Lesson Plan © Easy Access English

MAKE A POINT



EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

Improve your presentation style. Learn some new idiomatic expressions. Learn useful expressions ad techniques for presentations. Practice making a presentation.

Do you know how to say this in English? A lot of people say *'make the point'* but this expression, like many others*, can't be translated directly from French to English. In English we can use these expressions ;



- To review the situation
- To update someone on something
- To meet and discuss something
- Take stock of the issue

*Try using each of those **expressions** in a sentence.*

Making a point means something different from 'faire le point'.

Try to fill the gaps in the paragraph below with the correct expression from ***this list***:

- To make a point of doing something
- To make the point that
- To make your point
- To get your point across
- You've made your point.
- To point something out
- To consider a point
- Consider the following points

Most people ……..of preparing for a speech or meeting by creating a powerpoint presentation. I'd like to ……..that preparation is important, but powerpoint has it's limitations. Many powerpoint presentations are very boring to look at. If you really want to ……in a meeting you have to ……:

- You should always try to use less than ten slides.
- You should try to surprise people with images they are not expecting - Use a metaphor rather than a representative image for example, to make a point memorable.
- Try to ask questions on your slides to get people involved.
- Talk to people, try to inspire them and rouse them, rather than just talking at them (consider the fact that the best speakers don't use slides).
- You want your ideas to survive, rather than provoking 'death by powerpoint'.

*If you are have in mind a French idiomatic expression when you are speaking English, don't try to translate it because it's probable that this expression can not be translated literally into English. So **make a simple sentence** instead.

Activity Two - ***Make your point…***

If you aim to INFLUENCE people's opinions, to CONVINCE them of something or to IMPRESS something upon them, then you often need to surprise them. You also need to INVOLVE* them in what you are saying and ILLUSTRATE your point in an original way which will remain in their memory. However, most powerpoint presentations are actually fairly boring. Here is a list of things to AVOID doing in a powerpoint presentation. Add your own points to this list. *(Please prepare at home before the lesson).* If you want to get your point across in a presentation do not make the following mistakes.

- ✳ Don't use animation on text.
- ✳ Don't use quick transitions between slides.
- ✳ Make sure your voice is not monotonous.
- ✳ Don't use sentences, use bullet points, and no more than three per slide.
- ✳ Don't use colours which are difficult to read (no yellow, no fluorescent colours etc.)
- ✳ Only use one, uniform, font in your presentation.
- ✳
- ✳
- ✳

Activity Three - ***Get creative..***

Here are some examples of how to illustrate a point with an image in a creative way. These images illustrate a metaphor not a concept. (Most powerpoint images illustrate a concept.) So this will surprise an audience and make your presentation more memorable. People have to stop and think. It's very useful to use metaphors* in business communication because they depend on familiar words to illustrate conceptual notions.

Which image should go with which sentence?

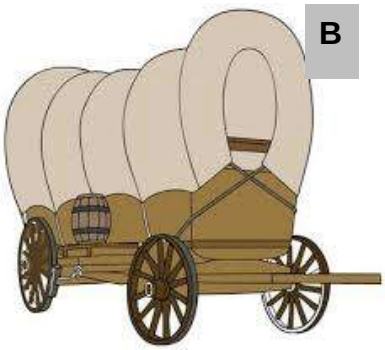
1. **"Coaching is the way forward in training today. "**
2. **"We will pioneer new techniques to improve customer service."**
3. **"Each co-worker should be on a clear path in their career."**



C



A



B

INVOLVE your audience by asking questions rather than just talking at them. Choose examples and images which are relevant to your audience. Create your own metaphors.

Activity Four - ***Use Metaphors..***

Metaphors make abstract concepts more concrete so we use them a lot. In fact we use them so often that we don't even know they are metaphors any more. Using fresh and new ones can be a powerful way of making a point in a presentation.

Here are some examples of common metaphors used in business.

- We talk about a SOLUTION when really we are referring to a PRODUCT.
- We talk about services which are TAYLOR made even though we are not referring to clothing.
- We talk of FOUNDATIONS in many different ways but rarely in a literal sense
- We use the word PLATFORM regularly in business as a metaphor for a software tool which supports us in a task.
- You will often refer to a career LADDER.

Here are some examples of more **unusual** metaphors.

- "Out there in some garage is an entrepreneur who's forging a bullet with your company's name on it." *Gary Hamel, Business Writer*
- "It doesn't work to leap a twenty-foot chasm in two ten-foot jumps." *American Proverb*
- "You do not lead by hitting people over the head – that's assault, not leadership." *Dwight D. Eisenhower*
- "Hanging a sign on a cow that says 'I am a horse' does not make it a horse." *Unknown*
- "The human race has only one really effective weapon and that is laughter." *Mark Twain*

Read the extract from this article by ***Bruna Martinuzzi*** to give you some inspiration and then invent some of your own original metaphors for concepts related to your work. (Please prepare this at home before the lesson).

