



MODULE 7 PRESENTATION SKILLS

UNIT 7 Questions

Task sheet

The aim of the lesson:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Examine the potential of questions to engage the audience2) Identify different types of questions presenters can ask, and strategies to use them effectively3) Consider strategies to handle the audience's questions4) Revise the grammar of constructing questions5) Learn strategies of clarification and negotiation
Language level:	B2 and up



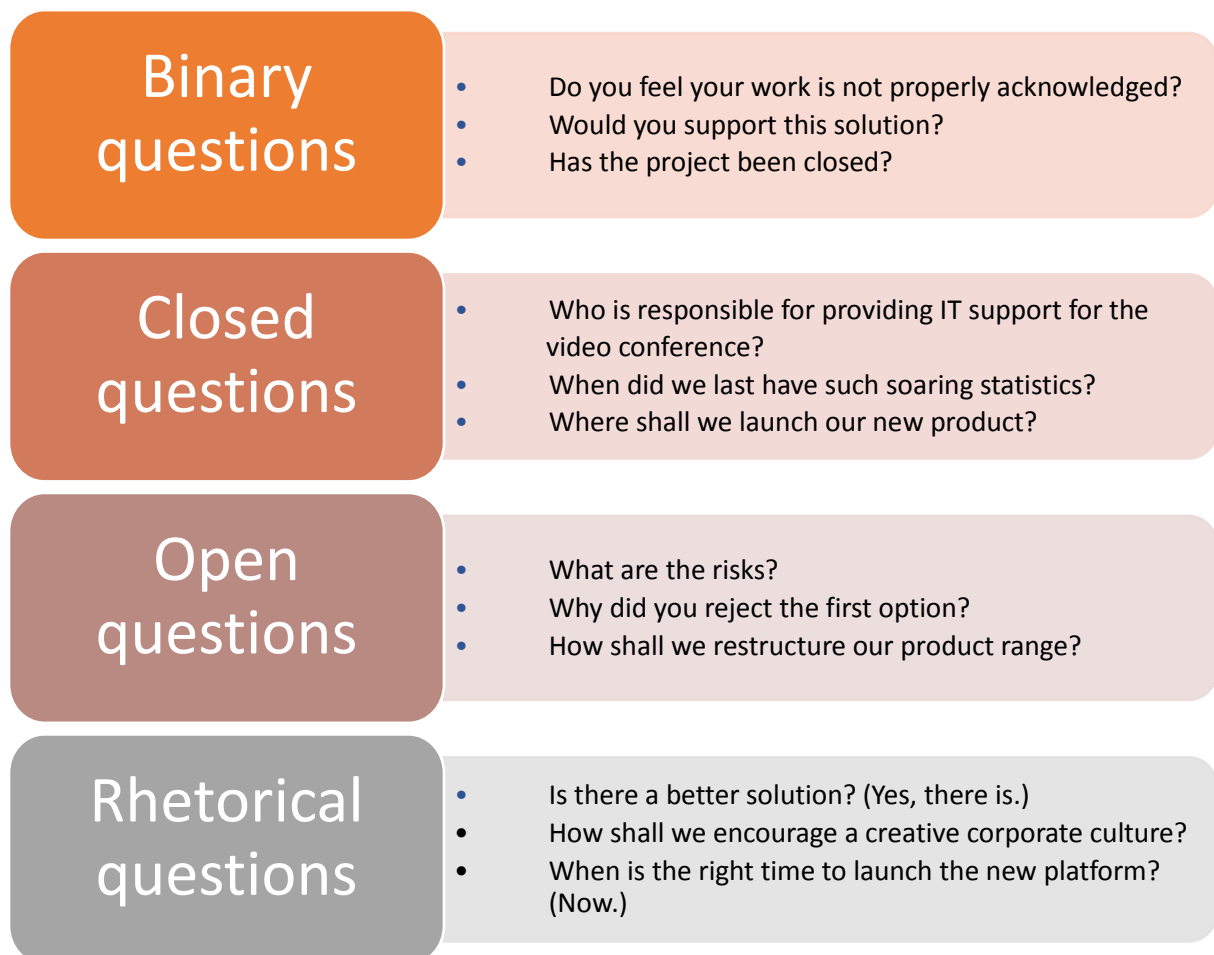
TASK 1 Create a dialogue

Despite appearances, a good presentation is a dialogue, not a monologue – even if the audience do not contribute a word. Asking questions during the talk can be a great opportunity to

- evoke associations,
- activate the background knowledge, experience, and belief systems of the audience,
- encourage them to connect these to the topic, and
- find the personal relevance of the topic for themselves.

