



**UK  
Parliament**

COMMONWEALTH  
PARLIAMENTARY  
ASSOCIATION UK



# **COMMUNICATIONS HANDBOOK FOR WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS**

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## FOREWORD

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It is my sincere hope that this resource will prove informative, insightful and beneficial to women parliamentarians in strengthening our capabilities as powerful communicators.

As former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Minister for Women and Equalities, and in my current role as Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee and Regional Representative of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, I know the importance of supporting fellow women parliamentarians in overcoming institutional and cultural challenges that limit or hinder our full involvement at all levels of decision-making.

There has been progress in increasing the involvement of women in the parliamentary process, but for women to be a vocal force for influence and change, we must have a voice that breaks boundaries. Enabling women parliamentarians to communicate with our communities, the media, colleagues and other stakeholders nationally and internationally is more important than ever.

I commend CPA UK, UN Women and BeSpoke Skills for developing this informative and helpful toolkit. It provides tools, techniques and advice to help women be more effective and clear communicators to effectively scrutinise, represent, and advocate on behalf of the people we represent and to be leaders within our parliamentary institutions.



### **Rt Hon. Maria Miller MP**

*Member, CPA UK Executive Committee*

*Chair, Women & Equalities Committee, House of Commons, UK Parliament*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Women parliamentarians around the Commonwealth can face a number of challenges which hinder their role and influence as leaders and decision makers within parliaments and their communities. The most detrimental areas identified by women parliamentarians have been the manner in which they are treated by the public, media and male parliamentarians. Women parliamentarians face a significant amount of abuse both verbal and in some cases physical. In the media, women parliamentarians and even ministers are denigrated and slandered.

Such attitudes undermine the integrity of women parliamentarians. In addition, women parliamentarians are reluctant to utilise formal and informal media channels to promote themselves and communicate with their constituents and party-base, through fear of inciting additional harassment. Male parliamentarians are also accused of insulting their female counterparts, in some instances through sexual harassment, such as commenting on their dress.

This handbook has been commissioned by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK (CPA UK) to provide women parliamentarians, specifically chairs and members of parliamentary committees with the confidence and skills necessary to effectively communicate with media and the public.

As part of its strategic objectives to strengthen parliamentary democracy with a key priority to empower women in parliament and increase gender equality, CPA UK continues to develop programmes and projects to strengthen the capacity of women parliamentarians across the Commonwealth. Over many years CPA UK has worked with women parliamentarians in Uganda, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Pakistan, Zambia and Ghana. This handbook has been developed to build upon that work, ensuring long-term sustainability in continued capacity building and skills building for current and future women parliamentarians.

The handbook has been written and developed by a leading communications specialist with experience and expertise in working

with women parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth and is tailored to meet many of the challenges they can face within their unique national political, cultural and social context.

The handbook is divided into four sections, each broadly covering a number of challenges highlighted above. The four sections are: dealing with the media, delivering speech, answering questions, and communication with committee members.

## **Overview**

The purpose of this handbook are to:

- **Improve communication with the media by mutual understanding and building collaborative relationships**
- **Improve delivery of speeches by understanding the key techniques to create impact**
- **Answer questions effectively by being concise, clear and ready**
- **Communicate confidently in all circumstances**
- **Be prepared and ready for panel interviews**
- **Understand good practice in committees**

By the end of this handbook, the reader will be able to:

- **Write a press release**
- **Craft short questions**
- **Prepare and think behind the answers**
- **Use open questions**
- **Build confidence**
- **Interact well**
- **Speak clearly**
- **Use body language**
- **Be focused**



# **SECTION 1**

# **DEALING WITH THE**

# **MEDIA**

## HOW THE MEDIA WORKS

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Often we find members of parliament worry about engaging with the media. This is understandable, as many careers have been cut short as a result of challenging interviews. But these risks are outweighed by the importance in sharing public interest stories and news with communities.

**Generally there are 4 types of media outlets;**

1. **Newspapers**
2. **Radio**
3. **TV**
4. **Social Media**

**Be vigilant about all encounters**

In TV and radio you should always be aware of what you're saying if you're wearing a microphone as all things you say could be recorded and used. In the UK, Gordon Brown MP kept his microphone on in the car and his conversation caused him much embarrassment.

Newspapers also try to set you up. For example Vince Cable MP had two undercover journalists visit his constituency surgery. They wore recording devices and these recordings were then used against him. Be careful what you say to people you don't know.

