

SPEAKING ACTIVITY

LIGHTNING TALK*

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- Objective** : To enable learners to articulate their significant ideas as succinctly as possible in a quick, insightful, and clear manner.
- Preparation** : Learners prepare themselves to deliver a lightning talk on a topic of their choice. They may need to rehearse the talk a number of times to give a memorable presentation for the audience as well as to be satisfying to themselves.
- Participation** : Individual
- Duration** : 5 minutes

Procedure:

- The teacher shows videos of a few popular lightning talks to be studied as models and discusses some of the significant features.
- The teacher identifies/gets about three volunteers to give lightning talks on the topics of their choice and sets the following guidelines [**to be done in advance**]:
 - o The students could choose an umbrella topic (e.g., Social media) and talk about different aspects of it, viz. popularity of some sites; impact on the youth; their future direction and so on, **or** each student can choose a topic they are passionate and can talk about.
 - o Having chosen a topic, they need to do extensive research and reflect over it to think of something new and interesting, and write a script for the presentation.
 - o The primary aim of a lightning talk is to make a point as briefly and as interestingly as possible at the initial stage itself and not to keep it to the last. The presentations should not be cluttered with details.
 - o They could prepare a few slides (3 to 5) which show images, bullet points, quotes and so on. However, successful presentations could be made without slides.
 - o They must practice/rehearse the presentation repeatedly until they feel very confident. Presentation is for 5 minutes, but it could be shorter.
 - o One should not speak at a lightning speed because it is called a lightning talk; one must talk at a normal rate because delivery is considered to be more important than content.
- On the appointed day the students deliver their lightning talk, which is to be critiqued by the class.
- The teacher divides the class into small groups of six members each and fixes the time for presentations. Everyone gives their talk in their respective groups and receives feedback.

Learning outcomes:

1. Learners realize that qualities such as beating around the bush, padding, and pompous words are not desirable for effective communication.
2. Learners understand that pithiness is the result of hard thinking as elucidated by Woodrow Wilson, "If I am to speak for ten minutes, I need a week for preparation; if fifteen minutes, three days; if half an hour, two days; if an hour, I am ready now."

Further activity:

Learners should practise on their own or with others as often as possible on topics of their choice, following the format of a lightning talk and keeping brevity and clarity in mind.

* A 'lightning talk', as the phrase suggests, is a short talk.

It is typically 5 minutes long and the spirit of it can be summarized in the words of Shakespeare: "Brevity is the soul of wit." Also, George Burns has said, "The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending, and to have the two as close as possible."

'Lightning talk', like the other short talk formats such as 'Pecha Kucha' and 'Ignite', is popular in many conferences and aims at presenting ideas in a short time.

[Did you know that the famous Gettysburg Address was only about two and a half minutes long?]

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