

# Being international

*Without knowing the force of words,  
it is impossible to know men.*

Confucius, Chinese philosopher (c. 551–478 BC)

## OVERVIEW ▼

- Listening and discussion**  
Public speaking
- Reading and language**  
International presentations
- Business skills**  
Networking  
Writing: replying to a formal invitation
- Case study**  
Working for Logistaid



## Listening and discussion

### A Discuss these questions.

- 1 Do you ever have to speak to an audience? How does/would it make you feel?
- 2 Have you ever heard a speaker who you felt was inspirational? What techniques did he/she use to engage the audience?
- 3 What, for you, makes a good presentation?
- 4 What might be some of the issues to bear in mind when giving a presentation to an international audience?

### B 1.1 Three business people talk about their experiences of giving presentations to international audiences. Listen and choose the best summary of each speaker's main point.

- a) Always organise the room so that the important guests are at the front.
- b) Don't make assumptions based on the audience's reactions.
- c) Be careful with the language you use when giving a presentation.
- d) Be aware of and try to be sensitive to local customs.
- e) Using jokes and humour is a good way to get the audience on your side.
- f) Question-and-answer sessions are universally popular.

### C 1.1 Listen to each speaker again, take notes and answer these questions.

- 1 What did Michael realise when he was talking to a group of executives in Geneva?
- 2 How does he describe his speaking style, and why does he want to change it?
- 3 What does he plan to do as part of his preparation for his next presentation?
- 4 What did Arianne find out when she was due to speak in Thailand?
- 5 How does she usually organise a room when she's giving a talk?
- 6 What did she do on this occasion?
- 7 In Japan, how might people in an audience show they are listening?
- 8 How might an audience show their approval in Germany and Austria?

**D Complete these tips for giving presentations to international audiences using the words and expressions in the box. There is one item you don't need.**

delivery	gestures	greet	handout	pace
rephrase	row	script	visual aids	

Be careful when you choose the colours for your ..... <sup>1</sup>. For instance, yellow has negative connotations in many countries, including Mexico, Peru and Iran.

Using a ..... <sup>2</sup> can help with international audiences. It can keep you focused on precise language. It can also be used as a ..... <sup>3</sup> for your listeners after you speak.

Adjust the ..... <sup>4</sup> of your ..... <sup>5</sup> to reflect what the audience is used to. North Americans prefer faster speech, whereas Europeans and Asians typically prefer more time to process information.

Take care, especially where language barriers may exist, to fully understand questions from your audience. Don't hesitate to ..... <sup>6</sup> them to check your understanding.

Be sensitive to how different audiences react to ..... <sup>7</sup>. In some Asian cultures, for example, audiences find fast, sweeping arm movements distracting.

If you're going to ..... <sup>8</sup> your listeners in their language, make sure you know how to speak it. And be sure your choice of language has your intended meaning.

**E Discuss these questions.**

- 1 How would you ideally set up a room for a small meeting / a seminar / a conference?
- 2 Which colours have positive and negative connotations for you?
- 3 Apart from speaking, how else can audiences show their reaction to a presentation?
- 4 What advice would you give an overseas speaker about to give a presentation in your country? Think about some of the following:
  - seating arrangements
  - length of speech
  - body gestures
  - audience reactions
  - visual aids
  - use of humour and personal anecdotes
  - taboo subjects
  - question-and-answer sessions.