**Build good relationships with key journalists**

The other side to this is that you need to build up good relationships with journalists. You need to be able to talk to them about stories you want to get out to the public. You need to build up trust that you will bring a good story to them. So keep meeting journalists but be clear before you meet them what you want to say and areas you do not want to discuss.

Get to know specialist journalists. If you're part of the Health Committee, get to know the Specialist Health Correspondent in all outlets.

Another way of building these relationships is through your media team. Go to them with ideas and stories and suggest press releases and timelines. The media is a great way to get messages out to your constituents.

**Know each outlet's deadlines**

Different programmes and newspapers have different deadlines. Make sure you know when they are so you can submit press releases in time.

If you are going to contact the outlet yourself, know the best time to call them. When do they have their meeting? At what time do they get worried they don't have enough stories? What is the timeline from press release to programme?



Find out how you can make the journalists life easy. Do they want photographs for newspapers, videos for TV, sound clips for radio? If it's for a social media blogger – what other media would they want on their site?

Great media coverage is about building good relationships with journalists. News journalists need politicians and stories. Politicians need to get stories out to constituents. If a journalist breaks trust from a senior politician they may never get an interview with them again. There is always a fine balance to the relationship. Navigate it well.

## MAKE AN IMPACT

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As a female parliamentarian you need to get the message out about what you're doing and how you are making an impact. It is important to show your constituents how you are helping to make your country economically strong with better infrastructure and opportunities.

There are 4 main ways a committee can make an impact which is based on research by the Institute for Government on [How to be an Effective Select Committee Member](#) (see overleaf). How you make an impact will depend on the topic area and focus of your committee.

### **To influence the government and other stakeholders**

Your choice of inquiry will influence the government, particularly if you invite the Minister to come in front of the Committee. When they come as a witness they need to familiarise themselves with the information on that topic, which brings it front of mind.

It is important to build a good, strong relationship with the government department. Research at Westminster has shown that Committees with good relationships with the government department are more likely to influence better outcomes. (see Hold to Account)

### **To engage your peers, your constituents and others.**

Engagement of your constituents in committee work can be a great way to build better relationships with businesses and grass roots organisations.

You can use the media to engage people on subjects you are covering in your committee.

For example, in Wales, Bethan Jenkins AM, who is Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, went out to the public to ask them what topics they thought they should cover.

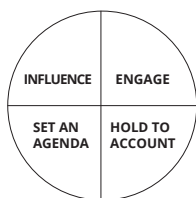
This was carefully orchestrated to ensure voices were heard and sensible suggestions encouraged.

## **To set an agenda that makes the Committee a “Go-to” place.**

It is possible for a committee to look at issues that the government is overseeing. This could be for many reasons. A committee can shine a light on important areas that need to be addressed. They can speak up for the silent and be a leading light in a new direction. This approach, along with the media messages can be a powerful way to affect useful change.

## **To hold the Government to account.**

### **WHAT IMPACT DO YOU WANT?**



INSTITUTE  
FOR  
GOVERNMENT

To influence the government and other stakeholders

To engage your peers and your constituents.

To set an agenda that leads on an agenda and makes the committee a “Go-to” place.

To hold the government to account.

Holding a government to account is often the phrase that is used for select committees but this can also be a way of supporting and helping getting the best legislation and policies for a country.

Often a Minister is bidding for more money for their department and needs good solid arguments to get it. A committee can help deliver the arguments and recommendations and support more investment in an area.

A committee can also spend the time exploring a topic or problem the country has from a different point of view. They could ask grassroots organisations what they think should be done and therefore the outcomes and strategies can have a positive effect on joined-up-thinking.

The EIS Committee looked at “An Economic Strategy for Wales” (available at <https://spark.adobe.com/page/fWGkdywww7sGO/>). This innovative document listened to alternative voices and perspectives on what the Economy in Wales could look like. They actively engaged people who had a different perspective and this helped refocus the Government’s approach when writing their Strategy.

However, there are alternative ways to **Hold to Account**. At other times it is also essential for a committee to challenge a Government on the decisions they are making. Evaluation encourages best practice.

## Impact Media and Dress Code

There are no absolute rules for dress code. On the whole you want to

- wear colours that do not clash with the background
- wear an outfit that doesn't "upstage" you, but is simple in design
- avoid wearing scarves or things that cover your neck and hands. If you need to do this for religious or other reasons that is fine. But if you cover your neck with a large scarf it can look like you're hiding behind it. If you cover your hands or wrists it can look like you are hiding your hands and doesn't look as strong. If you're unsure, take a picture or video and get a second opinion
- wear jewellery that isn't too distracting.

