

A Short Guide to the

ORAL
PRESENTATION

IN ENGLISH

*How to get started, how to conclude, and
suggestions for what to do in between*

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CONTENTS

1. Getting Started

- 1.1 Greeting the audience – Calling for attention
- 1.2 Introducing yourself and your company
- 1.3 Stating the purpose of the talk – Giving a short introduction
- 1.4 The overview – Presenting the structure of the talk

2. The Body of the Presentation

- 2.1 Transitions
- 2.2 Road signs – Signaling the direction your talk is taking
- 2.3 Restating the important ideas
- 2.4 Using quotations
- 2.5 Using examples
- 2.6 Expressing opinion
- 2.7 Using numbers
- 2.8 Using charts, graphs and tables

3. The Conclusion

- 3.1 Signaling the conclusion
- 3.2 The final summary
- 3.3 Closing
- 3.4 Calling for questions

4 In General

- 4.1 Audience-friendly language
- 4.2 Visuals

5 Graphs and Charts

- 5.1 Types of graphs and charts
- 5.2 Upward trends
- 5.3 Downward trends
- 5.4 Special cases
- 5.5 A verb or a noun?

1. Getting started

- The first two to three minutes of your talk are important. During this time, you'll make contact with the audience; you'll introduce yourself and say a few words about your company; you'll tell the audience the purpose of your talk; and you'll give them a map of your presentation.

1.1 Greeting the audience - Calling for attention

- Give the audience a signal that you're ready to start. Take advantage of these few words to find your position and adapt your voice to the size of the room.

- * Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.
- * Good afternoon everyone. Shall we begin?
- * Ladies and gentlemen. Good morning. It's a pleasure to be here with you today.
- * Good afternoon. If everybody's ready, I think we can begin now.

1.2 Introducing yourself and your company

- If the chairperson of the session hasn't done so, introduce yourself and your company. Be sure to mention the key elements of your company: its main activities, its size, its location, etc.

- * Let me introduce myself first. I'm Robert Vincent.
- * I'd like to introduce myself. I'm Pierre Dupont from Dazzi Engineering.
- * Before I begin, let me tell you a little about myself. I'm ...
- * I'm with the CNRS—the French National Center for Scientific Research—in the Department of Solid State Physics.
- * I work for Schneider Electric in the xxx department. Schneider is a world leader in the development and manufacture of ...
- * Dazzi Engineering is a small but fast-growing company in Grenoble, in the heart of the French Alps. Our main activities are in the field of waste management. You may be familiar with some of the techniques we've developed for plastics recycling.
- * I'm a research engineer with Electricité de France or EDF. EDF is the leading company for the production and distribution of electricity in France and throughout Europe.

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. It's a pleasure to be here with you today. First, I'd like to introduce myself. I'm Pierre Dupont from Dazzi Engineering. Dazzi Engineering is a small but growing company in Grenoble, in the heart of the French Alps. Our main activities are in the field of waste management. You may be familiar with some of the techniques we've developed for plastics recycling.

- Abbreviations from the French, like EDF or CNRS, must be pronounced in English. The same goes for abbreviations like the UN (United Nations) or GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Before using any abbreviations or acronyms that may not be familiar to a nonFrench audience, explain them in full.

1.3 Stating the purpose of a talk - giving a short introduction

► Begin by telling the audience why you are there.

- * My purpose today is to
- * What I want to do this afternoon is to
- * My objective today is to
- * I'm here today to
- * My talk today will deal with
- * My presentation this morning will concern primarily
- * This afternoon, I'd like to cover two topics of interest to the automobile industry,

- * I've been asked to.....
- * I've been invited here this morning to

My purpose today is to give a detailed analysis of the role of government in Japanese industry.

My talk today will deal primarily with the ethical considerations in genetic engineering.

I've been invited here this morning to describe some of the recent developments in nuclear safety technology.

► Or begin by giving a short introduction to your subject.

One of the main problems facing any company in the field of nuclear energy today is overcoming public opposition to nuclear installations. After the events at Chernobyl, the public needs to be reassured. This afternoon, I would like to describe some of the recent developments in nuclear safety technology and show how they can be presented in layman's terms.

