

8.5 – Video: Preparing and using notes for your presentation

Okay. Now we're getting to a central point. What should you **do during your preparation time** at the exam, in the **20 to 30 minutes** right before you start talking?

First of all – and I'm sorry if I sound like your parents here, but it's true – **the real preparation time is actually the weeks or months before the exam**, where you have time to **look at the topics in depth and detail**. It's just so much easier to **talk about things you are familiar with**. You will know **more facts** and **more words**, and it will be much more fun. Speaking of more words, there's one thing you **shouldn't** do during your exam preparation time, and that is **look up lots of words in a dictionary**. That takes up way too much time. Make sure you **have a good vocabulary** beforehand. Learn the **central words and concepts related to each topic**. Trust me, you'll be glad you did.

So now you're in a small room with your task sheet. The first and most important thing you should do is **read that task sheet. All of it**. Take your time, and make sure you really **understand the instructions** – not only the **bullet points** but also **the situation you are given, the scenario**. That's important because **it makes a huge difference whether you are talking to a group of students or to members of the board of a company**. Chapter five has a section on finding the right tone and style depending on your target audience.

Once you know what to do, you will probably start **taking notes** for your presentation or speech. Please **do not try to write down every word you are planning to say. That's a bad idea**. You will sound very stiff if you read an entire speech to your audience, and again, you will run out of time. Write down **keywords**, and while you're talking, **remember that Re-Re-Ex-Ex method** we discussed earlier. Repeat and rephrase your most important points, explain, and give examples.

Some people prefer handwritten notes. Others prefer typed ones. If you're using a computer, it's very helpful to **change the font size** to something like **sixteen**, and the **spacing to double-spaced**. Your notes will be much easier to read that way. Also, it feels better to hold **smaller pieces of paper** in your hand rather than entire A4 sheets. You could cut an A4 sheet into quarters or use flash cards instead.

During the presentation, try not to look at your notes too much. **Make eye contact with your audience**, and believe in yourself. You've come this far. Nothing will stop you now.

