

Section 4 Group Discussions

OPENING UP THE SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

- Dr _____, may I ask you to begin?
- Ms _____, would you like to begin?
- Who would like to begin?
- Anyone wants to start the ball rolling?

MONITORING TURN-TAKING

- Dr _____, we appreciate the good points you have shared, but let us hear from some others for a while.
- Thank you, Mr _____, but can we have a few minutes and listen to Ms _____ about this issue?
- Yes, I get what you mean, but let's see what some of the others have to say about this.
- I think you have a good point there. Can we hear what the others think about this?

RETURNING TO THE SUBJECT

- Yes, that's an interesting idea, but it raises a different point. Could we go back to it a bit later?
- That's a good idea. Let's come back to it later once we finish with _____.
- I think that's a point worth discussing. However, let's see if anyone has anything to add before we move to a different topic.
- That's an interesting point, but perhaps it's a bit off the subject. We're discussing _____.

BRINGING OTHERS INTO THE DISCUSSION

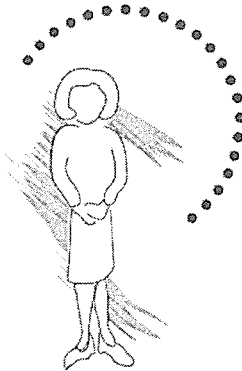
- What's your opinion of _____?
- Would you like to say something about this, Dr _____?
- What do you think?
- Any thoughts about this point?
- Do you have anything to add?

BRINGING THE DISCUSSION TO A CLOSE

- I am afraid that we will have to end here.
- We have run out of time.
- It looks like our time is up.
- To summarize, we agreed/decided that _____.
- The following are the conclusions we have reached:
- Although we did not reach a final decision, we accomplished the following:
- To wrap up, the discussion led us to the decision that _____.

THANKING MEMBERS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION

- I deeply appreciate your participation in this fruitful discussion.
- I would like to thank you all for your cooperation.
- Thank you all for coming.



Other Expressions

A group discussion participant is expected to assume an active role in the exchange of ideas. He/she has to share his/her views, offer opinions, agree or disagree - and, in general, be an important contributing member in the group.

The following are some of the useful expressions for him/her.

GIVING AN OPINION

- I think _____ .
- I believe _____ .
- In my opinion, _____ .
- As far as I am concerned, _____ .
- As I see it, _____ .
- Personally, I think _____ .
- It seems to me _____ .

ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION

- Would you mind explaining that a little more, please?
- Can you please explain that with more details?
- Do you mean _____ ?
- I'm sorry, but I didn't follow you. Could you please repeat/explain what you said?
Sorry, I don't understand/see what you said.
- What do you mean by _____ ?
- What do you mean?

CLARIFYING

- The point I am trying to make is _____ .
- What I mean is _____ .
- In other words _____ .
- I mean _____ .

Section 4 Group Discussions

ASKING FOR AGREEMENT

- Do you agree?
- Dr _____, don't you agree?
- Don't you think so?

AGREEING

- I completely agree with you.
- I couldn't agree with you more.
- I agree with you.
- I definitely agree.
- That's a good point.
- I think so, too.
- You're right.
- That's right.

DISAGREEING

- I can see your point, but _____.
 - I see what you mean, but _____.
 - Well, you have a point there, but _____.
 - I am not sure I quite agree with you.
 - I'm afraid I can't agree with you.
 - Yes, that may be true, but _____.
 - I don't really agree with you.
 - That's not how I see it.
 - I don't think so.
- _____
- _____

SUPPORTING AN IDEA

- I think _____ is a good/an excellent idea/plan because _____.
- The main advantage of _____ is that _____.
- I am in favor of _____ because _____.
- I support _____ because _____.
- I'm for _____ because _____.

OPPOSING AN IDEA

- The main disadvantage of _____ is that _____.
- I think _____ is not a good idea because _____.
- I'm not in favor of _____ because _____.
- I'm against _____ because _____.

MAKING/ACCEPTING/REJECTING A SUGGESTION

Making a suggestion

- May I make a suggestion?
- There's a suggestion I'd like to make.
- I suggest that we _____ .
- Perhaps we could _____ .
- We might _____ .
- Why don't we _____ ?
- How about _____ ?
- What about _____ ?
- Why not _____ ?

Accepting a suggestion

- Yes, why don't we try that?
- Yes, that's a good idea.
- By all means.
- Yes, of course.
- Certainly.