**Be sensible.** Think if anyone could read anything into what you're wearing. Recently Melania Trump wore a contentious coat with a message on it, which may or may not have been on purpose. The press will often comment on dress so think about how you want to use that. Ssee appendix 3 for more information.

## DELIVER YOUR MESSAGE

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Building good relationships with the media is essential to have an impact. There are different ways to engage the media.

These are:

- Have a short soundbite prepared
- Deliver it with good body language and tone
- Know the audience and how to engage them
- Know the type of programme / newspaper you are participating in – this will help you structure your message to the audience
- Understand how long you will have with the interviewer
- Know as much as you can about the interviewer
- Be prepared for difficult questions and think of your answers beforehand.

As you build those relationships with the media you educate them in how to use the data you are collecting. Increasingly in Westminster the media are covering the witness sessions, not only when there is a dramatic scene but due to the content of the session. Increasingly committee members are asking excellent questions that get answers that take the topic to a new level.

In some committees, Ministers are choosing to make announcements at Committee inquiries, which get the Committee positive news coverage.

Know what you want the media to cover and find approaches to get them to cover your witness evidence sessions. Have a good press release (see next section) and have a clear short message prepared for interviews.

Be able to communicate the complicated message in a short sentence.

It is important to do this by preparing key messages or soundbites that the media will be able to use.

## PRESS RELEASES

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Another specific way of making an impact is by writing a short, concise and clear press release. The aim is to get coverage on your topic and get it shared widely.

While writing a press release, parliamentarians should keep in mind that its objective is to get broad media coverage. The press release will therefore require careful consideration and advance preparation. A key message can be lost in a badly written press release.

Appendix 1 has a useful guide on creating short and impactful press releases. The template sets out the key areas which should be included in a press release.

Most journalists get numerous press releases on a daily basis. So to make it stand out it could include:

- An attractive and engaging subject line.
- The heading should contain the '5WH' (who, what, why, where, when, and how)
- The news story should not be more than 300-400 words.
- A one-two line quote could be included to give an insight, but it should avoid the inclusion of any important information.

Remember journalists are very busy. Don't be afraid to write a short press release or email as it is the story they are interested in. Don't try to write the headline for them. That is their job. Be clear what the story is and why it is new.

### **Potential Action:**

Teach your aides and staff how to use the document (Appendix 1) to help you prepare a press release quickly – even when you are out in meetings. You can then edit it and give it the final go-ahead.

## CONSTRUCT YOUR MESSAGE

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It can be daunting to write a soundbite but it doesn't have to be. If you follow a clear structure you can craft a clear message. Here are a few ways to do it.

### Parallel Writing

**The Power of Threes** can be a useful structure as it is created in different ways. You can structure your message by thinking about:

- a. past, present, future - in the past we did x, now we do y and we're going to do z
- b. problem, options and solutions - here is the problem, here are the options and our solution is this....
- c. beginning middle and end - we started with, achieved x and know we can get y

Our brains hear things better when they are segmented and have structure. When we signpost moving through our ideas - the person stays engaged. Also **3** is a rather magical number. Scientists think we generally remember three things (although scientists think we can think of up to 9 things simultaneously). So if this is the case you need to choose what you want them to remember rather than leave it up to fate or chance!

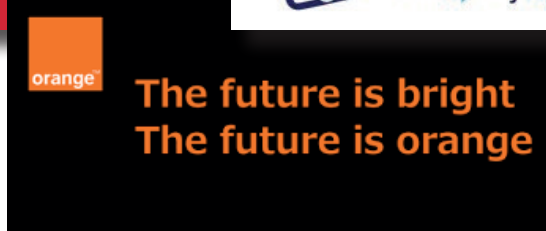
If you are pitching or presenting to Americans, they often get taught the '**power of three**' as a tool for communicating, so they expect it and like messages to be clear in this way.

To create powerful messages, the power of three can be teamed up with the **use of power verbs**.

Examples of powerful verbs are: improve, increase, develop, integrate, build. Weak verbs are things like make, do, will, are etc.

It's used in message creation and advertising all the time! It doesn't have to be combined with the power of three's but it adds to the impact of your message.

