

Lesson 9

Briefings

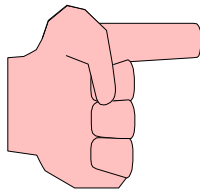
Overview

Introduction We informally exchange information every day, but much of it is either unstructured, opinionated, or imprecise. In a military setting, when the occasion calls for more rigorous means to impart or exchange information, we use formal briefings.

Decision makers are busy people, who need information and recommendations presented in rapid but complete form. Briefings are an ideal way to do that.

Purpose This lesson outlines procedures for preparing and delivering formal briefings.

Objectives After completing this lesson you should be able to--



- Describe features, types, and formats of military briefings.
- Prepare an information or decision briefing.
- Describe four methods of presentation.
- Make a text slide.
- Describe rehearsal techniques.
- Field and answer questions.
- Take follow-up actions.

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Military Briefings

- Introduction** Commanders and staffs at all levels use briefings to--
- Communicate in a precise way.
 - Exercise control.
 - Save time.
 - Get questions answered.
 - Make decisions.
 - Ensure coordinated action.

Criteria Unlike speeches or debates, briefings are straightforward presentations without embellishment. Briefings in a military setting should meet these criteria:

Criteria	Description
No rhetorical devices	No-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic statements. • Emotional gestures. • Hyperbole. • Anecdotes. • Jokes.
Concise	Concise and <i>brief</i> . Key information only. No-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lengthy introductions. • Convoluted explanations. • Comprehensive summaries.
To the point	No gimmicks or attention getters.
Objective	Objective presentation. The briefer avoids-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional appeals. • Unsolicited opinions. • Asking questions • Arguments. • Special pleading. • Pride of authorship. (Clarifying questions OK).
Businesslike	Businesslike but relaxed and enthusiastic.
Ethical	All pertinent facts and all sides of the issue presented. A biased presentation is both unethical and inexcusable.

Clarification We don't suggest briefings are stodgy affairs. They can be spirited, colorful, and well-choreographed presentations. At times, a dramatic statement or humorous remark may be appropriate. While briefers don't tell jokes, they do engage in humorous exchanges and repartee, especially in closely knit organizations.

We're simply stressing that the subject and information needs of the audience should be the focus, not the person presenting the material.

- Types of briefings** Military organizations use four types of briefings. They share common features but each is distinct.
- Mission briefing.
 - Staff briefing.
 - Information briefing.
 - Decision briefing.

Continued on next page

Military Briefings, Continued

Mission briefing	Purpose is to brief an operations plan or order for combat or deployment operations. The commander or a key staff officer outlines what is to take place or provides last-minute instructions.
Staff briefing	<p>A staff briefing is a forum for the staff and command group. Purpose is to--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exchange information among staff members.• Update the command group on status of operations.• Answer questions raised from previous briefings.• Discuss matters requiring coordination.• Announce or clarify decisions.• Assign taskings.• Present guidance. <p><u>Note:</u> A staff briefing <u>isn't</u> a forum to settle issues or present decisions for approval. Staffers usually discuss these matters before or after the briefing. The command group, however, may use information that flows in a staff briefing to make decisions on the spot.</p>
Information briefing	Purpose is to present routine, high priority, or complex information. It deals primarily with facts, and except for a short concluding statement, doesn't feature conclusions or recommendations.
Importance	<p>The information briefing is the foundation of all briefings so master its techniques first. This will develop mental discipline to present essential facts objectively without drawing conclusions.</p> <p>Ability to isolate facts will help you draw sound conclusions and prepare solid recommendations. You'll need these skills when preparing more difficult presentations, such as decision briefings.</p>
Decision briefing	Purpose is to get an answer or decision from the decision maker. It contains the same elements as a decision paper. A decision briefing represents an action officer's analysis of a problem and proposed solution. This type of briefing is the most difficult to deliver, so we focus on it in this lesson.
Formats	Briefings have no standard formats. Complexity of information, background of the audience, and local preferences will influence format. The next two maps suggest formats for information and decision briefings.

Information Briefing Formats

Introduction This map suggests formats for information briefings.

Note: We don't discuss formats for mission or staff briefings in this lesson. Mission briefings usually follow the sequence of an operations order. Staff briefings are similar to information briefings but less structured.

Information briefing The next three blocks describe the three phases of an information briefing:

Phase I: introduction The introductory phase of an information briefing contains these parts:

Greeting	If not introduced, state your name and organization.
Classification	Announce classification but only if the briefing is classified.
Purpose	Tell what you're briefing and why.
Approach	Summarize your approach to the presentation.
Procedure	Explain procedure if briefing includes a demonstration or tour.

Phase II: development The development phase of an information briefing contains these parts:

Key points	Discuss in logical sequence.
Transitions	Use transition statements as you move through topics.
Summaries	Summarize periodically if providing extensive information.

Phase III: conclusion The concluding phase of an information briefing contains these parts:

Statement	End with a short concluding statement.
Questions	Ask for and answer questions.
Next briefer	If someone will follow you, announce it.

Alternate formats for information briefings Consider using these informal, alternate formats in information briefings:


<p>D e s c r i p t i v e A p p r o a c h :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W h a t i s i t ? • W h a t d o e s i t d o ? • H o w d o e s i t d o i t ? <p>E v e n t s A p p r o a c h :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W h a t h a p p e n e d ? • W h y d i d i t h a p p e n ? <p>P r o g r e s s R e p o r t :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W h a t w a s p l a n n e d ? • S o w h a t ? • W h a t w a s a c c o m p l i s h e d ? • W h a t ' s n e x t ? 	
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Figure 9-1. Use these formats when appropriate

Decision Briefing Formats

Decision briefing The next three blocks describe three phases of a decision briefing.