Rejecting a suggestion*

- I am not sure the idea will work/be possible because _____ .
- I'm sorry but _____ .
- Well, the problem is _____ .
- Unfortunately, _____ .

* *In rejecting a suggestion, always try to explain your reason to the person making the suggestion.*

INTERRUPTING*

- Sorry to interrupt, but _____ .
- Excuse me/pardon me for interrupting, but _____ .
- Excuse me, _____ .

* *Interrupting techniques should not be used often. Allow others to finish their turn at speaking. However when it is appropriate, wait for a natural pause in the flow of the speech, and use what is appropriate among those listed.*

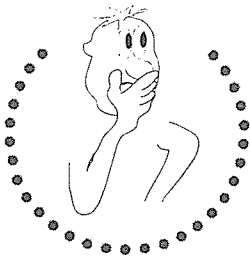
HOLDING OFF THE INTERRUPTION

- If you could wait a moment, I'm almost finished.
- Excuse me. Could I just finish my point?
- I'm not quite finished. Give me a minute?
- Just a minute/moment. Let me just finish this point.

Section 4 Group Discussions

AIM FOR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN A GROUP DISCUSSION

- Speak loudly and clearly to be heard by everyone using simple, easily understandable language. Be ready to explain any difficult or technical word that you use.
- Be prepared for the discussion. Bring information or visual aids that you feel will be useful in the discussion. Prepare to support your opinions with facts, reasons and examples.
- Keep the goal of the discussion in mind and do not stray from it. Be brief and direct in presenting your ideas.
- Listen carefully to other participants' ideas. Ask questions, agree or disagree. A conflict of ideas within the group is useful because it helps to see different sides of an issue. But keep an open mind – be prepared to compromise or change your opinion if others present strong, logical arguments.
- Work as a team member. Share speaking time, consider opinions that are different from yours and try to bring in others who are quiet and shy.



Exercises

PRACTICE 1 WRITE OUT THE APPROPRIATE EXPRESSIONS FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS.

Situation	Fill the chart with expression/s you will use
1. As the discussion leader, announce the start of the group discussion by calling the members' attention	
2. In the course of a discussion, you notice one member who has been talking too much, almost monopolizing the floor.	
3. The talk leads to an interesting but irrelevant point; you want to bring the discussion back to the real topic.	

Situation	Fill the chart with expression/s you will use
4. One member of the group seems shy and has not spoken at all; encourage him to speak and share his opinion about the topic.	
5. Everyone in the group is absorbed in the topic. Each has something good and significant to say. But your time has run out. You need to bring the discussion to a close.	
6. As a member of a group discussion, you would like to react to an idea just explained but you did not understand part of what the speaker meant.	
7. Four members in your discussion group are proposing a specific decision after they presented their opinions. You do not agree with their decision. You must give your reasons.	
8. Someone interrupts you at mid-point of your explanation. While you want to give him the floor, you are afraid you may lose your thread of thought; so you would like to continue.	
9. The discussion over a topic that turned controversial is becoming quite heated and you want a 3-5 minute break.	
10. You felt that you took a lot of time discussing your point, and at the end you want to say how you appreciated the group's giving you the time without objection.	

Section 4 Group Discussions

PRACTICE 2

Case 1

Health and medical experts from around the world have responded to an emergency in a country which experienced an epidemic outbreak of an infectious disease. Before the pull-out of these teams, all of you saw the need for a group discussion to put safeguards in place so that the country's health authorities can act on their own with your guidance.

Identify a representative each from the following countries whose experts are in the country to help:

- Japan
- Australia
- the US
- Spain
- China
- France
- Great Britain
- 4 health practitioners from the country

In a round table group discussion, appoint a discussion leader who will be the procedure facilitator; and among the group members, agree on who will assume the following roles:

- opinion giver
- information seeker
- clarifier
- harmonizer
- tension reliever
- compromiser
- social supporter
- summarizer

Case 2

With 6 to 7 members, present a group discussion on organizing an infection control program. The members of the group should assume the roles of health and medical professionals. Choose a discussion leader to moderate while the rest should each contribute or share useful ideas and opinions about aspects of the topic like

- setting country objectives consistent with national health care objectives;
- developing and updating guidelines for health care surveillance, prevention and practice;
- developing a monitoring system for selected infections and assessing the effectiveness of interventions;
- harmonizing initial and continuing programs for health care professionals, and
- facilitating access to materials and products necessary for hygiene and safety.