Figure 1 below shows different types of questions we can consider:

Figure 1 Question types



TASK 1/A Functions

Read the potential functions of the question types. Match the functions with the question types.

Functions	Question types
1. Introduce a topic Illustrate a point Find out factual information quickly	
2. Elicit contribution Encourage sharing relevant experience and expertise	
3. Getting used to participation Conducting a quick survey to illustrate a point	
4. Introduce/highlight new topic, main ideas Focus a key word by repetition Indicate a controversial point.	

TASK 1/B Problems and implementation

Match the potential problems of implementation and solutions with the question types.

Problems and implementation	Question types
1. It takes too long in a frontal format, and people might be reluctant to contribute in front of the whole group. Set a strict time limit and ask the audience to work in small groups. Keep to a pre-planned outline, and summarise the outcome.	
2. Do not overuse them; apply them in strategic places to emphasise info. Keep a very short pause to indicate that you do not expect an answer.	
3. People won't normally volunteer to answer in a bigger group, especially if they do not know each other. Keep it short, sweep the audience with your eyes and designate the respondents.	
4. People won't normally volunteer to answer in a bigger group, especially if they do not know each other. Keep it simple, and show how to respond.	

TASK 1/C Examples

Watch the following extracts from business speeches and specify

- which question types are used by the presenters, and
- for what purpose.

Sources:

1. Jim Collins: Will you settle for being a good leader ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZdPkJGGdOwk>

2. Stewart Vernon Motivational speech- Young Entrepreneurs Academy - 2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oYHOXKSWVU&t=1s>

3. Roselinde Torres What it takes to be a great leader

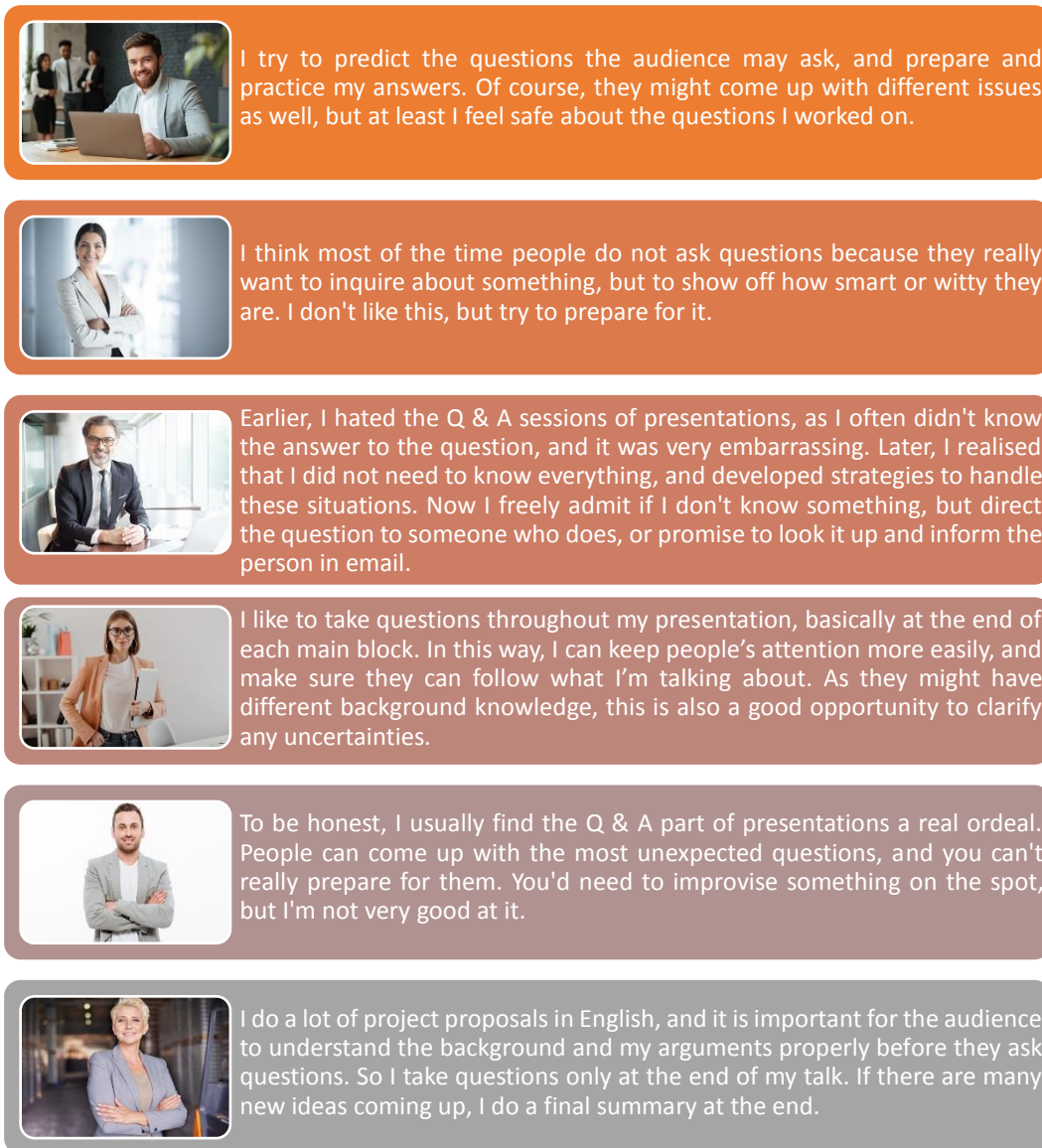
https://www.ted.com/talks/roselinde_torres_what_it_takes_to_be_a_great_leader#t-275269