# DEALING WITH THE MEDIA



**The Rule of 3** is a simple method of structuring your message into threes.

In summary:

**Step One:** think of the **three** things that are most important to your message.

**Step Two:** get the structure right

Problem	Option	Solution
Past	Present	Future
What	Why	How
Begin	Middle	End

**Step Three:** make it memorable by making it **parallel**

**Parallel writing** is simply when the structure of the writing is consistent. So:

*“Improve the numbers; building powerful networks and a clear vision that is being developed”*

*becomes*

*“Improve the numbers - build a powerful network and develop a clear vision”*

What has changed is the verb structure, which is now the same (**from building to build**) and the structure of the phrase is the same (**from a clear vision that is being developed to develop a clear vision**).

If you read it out aloud, you may hear that it is easier to listen to.

## Contrast & Antithesis

Contrast or Antithesis writing is using words and phrases that work against each other. The comparison makes the phrases memorable.

When writing, the words don't always have to be opposite.  
E.g. if we **strengthen** our resolve we may **weaken** our flexibility

### *You can use alliteration*

E.g. we need to **influence** more clients to **increase** our client base.

**Contrast** can also be used in the selling pitch by using contrasting information. You can also use contrast to highlight the pain or worries that the client is going through – then show them how you will solve their pain. Ideally you want to also prove that you've done it before.

**Opposition** writing or antithesis is when two opposites are introduced in the same sentence for contrasting effect.

- **Under** promise, **Over** deliver
- **Tonight** we celebrate, **tomorrow** we go back to work

This writing strategy goes back centuries and decades

- “I came, I saw, I conquered”.
- “Never give in — never, never, never, never, in nothing **great** or **small**, **large** or **petty**, never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.” (by Winston Churchill)

## Keep it Short and Sweet

Reducing your message into as few words as possible can be an art. First write out your message in long form, then identify the key words, then write it again with only the key words.

### Use three strategies to create a message

- The power of 3s
- The visual 2s
- The powerful 1s







## SECTION 2

# DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH

## FIRST STEPS OF PREPARATION

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The first thing to think about is what is the topic you're going to present on. Even in a meeting you will need to look at the agenda and think "what do I want to find out from this meeting?" "What do I want to contribute?" In plenary you may ask "what do I want people to remember about this" or at constituency gatherings "what do I want them to do or know I've done".

Life is not quite as simple as that though. Everyone in the meeting will have something they want to achieve and getting them to listen may result in conflict. You need to prepare for counter questions, views and their challenges.

Part of presenting is influencing the listeners so they hear your message. If they are in a state to hear you, you have a greater chance to sell them your idea, your approach, your message and your visions. This is the way to have impact.

**Aim:** Know your outcome and if you can, hazard a guess at what outcome the audience might expect. Fill in Appendix 2 template to help in the planning process.

## HOLDING THE ROOM

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When you **stand up, sit up and speak up** you need to grab the attention in the room. You do this by "starting". This is where you take up position in the room or around the table, you take a pause and you deliver a prepared thought-through strategy. People can tell when you've prepared. It shows. The reason is you can think about other things while you're speaking. You can present rather than just speak.

You hold the room by preparing well. Why? Because you have done the thinking, you know what you've got to say so the time is about listening to who is there and making sure they hear you.

Don't worry, this doesn't need to take loads of preparation time. It's clever preparation: know your audience, prepare your structure and know your key message "teeth". Also deliver powerfully through your body language, gestures and focus.

### Memory techniques

**COMPARISON** - remember names by comparing it to a name of someone you know is famous

**SOUNDS LIKE** - what does it sound like?

**RHYME OR SONG** - link a song or rhyme to their picture e.g. Good Golly Miss Molly

It's not always wise to share your memory game with the person - they may have heard it before!!

## 70-20-100 CHALLENGE

The most important challenge you face is the 70-20-100 model. Most people remember 70% of words at the start, 20% of the middle and 100% of the end.

In a large group - you want to improve that by creating interesting peak points during the session - this way you can change the status quo and be memorable in the middle.

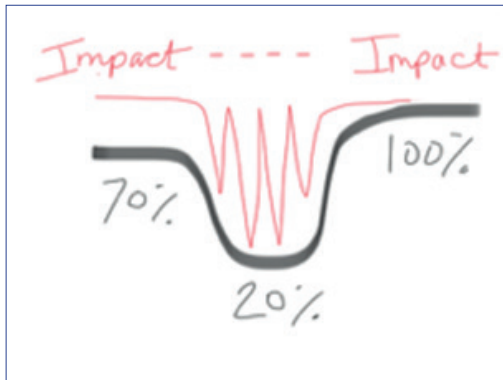
You do this by creating interesting messages, that engage the audience and are delivered in an attractive way. These are your key messages or soundbites.