RATING YOUR PERFORMANCE IN A GROUP DISCUSSION

I. Performance

Factor	Excellent(3)	Satisfactory (2)	Weak(1)	Unsatisfactory (0)
A. Interaction: <i>Did you effectively interact with others? Initiate? Involve others? Ask questions?</i>				
B. Use of expressions: <i>Did you effectively and appropriately use a variety of expressions?</i>				
C. Content: <i>Did you contribute logical, relevant information and ideas? Stay on the subject? Analyze solutions? Show strong support of arguments?</i>				
D. Accuracy: <i>Did you communicate ideas clearly with effective control of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation?</i>				

II. Improvement

Areas of Strength:
Areas to Improve:
Action to Take:

Adapted from: Matthews & Marino, *Professional Interactions*, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.

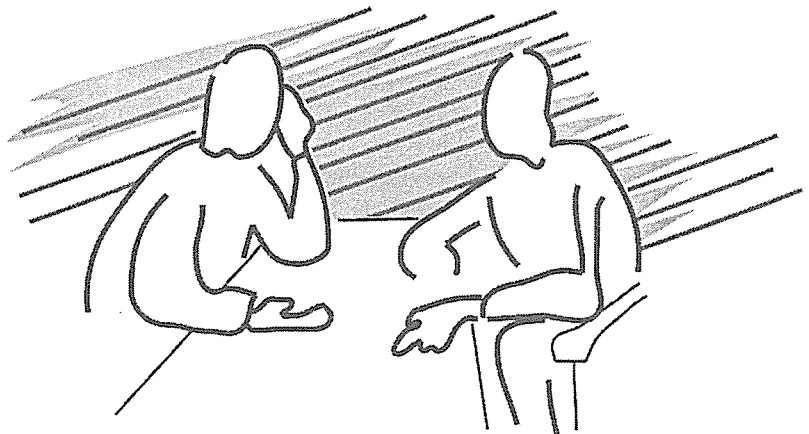
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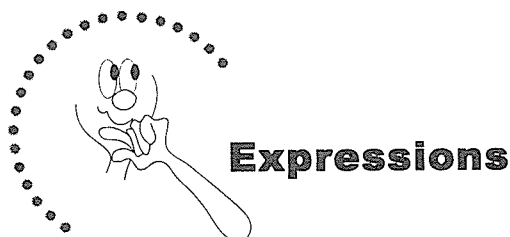
Panel Discussions

A panel discussion is focused on a specific topic. Its purpose can be either to provide information about the topic from different perspectives or to create a forum for experts to present their ideas or express their opinions.

A moderator introduces and guides the discussion to make sure that everyone in the panel gets to speak. He fields in questions when needed, guides the turn taking of speakers and brings the discussion to a close. Members of the panel talk about different aspects of the topic. They are allotted a specific time limit during their turn. Later, they give the audience the opportunity to raise questions or seek further clarification about the ideas they each presented.

As leaders in the health and medical fields, you may be asked to take part in a panel discussion in the foreign countries you are sent to help. It is important to know that there are useful and convenient terms and expressions for this purpose.





As a moderator, you will find the following expressions useful:

OPENING AND PRESENTING THE TOPIC

- Ladies and gentlemen, good morning/afternoon. Today, we are presenting a panel discussion on *(name the subject)*.
- Good morning/afternoon. Allow me to open today's discussion on a very timely topic, *(give the subject)*.
- We are presenting today, a discussion on a timely topic, *(give the subject)*.
- Let us focus on *(give topic)* which is the subject of our panel discussion.
- Hello, everyone. *(Give subject)* is our topic for today's discussion.

INTRODUCING THE PANEL

- I am privileged to introduce to you the distinguished members of our panel. They are *(give names and titles/positions of panelists)*.
- Let me now introduce the members of the panel. Starting from left, we have *(give names of panelists)*.
- Composing our panel are six well-known names in the medical field in the country. The first is _____, the next is _____, the third is _____, etc.
- Joining us on the panel today are *(give names and positions of panelists)*.
- Here are the members of the panel: *(give names and positions)*...

