Introduction to the Second Edition

Giving Academic Presentations is a speaking text specifically written to prepare university-level students to make presentations in an academic setting. To carry out this goal, the text addresses a range of skills and strategies that speakers of academic English need to become successful presenters. It provides information and hands-on tasks designed to enhance a speaker's performance and thereby maximize communication with members of the audience–faculty, fellow students, and colleagues.

Giving Academic Presentations was primarily written for advanced non-native speakers of English who are attending or will attend a university-level academic program in English and who are expected, as part of their studies, to make academic presentations. The text was classroom-tested primarily with graduate students but has also been used successfully with undergraduates. The materials were designed for presenters from a range of academic fields; discipline-specific material has been excluded. Instructors who work with international students planning to become teaching assistants (TAs) or graduate student instructors (GSIs) may also wish to consider using this book. While the text does not address teacher-student classroom interaction, it does focus on a number of skills needed for good teaching. It is, therefore, best used before a more advanced TA/GSI training course. For suggestions for using the text with pre-TAs/GSIs, see the Notes to the Instructor (available online).

Giving Academic Presentations can also be successfully used with native speakers. However, since it was written with non-native speakers in mind, instructors may have to add, eliminate, or adapt materials through a process of trial and error. Suggestions for using the text with native speakers are provided in the Notes to the Instructor (available online).

This textbook teaches skills as diverse as choosing an appropriate topic, creating effective visuals, and designing a speech opening. While some aspects of speech giving are emphasized, such as awareness and use of common speech types and organizational strategies, one important aim of the text is to make presenters aware that giving an effective presentation requires mastery of a broad range of skills.
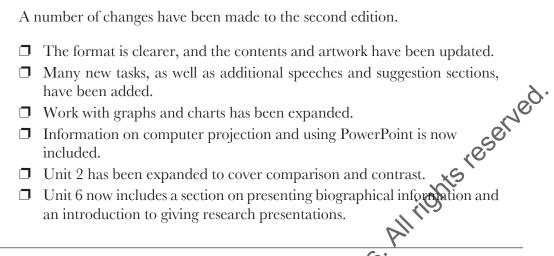
The diversity of skills included in *Giving Academic Presentations* is reflected in a summary of its contents:

❒ analysis of speeches to help speakers become more aware of the thought processes involved in speech planning

❒ examination of major speech types and accompanying organizational strategies

❒ discussion of connecting devices and how they can successfully enhance the flow of a speech

❒ suggestions for developing speech introductions, including designing openers and choosing and organizing introductory material

❒ discussion of the importance of speech overviews and suggestions for designing overviews and visuals to accompany them

❒ ways to improve non-verbal behavior

❒ suggestions for speaker-listener interaction including

  ▪ checking for understanding

  ▪ requesting questions from the audience

  ▪ preparing for and responding to questions from the audience

  ▪ interrupting the speaker to ask questions or request clarification

❒ discussion of the importance of using evidence in academic speaking and the advantage of using certain types of evidence

❒ examination of ways to qualify claims and strategies to make weaker or stronger claims

❒ definition and discussion of fillers

❒ advice on preparing visuals using PowerPoint slides

❒ presentation of practical information about when and how to use visuals

❒ pronunciation work on pausing, stress, and intonation

❒ practical advice about preparing and practicing speeches

❒ opportunities for presenters to evaluate their own and others' work

The text is organized into six units, each highlighting a different speech type. A typical unit begins with a brief introduction that explains the rationale for choosing the speech type and its relevance to users of the text. Each unit includes one or more speeches to be analyzed and questions to guide the discussion. Answers to the questions are then briefly summarized. Other sections of each unit concentrate on specific speech-making skills. The final task in each unit is the presentation itself. Evaluation sheets are included. Each unit except Unit 6 contains pronunciation practice.

A number of changes have been made to the second edition.

- ❐ The format is clearer, and the contents and artwork have been updated.
- ❐ Many new tasks, as well as additional speeches and suggestion sections, have been added.
- ❐ Work with graphs and charts has been expanded.
- ❐ Information on computer projection and using PowerPoint is now included.
- ❐ Unit 2 has been expanded to cover comparison and contrast.
- ❐ Unit 6 now includes a section on presenting biographical information and an introduction to giving research presentations.

The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE)

Sections of the text, especially those related to improving speaker-listener interaction, incorporate examples from the University of Michigan English Language Institute's collection of academic spoken English, *the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE)* (R. C. Simpson, S. L. Briggs, J. Owens, and J. M. Swales, compilers. 1999—2000. The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English. Ann Arbor, MI. The Regents of the University of Michigan. Reproduced with permission of MICASE). MICASE contains speech events in various academic settings, including lectures, student and faculty panels, and one-on-one discussions. The first of its kind in the United States, this corpus is extremely useful for textbook writers because it contains language that speakers of academic English have actually spoken. Information about MICASE and currently available transcripts are available at www.elicorpora.info/.

Notes to the Instructor

The Notes to the Instructor are available online at www.press.umich.edu/elt/tm/ for use with this text. It offers both general advice on how to use the text and specific suggestions for using material in each unit. Suggestions for additional instructor-designed activities are also included.

Comments and feedback on the text can be sent to susanrei@umich.edu.