The design of electric vehicles has improved enormously in the past ten years. Electric cars have become lighter and faster. However, they still do not have enough autonomy. And they will not make large gains in autonomy until research has developed better batteries. I'm here today to present some possible approaches to the problem.

► You may want to use a rhetorical question.

Who in the field of waste management has never been confronted with the NIMBY syndrome?

My talk today will concern primarily the ozone hole. We all know that an ozone hole has formed over Antarctica. What we don't know is: Why?

1.4 The overview - presenting the structure of the talk.

► Give your audience a map. They'll be much more willing to follow you if they know where you intend to take them and how you intend to get there. As P.T. Barnum, founder of the Barnum Circus, said: in any talk, the speaker must do three things: "Tell them what you're going to tell them; tell them; then tell them what you told them." By giving them the overview, you're telling them what you're going to tell them.

To begin with, I'll be speaking about the components normally found in our atmosphere. Then, we'll examine some of the reasons for the growth in CO2 in recent years. After that, I'll explain what the greenhouse effect is and how it works. And finally, we'll take a look at some possible consequences of the increase in temperature caused by the greenhouse effect.

► To make an overview, choose a sequencer:

* First of all, To begin with, To start with, First(ly), Second(ly),	* Next, Then, Later, Subsequently, After that,	* Finally, Last of all, In the final part,
--	--	--

► Select a verb that reflects the approach you intend to use:

<u>multipurpose</u> present, discuss, talk about, consider, speak about, look at	<u>detailed development</u> analyze, examine explain, describe
---	--

<u>special techniques</u> review, compare, contrast, develop	<u>rapid review</u> highlight, outline go over
--	--

► Put the pieces together in a structure:

* I'll be _____ing
We'll be _____ing
I'm going to be _____ing

* I'd like to _____
We're going to _____
I want to _____

First of all, I'll be presenting a historical view of AIDS and how it spread. Then, we'll analyze the segments of the population most susceptible to the disease at its beginnings and compare them to the types of cases we are finding today. Finally, we'll try to forecast the evolution of AIDS in the coming years.

2. The Body of the Presentation

2.1 Transitions

► In a written paper, the eye sees how the paper is divided into sections and subsections by the section numbers, titles and subtitles, and the page layout in general. In an oral presentation, you must provide verbal transitions. Guide your audience through your talk by referring to the overview you presented at the beginning. As you go from one section to another, use transitions. Restate or sum up what you've just seen. Announce what you're going to see.

* Now that we have seen ...
let's look at ...

Now that we have seen what causes acid rain, let's look at some of its effects on our forests.

* Now that we have an idea of ...
let's turn our attention to ...

Now that we have an idea of the dimensions of the problem of malaria in Africa, let's turn our attention to efforts now underway to control it.

* Before going on to the next part which deals with ...
I'd like to stress once again ...

Before going on to the next part which deals with environment-related cancers, I'd like to stress once again the fact that it is extremely difficult to pinpoint one specific cause for any cancer.

* To sum up then, we've examined ... We've also analyzed ... I'd now like to focus on ...

To sum up then, we've examined the evolution of the ozone hole since it was first discovered in 1978. We've also analyzed the mechanics of the destruction of ozone. I'd now like to focus on the role of CFCs.

* In addition to ..., what other factors contribute to ...?

In addition to human error and design flaw, what other factors contributed to the accident at Chernobyl?

* Before we go on to the next section, let me briefly restate ...

Before we go on to the next, section let me briefly restate the main reasons why the electric car is not yet the solution to urban transport.

► Remember, for the transitions to do their job efficiently, you must do your job: articulate and stress the key words.

2.2 Road signs

► When you're giving a talk, some words act just like signs on the road. They tell your audience whether you're continuing in the same direction, changing direction, contrasting two possible directions, or arriving at your destination. Used effectively, 'road signs' make it easier for your audience to follow your development. Once again, you must use your voice to stress the road sign and make it stand out for your listeners.

Notice that for an oral presentation, it is easier to use links that allow you to make two short sentences rather than one long, complex sentence.