CALLING ON THE PANELIST TO SPEAK

- It is an honor to call on *(give name with title)* who will begin this morning's/afternoon's discussion.
- May I now call on the distinguished *(give name with title)* who is this morning's first speaker.
- Let me now call on *(give name with title)*
- The first (or second, or third, or fourth) is *(give name with title)*.
- May I now present the second/third/fourth, etc., speaker on the panel?
- Our next speaker/panelist is *(give name and position)*.
- Let me call on *(give name and position)* who is the next speaker.
- Our last speaker on the panel is *(give name and position)*.
- Finally, may I call on *(give name and position)* our last panelist on the topic.

Section 5 Panel Discussions

INTRODUCING THE Q & A AFTER EACH PRESENTATION

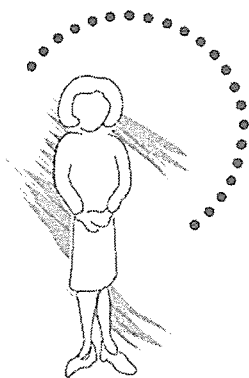
- At this point, our speakers can take some of your questions.
- Our speakers are ready to answer your questions now.
- We have time to take a few questions now.
- Okay, now the speakers will answer your questions.

THANKING MEMBERS OF PANEL

- We are deeply honored to have these distinguished experts share their knowledge on (*give topic*) with us today. Let me thank each one for such an absorbing exchange.
- It is with deep appreciation that I thank the panel today for sharing their knowledge on (*give topic of discussion*) with us.
- We thank each member of the panel for sharing both their time and knowledge with us today.
- Thank you, members of the panel, for an interesting exchange.

BRINGING THE DISCUSSION TO A CLOSE

- This has been a fruitful discussion, thank you for being such a good audience.
- We now bring this interesting discussion to a close.
- That concludes today's discussion on (*give topic*).
- On this point, we end our panel discussion.



Other Expressions

As a member of the panel, you can use the following expressions.

INTRODUCING YOUR TOPIC

- The part of the topic assigned to me is _____ .
- I shall discuss (*give the aspect of the topic*) this afternoon/morning.
- I am going to talk about _____ which is the aspect of (*give topic*) that I shall handle today.
- The title of my discussion is _____ .

ENUMERATING

- I would like to focus on four important points in this talk.
First, _____ . Second, _____ .
Third, _____ . And fourth/last _____ .
- I shall talk about four main points. Firstly _____ ;
secondly _____ ; thirdly, _____ and
lastly, _____ .
- The important considerations we need to keep in mind are: one,
_____ ; two, _____ ; three, _____ and
four, _____ .
- There are three possibilities. The first is _____ . The second is
_____ . And the third or the last is _____ .

GIVING EXAMPLES OR ILLUSTRATIONS

- Consider this illustration.
- Let me cite an example.
- An example/illustration can be _____ .
- To illustrate _____ .
- For example _____ .
- For instance _____ .

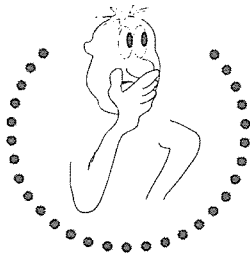
SUMMARIZING

- In summary, let me _____ .
- To summarize, _____ .
- Summing it all up, _____ .

ENDING YOUR PORTION OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION

- On this point, I would like to end my discussion.
- This ends my presentation.
- Thank you for listening to my talk.
- Okay, that's about all on this topic.

Section 5 Panel Discussions



Exercises

PRACTICE 1 WRITE TWO POSSIBLE WAYS OF EXPRESSING THE FOLLOWING:

1. As moderator, introduce the panel discussion on the dangers of HIV.
a. formal

b. less formal

- _____
2. As a panel member, introduce your topic on malaria control strategies
a. formal

b. less formal

- _____
3. As moderator, make audience know that only a little time is left for questions
a. formal

b. less formal

- _____
4. Tell the audience that you are ready for questions after presenting your part in the panel discussion.
a. formal

b. less formal

- _____
5. As moderator, thank the panelist at the end of his/her presentation.
a. formal

b. less formal

PRACTICE 2

Case 1

Four Japanese medical experts who are part of a team sent to Kenya have been invited by the Kenyan government to present a panel discussion on Infection Control Practices. The purpose of the discussion is to disseminate information and provide general guidance about these practices. The audience will be composed of local medical and health officials and some NGO members.