You also ensure that each of your interesting messages are different and if you are delivering a presentation make sure you have a memorable ending!

The first thing you do in a meeting is meet them and say your name. Say your name and your committee's name clearly and don't rush! Think about giving them a visual or verbal cue or story to help them remember.

During that moment you may have to say their name - make sure you remember it and can pronounce it correctly! When people say your name correctly it releases an endorphin into your body. That will help make you memorable? You can repeat it when you're talking to the person. Ideally check out their names beforehand and find out the pronunciation.

Before you can work out your structure, you need to know what **OUTCOME** you want to achieve.



Researchers asked people to look at a list of words; they then took it away and asked them what words they remembered. They came up with this percentage

## 4 STRATEGIES TO START YOUR SPEECH

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You need to create an **Opener with Impact**. You can use:

1. What if
2. Imagine
3. Number play
4. Pictures

### 1. What if

When you create a **“What If” Impact Opener** you need to be aware of the number of times you use it. One is rarely enough, two to three is best and four or more is just a bit much - get the right number to make the **“what if”** sound more natural

**“What if”** is a way of controlling their thought process. See the example to the right. How would you feel if someone gave you these three options? Some people will think, “this is my dream - I’m buying this” while others will have a healthy skepticism “this can’t be real”. Both will want to know **HOW** you will achieve it and **PROOF** you’ve done it before.

So that will take up the rest of your pitch. Make sure you finish with a call to action or **IMPACT** ending.

**WOW**

**HOW**

**PROOF**

### 2. Imagine

Earnest Hemingway was out for lunch and bet his friends he could craft a whole novel in 6 words. Those words were: *For Sale: baby shoes, never worn.*

These words create stories in the listener that could range from the mundane to the deeply emotional. Use enticing language to trigger the buyers’ imagination. You don’t always need to tell them the whole story.

Entice them into your pitch or presentation. Tell them some things but not **ALL**. This should not prevent you from knowing the topline and conclusion and being able to summarise it succinctly. This is about enticing them into the detail.

The aim of a pitch or presentation is to get the buyer, who is the listener or

**What if** you got a return on your investment?

**What if** you got access to capital without conditions?

**What if** all the key people knew about you?

the client, to ask the questions you want. You want to direct them to the best questions you wish to answer, so the relaxed “chat” becomes a relaxed “sell”.

You may also want to get the face-to-face meeting. You need to prove you are worth giving up some time for. You need to develop their interest in the product. The product could be your idea, your proposal or your skills.

However, make sure you give them the clear sell not the subtle sell. Don't underplay your success!

### 3. Number play

2500

90

10

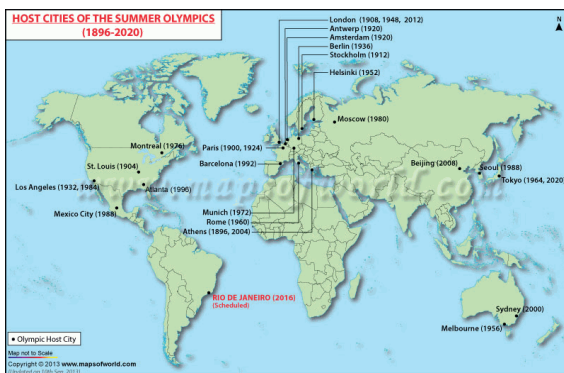
Number play introduces key numbers first. Our brains try to create patterns and make sense of information. So introducing numbers help the information stick and creates surprise. Our memories remember things that are unusual or different and a number play can help create those memories.

The reveal to this number play is - In an experiment with **2,500** pictures, **90%** of people remembered the pictures with an exposure of only **10 seconds**.

If you could create a number play for your pitch or presentation, what could it be?

### 4. Use pictures

79% of people are visual learners so if you use pictures they are more likely to be remembered. The team that pitched for Rio as the Host of the Olympic games won it by showing a picture of the locations of the host cities. It showed clearly that South America and Africa were the only continents that had not hosted the Games. This and their powerful pitch, won them the bid.



# DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH

## **What other things could you do to make an impact at the beginning of your speech?**

A speech can be many things in many places. A speech may also be how you deliver a talk or a question in plenary.