Phase I: introduction The introductory phase of a decision briefing contains these parts:

Greeting	If not introduced, state your name and organization.
Classification	Announce classification but only if the briefing is classified.
Purpose	Tell the decision maker you'll be seeking a decision.
Problem	State the problem--the ways things are.
Recommendation	Recommend the solution to the decision maker. If the decision maker knows the problem and is ready to decide, it wouldn't be unusual for the briefing to end here.

Phase II: discussion The discussion phase of a decision briefing contains these parts:

Criteria	Define criteria: the way things ought to be.
Assumptions	State assumptions: things we can't verify.
Constraints	Identify constraints: conditions we can't change.
Alternatives	Lay out alternatives: ways that might solve the problem.
Comparison of alternatives	Present the clinching argument: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly discuss pro and cons of alternatives. • Recap nonconcurrences and considerations of them. • Display a decision matrix if it will clarify the issue.
Conclusion	Briefly summarize discussion and explain why you chose the recommendation you did.

Phase III: close The closing phase of a decision briefing contains these parts:

Questions	Ask for and answer questions.
Decision	Ask for the decision and, if necessary, explain why it's needed now. Use wording that lets the decision maker simply approve or disapprove the recommendation. <u>Note:</u> The decision paper and implementing documents awaiting signature should be in the readahead package given to the decision maker before the briefing.
Next briefer	If someone will follow you, announce it.

Alternate format If briefing one who really knows the problem, shorten the presentation:

- Define the problem.
- Explain why.
- Recommend a solution.
- Ask for a decision.

Preparation

- Introduction** This map describes five tasks to accomplish when preparing a briefing:
- Take care of details.
 - Analyze audience.
 - Gauge and allocate time.
 - Focus on key points.
 - Coordinate.
-

Take care of details Preparation involves many details, none of which you can let slide. If you don't do it right the first time, you won't likely get a chance to do it over. If your action is important or has high visibility, assume you'll have to brief it.

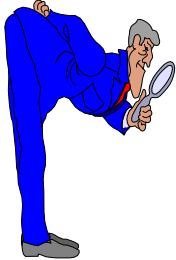
Use local SOP and a checklist to keep track of details:

✓	Briefing Checklist	Notes
	Type of briefing	
	Date, time, place	
	Audience background	
	Protocol requirements	
	Contentious issues	
	Likely questions to arise	
	Method of presentation	
	Rehearsal dates	
	Readahead packages	
	Prebriefs	
	Handouts	
	Slides	
	Coordination	
	Facilities and equipment	
	Refreshments	
	Follow-up actions	

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Preparation, Continued

Analyze audience



When assigned a briefing, ask these questions immediately:

- Who is my audience?
- What do they want?
- How much do they know about the subject?
- What is their background?
- What is their position on contentious issues to be raised?
- What are their hidden agendas?

Get this information from audience members, if possible. If not, get it from your information network or staffers who work with the people involved.

Consider background of outsiders

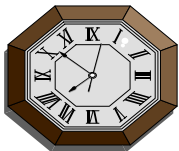
If briefing outsiders unfamiliar with the subject, take these measures:

- Adjust your presentation to their level of understanding.
 - Limit scope and detail of the subject.
 - Don't use jargon, acronyms, or technical terms.
-

Start drafting slides

If preparing a decision paper you'll also brief, don't wait until you've finished the paper before starting on the briefing. Start drafting slides while writing the paper. This will help to structure both paper and briefing.

Gauge and allocate time



To gauge and allocate time, follow these guidelines:

- Mentally rehearse to estimate time required.
 - Confirm with a live rehearsal.
 - Request a block of time from the tasking authority (may have to negotiate).
 - Adjust presentation to the time allotted.
 - Also prepare a condensed version, should your time get cut at the last minute.
-

Follow rules of thumb

To gauge and allocate time, follow these rules of thumb:

- Allow about two minutes for presentation of each slide.
 - Remember: the higher the rank of the audience, the shorter the briefing. When briefing a flag officer or SES, expect no more than thirty minutes.
 - Allow one-third of allotted time for interruptions and questions.
-

Be flexible

Officials often run behind schedule. Your decision briefing could get cut from thirty minutes to five. If that happens, just show three slides and give the decision maker a hard copy of the full briefing.

- Statement of the problem.
 - Recommendation.
 - Alternatives considered.
-

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Preparation, Continued

Focus on key points



Typically you'll have more information than time so focus on key points and ways to present them. You're only going to tell your audience what they need to know--not all you know or how you feel about the topic.

If they want more they'll ask for it--that's why you'll have backup slides on hand. In a decision paper you put details in the tabs--do the same for your briefing with backup slides. Limit briefing content to the tip of the iceberg:

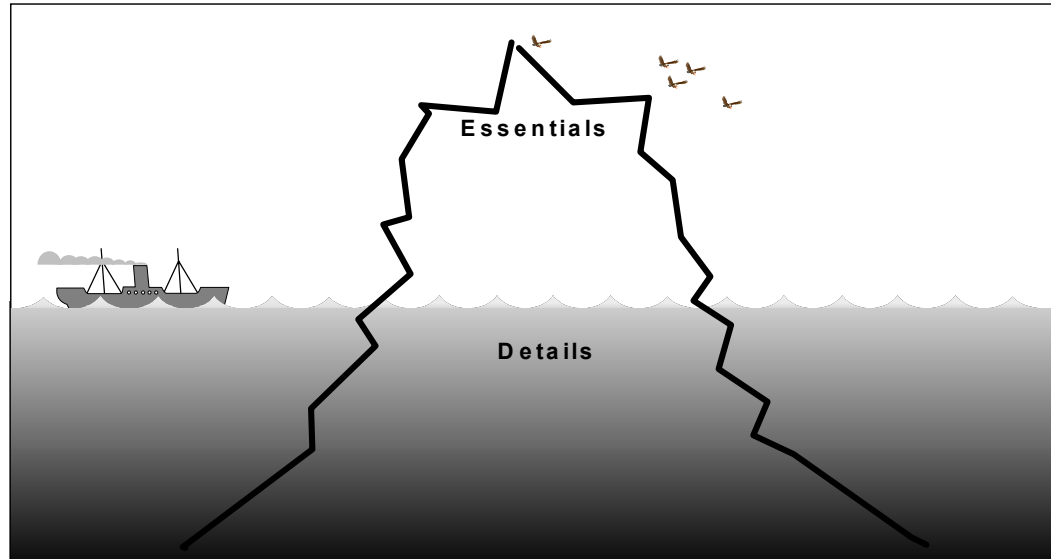
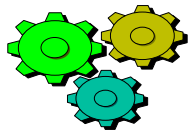


Figure 9-2. The briefing iceberg

Coordinate



As with any action affecting others, touch base immediately. This is especially important in decision briefings. Tell key players what you intend to brief--it's part of good staff work. Don't wait until the briefing to "surprise" everyone.

Advantages:

- The announced decision merely ratifies what people had expected all along.
- Helps make the briefing *brief*. Keeping players informed makes it unnecessary to discuss the subject extensively in the briefing arena.

Keep the briefing brief

To keep the briefing *brief*--

- Pre-brief the key players.
- A few days before the briefing, send readaheads to the audience.

Note: Readheads are intended to prepare your audience for the briefing. But don't be surprised if they arrive unprepared--most people don't read readheads.

Methods of Presentation

Introduction Depending on experience and speaking ability, there are four ways to make an oral presentation:

- Speak impromptu.
- Read from a manuscript.
- Speak from memory.
- Speak extemporaneously.

Speak impromptu With little or no preparation, one delivers a complete, well-organized presentation on the spot. Only gifted and experienced speakers can effectively present impromptu briefings.

Read from a manuscript One simply reads from a prepared manuscript, word for word:

Advantages:

- Ensures key information won't be omitted.
- Imparts exact definitions and precise phrasing, if these are important.
- Compensates for lack of preparation and rehearsal time.
- Can make a presentation without being completely informed on the subject.
- Can be incorporated into a *canned* briefing that anyone can present.

Disadvantages:

- Unless you're a talented speaker, reading words aloud sounds dull. Words may look good on paper but may not sound good when read aloud.
- You'll lose credibility. The audience may think you're parroting words you know nothing about. They'll feel insulted if you read something they could have just as well read themselves.

Speak from memory One speaks from memory. Memorized presentations are as bad as reading from a script. They sound stilted and are risky--could lose memory in the middle of a presentation.

However, to build confidence and control nervousness it's a good idea to memorize--

- Outline of the presentation.
- Opening statement.
- Closing statement.

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Methods of Presentation, Continued

Speak extemporaneously

One speaks from an outline and notes as cues (no script, no memorization). This results in a fresh and original presentation, which captures the vigor of the spoken word.

The preferred way

Speaking extemporaneously is the preferred way to brief and far better than reading a script or memorizing. However, it requires--

- Well-developed speaking skills.
 - Subject-matter expertise.
 - Thorough preparation.
 - Rehearsals.
 - Frequent presentation.
-

Steps

To prepare an extemporaneous presentation, follow these steps:

Step	Action
1	Prepare written outline of remarks.
2	Orally draft remarks into a tape recorder.
3	Write a manuscript from playback tape.
4	Polish draft manuscript.
5	Reduce manuscript back to outline form.
6	Use manuscript and outline to write phrases on cards.
7	Rehearse to learn which words flow smoothest. Afterwards, a glance at notes will be all you need to jog your memory.

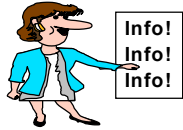
Use short and simple words

Whichever method of presentation chosen, use short and simple words the audience will readily understand.

Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air.
--1 Corinthians 14:9

Visual Aids

Introduction



Used properly, visual aids are a briefer's best friend. They--

- Simplify presentation.
- Promote understanding.
- Add interest.
- Enhance showmanship.

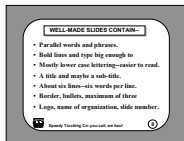
Examples

Examples of visual aids:

- Equipment displays.
- Demonstrations.
- Models.
- Flip chart and easel.
- Video tapes.
- Slides.

Note: Remember, you as the briefer are also a visual aid. If well groomed and well prepared, you'll be the most effective visual aid in your presentation.

Slides



In this lesson we'll focus on slides, the most common visual aid used in briefings. Using slides in a presentation--

- Increases retention.
- Simplifies presentation of complex data.
- Helps briefer to remember key points.
- Helps to keep the briefing *brief*.
- Contributes to a professional image.

Content of slides

To be quickly understood, slides must have minimal content and plenty of *white space*. Slides aim at the visual portion of the brain and will only confuse viewers if crammed with data. Both text and graphics on slides should be simply designed with little annotation.

Less is more

A slide should not be self-explanatory. If it is, it probably has too much information. A slide's value lies in its simplicity (less is more). The briefer makes the slide meaningful by supplementing it with spoken words.

