



American Translators Association

The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

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ATA Client Outreach Kit

Skills Module

Writing your introduction

A good introduction tells your listeners why they should bother listening to you and what you can offer them. It can make the difference between getting off to a strong start or playing catch-up from the beginning. So it's always a good idea to write your own, even if someone else delivers it—you're more likely to get off on the right foot, and most MCs will be grateful for the support.

Introduce yourself as concisely as possible, keeping the focus **on the needs of your audience and what you can do for them**. Many professional speakers use the TIS—Topic, Interest, Speaker—method:

Topic. Start your introduction with a brief summary of the topic—enough to interest the audience and make them want to know more.

Interest. Bridge the area between the topic and the particular interests of your audience: why will this particular group want to listen to what you have to say about translation?

Speaker. *Briefly* list your qualifications, particularly those that relate to the topic.

To give your introduction maximum impact:

- **Do** focus on skills and experience that will be relevant to your audience.
- **Do** think about the impression you want to make. When you have your draft, step back to take a second look: Does it clearly communicate what you can offer the audience? Does it portray you as an experienced professional with valuable information for their businesses?
- **Do** make your introduction memorable ("Remember that lady who spoke at the Chamber of Commerce? We should call her.")
- **Do** practice and time your introduction separately from your presentation.
- **Don't** let your introduction run over 200 words—it shouldn't last more than that. In fact, it shouldn't last more than about 90 seconds.
- **Don't** list your academic degrees. Why not? Clients are far more interested in what you can do for them today. See www.atanet.org/client_outreach/skill_donot_list_your_degrees.pdf.