Using transition signals (signposting)

‘Transition signals’ are words and expressions used by the speaker which help the audience to understand the structure of the presentation. You use transition signals when you want to move from one subject or item to another, when you want to give examples, if you want to digress, when you want to describe visual aids, when you want to invite questions, and when you want to sum up or conclude.

Most presentations are divided into three main sections: the introduction, the body and the conclusion. However, each section is then divided into smaller sections which are linked by transition signals. Below is an example of the structure of a presentation made by the manager of a fitness centre to a group of potential members.

**Introduction**
- Introduction of self
- Welcome of the audience
- Explanation of format

**Body**
- Description of the facilities and equipment
- The rules for using the equipment and facilities
- Booking a sauna or massage
- Other benefits of membership

**Conclusion**
- Summarising
- Concluding
- Inviting questions

After you have welcomed your audience and outlined the structure of your presentation, you need to commence the body of your presentation. This will require a transition signal. Some ideas are:
- OK, I’d like to begin by describing...
- Right. Let’s begin with a description...
- First, let me tell you something about...

When you move on to the next topic, some expressions you can use are:
- Now let’s move on to...
- Let’s turn now to...
- Next I’d like to look at...
- Now let’s talk about/discuss...

**Activity:** Now it is your turn to think about the way you can use transition signals. If you are studying a unit that makes use of i-lectures, listen to a couple of lectures and make a note of all the transition signals you hear. Think about how they help you understand the structure of the lecture.