No time for busy slides

A complicated or busy slide may be acceptable in a written report, since readers have time to study it. But they don't have time to study complicated data or fathom a busy slide in a fast-paced briefing.

Whether designed for a briefing or written report, no graphic should be so elaborate that it becomes an end in itself and obscures the message.

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Visual Aids, Continued

Example

This is an example of a simple slide that sends a clear message:

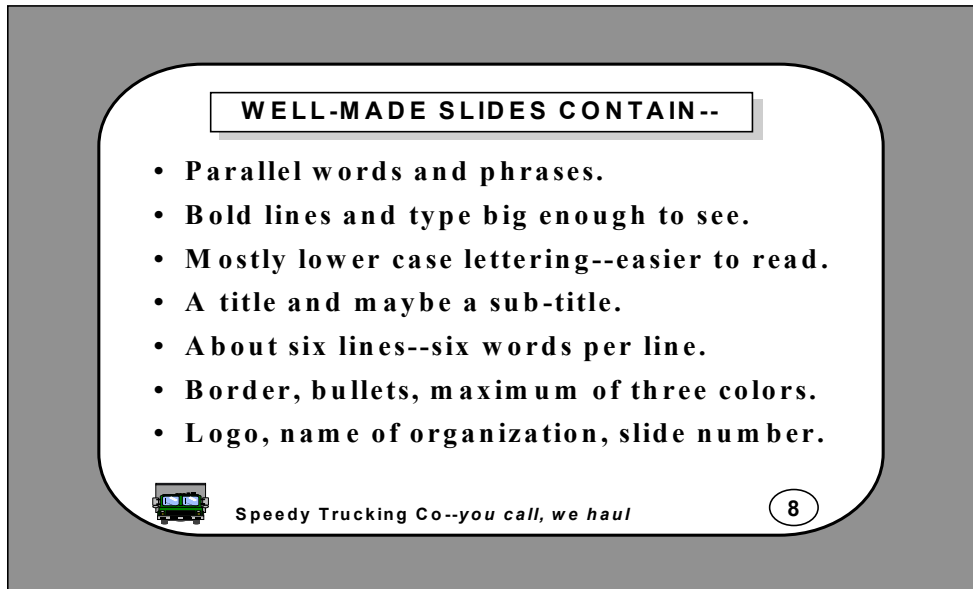


Figure 9-3. Sample slide

Numbering slides

Numbering each slide makes it easier to retrieve if someone wants to see it again later in the presentation. However, don't number slides if you vary their sequence in other presentations.

Rules

To show slides properly, follow these rules:

Don't	Do
Disrupt presentation to handle slides.	Practice handling slides and gauging time needed to read them. Also use an assistant to flip slides.
Talk at the screen.	If referring to the screen, stand aside, use a pointer, and put it down when done.
Block audience's view.	Give the audience a clear view of screen.
Change slides too quickly.	Give the audience time to read slides.
Read slide to the audience.	Read the slide silently or watch to see if the audience has finished reading. Paraphrase key points for emphasis.
Show a complicated slide and give a complicated explanation of it.	Make the slide simple and fill it out with concise spoken words.
Use slides as gimmicks or crutches.	Show only necessary slides.
Leave projector on with blank screen.	Turn off projector or use a cover slide.

Rehearsals

- Introduction** Professional performers always rehearse before the show goes on. Rehearsals--
- Refine your presentation in a less-threatening, informal environment.
 - Build self-confidence, which helps to control nervousness.
 - Provide feedback from a live audience. Without feedback, a briefer will stumble blindly into a presentation and wonder what went wrong.

Illustration of rehearsal feedback loop:

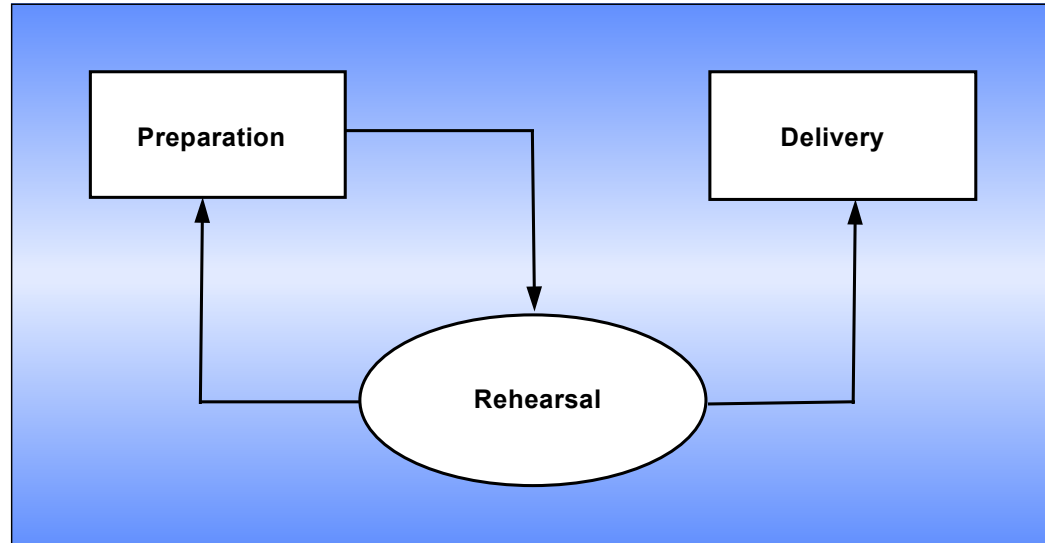


Figure 9-4. Rehearse to get feedback on your presentation

Mental rehearsal

- Mentally rehearse to--
- Visualize how you should look and sound to the audience.
 - Define key points.
 - Organize remarks.
 - Develop visual aids.

