

## Dealing with questions

When someone asks you a question at the end of your presentation, it is always good to repeat the question in your own words. This accomplishes three things. First, it ensures that you understood the question and that your answer will be appropriate. Second, it allows audience members who may not have heard the question to hear it. Finally, it gives you a few seconds to think about how to answer.

QUESTION: You mentioned several interesting places in Kyoto. Which is the best?

ANSWER: Thank you for that question. What is my favorite place to visit in Kyoto? That is a difficult question because there are so many interesting places to visit. I think that my favorite is Ginkakuji, but there are many other beautiful spots.

The speaker starts by thanking the questioner. This gives her a few seconds to think about the question and make sure she understands it.

This question (“Which is best?”) is a little unclear. The presenter rephrases the question as, “What is my favorite place to visit in Kyoto?” By rephrasing the question the presenter makes sure that she understands what the person who asked the question meant. After you restate the question, pause briefly. If that is not what questioner meant, he can ask his question again a different way.

In addition, the presenter says, “That is a difficult question,” and explains why. This allows the presenter time to think about how to answer the question. After saying that the question is a good one, the presenter can pause for a couple of seconds and the audience will know that she is thinking about the question.

This strategy works well if you understand the question, or if you think you understand and need to check your understanding. But remember, the question is not a test. If you don't understand the question, ask the person to rephrase the question.

I'm sorry I don't quite understand. Could you rephrase that?

I'm not sure I get your meaning. Can you explain?

Unless a question is very simple *and* you are sure that the audience has heard the question as well as you did, it is always a good idea to repeat the question. If the question is very difficult, don't be embarrassed to ask for a clarification or rephrasing.

# Practice

Here are several questions from presentations. Practice rephrasing them in your own words. Write a version of the question that asks the same thing, but use your own words.

1. You said engineers have a different way of looking at problems, can you give me an example or an explanation?
2. Compared to living in Shizuoka, how is Nagoya?
3. I like matsuri because I can meet my friends and eat special food. How about you?