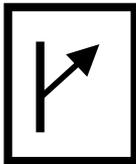
Continuation



Furthermore
Moreover
In addition

*Backup mechanisms for computers tend to become obsolete rapidly. It's easy to find three examples from the past 20 years: floppy disks, diskettes and Zip disks. **Furthermore**, new software formats do not always recognize older formats.*

Change in direction



However
Nevertheless

*Today, digital cameras are used for more than half of all photographs taken. **However**, most of those pictures never go any further than the hard drive of a personal computer.*

Although

***Although** digital cameras are used for more than half of all photographs taken, most of those pictures...*

Despite
In spite of

***Despite the fact that** digital cameras are used for more than half of all photos taken today, most of those pictures...*

Contrast



In contrast
On the other hand

*The life of a CD recorded with a CD burner at home could be as little as five years. **In contrast**, some photographic papers can last up to 200 years.*

While
Whereas

***While** the lifespan of a CD recorded with a CD burner at home could be as little as five years, some photographic papers can last up to 200 years.*

ARRIVAL

Consequently	Consequently , saving a digital photo file for the next 20 or 50 years is going to take a lot of hard work.
Therefore Thus	Thus , it's going to take a lot of hard work to save a digital file for the next 20 or 50 years.

2.3 Restating the important ideas

► There are two main reasons why you should restate (or reformulate) important ideas. The ear is not as efficient as the eye. (The ear cannot go back to the top of the page and reread a piece of information.) And an audience is not always giving the speaker 100% of its attention.

* in other words ...

A major drawback of many cancer drugs is their lack of specificity. In other words, they don't just kill cancer cells; they kill healthy cells too.

* in short ...

In short, CO₂ is the major cause of the greenhouse effect.

- * In simple terms, this means that ...
- * To put it in more concrete terms ...
- * The point I'm trying to make here is ...
- * What I mean by this is ...
- * Basically, what this means is ...

2.4 Using quotations

► Quotation marks (" ") in a written text set off quotations visually. In an oral presentation, you must verbally set off quotations by signaling the quotation and by 'surrounding' it with pauses. Remember, if you think it is worthwhile to include a long quote in your presentation, you must take the time to read it clearly.

- * To quote Professor Grand, "The earth is as flat as a pancake."
- * Professor Grand has said, and I quote, "The earth is ..."
- * Here I'd like to quote what Professor Grand has said about ...
- * Professor Grand has often said that the earth is flat—"as flat as a pancake"—to use his exact words.
- * I have here a quotation from Professor Grand. It says, "The earth is ..."

2.5 Using examples

► Examples help you make your point by taking your audience from the abstract to the concrete. Signal them by using key words: example, instance, illustrate, case, like, such as.

- * Let's take the example of what happens when ...
- * The best example of ... is probably ...
- * An interesting example of ... is ...
- * For instance ...
- * Let's now look at ... This will illustrate some of the principles we've been talking about.
- * Let's take the case where...
- * Vegetables like carrots and squash are loaded with beta-carotene
- * Pollutants such as those found in automobile exhaust are responsible for most of the smog in Los Angeles.

2.6 Expressing opinion

► Avoid preceding everything you say with, "in my opinion," or "I think that." The audience understands that you, the speaker, are generally expressing what you think. However, it is important to signal your opinion in contrast to another person's opinion or an opinion that is commonly held.

- To signal another person's opinion
 - * According to Professor Grand ... (an authority on the subject)
 - * Lauren Thompson has expressed the opinion that ...
 - * In a recent article, D.J. Tehl stated that ...
 - * In Mr. John Mugg's opinion ...
- To signal a widely-held opinion
 - * It is commonly thought that ...
 - * According to conventional wisdom ..
- To signal your opinion
 - * In my opinion
 - * I think that ...
 - * It is my view that ...
 - * It seems to me that

According to Professor Grand, the sun moves around the earth. In my opinion, however, it is the earth that moves around the sun.

Although it is commonly thought that the earth is flat, it seems to me that recent discoveries tend to prove that the earth is round.

► Remember: "According to" is used only for another person's opinion (usually an authority on the subject.) You cannot say "according to me." Do not try to translate the French "Je dirais que" and other such expressions.

