

Questions and Answers



Think about these questions

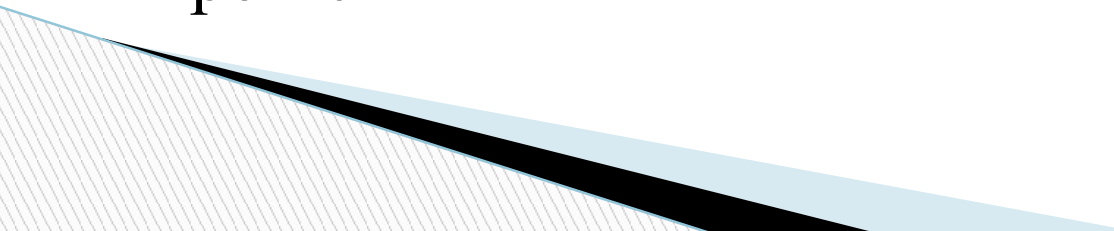
- How can you prepare for the Q&A session? Is it possible to predict what questions you will be asked?
 - If you already knew what questions you would be asked, what could you do to prepare the answers?
 - If someone asks you a question and you don't understand what they have said, how do you typically react? What is the best solution?
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Learn to deal with your anxiety about the Q&A session

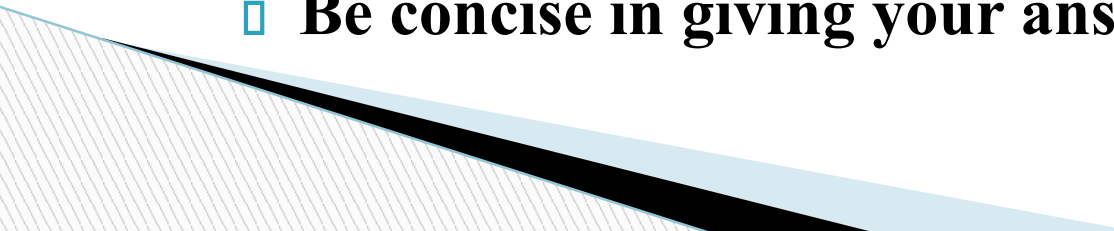
- 1) prepare for all the questions in advance;
 - 2) simply tell the questioner that you don't understand the question;
 - 3) ask members of your research team or friendly people that you have met at the conference to ask you a question (suggest what question they should ask).
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Prepare in advance for all possible questions

If you have thought of all the questions your audience are likely to ask, it will enable you to

- seem professional
 - stand a better chance of understanding such questions when they are asked
 - prepare in advance extra slides to answer such questions
 - prepare yourself mentally for difficult questions from difficult people, and during the session remain calm and polite
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Role play the situation in the card

- Give the audience time to respond to your call for questions**
 - Get the questioner to stand up. Reply to the whole audience**
 - Repeat the questions**
 - Don't interrupt the questioner unless ...**
 - Remember that it is not just your fault if you can't understand the question**
 - Always be polite**
 - If you are attending an important professor's presentation, think about the value of asking her/him a question**
 - Be concise in giving your answers**
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□ It is sometimes necessary to reformulate a question

You can use the following phrases and the techniques in the table below to reformulate questions:

I see. So, what you're asking is: ...

If I understand you correctly, you want to know ...

OK, let me just repeat your question so everybody can hear it.

If I could just rephrase your question ...

The question is:	You reformulate to make it:	by:
negative <i>Isn't there a better solution?</i>	positive <i>What would be a better solution?</i>	leaving out negative words such as <i>no, never, none</i>
aggressive <i>Do you honestly believe we can get the contract?</i>	neutral <i>You're asking whether I think it is possible to get the contract.</i>	avoiding words which sound aggressive or have a negative meaning such as <i>honestly, really, disaster</i>

Asking for clarification

If you do not understand the question, politely ask the person to repeat or explain it.

I'm sorry. Could you repeat your question, please?

I'm afraid I didn't quite catch that.

I'm afraid I don't quite understand your question.

Avoiding giving an answer

Sometimes you may not want to answer a question, perhaps because it's the wrong time for it or the question is irrelevant. When avoiding giving an answer, make sure that your tone of voice is friendly and your reply is polite.

If you don't mind, I'd prefer not to discuss that today.

Perhaps we could deal with this after the presentation/at some other time.

I'm afraid that's not really what we're here to discuss today.

Admitting you don't know the answer

If you don't know the answer to a question, be honest and say so. Offer to find out or name a person who can answer the question.

Sorry, that's not my field. But I'm sure Peter Bott from Sales could answer your question.

I'm afraid I don't know the answer to your question, but I'll try to find out for you.

I'm afraid I'm not in a position to answer that. Perhaps Maria could help.

Dealing with interruptions

Sometimes you may be asked questions during the presentation, even if you have asked the audience to wait. Whereas some questions can and should be answered quickly (for example, when a participant hasn't understood something you've said), you might prefer to postpone unwelcome questions or comments.

If you don't mind, I'll deal with this question later in my presentation.