- Think about how you start and how you end. These are the keys to increasing your memorability and impact.
- Plan these phrases to get noticed.
- Prepare your key messages throughout the speech.

If you are delivering a short speech or question in plenary make it memorable. What are your audience interested in?

Here is an example of Senator Durbin making his 4 minutes count in the Mark Zuckerberg session in the US Senate. He asked if Mark Zuckerberg would share the details of his hotel or messages he sent. This gained wide media coverage.



<https://www.cnn.com/video/2018/04/10/sen-durbin-asks-zuckerberg-if-he-would-share-what-hotel-he-stayed-at-during-congressional-testimony.html>

## FEAR AND RESILIENCE

It's quite natural to feel apprehensive or worried before an interview. In politics you can feel under attack so you need to manage your mental and physical approach to keep calm or control of your speech.

The trick is to plan – not only what you'll say, but what you will do if things don't go to plan.

1. Prepare your message
2. Plan for difficult questions
3. Keep your body balanced to help your mind stay balanced
4. Manage your breath – breathe low to relax

We've covered the first two in the previous sections, now let's look at the next two.

### Mind-Set & Body

The Mercedes model shows how our thoughts, feelings and body language are all linked.

Our thoughts relate to our internal dialogue and the pictures we run in our mind are like a movie.

Our feelings are the barometer of emotions. Are we anxious or confident, positive or negative?

Our physiology includes how our behaviour plays out in different scenarios. How we might stand, walk or gesture are represented in this section.

What we are discussing here is how to be in charge of your thoughts, feelings and behaviours. We have to increase our self-awareness to be aware of any negative thoughts that get in the way of us being brave. We need to be very attentive to our emotions and feelings and have the skill to understand them. An easier way to manage our behaviour is to change our body language or physiology. A small shift from slouching to standing upright with balanced posture can change our mindset and with it our thoughts and feelings.



# DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH

When you need to speak in front of the media or to a large crowd, it is essential to be able to manage your thoughts, feelings and gestures. You may always feel nervous but you need to balance out your reactions. Body posture is a great way to start.



If you slouch when you speak, it cuts off the easy flow of breath from your lungs to your voice. This makes your voice go higher and sound less authoritative. It also can make it quieter.

Notice when you have your arms crossed it pulls your chest in, your eyes down and makes you think more internally. When you open your hands and place them in the middle of your body and use them to speak, your tone becomes more engaged and you connect more with your eyes. This change in gesture and body language can create a different, more positive response from those around you.

You only need to make a small change to make a big difference.

## Body Language

When you walk on to a stage or into a room, the first thing people notice is how you look and how you appear. It's essential you look confident, no matter what you feel. Looking authoritative and confident is simply a technique of how you hold your shoulders and head.

## Wall Angels Exercise

Practice **'Wall Angels'** to get your upper body balanced.

Wall Angels are when you put your feet up to a wall and raise and lower your arms against the wall. Start with your arms up straight above your head then lower your elbows until they are in line with your shoulders. Repeat two more times. Try to get your arms onto the wall but only do what your body can do easily. Don't force anything. This is a great way to put the **'Mercedes Model'** into action.

You should feel your head more straight on, your shoulders further down your back, your chest more open (but not pushed out). Some people feel it in their back too. You shouldn't feel it in your lower back. If unsure please see a physiotherapist or doctor. Go at your own body's pace; you know it better than anyone else.



It's good to stretch out the back after the exercise. Stretch your arms out in front of you to release any tension in the back.

If you do this exercise in the morning regularly, it will start making a difference to your day-to-day posture.

## **Feet and shoulders**

Where your feet are your shoulders follow. Always make sure your feet are balanced, as this will affect how your upper body is positioned.

Be aware of this when you stand AND sit. Even if you are doing radio or newspaper interviews think about your body position. If you are sitting in a balanced way you are more likely to be flexible and prepared mentally to deal with difficult situations

Balance is also key to looking authoritative. Some people can tend to lean on one leg. If this happens, the shoulders get out of place, the upper body sinks in and the focus can tend to look down. Keep your legs and hips balanced and the rest will fall into place more easily.

## **Hands**

We look at other people's hands when they speak. Hands are a barometer of our emotions or at least we read them like that. When speaking keep your hands in the middle of your body so they frame your face. Be aware where your hands are in relation to the camera shot. When sitting around a table, make sure your hands are in view.