The following and their topics will make up the panel:

- Dr Kenji Tanaka - Standard Precautions in Infection Control
- Dr Kiyoshi Ito - The Need for an Infection Control Program (ICP)
- Dr Jiro Ono - Training the Health Care Staff
- Dr Isamu Saito - Setting up a Monitoring System for the ICP
- Mr Babu Meuleki - moderator

Members of the panel should be given enough time to understand their roles and prepare what to say. They should limit their talk to 3-5 minutes each.

The moderator will open the discussion, introduce each of the panel members before the discussion, call each of the panelists when their turn comes and bring the panel discussion to a close.

Case 2

As a result of the SARS health crisis, hospital administrators have requested for a panel discussion on Environmental Management Practices to increase the level of awareness about the prevention of hospital associated-infections.

Assign the following topics to four people who will assume the role of health experts:

- Assuring Safe Air Quality
- Assuring Safe Hospital Water Systems
- Appropriate Waste Management Facilities and Practices
- Assuring Care of Health Workers

Give the speakers enough time to understand their roles and to prepare what to say. They should be given a limit of 3-5 minutes to speak.

Appoint a moderator to open the discussion, introduce each of the panelists before the discussion, call each of them when their turn comes and close the panel discussion.

Section 5 Panel Discussions

RATING YOUR PERFORMANCE IN A PANEL DISCUSSION

A. Delivery

Factor	Excellent(3)	Satisfactory (2)	Weak(1)	Unsatisfactory (0)
1. Voice: loud and clear				
2. Eye contact				
3. Natural delivery: not read nor memorized				
4. Rate of speaking: not too fast nor too slow				
5. Posture: no distracting mannerisms				

B. Content

Factor	Excellent(3)	Satisfactory (2)	Weak(1)	Unsatisfactory (0)
1. Clear central idea				
2. Topic suitable for time available				
3. Topic well developed with facts, relevant examples to support central idea				
4. Topic/language suitable for audience				

C. Organization

Factor	Excellent(3)	Satisfactory (2)	Weak(1)	Unsatisfactory (0)
1. Introduction: identified topic, stated central idea				
2. Development of ideas: logical, clear and smooth flow of ideas				
3. Conclusion: summarized points taken				

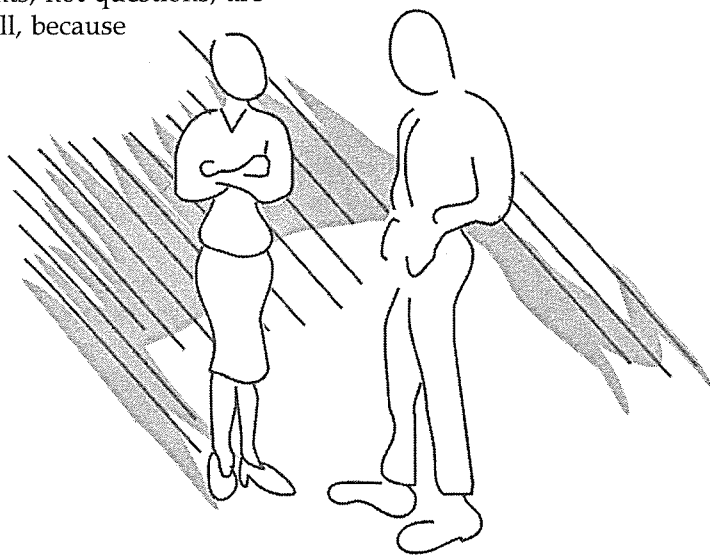
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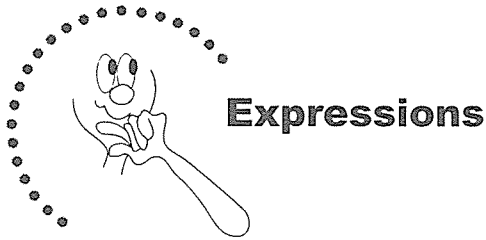
Handling the Q & A

The question and answer is a common feature of panel discussions and oral presentations. This Q & A part is valuable because it shows how well speakers have communicated their information and how effectively they moved their listeners to interact with them.

When you present a topic, whether as the main speaker or as part of a panel, one of the ways of making your audience feel that you know your topic well is by offering to take questions at the end of your presentation. It is a way of actively connecting with your audience. It becomes an absorbing process especially when questions are raised to have points in your presentation clarified. Do not feel nervous about this part if you are well and carefully prepared. Sometimes comments, not questions, are raised. You should welcome this as well, because these are indications of your listeners' interest or their appreciation over what you have shared with them.