Live rehearsals

- Best insights come from reviews of a live audience. Get some good listeners but give them only enough background to clarify your intent. Your audience could be peers at work or a family member at home. Rehearse at least twice:
- First time to find mistakes in content or delivery.
 - Second time to fix mistakes and refine presentation.

Try to do "dress rehearsals." Use the same visual aids, equipment, and location you'll use in the actual briefing.

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Rehearsals, Continued

Critics

Critics can challenge your presentation and reveal how you sound, look, and move--all part of showmanship. Critics should--

- Play the role of a real audience but hold comments until you finish.
- Use a checklist to note content and delivery.
- Time your presentation.

Tip: Taping rehearsals (audio or audio-visual) provides excellent feedback; you hear or see yourself as you are and can confirm critics' comments.

Rehearsal time

Rehearsals tend to go faster than the actual briefing, so they should run shorter than the allotted time.

Final check

During rehearsals use a checklist to note things that must be available and in working order. On the day of the briefing check these items again:

- Projector plus spare bulbs.
 - Extension cords.
 - Acoustics.
 - Lighting and ventilation.
 - Name placards.
 - Seating arrangements.
-

Failure to check

This is what can happen if you fail to make a final check:



Figure 9-5. Starting off on the wrong foot

Delivery

Introduction This map explains how to deliver a briefing that's believable.

First twenty seconds



During the first twenty seconds everyone in the room will form an opinion about you. First impressions are lasting. Before you open your mouth, people will start to judge you. Some will look for chinks in your armor.

They'll appraise your entry, appearance, and even the quality of your first slide. They'll look for signs to confirm their first impressions, rather than reasons to change them. After looking you over, they'll listen to your first words and use them to judge your credibility.

Believability While decision makers are influenced by the merits of the briefing, they're also influenced by your delivery. A convincing stage presence makes you believable. If they believe in you, they're more apt to believe in what you show and tell them.

No apologies Never begin by apologizing because you didn't have time to prepare or don't know much about the subject. This--

- Makes you look irresponsible.
- Ruins credibility.
- Builds resentment.

Body language Body language can be more important than spoken words and visual aids. It can make or break a presentation. Good body language makes words ring with meaning; poor body language weakens them, no matter how eloquently spoken.

To use body language to advantage, follow these rules:

Don't	Do
Stand rigidly.	Stand erect but relaxed.
Slouch or lean on the podium.	Maintain upright posture.
Exaggerate gestures.	Use normal gestures.
Frown.	Smile.

Tip: Review *Body Language* in Lesson 6, pages 6-9 through 6-11.

Appearance Appearance counts! Obviously one should appear alert, prepared, confident, well groomed, and well dressed. For--

... the apparel oft proclaims the man ...
Hamlet--Shakespeare

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Delivery, Continued

Inappropriate appearance Don't make this kind of first impression:

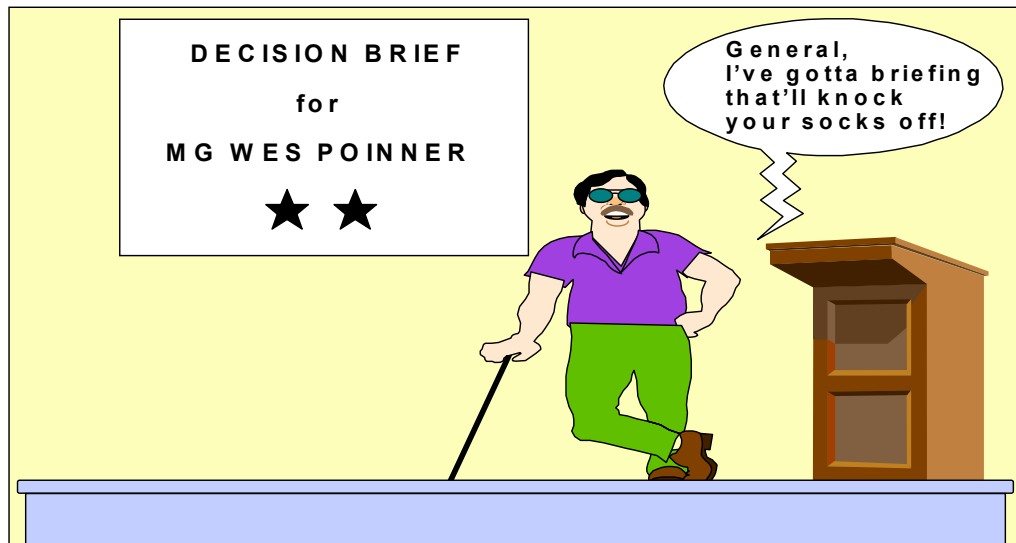


Figure 9-6. Inappropriate appearance, body language, remarks

Eye contact

Eye contact forms a momentary bond between two people. It conveys interest, trust, and feelings. Right or wrong, people consider it a sign of fear or dishonesty if you can't look them in the eye.

Make momentary eye contact with everyone in the audience but focus on the decision maker and other *heavies* present. However, if briefing a large audience in a large auditorium, it's impossible to make eye contact with everyone. Instead, look at small groups of people spread throughout the auditorium.

Audience reaction

Expect various audience reactions, from warm acceptance to outright rejection. Some officials will quietly tolerate slips, while others will unmercifully attack you.