2.7 Using numbers

► In a written paper, the reader's eye takes in numbers and their size and automatically makes approximations. (That's why numbers are written with commas: 36,254,967) Large or complicated numbers are much more difficult to assimilate orally (and long to pronounce.) Give your listener approximations instead. But signal that it's an approximation.

- * approximately The greatest number of discrepancies occurs at approximately 6 Pascals. (5.92)
- * nearly Nearly 9,000 cases were examined in this study. (8,679)
- * roughly Roughly half the cases were found in the past two years. (4,250/9000)
- * over Over a third of the respondents said they preferred instant coffee. (34.5%)
- * more than More than 8 million people live in metropolitan New York. (8,246,456)

2.8 Using charts, graphs, tables

► Used efficiently, charts, graphs and tables are wonderful aids to an oral presentation. They help the speaker make a point rapidly, and they help the listener retain the information. A few rules:

► Introduce the chart or graph **before** you show it. If you don't, the audience will stop listening to you while they try to decipher it alone. If you're using presentation software like PowerPoint, put a transition slide before your chart instead of leaving the previous one on.

* *I'd like you to look now at a graph of domestic oil production in the United States. I think it will clearly show just when we became dependent on imported oil.*

* *Next, we'll take a look at a chart showing the impact of the polio vaccination program in selected areas in India and Africa.*

► When you do turn on the slide with your graph, remember to explain what it shows. Again, if you don't, the audience will stop listening to you and find the information by themselves.

* *This graph presents the wide variations in the price of oil since 1970. The horizontal axis shows the years from 1970 to 2005, and the vertical axis shows the average price in dollars for a barrel of oil.*

► When describing a graph, you shouldn't simply state what the listener can easily see: the line goes up and the line goes down. It's your job to point out important changes and explain why they occurred or their impact.

3. The Conclusion

3.1 Signaling the conclusion

► Signal that you're arriving at the conclusion early on. Doing so leads to increased attention in the audience. Use key words like:

- * To conclude ...
- * In conclusion ...
- * As a conclusion
- * This brings me to the end of my presentation this afternoon.

► You may want to refer to something you said at the beginning of your talk

- * You may remember I began my talk today with a question "...?"
As I end, I hope we are a little closer to an answer.
- * In my introduction, I said we would be concentrating on solutions to the problem of acid rain. Now that we have reached the conclusion, I hope
....

► Now that you have raised the level of attention, this is no time to make any digressions. To do so would lead to a frustrated audience. Nor is the conclusion the time to introduce any new ideas or develop any new examples.

3.2 The final summary

► Tell them what you've told them. Review the main points. Recall the most important examples.

To conclude then, we have seen the types of industries that produce the pollutants that cause acid rain - notably heavy industry or power plants dependent on sulfur-loaded coal. We also discussed the non-negligible role of domestic heating. The examples of eastern Canada or Sweden reminded us that the effects of acid rain are often felt miles from its source. By analyzing the mechanics involved, we realized that millions of acres of apparently healthy forests are already in the first stages of destruction. And the devastation of forests in Germany gave us a preview of what may lie ahead in many more areas if nothing is done.

3.3 Closing

► End with a strong statement and thank your audience. Pause before thanking the audience.

* And the devastation of forests in Germany gave us a preview of what may lie ahead in many more areas if nothing is done. Thank you.

* I think you'll all agree then that we cannot rest on past achievements. The infant mortality rate can and must decrease even more. Thank you for being such an attentive audience.

3.4 Calling for questions

► **Invite** your audience to ask questions.

- * And now if you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them for you.
- * If you have any questions, I'll do my best to answer them in the time we have remaining.
- * I hope that was clear. If you do have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask them.
- * This a complex subject. There are probably many things that are still not clear. I welcome any questions you may have.
- * Thank you for being so attentive. I'd like to give you the chance to express yourselves now. If you have any questions or would like to have some points clarified, please feel free.

► If no questions come, you cannot beg, but
- **you can try humor**

- * If you're hesitant to ask a question for fear I'll start in again for another twenty minutes, let me reassure you on that point.
- * It's always hard to ask the first question, so why don't you go ahead and ask the second.

- **you can suggest one**

- * The last time I gave a talk on this subject, the most common question was on ...
- * You might be interested in some examples where this method has already been used successfully.