"You don't have to depend on metaphors from external sources; you can create your own. Here's how: Choose the concept you want to spice up with a metaphor—let's say you want to explain that without change, your organisation will not progress. Think about the negative characteristics that come to mind for something that doesn't change: It stands still, it can get run over, it stagnates, it can't go forward, it stays behind while others are moving past it, it blocks what's behind, it creates a gridlock. You get the idea. Now think about what associations any of these words bring to mind. For example, the word "stagnate" might bring to mind a body of water. When water is confined, it accumulates debris, and the water becomes stagnant. But when there is wind and the water is allowed to move unrestricted, there is a flow and the water is fresh and rejuvenated. Now you can develop the metaphor: A lack of change in an organisation can be likened to a stagnant pool of water, littered with the debris of outdated modes and practices that hamper the flow of fresh ideas."

(For further reading on this subject -
(http://www.abccopywriting.com/2013/03/18/20-business-metaphors-and-what-they-mean)
(https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/9-ways-to-make-sure-people-really-hear-you/)

Activity Six - ***Use language which resonates. Idiomatic expressions.***

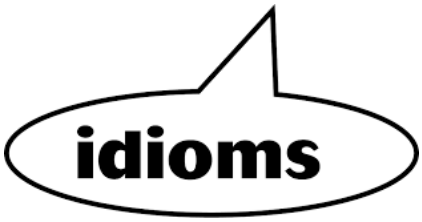
There are thousands of idioms in any language and at least 25 000 in the English language. These expressions have a figurative meaning, often they had a literal meaning at one time. It can be interesting to study the origin of these expressions. Idiomatic expressions really tell a story and have been used often and shared, so they have extra meaning which people can relate to.

The figurative nature of an idiomatic expression also means that they make your language more colourful and expressive. Your language will resonate and make more impact if you use idiomatic language. Of course you need to consider your audience before choosing an idiomatic expression. If you are speaking to an international audience they may not understand a typically British expression for example.

Some idiomatic expressions you can use in presentations.

Here are some idiomatic expressions which you can use in your presentations. Try to use them in a sentence to show that you understand their meaning. (Please prepare this before the lesson).

- **To stay ahead of the game -** to be ahead of other people or of your competition
- **There's a lot at stake -** much depends on the result
- **To go back to square one -** to go back to the beginning
- **To go back to the drawing board -** to return to the planning stage
- **To see the big picture -** to get an overview
- **To do things by the book -** to follow the rules
- **To have a game plan -** to have a plan of action
- **To get the ball rolling -** to start things moving
- **To get something off the ground -** to initiate action
- **To be on the same page -** to be of a common opinion
- **To be out of the loop -** to be excluded from shared information
- **To be kept in the loop -** to be included in shared information
- **To raise the bar -** to improve the level of expectations



Activity Seven - ***Tell a story***

To really make an inspiring and memorable presentation you need to capture the hearts and minds of your audience. It can be very effective to use story telling techniques. This means recounting experiences or events and making sense of them.

Having a beginning, a middle and an end to the story is a basic structure which you can start from. If you start with a captivating beginning and an ending which refers back to the start then your presentation will be fluid and interesting.

You can go further with story telling techniques by telling the story of a journey, where there is a threat to overcome, or a lesson to learn on the way. You can tell stories in a variety of different ways to keep people listening and get their attention. Here are some more examples of ways you can structure the 'story' in your presentation.

You can tell a story of ascent, building the tension by listing the different challenges and then reaching an apex of difficulty and then showing the way to overcome these problems with a suggested course of action.

You can also compare what exists now to what could exist by choosing to structure your speech with a succession of problems and solutions.

You can start with a shocking fact or statement and then tell the story of how you got to that point.

You can tell a story that seems to be predictable and then surprise your audience in the middle.

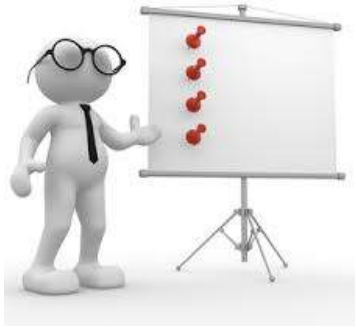
You can tell a series of different stories about things that have happened and then draw a parallel between them all in order to illustrate your main point.

These stories should always contain facts and figures so that they are concrete and convincing. Asking questions during the story about people's own experience, or just questions to provoke reflection or discussion, can also add an element which involves your audience.

Using graphs, images, or facts and figures to illustrate your story can make it easier to follow. However power point is not everything and to really hook your audience you need to pay attention to your intonation and stress, to the content and structure of your presentation and to the words and expressions you use.

Activity Eight ***Present your ideas!***

Make a presentation using metaphors and idioms and telling a story. Present your ideas on one, or more, of the following subject:



1. Co-workers have to have a sense of purpose in order to have job satisfaction.
2. A low-price, high quality reputation is essential to succeed in retail today.
3. We need to improve customer service in order to compete.
4. My strategy for improving logistics in our daily business.
5. My strategy for improving togetherness in my team.

Further Study -
https://www.ted.com/talks/james_geary_metaphorically_speaking