If attacked, keep cool. Don't complain or *explain*:

- Complaining betrays inability to do anything about the situation.
- Explaining won't impress detractors and isn't necessary with friends.

If asked, then explain; but don't volunteer explanations to a hostile audience.

Defusing hostility

When encountering hostile remarks or questions, don't answer in kind or engage in a heated exchange. Simply acknowledge the remark and move to your next point. If the remark merits a reply, couch it in milder words:

Example of a hostile remark: "That's the dumbest thing I ever heard of."

Example of a reply: "We know you're concerned about the plan's feasibility and will show you the safeguards built into it."

Fielding Questions and Giving Answers

- Introduction** Questions are one of the most important parts of a briefing:
- They let you discuss points you didn't have room for in the briefing.
 - They also give feedback on how well you're communicating.

Fielding To field questions, follow these guidelines:

Guideline	Description
Anticipate	Anticipate likely questions and prepare responses.
Rehearse	Practice fielding and answering possible questions.
Be courteous	Be courteous--there are no dumb questions. <u>Don't</u> patronize the questioner with rejoinders such as-- "I'm glad you asked that question." "That's a good question."
Listen	Listen carefully to the question.
Look at 'em	Maintain eye contact with the questioner.
Minimize interruptions	If someone interrupts with a question, answer briefly and continue--keep the briefing on track.
Defer questions	If a question concerns a point you'll cover later, defer it. When reaching that point in your briefing, refer to the earlier question and answer it.
Clarify the question	If you don't understand the question-- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the person to restate it.• Rephrase it to confirm understanding.
Ask no questions	<u>Don't</u> ask questions--only to clarify those from the audience.

Answering To answer questions, follow these guidelines:

Guideline	Description
Short	Keep answers short and simple.
Candor	If stumped by a question, admit it and offer to find the answer.
Pauses	Avoid quick <i>party line</i> answers; instead, pause to show you've given some thought to the question.
Restraint	Answer the question and stop. People who talk too much fall into the trap of saying things they can't back up.
Repeating questions	Sometimes you may repeat a question so the audience can hear it. In this situation-- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always repeat a positive question.• <u>Never</u> repeat a hostile question. Rephrase it in milder terms.
Mouthpiece	If you're not an expert, bring one along to serve as your mouthpiece.

Closing

Introduction This map discusses how to close a briefing and take follow-up actions.

Getting a decision Don't be bashful--you're there to get a decision, so ask for it. If you don't understand the decision, ask for clarification immediately.

Last slide Make your last slide a summary of the decision and its implementing tasks. To ensure everyone understands, point to it when discussing the decision and its implications. Or you may miss a key point and the final decision may be flawed.*

*Source: Perry M. Smith (MG, USAF, Ret.), *Assignment: Pentagon: The Insider's Guide to the Potomac Puzzle Palace*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Brassey's [US], 1993) 188.

Closing statement Don't end with a lengthy summary or a strong dramatic statement, as these are inappropriate for military briefings. To close, use a short pointed statement:
Information briefing: General Lee, this ends my briefing; are there any questions?
Decision briefing: General Grant, may we have your decision?

Early decisions A decision maker may approve your recommendation before you've finished, so it's pointless to carry on. Simply note the decision, end the briefing, and start following up. Don't talk past the decision or ramble on.

Follow-up Follow up or the decision may quickly lose impact. Until it's implemented, it simply remains as a good intention. To capture what occurred and note those responsible for follow-up actions, prepare a memorandum for record (MFR).

Guidelines To prepare an MFR, follow these guidelines:

Guideline	Description
Record events	Record what took place and those responsible for tasks.
Clarify discussion	If there's doubt about the decision maker's intent or a need for further discussion, take these actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with action-officer attendees to clarify who said what.• Prepare a draft MFR and submit it for approval or correction.
Distribute copies	Distribute copies of the final MFR to interested parties. They need not comment unless they disagree. If they do, work it out. If they don't, the MFR stands.

Lesson Summary

Key points		This table summarizes key points of lesson maps or information blocks:											
Topic	Summary		Page										
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe features, types, formats of military briefings. Prepare an information or decision briefing. Describe four methods of presentation. Make a text slide. Describe rehearsal techniques. Field and answer questions. Take follow-up actions. 												
Military briefings-- criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No rhetorical devices. Concise. To the point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective. Businesslike. Ethical. 	9-2										
Types of briefings	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Types</th> <th>Purpose</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Mission briefing.</td> <td>Brief an operations order.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Information briefing.</td> <td>Present information.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staff briefing.</td> <td>Exchange information.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Decision briefing.</td> <td>Get a decision.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Types	Purpose	Mission briefing.	Brief an operations order.	Information briefing.	Present information.	Staff briefing.	Exchange information.	Decision briefing.	Get a decision.	9-3 thru 9-5
	Types	Purpose											
	Mission briefing.	Brief an operations order.											
	Information briefing.	Present information.											
	Staff briefing.	Exchange information.											
Decision briefing.	Get a decision.												
Information briefing is the foundation of all briefings.													
Preparation: details													
Take care of details. If you don't do it right the first time, you won't likely get a chance to do it over. Use a checklist.													
Analyze audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is my audience, and what do they want? What is their position on contentious issues? 		9-7										
Gauge and allocate time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentally rehearse to estimate time required. Confirm with a live rehearsal. 		9-7										
Follow rules of thumb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two minutes per slide. One-third of time for interruptions and questions. 		9-7										
Key points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell what they need to know, <u>not</u> what you know or feel. If they want more, use backup slides. 		9-8										
Coordinate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Touch base with key players immediately. <u>Don't</u> wait until the briefing to <i>surprise</i> the decision maker. Keep players informed on how action is unfolding. 		9-8										
Speak impromptu	Able to speak on-the-spot with little or no preparation. Only gifted speakers can do this.		9-9										
Read from a manuscript	Ensures speaker won't omit key information. But sounds dull and risks loss of credibility.		9-9										
Speak from memory	As bad as reading from script. Sounds stilted and is risky--may lose memory in the middle of presentation.		9-9										