► If you don't understand the question, you can ask the person to repeat, (but only once) or you can restate the question.

- * I'm sorry. I'm not sure I understand. Could you repeat your question please?
- * If I understand you correctly, what you want to know is

► If the question is aggressive, you don't want to appear hostile and you don't want to start up a debate. You can put the question off.

- * I'm afraid we don't have enough time to go into that now, but I'd be glad to send you some documents on that point.
- * That's an interesting point, but I'm afraid it concerns few of us here. I'd be glad to talk to you during the break or at the end of the session.
- * Your question leads to an area which could be the subject of another paper. Perhaps we could continue this discussion during the lunch break.

► If you don't know the answer.

- * I wish I could answer that, but I can't. I'd have to go back to my lab for more data.
- * I wish I knew the answer to your question. We're working on that aspect right now.

4. In general

4.1 Audience-friendly language

► Make your audience feel more involved in your presentation by using audience-friendly language.

► Use polite forms

* What **I want** to do today isWhat **I would like** to do today is ...

* **I want** to explain the risks**Let me** try to briefly explain the risks involved in this procedure.

► Make yourself part of the group.

Instead of using "I" systematically, use "we," meaning you the speaker and your audience. You can also use the imperative "let's."

* In the next section, **I'll be describing**In the next section, **we'll be looking at** ...

* As **I have shown** here on this chartAs **we can see** here on this chart ...

* As **I explained** earlier,As **we saw** earlier, ...

* **I have been** confronted with the.....**Most of us have been** confronted with problem of the problem of ...

* Now that **I have examined**.....Now that **we have seen** ...

* **Look at** the statistics for 1992.....**Let's look at** the statistics for 1992.

* Now **I want to speak** aboutNow **let's turn our attention to**

► Call on the audience—its knowledge, its experience.

* As you probably know ...

* If you remember the accident at Chernobyl, ...

* I'm sure you are familiar with ...

* You may have noticed the growing demand for ...

► Use the rhetorical question.

A rhetorical question is one that the speaker will answer him/herself. It's a good way to introduce a section.

* How accurately can we predict future energy needs?

* Why did the dinosaurs become extinct?

* How much progress has been made on the electric car?

► However, it is a dangerous technique to ask a real question and expect the audience to answer it. This technique usually leads to an embarrassing silence. Your audience may feel they're being tested or may be afraid of giving the wrong answer. You could also lose control of the situation and waste valuable time.

4.2 Visuals

► When we think of visuals today, we almost always have in mind presentation software like PowerPoint. But in some circumstances you might also want to consider using an overhead projector, flip charts or posters. Whatever format you choose, remember: you must not expect the visuals to do the entire job for you. They help you, the speaker, organize your presentation, and they help the audience understand better and retain the information, but visuals can never replace the speaker.

A few basic rules or suggestions:

► on amount of information per slide

- Avoid the "mega data" slide: Don't try to crowd too much information on one slide. Put only information that is necessary. If you don't intend to talk about something, don't put it on your slide.
- Try to respect the rule: one visual = one point
- In general, use
 - 6 to 8 words per line
 - 5 to 7 lines per slide

► on language

- The language on visuals is densified. You don't want to read to your audience, and you don't write in full sentences. For example,
 - instead of: **In 2005, sales increased by 5%**
 - you write: **2005 sales up 5%**
- Check your spelling. A spelling error projected on a screen stands out, and your audience will notice it.

► on fonts (*police*)

- Sans serif fonts are easier to read.

An 'R' and a 'T' in Times New Roman, for example, have short lines or 'tails' at the ends. (serif)

An 'A' in Arial or a 'V' Verdana do not. They are examples of sans serif.

- *Italics are hard to read projected on a screen. Avoid using them.*
- DON'T WRITE A LOT OF TEXT IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. THEY ARE HARD TO READ, AND USING THEM IS LIKE TALKING TO YOUR AUDIENCE IN A VERY LOUD VOICE. THEY ARE OK FOR TITLES THOUGH.