Speech	Question type	Function
1. Jim Collins (full video)		
2. Stewart Vernon (2:05- Q&A)		
3. Roselinde Torres (full)		

TASK 2 Question time!

The question and answer (Q & A) sessions during or after the presentation are of key importance. They enable the audience to engage in a real dialogue: clarify issues, contribute knowledge, express opinions, and yes, test or challenge you. It is advisable to prepare for this part separately, by collecting background information on issues that may come up, and strategies to handle questions. Read the following reflections on the Q & A sessions. Which one is the closest to your view?

Figure 2 Views on handling questions¹



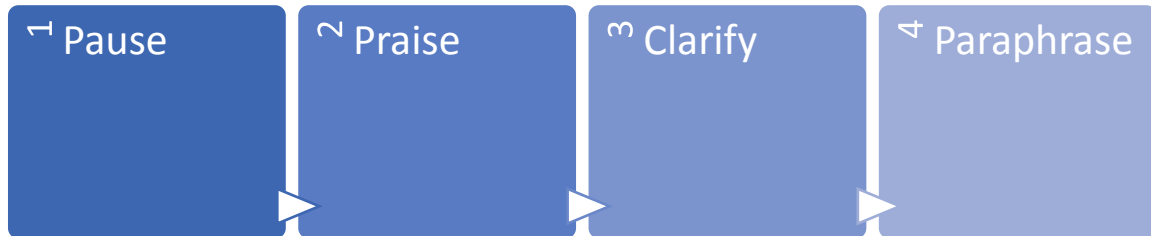
¹ Source of images:

- 1: [Free Photo | Cheerful young caucasian businessman \(freepik.com\)](#)
- 2: [Free Photo | Smiling female business leader with arms crossed \(freepik.com\)](#)
- 3: [Free Photo | Smiling business leader sitting at office desk \(freepik.com\)](#)
- 4: [Free Photo | Portrait of successful business woman with glasses and in light jacket smiling against white office. \(freepik.com\)](#)
- 5: [Free Photo | Portrait of successful man having stubble posing with broad smile keeping arms folded \(freepik.com\)](#)
- 6: [Free Photo | Businesswoman working in warehouse \(freepik.com\)](#)

TASK 2/A Strategies to handle questions

When you take questions, there are four useful strategies we can apply:

Figure 3 Strategies to handle questions



1. Take some seconds to think before you answer rather than rushing into a confusing or superficial response.
2. You might praise the question if you think it is one you have expected or taps into a weak point of your argumentation. However, do NOT automatically say that “this is a good question”, as it might come across as “talking down” to the person.
3. If you do not clearly understand the question or the intention behind the it, do not hesitate to ask for clarification.
4. If you need some time to think over your response, or want to take the edge of an offensive question, try to paraphrase it.

Look at the following Q & A exchanges and decide which strategy is applied.

Example	Strategy
<p>1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When did you realise that your advertising campaign was a disaster? - So you are asking when we discovered that the advertising campaign wasn't as successful as we had expected. 	
<p>2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think we can make do only with our take-away service? - I'm glad you are asking that as I have also been considering adding an extra option. 	
<p>3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - And what future, if any, do you see for our technology at Asian markets? - Well, let me think this over 	
<p>4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't you think you we should be looking out for some of our Japanese partners before we decide on this? - Excuse me, I don't quite understand your point here. Could you specify which Japanese partners might be of concern to us here and why? 	
<p>5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - And on what basis are you claiming that we haven't fulfilled our commitments? - Do you mean you would like me to show the supporting data from the annual report? 	
<p>6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I'm not sure I fully understood your point about increasing our social benefits AND allowing for flexible home officing to boost our productivity. - Yes, thanks, I have actually expected this question. 	
<p>7.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On what basis can you say that big insurance companies can't stand a chance against small, but aggressive companies using direct marketing? - Ok, let's see 	
<p>8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You have made a point about transferring some of the good practices of home officing during the pandemic to our regular business operations. Could you expand on this? - Ok, are you asking what aspects of our business could be done online? 	