Continued on next page

Lesson Summary, Continued

Key points (continued)		
Topic	Summary	Page
Speak extemporaneously	Speak naturally from an outline and notes. Best way--beats reading from a script or memorizing. Follow seven-step procedure to prepare an extemporaneous briefing.	9-10
Visual aids	Briefer's best friend. Briefer is also a visual aid. Be well groomed.	9-11
Slides	Minimal content, plenty of <i>white space</i> . Should <u>not</u> be self-explanatory.	9-11
Live rehearsals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First time to find mistakes in content or delivery. • Second time to fix mistakes and refine presentation. 	9-13
Final check:	During rehearsals check things that must be available and in working order. On the day of the briefing, check again.	9-14
Delivery	Audience will look for signs to confirm first impressions, rather than reasons to change them. <u>Never</u> start off by apologizing for lack of preparation or lack of knowledge about the subject.	9-15
Body language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be more important than spoken words or visual aids. • If negative, turns off audience in spite of eloquent words. 	9-15
Eye contact	Make momentary eye contact with every member of the audience but focus on the decision maker and other <i>heavies</i> .	9-16
Audience reaction	If attacked, keep cool. <u>Don't</u> complain or explain.	9-16
Defusing hostility	<u>Don't</u> reply to hostile remarks or questions in kind. If you must reply, use milder words.	9-16
Fielding questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate likely questions. • Rehearse possible answers. • Show courtesy to questioner. • Listen carefully. • Maintain eye contact. • Clarify question if required. • Minimize interruptions. • Defer questions to be covered later. • <u>Don't</u> ask questions. 	9-17
Answering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep answers short and simple. • If stumped by a question, admit it and offer to find the answer. • <u>Don't</u> give quick replies. • Answer, then stop. • If not an expert, bring one along to serve as your mouthpiece. 	9-17
Getting a decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember to ask for a decision. • If you don't understand the decision, ask for a clarification. • Use a summary slide to show decision's key points and actions. 	9-18
Early decisions	If you get a decision before you've finished briefing, note the decision, end the briefing, and start follow-up actions.	9-18
Follow-up	After the briefing, prepare a MFR to record what took place and those responsible for follow-up actions.	9-18

Lesson 9--End-of-Lesson Exercises

Instructions Select best answer or answers.

1. Briefings are an ideal way to impart or exchange information, because they--
 - a. Add rigor to the presentation of information.
 - b. Save time for decision makers.
 - c. Communicate information in a precise way.
 - d. Enable commanders to exercise control.

 2. Purpose of a staff briefing is to--
 - a. Debate issues.
 - b. Present decisions for approval.
 - c. Settle disputes.
 - d. Discuss matters requiring coordination.

 3. Announce a briefing's classification only when--
 - a. It's classified.
 - b. It's unclassified.
 - c. Giving a decision briefing.
 - d. Briefing VIPs.

 4. When presenting a decision briefing, invite questions from the audience--
 - a. In your introduction.
 - b. After asking for the decision.
 - c. Throughout the briefing.
 - d. After concluding the discussion phase of the briefing.

 5. Assume you'll have to prepare a briefing if an action--
 - a. Is important.
 - b. Has high visibility.
 - c. Is routine.
 - d. Has low visibility.
-

Continued on next page

Lesson 9--End-of-Lesson Exercises, Continued

6. When briefing outsiders who are unfamiliar with your organization or subject--
 - a. Adjust the presentation to their level of understanding.
 - b. Limit scope and detail of subject.
 - c. Don't use jargon, acronyms, or technical terms.
 - d. Treat them no differently than you would if briefing insiders.

 7. In a decision paper you put the details at TABS. In a decision briefing put details in your--
 - a. Briefing handouts.
 - b. In your briefing slides.
 - c. Backup slides.
 - d. Oral presentation.

 8. Why coordinate a decision briefing with key players before formally presenting it?
 - a. Avoids surprises--people know what to expect.
 - b. To get ideas on how to organize your presentation.
 - c. Helps keep the briefing *brief*--don't have to discuss subject extensively at the briefing.
 - d. It's part of good staff work.

 9. An extemporaneous presentation is one in which the speaker--
 - a. Speaks from memory alone.
 - b. Reads from a manuscript.
 - c. Makes an on-the-spot presentation with no preparation.
 - d. Speaks from an outline and notes.

 10. Which can be the most effective visual aid in a briefing?
 - a. Slides.
 - b. Video tapes.
 - c. The briefer.
 - d. Demonstrations.

