

Opening and closing

ANSWER KEY

A

DISCUSS

- 1 Graph c. Attention is typically high at the beginning of a presentation (most audiences start off hopeful!), then falls to a low in the middle as the audience gets tired, rising again at the close as people can see the end is near.
- 2 Graph a represents an otherwise interesting presentation with a poor opening and close. Graph b represents a disappointing presentation with audience expectations high at the beginning but falling steadily throughout the talk to end on a low. Graph d represents the practical ideal. Since it's impossible to keep audience attention high throughout your presentation, the solution is to break your talk into sections, each with its own opening and close. This way attention peaks regularly. Of course, you still want to close on a high note.

RECALL

- 1 Primacy is an audience's tendency to remember what is said first and recency what is said last.
- 2 They support your talk.
- 3 The first version of the opening just states the theme of the talk. This is clear and to-the-point, but it's rather boring. After all, the audience probably knows this already. Better to give the audience some dramatic examples of what you're going to talk about and let them draw them all together before you move on to your theme.

B

DISCUSS

- 2 Things you could add: the use of photographs and cartoons, news headlines, a video or clip from a movie; involving the audience by setting them a problem or challenge, asking them to raise their hand or confer with a neighbour.

VIEW

- 1 The first presenter tells a true story and asks the audience a question. The second presenter refers to a book and TV programme, quotes some statistics and also asks the audience a question.

C

DISCUSS

The end is more important in the sense that it is what the audience will have at the front of their minds as they leave your presentation. On the other hand, if you lost them right at the beginning, studies show it can take at least 10 to 15 minutes to win them back.

RECALL

He says a presentation should end with your 'biggest brightest fireworks' – not necessarily a bang, but something with real impact.

D

DISCUSS

A summary (as long as it's short and snappy) is a good idea if you've made quite a lot of complex points in your presentation. A touch of humour may help if your talk has been long or if you've had some bad news to give. A call to action is essential if your talk has been designed to motivate, inspire or promote change. A wise saying might be of use if you think your audience is not fully persuaded.

VIEW

Presenter 1 gives a summary and makes a call for action. Presenter 2 uses humour and a wise saying.

RECALL

If you begin with the end in mind, you know where you're headed in your talk and it helps you to prepare.