Introductions

There are three main purposes of presentations and speeches: to inform, to entertain, and to persuade. However, whichever type of presentation you want to make, there are some rules that you need to follow. These can be summarised as follows:

- Make sure you have a clear structure to your presentation. This means you should have a beginning, a middle and an end.
- Make sure that your language helps the listener to follow your presentation. You need to include ‘signposting signals’ so that the listener can follow your ideas.
- Make sure that you use body language in a positive way.
- Make sure that your visual aids, if you use them, are effective, and that any equipment you use works properly.
- Prepare your presentation carefully and practise it in advance.

Often when you begin a presentation, your introduction will contain a number of key elements.

- First, you will welcome or greet your audience and introduce yourself if necessary.
- Second, you will introduce your subject.
- Third, you will describe the structure or format of the presentation.

Example:

Good morning everyone and welcome. My name is Caroline Moore and I’m a PhD student at Curtin University of Technology in Perth in Western Australia. I’d like to talk today about an aspect of my research study that is particularly relevant to the conference theme of global education: the importance of adaptability in transnational education. I’d like to begin by explaining what I mean by transnational education. I’ll then go on to describe the notion of adaptability and explain why I think it is so central to the success of transnational education programs. Finally, I’ll describe some of the recommendations that have emerged from my study in relation to transnational education.

Activity: Now it is your turn to think about the introduction to a presentation. Think about a research study you have conducted or read about. Imagine that you are going to present the findings at an international conference. Write an introduction and present it to a friend.