 11. To be quickly understood, slides must have--
 - a. Minimum content.
 - b. Plenty of white space.
 - c. Maximum content.
 - d. Little white space.
-

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Lesson 9--End-of-Lesson Exercises, Continued

12. A slide should--
- Need no explanation by the briefer.
 - Be filled with data.
 - Be simple.
 - Be supplemented with the speaker's words.
-
13. Rehearsals--
- Enable one to refine presentation in a less-threatening, informal environment.
 - Build self-confidence, which helps to control nervousness.
 - Enable one to get feedback from a live audience.
 - Aren't necessary for experienced speakers.
-
14. After the audience has formed a first impression of you as a briefer, they will look for--
- Signs to confirm their first impressions.
 - Reasons to change their first impressions.
-
15. If you had little time to prepare or lack expertise, then--
- Begin the briefing by apologizing to the audience for lack of preparation.
 - Do the best you can to prepare, simplify the presentation, and deliver the briefing.
-
16. If the audience attacks you--
- Don't complain--shows inability to influence the situation.
 - Defend yourself--offer to give a thorough explanation.
 - Don't accept it--counterattack.
 - Don't *explain*--won't impress detractors.
-
17. When briefing, how should you handle a question you'll cover later in the presentation?
- Answer the question immediately.
 - Defer the question until later.
-
18. Select reasons for preparing a memorandum for record after a briefing.
- Capture what occurred.
 - Note those responsible for follow-up actions.
 - To confirm the decision.
 - To remind the decision maker of his decision.
-

Lesson 9--Answer Key and Feedback

Instructions Correct choices are highlighted.

1. Briefings are an ideal way to impart or exchange information, because they--
- a. **Add rigor to the presentation of information.**
 - b. Save time for decision makers.
 - c. Communicate information in a precise way.
 - d. **Enable commanders to exercise control.**

(Page 9-1)

2. Purpose of a staff briefing is to--
- a. Debate issues.
 - b. Present decisions for approval.
 - c. Settle disputes.
 - d. **Discuss matters requiring coordination.**

(Page 9-3) *Choices a and c are incorrect. Debate and settle issues before or after the briefing. Choice b is incorrect. Proposed decisions are presented in decision briefings.*

3. Announce a briefing's classification only when--
- a. **It's classified.**
 - b. It's unclassified.
 - c. Giving a decision briefing.
 - d. Briefing VIPs.

(Pages 9-4 and 9-5)

4. When presenting a decision briefing, invite questions from the audience--
- a. In your introduction.
 - b. After asking for the decision.
 - c. Throughout the briefing.
 - d. **After concluding the discussion phase of the briefing.**

(Page 9-5)

Continued on next page

Lesson 9--Answer Key and Feedback, Continued

5. Assume you'll have to prepare a briefing if an action--
- Is important.**
 - Has high visibility.**
 - Is routine.
 - Has low visibility.

(Page 9-6)

6. When briefing outsiders who are unfamiliar with your organization or subject--
- Adjust the presentation to their level of understanding.**
 - Limit scope and detail of subject.**
 - Don't use jargon, acronyms, or technical terms.**
 - Treat them no differently than you would if briefing insiders.

(Page 9-7)

7. In a decision paper you put the details at TABS. In a decision briefing put details in your--
- Briefing handouts.
 - In your briefing slides.
 - Backup slides.**
 - Oral presentation.

(Page 9-8) *Brief the key points and put the details in backup slides.*

8. Why coordinate a decision briefing with key players before formally presenting it?
- Avoids surprises--people know what to expect.**
 - To get ideas on how to organize your presentation.
 - Helps keep the briefing brief--don't have to discuss subject extensively at the briefing.**
 - It's part of good staff work.**

(Page 9-8) *Choice b is incorrect. You should have done this much earlier.*

9. An extemporaneous presentation is one in which the speaker--
- Speaks from memory alone.
 - Reads from a manuscript.
 - Makes an on-the-spot presentation with no preparation.
 - Speaks from an outline and notes.**

(Page 9-10) *This is the preferred way to speak.*

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Lesson 9--Answer Key and Feedback, Continued

10. Which can be the most effective visual aid in a briefing?
- Slides.
 - Video tapes.
 - The briefer.**
 - Demonstrations.

(Page 9-11)

11. To be quickly understood, slides must have--
- Minimum content.**
 - Plenty of white space.**
 - Maximum content.
 - Little white space.

(Page 9-11) *Busy slides confuse viewers.*

12. A slide should--
- Need no explanation by the briefer.
 - Be filled with data.
 - Be simple.**
 - Be supplemented with the speaker's words.**

(Page 9-11) *Remember, less is more.*

13. Rehearsals--
- Enable one to refine presentation in a less-threatening, informal environment.**
 - Build self-confidence, which helps to control nervousness.**
 - Enable one to get feedback from a live audience.**
 - Aren't necessary for experienced speakers.

(Page 9-13) *Professional performers always rehearse before the show goes on.*

14. After the audience has formed a first impression of you as a briefer, they will look for--
- Signs to confirm their first impressions.**
 - Reasons to change their first impressions.

(Page 9-15) *First impressions are lasting.*

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Lesson 9--Answer Key and Feedback, Continued

15. If you had little time to prepare or lack expertise, then--
- Begin the briefing by apologizing to the audience for lack of preparation.
 - Do the best you can to prepare, simplify the presentation, and deliver the briefing.**
- (Page 9-15) *Never begin a briefing by apologizing for lack of preparation--makes you look irresponsible.*
-

16. If the audience attacks you--
- Don't complain--shows inability to influence the situation.**
 - Defend yourself--offer to give a thorough explanation.
 - Don't accept it--counterattack.
 - Don't explain--won't impress detractors.**
- (Page 9-16) *Don't complain, don't explain.*
-

17. When briefing, how should you handle a question you'll cover later in the presentation?
- Answer the question immediately.
 - Defer the question until later.**
- (Page 9-17)
-

18. Select reasons for preparing a memorandum for record after a briefing.
- Capture what occurred.**
 - Note those responsible for follow-up actions.**
 - To confirm the decision.**
 - To remind the decision maker of his decision.
- (Page 9-18)
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