- Make sure your font size is big enough. Depending on the size of the room, you will be using font size ranging from 18 to 48. Anything smaller will be impossible to read, even in a small conference room. How it looks on your computer screen is not a good test of how it will look when it's projected. It is sometimes necessary to use bold type.

► **on colors and special effects**

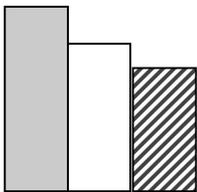
- Use them sparingly. You don't want your audience to focus on zooming text, sound effects and dazzling colors. You want them to concentrate on what you say. Remember: the visual is an aid, not the primary focus.
- Limit the number of colors to three. Use them for contrasting, highlighting and differentiating.
- Use black or very dark blue for text on a white or very pale background, white or yellow for a dark background.

5. Graphs and Charts

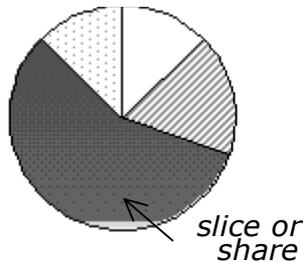
Graphs and charts are tools you'll probably use often in your presentations. This section is intended to be a reminder of the vocabulary you'll need.

5.1 Types of graphs and charts

Bar Chart



Pie Chart

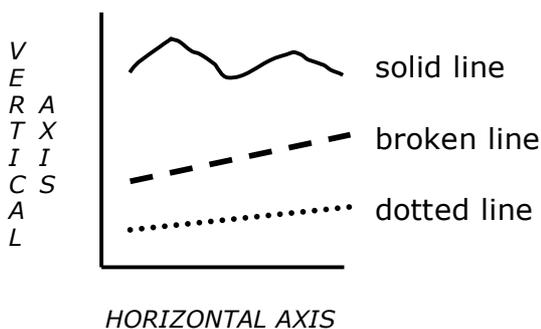


Table

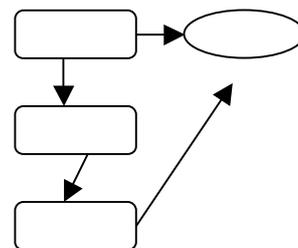
	A	B	C	
xxx				line or row
www				
zzz				

column

Graph or Line Chart

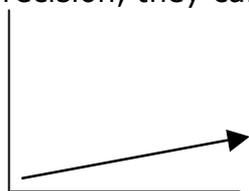


Flow Chart



5.2 Upward trends

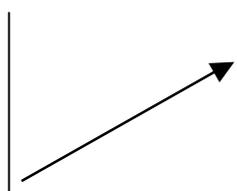
► The all-purpose verbs below simply show an upward movement; they don't indicate whether the movement is fast or slow, steady or erratic. For more precision, they can be combined with an adverb.



to increase
to rise
to go up
to climb
to grow

gradually
steadily
constantly
slowly
slightly

- * *The international role of the euro has increased gradually since 1999.*
- * *During the period 1969 to 1999, the salaries and wages earned by women rose slowly but steadily.*
- * *From the 14th century to the beginning of the 20th, the climate grew constantly colder.*

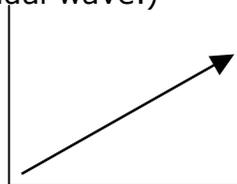


to increase
to rise
to go up
to climb
to grow

sharply
significantly
dramatically

- * *Trade between the US and its Nafta partners increased sharply between 1993 and 2001.*
- * *After Hurricane Katrina, gasoline and diesel commodity prices went up dramatically in Canada and the U.S.*
- * *As microprocessors become faster and memory becomes cheaper, the benefit to cost ratio has climbed significantly.*

► Other verbs show a fast, upward movement. Each one is associated with a particular image (to shoot up like a bullet, to soar like an eagle, to surge like a tidal wave.)