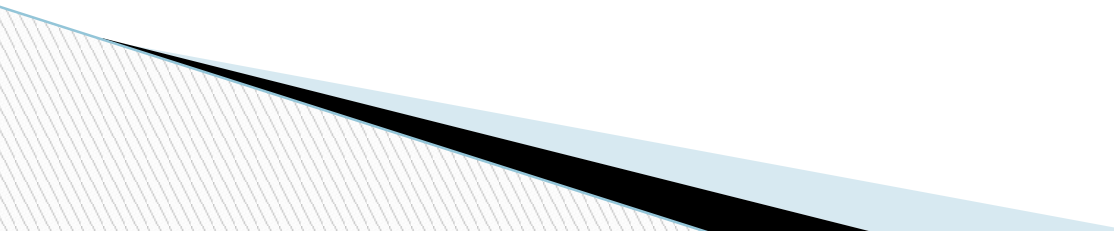
Can we get back to that a bit later?

Would you mind waiting with your questions until the question and answer session at the end?

After answering questions, especially those that require a longer answer, it is sometimes necessary to remind the audience what you were talking about before the interruption.

Before we continue, let me briefly summarize the points we were discussing.

So, back to what I was saying about ...



Think about how you might answer (or ask) generic questions

□ reason for research / contribution

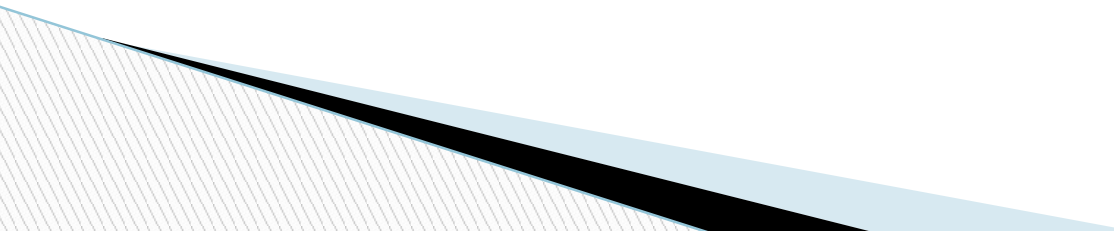
1. Why did you carry out this research? / What gap were you trying to fill?
2. Are there any other research groups working in this area? If so, are their findings similar to yours?
3. I am a little bit confused as to why you set out to do this research. Why did you decide to do this research? / I work in a very similar field to yours, but I am not really sure what exactly your contribution is.
4. Have you presented these findings before? / I found your talk fascinating. Thank you very much. I was just wondering whether this was the first time you have announced your findings, or have you presented them at other conferences or in papers?
5. What key papers did you read while preparing your research?
6. What did you enjoy most about doing your research? / What was the most enjoyable aspect of carrying out this research?

▣ importance of findings / limitations

7. What do you think is the importance of your findings? / I am curious to know where you think the real significance of your findings lies.

8. What do you think your key finding was? / You made a lot of good points during your presentation. I thought it was very interesting. But I am not completely clear about what you believe your key finding to be, or do you think that there is no one finding that stands out above the rest in terms of real relevance?

9. What are the limitations to your research? / What do you think are the limitations to your research?



▣ request for clarifications

10. Could you explain the diagram in the fourth slide? / I got a bit lost when you were explaining the diagram in one of your slides. Could you go back to it and explain it again please.
 11. What are your recommendations? / I am not entirely clear what your recommendations are.
 12. I missed your first slide. Can you just remind me where you work?
 13. I wasn't very clear about the true nature of your first conclusion, could you elucidate for me? / Could you tell me your first conclusion again?
 14. Could you repeat your main conclusion please? / I think many of us the audience were a little confused when you outlined your conclusions. Could you recap them for us?
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▣ **published papers and future work**

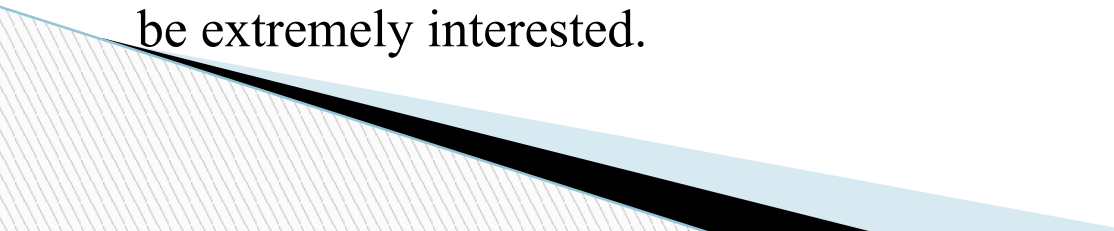
15. Have you published a paper on this topic? Are you going to talk more about it at tomorrow's workshop? / I was just wondering, given the high level of novelty of your work, which I would actually consider to be breaking new ground, whether you have actually published any papers on this topic? Also, will you be covering more of what you have said today in tomorrow's workshop?

16. What are you planning for the future? / Your work seems particularly pertinent given the current state of the art in this field. Do you have any idea what your next step will be in this fascinating path that you are following?

▣ **collaborations**

17. We are doing similar research. Would it be possible for us to see your full results? / I found your presentation extremely interesting and informative. At my lab we are working on a similar project. Would you be willing to share more of your results with us?

18. Are you looking for collaborators? / If you don't mind me asking, are you by any chance looking for collaborators to join your team? If so I would be extremely interested.



Thank you for attention!