Task 2/B Taking the edge of critical or too personal questions

Which exchange above contains a critical, too personal question, which the presenter paraphrases in a more positive and less personal manner? Describe how this transformation is made.

Example:

Explanation:
.....
.....

Task 2/C Transformation

Transform the following direct questions into reported questions.

Example:

What budget will you use to cover this?

So you are asking what budget we shall use to cover this.

1. What do you mean by “pay freeze”?

.....

2. Isn't the second option somewhat safer than the third one?

.....

3. Have you considered the long-term risks of this solution?

.....

4. Who was responsible for the provision of the digital platform?

.....

5. How shall we compensate for the loss of profit during the pandemic?

.....

Task 2/D Paraphrasing

Paraphrase the following questions to be more positive and/or less personal.

1. How do you imagine communicating this catastrophic breakdown to our consumers?

.....

2. Why didn't you inform the management earlier that your incompetence was threatening the provision of our services?

.....

3. How can you be so sure that your calculations are justifiable? Our statistics do not support this optimism at all.

.....

4. And do you really think your project results can be maintained without further EU support?

.....

In sum

- **Questions are an opportunity to involve the audience and create a dialogue.**
- **The presenter may ask questions to engage the audience, and highlight information.**
- **The audience can ask questions to clarify the message, express agreement and disagreement, as well as extend the information with their own knowledge. Thus Q & A sessions may become a form of creating new knowledge together.**
- **Different types of questions are good for different purposes. Think over carefully when and how you want to integrate questions into your presentation.**
- **It is important to decide when and how you would like to address the audience's questions. Always take them seriously and answer them to the best of your knowledge. If you don't know the answer, say that, and offer options for finding the information.**

MODULE 7 PRESENTATION SKILLS

UNIT 7 Questions

Key

TASK 1 Create a dialogue

TASK 1/A Functions

Functions	Question types
1.	Closed questions
2.	Open questions
3.	Binary questions
4.	Rhetorical questions

TASK 1/B Problems and implementation

Problems and implementation	Question types
1.	Open questions
2.	Rhetorical question
3.	Closed question
4.	Binary question

TASK 1/C Examples

Speech	Question type	Function
1. Jim Collins (full video)	What was Eisenhower doing ...? Rhetorical question	Introduces a story, prepares a contrast
	Will you do whatever it takes ...? Rhetorical question (also binary)	Relate story to audience's lives, encourage them to consider the issue at hand
	Will you scale your leadership ...? Rhetorical question	Repetition, emphasis
2. Stewart Vernon (2:05- Q&A)	Closed question (definition of entrepreneurship)	Engaging the audience, getting used to participation, testing background knowledge Sweeps the audience with his eyes to look for people who return eye contact
3. Roselinde Torres (full)	What makes a great leader today? Rhetorical question	Raises the main topic
	Is my company helping me to prepare great 21 st century leaders? Rhetorical question	Encourages audience to consider main point from their own context
	Two questions: Two main focal points of the presentation Rhetorical questions	Signal main components of talk
	Three questions: subpoints of the first block Rhetorical questions	Signal subpoints
	Returning to first question at the end (framing) Rhetorical question	Signal conclusion

TASK 2 Question time!

TASK 2/A Strategies to handle questions

Example	Strategy
1.	Paraphrase
2.	Praise
3.	Pause
4.	Clarify
5.	Paraphrase
6.	Praise
7.	Pause
8.	Clarify

TASK 2/B Taking the edge of critical or too personal questions

Example: 1

Explanation: The paraphrase removes personal reference by using “the advertising campaign” instead of “our”, and uses positive language (“less successful”) instead of the negative evaluation (“disaster”) appearing in the question.

TASK 2/C Transformation

1. So you would like to know what I mean by “pay freeze”.
2. So you are asking if the second option is somewhat safer than the third one.
3. So you would like to know if I have considered the long-term risks of this solution.
4. So you are asking who was responsible for the provision of the digital platform.
5. So you want to know how we shall compensate for the loss of profit during the pandemic.

TASK 2/D Paraphrasing

1. So you are asking how this temporary breakdown can be communicated to our consumers.
2. So you want to know why we didn't communicate earlier that more help was needed to maintain the provision of our services.
3. So you are asking to see the supporting data for our calculations.
4. So you are asking how the project results can be maintained relying on our own resources.