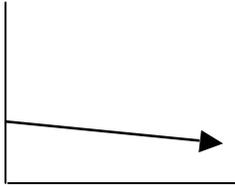


to shoot up
to soar
to surge
to skyrocket
to jump
to boom

- * *Sales of Mac computers and iPods also shot up 20 percent and 207 percent, respectively.*
- * *UK carbon dioxide emissions soared in 2003.*
- * *The PC market surged in 2005, and is expected to slow down in 2006*
- * *Two years ago, South Africa's malaria rates suddenly skyrocketed to 50,000 cases a year from just a few thousand.*
- * *Coal production boomed in Wyoming during the 1980s and 1990s.*

5.3 Downward Trends

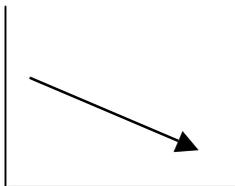
► As for upward trends, all-purpose verbs simply show a downward movement; they don't indicate whether the movement is fast or slow, steady or erratic. For more precision, they can be combined with an adverb.



to decrease
to go down
to decline
to fall

gradually
steadily
constantly
slowly
slightly

- * *From 1990 to 2001, rates of extreme poverty decreased slowly in Latin America.*
- * *Imports fell slightly in November resulting in an increase in the trade balance.*
- * *The high school drop out rate has declined steadily since 1995 from 7 percent in 1995 to 3.7 percent in 2005.*

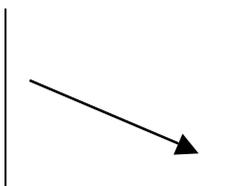


to decrease
to go down
to decline
to fall

dramatically
sharply
drastically
significantly
rapidly

- * *Snow cover has decreased rapidly over many parts of Canada in recent decades.*
- * *The use of antibiotics fell dramatically in response to widespread public educational campaigns about the dangers of antibiotic resistance.*
- * *After the disaster the number of migratory birds went down drastically.*

► Some verbs show a fast, downward movement. Again, each one is associated with a particular image (to plunge – make a steep dive from a high place, to plummet – fall perpendicularly, to take a nosedive – like an airplane.)

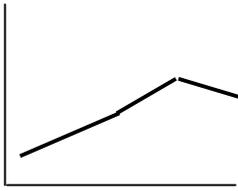


to drop
to plunge
to dive – to take a nosedive
to plummet

- * *Temperatures in Moscow plunged overnight to as low as minus 24.*
- * *Sales of new houses plummeted in November by the largest amount in nearly 12 years.*
- * *The violent crime rate dropped by 6.2 percent.*
- * *On March 15, 2005, General Motors stock took a nosedive.*

5.4 Special cases

► A peak



to peak
to reach a peak
to reach a high point
to hit record levels

- * *United States oil production peaked in 1970, with a second, lower peak in the mid 80s resulting from the Alaska oil discoveries.*
- * *English dominion of French territories reached a high point under Henry II.*

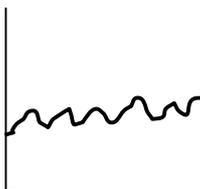
► A plateau



to level off
to remain steady
to flatten out
to reach a plateau

- * *Asthma rates may have leveled off in US children after increasing in the 1980s and early 1990s.*
- * *Has aqueous inkjet printing of graphics reached a plateau ?*

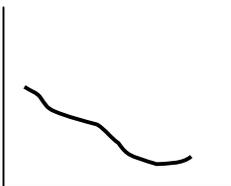
► Fluctuation



to fluctuate
to zigzag

- * *The trajectory of the Argentine economy during the past 13 years has zigzagged from hyperinflation and economic stagnation to rapid growth with low inflation to the deepest depression in Argentine history.*
- * *Unemployment in the United States has fluctuated due to economic conditions through the decades*

► A low point



to bottom out
to hit a low point

- * *Spending on information technology bottomed out early in 2005.*
- * *The Canadian tourism industry hit a low point in 2003, partly due to the cases of SARS virus in Toronto.*

5.5 A verb or a noun?

► All the examples in the sections above use verbs to indicate the upward or downward movements. The verb focuses on the action: did sales go up? down? a little? a lot? Example: *Sales of new houses plummeted in November by the largest amount in nearly 12 years.* The use of a noun to indicate the movement will put the focus on the causes or consequences of the movement. Example: *Experts see the drop as an indication that prices in the housing market will finally begin to stabilize.*

For some verbs, there is no noun form. The lists below provide some easy-to-use nouns.

* climb, growth, increase, jump, rise, surge

* decline, decrease, drop, fall, plunge