

Discussion I

I. Introductory remarks

II. Useful phrases for the presenter

I. Introductory remarks

The purpose of this section is to give you **guidance in answering questions**, responding to comments, dealing with difficult questions or questions that you are not able to answer. Remember that it is common practice in English to **begin** your request, question, comment, agreement or disagreement **with a polite phrase**.

II. Useful phrases for the presenter

1. Inviting questions

(Are there) any questions?

We just have time for a few questions.

And now I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

I am ready for your questions now.

Your questions are welcome.

2. Dealing with questions

Saying you didn't understand (because you didn't hear what was said/because the speaker spoke too quickly or with a strange accent)

Would you speak up, please?

Would you speak a bit louder, please?

Could you possibly raise your voice?

Could you use the mike/microphone, please?

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

I'm sorry, could you repeat your question, please?

Asking for clarification

I'm not quite sure what you mean by that.

I'm afraid I don't quite follow.

So, if I understand correctly, you would like to know whether ...

Let me check I understand. Are you asking ...?

Does that answer your question?

Avoiding/delaying giving an answer

That's a very interesting question.

That's a difficult question to answer.

If you don't mind, could we discuss that in the coffee break?

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

I'm afraid we don't have enough time now, but we can discuss this in more detail after the presentation.

Seeking help from the audience

Has anyone else had a similar problem?

Would anyone else like to comment on that?

Saying you don't know

*Sorry, but I don't have the figures available at the moment.
Sorry, but I don't know that off the top of my head.
Sorry, that's not my field, but I'll put you in touch with Mr/Ms ...
That's an interesting question, I'll try to find out for you.*

Dealing with interruptions

*I'll deal with precisely that point later in my presentation.
Would you mind waiting until the question and answer session at the end?*

Concluding the Q & A session

*OK, we only have a few minutes left. Is there one last question?
I'm afraid that's all we've got time for. Thank you all very much for your attention.
I look forward to discussing some of your points in more detail during the coffee break.*

EXERCISES

I. Translation

1. Máme tak čas na několik otázek.
.....
2. Jsem teď připraven na vaše otázky.
.....
3. Nejsem si zcela jist, co tím míníte.
.....
4. Mohl byste prosím tu otázku zopakovat?
.....
5. To je velmi zajímavá otázka.
.....
6. Jestli vám to nevádí, mohli bychom tuto otázku prodiskutovat o přestávce na oběd.
.....
7. Lituji, ale nevím to z paměti.
.....
8. Lituji, ale to není můj obor.
.....
9. Zprostředkuji vám kontakt s prof. X
.....
10. Obávám se, že na víc nemáme čas (to je vše, na co máme čas). Děkuji vám za pozornost.
.....

II. What would you say in the following situations? Where possible, give two responses.

1. You want to encourage the conference participants to ask questions.
.....
.....
2. You didn't hear/understand what the participant said.
.....
.....
3. You didn't understand what the participant meant.

.....
.....
4. You need time to think how to answer.
.....
.....

5. You don't know the answer.
.....
.....

6. You don't like to be interrupted.
.....
.....

7. You want to bring the session to an end.
.....
.....

III. Make the following sentences sound more polite.

1. You can ask questions now.
.....

2. I can't hear you.
.....

3. Repeat your question.
.....

4. I don't follow you.
.....

5. I can't give you the figures at the moment.
.....

6. I can't remember everything.
.....

IV. Reformulate the sentences to make them acceptable.

You may think this

but you say it like this

1. I hate being asked questions.

2. Your accent is awful, I can't understand
a word of what you're saying.

3. Don't you know I hate interruptions?

4. If you want to ask a question,
you'd better do so now. I'm hungry.

5. Damn! Did you have to ask that?
I have no idea what to answer.

6. An impossible question!
Best to pass the buck to someone else.