)/Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk to you today.
- Good morning. I'd like to/I'm happy to welcome you all here today. I'm . . . (name) and I'm . . . (designation) in the . . . office/department (name of the branch or division) here (necessary when you are making a presentation for people who are not part of your organisation).
- Good afternoon, everyone. I'm happy to be here this afternoon. I'm (designation) at . . . (name of the company).
- Good morning. Let me introduce myself. My name is . . . and I'm from . . .
- Good morning. I'm . . . from . . . Thank you for inviting me to talk to you this morning. Before I begin, I'd like to/let me tell you something about myself.

Stating the purpose

- As you know, the subject of my presentation today is . . .
- I'm here this morning to . . .
- My aim is to . . .
- The purpose of my talk today is to . . .
- In my presentation today, I'm going to/I'll . . .

Giving an outline

- I've divided my presentation into . . .
- I'll first . . ., then we'll . . . Finally, I'll . . .
- I'll begin by . . . and after that I'll deal with . . . before going on to . . . The presentation will conclude with . . .
- I'll be talking about . . . (issues/areas). Firstly, . . . Secondly, . . . Thirdly, . . .
- My talk has four parts: first, I'll introduce you to . . ., second, we'll discuss . . ., third, you'll learn about . . ., and, finally, I'll conclude by giving you . . .

Giving other preliminary information and starting with the content

- My presentation will take about half an hour or so. If you don't mind, could I deal with questions after the talk, please.
- I'll take only about fifteen minutes of your time. We'll have a question-and-answer session after that.
- The presentation is going to take around forty minutes. Please feel free to interrupt if you have a question.
- You don't need to/needn't take notes. I'll give a set of handouts with all the points we discuss today.
- There's no need for you to copy down the points on the slides or the visuals. Handouts containing all of them will be distributed.
- I hope everyone has a copy of the handout with the examples we'll be looking at today.
- Let's get started then.
- Right, I'll begin by . . .
- Shall we begin?

- Let's begin, shall we?

Moving to another point or going back to an earlier point

- Let's now turn to . . .
- I'd like to move on to . . .
- Turning/moving on now to . . .
- This takes me to my next point about . . .
- Next, I'd like to consider . . .
- Let me go back briefly to an earlier point.
- As I said earlier . . .
- To recap what we discussed under the last point . . .

Emphasising important points

- What we must understand/realise/do is . . .
- What we mustn't do is . . .
- We urgently/really need to . . .
- . . . is absolutely true/highly recommended/totally unacceptable/extremely urgent, etc.

Drawing attention to visuals

- I'd like to draw your attention to . . .
- Could you just look at the . . . on the screen.
- As you'll see in the next slide . . .
- If you look at this . . ., you will notice that . . .
- You can see that . . .

Making recommendations

- I (strongly) recommend that . . .
- My recommendation is that . . .
- I really think/believe we should . . .

Keeping the audience involved

- How would you solve this problem?
- Where are we heading?

- Can you think of a way of dealing with this?
- What are the options open to us?
- Why should we be concerned about this?
- What does this mean for our company?
- Don't you think we must address this problem?
- I'm sure many of you here have experienced this.
- I'd like you to understand why I'm saying this.
- You must all be aware of what is happening.
- I hope you know about the situation.

Summarising and concluding

- To sum up the main points of my presentation, . . .
- Before I end my talk, I'd like to summarise its main points
- To run through/recap my main points, . . .
- I'd like to conclude by saying . . .
- That brings me to the end of my presentation.
- I'd like to/I must thank you all for listening.
- Thank you all for your attention.

Inviting questions

- If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them.
- If want to ask any questions, I'll do my best to answer them.
- If there are any questions, I'll be pleased to answer them.

Tips and techniques for making a presentation

Besides making sure you have prepared excellent content and visual aids, it is important to remember the points below when making your presentation.

- Plan your presentation in a way that will enable you to keep to the time allotted to you. Remember that this will include about five minutes for questions.
- Stick to your original plan for the presentation. Do not take up other matters, however interesting they may be, because this will lead to total confusion.

- Use your voice cleverly according to the size of the room and the audience. Do not shout or whisper, but speak clearly enough to be heard by everyone in the room. Speak at a natural, even pace—neither too fast nor too slow. Varying the pitch and tone of your voice makes it interesting for the audience to listen to you. Pausing at appropriate points in your presentation—for example, when you want to show that something you said is important or give the audience time to consider it—is effective.
- Avoid pacing up and down. It is less distracting for the audience if you stay in one place, somewhere at the front of the room. Move only when you have to go to the whiteboard or operate the equipment or pass handouts around.
- Your appearance, facial expressions, eye contact with the audience and body language are very important factors that contribute to the success of your presentation. These are nonverbal signals that speak to your audience just as much as your words.
- Do not read out the matter on the screen or a prepared script.
- Do not block the screen or stand facing it so that your back is turned to the audience. Remember that you are talking to the audience and that the matter being displayed is for them to read.
- Before the presentation, try operating the equipment you will use to project your slides or transparencies on the screen to see if it works, and if you are comfortable with it. If someone else is going to operate the equipment, speak to the person beforehand and explain what you want when and also how you will signal what you need.
- Also make sure your audio equipment such as collar mics or stand mics are working. Take a few minutes to use the microphones to make sure you are neither too loud nor too soft.
- Finally, prepare your presentation early and rehearse it as many times as you can. Do it by yourself first, and after a few rounds of practice, do it before friends or colleagues whom you can depend on to give you support and helpful suggestions.