Whatever the nature of the question or comment, what you should remember is to stay calm even when provoked and to remain civil and polite at all times.





The following expressions are used in a Q & A session.

LETTING YOUR AUDIENCE KNOW IN ADVANCE THAT YOU WILL TAKE QUESTIONS

- I will save some time at the end of my presentation for your questions. I'll appreciate it if you could save your questions and comments at the end of my presentation
- I shall be taking your questions and comments at the end of my talk.
- We shall have 15 to 20 minutes for questions when I finish with my topic.
- I'll save some time to answer questions if you have any at the end of my talk.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE QUESTION

- Yes, thank you for that question, (say the name of the person if you know it).
- That's a good/interesting question.

ASSURING THAT THE AUDIENCE HEARD THE QUESTION

- Dr Sato's question was _____.
- Dr Sato asked if _____.
- As I understand your question, you are asking _____.
- May I repeat the question, _____.

ANALYZING THE QUESTION

- There are two/three components/parts in that question. I shall address them one by one.
- I shall take up the two/three, etc. components of that question separately.
- [*When the question is irrelevant*] I am afraid I don't have an answer to your question.
- I'm afraid I can't answer that.

DEALING WITH HOSTILE QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Always listen politely even if the questioner is rude. You may not be able to control the questioner but you can control your reaction to him/her.

Section 6 Handling the Q & A

- In other words, you are asking [*rephrase question for thinking time*]
_____.
- So, what you want to know is _____.

SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

1. When a questioner states that your information is wrong, but you are sure that it is correct:
 - I believe that my information is correct, but I will certainly recheck my facts.
 - Thank you for bringing this to my attention, I'll check my sources to see what is correct.
2. When a questioner asks something so basic, you realize he/she did not understand any of your presentation:
 - Well, I don't think we have time to discuss that point right now, but we can talk about it later.
 - Our time does not allow us to go into that now; can we talk about it after this?
3. When a questioner asks something that will require a long, complicated answer:
 - That's an interesting question, but it would take too long to answer it adequately. Perhaps we could discuss it later
4. When the question is totally unrelated to your topic:
 - That's really an interesting question, but I'm afraid my presentation does not really deal with it.
 - I'm sorry, my presentation is not really related to that issue.
 - I'm afraid I don't see how that question applies to what I've said.
5. When a person asks too many questions:
 - I'm glad you are so interested, but I think we should give others a chance to ask questions.
 - I'll get back to your other questions if there is time. Can we give the other questions a chance to be asked?

SIGNALING FOR THE END OF THE Q & A

- I think we have time for just one more question before bringing this to a close.
- This is all quite absorbing, but I am told we have enough time for just one more question.
- I'm afraid this will be the last question.

ENDING THE Q & A

- I must now thank you for your questions and comments.
- That last point brings this portion to a close. Thank you very much.
- Thank you very much for being such an interested audience. Have a good day.



Exercises

PRACTICE 1 WORK WITH A PARTNER AND COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE WITH THE APPROPRIATE EXPRESSIONS.

1. Question: Dr Shimura, I noticed that you talked extensively on avian flu and its dangers but you failed to discuss surveillance and monitoring systems that countries like ours should set up as security measures.

Answer : _____

2. Question: I am sorry, doctor, but I guess I failed to hear what you said about the history of the spread of meningococemia . Would you mind repeating that please?

Answer: _____

3. Question : Thank you, Dr Koga, for your presentation. In the newspapers recently, we are told that any effort to eradicate would be useless because the government will never have enough funds available for this purpose. Can you comment on this, please?

Answer: _____

4. Question : Dr Oshiro, you have given a very general and broad presentation about standard precautions on infection control. Most of us know all about these. We were expecting something more current to update our knowledge.

Answer : _____

5. Question : Your presentation is very enlightening. I have always been interested to join a team that goes to various countries to help in emergency situations like an epidemic outbreak. Do you accept volunteers in your team, Dr Hayashi? If you do, what should I do to become part of your team?

Answer : _____

Section 6 Handling the Q and A

PRACTICE 2

The Question & Answer part is rarely an independent unit of communication. It usually follows a discussion or a presentation and is viewed as an extension or an integral part of either.

After a simulated oral presentation or a panel discussion, attach a Q & A portion to practice the expressions given in this unit.