## **Manage your breath**

We often breathe in to help us relax. However sometimes we can breath into the upper part of our lungs, which increases our anxiety and stress response. Aim to breathe into your lower lungs or stomach.

Here are three ways to practise:

1. Breathe all the way out – as if you're blowing into a balloon. When we breathe all the way out to the end of our breath, our body has to take in breath in the most efficient way. Blow into a balloon then notice your next breath – you may find it is deep and low.
2. Nostril breathing. Try it out and see if it works for you. See the instructions in the blue box overleaf.
3. 6/4 breath. A simple way of thinking about it is making your out breath longer than your in breath. This way we trick the mind into thinking there is nothing to fear! We are stopping the adrenalin kicking in!

# DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH



1. Use the hand gesture pictured above if possible.
2. Close the right nostril and breathe deeply through the left nostril
3. At the end of the breath, hold both nostrils then exhale through the right nostril.
4. With the left nostril now closed, breathe through the right nostril, at the end of the breath hold both nostrils then exhale through the left nostril.

Repeat 2 more times.

Aim to have the in and out breaths the same length

You may notice the breath easily going into the tummy.

This also helps relax the mind as well as the body.

***If we balance the body and manage our breath we can have more control over our thoughts and feelings. Coupled with planning this is a great way to reduce anxiety.***

## Mind-set

Here are different ways to manage your mind-set.

### Listen to peers

You are members of parliament. You have been elected to have your voice heard and your position considered. Remember all the women around the world who can't be heard. Speak up for them!

### Visualise

Some people have a strong sense of visualisation. It can be useful to imagine

yourself in the situation and it going well. Even better, go to the room you will be having the meeting in and do your pitch there. Sounds crazy but it works. New environments can make us feel more edgy.

## Anchor positive emotions

This is about remembering positive previous experiences and times when you felt empowered. We anchor those feelings and remember them when we need them.

## Belief Change

Often we believe in things and realise that they are not true e.g. the tooth fairy or Santa Claus. So beliefs are simply constructs we make. If you believe you aren't a good speaker, this may simply be a belief not a truth. Deciding that a negative belief isn't useful and deciding to change it (even for a while) can be a useful technique to getting over nerves in presentations.

## Worry

Worry is an interesting one. It's very difficult to stop ourselves from worrying, even if we tell ourselves things like "Worrying won't help". The best antidote to worry is practicing. The more you practice and the more often you do the pitch the easier it will get. If you are going to do a pitch over a number of meetings, it might be worthwhile measuring out of 10 how you feel about the 1st one and then how you feel about the 5th one. Once you realise that you can do it, you feel more comfortable.

If you realise this, you will also realise that the next time you have to do a set of pitches, it may be the same process of nerves but perhaps you can reduce the nerves by the 2nd one!

There is also a 4-step process to stop worrying:

1. Define exactly what you are worrying about
2. Identify what the worst thing that could happen would be
3. Agree to cope with the worst case. Tell yourself "if that happens, I'll cope"
4. Do everything to ensure the worst won't happen: practice, do your research, plan!

## Keeping calm

Our head often gets out of balance when we crave to be brilliant or worry about the consequences of failure. Try and think like an athlete – **be ready but relaxed**. Be in the moment. Do your preparation then trust yourself to deliver it as you practiced it.

How we deliver our message is essential if we want to be heard. Here are a few things to think about when you deliver your message.

## DELIVERY

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### Focus technique

Think about how to engage the whole audience. People want to feel that you are connecting with them

Being able to control where your focus is can take practice. It's useful to practice with friends to get this subconscious reaction more conscious and proactive.

Good focus technique is about looking at people for a short period of time and connecting with them. This is where you want to make it like a conversation with one person even though there are a large number of people in the room.

#### Individual

Use the eye-eye-mouth or eye-eye-forehead technique to avoid the intensity of the eyes.

#### Group

Make sure you move your attention round the whole group. Try to link your message with the person you are talking to.

### Hand Position

Starting with the hands in the middle looks great and confident. Or if you're sitting have them above the table and in front of you. Try not to lean on the table.

Make sure the fingers look relaxed. It may take some getting used to but it's worth practicing. Hands are a barometer of feelings. If your hands look nervous – the listeners think you're nervous and then feel nervous.

Aim not to point, or push the hands and make them congruent with what you're saying. The hand gestures are best when they back up what you're saying.

### Tone

One sure way to make you sound and look confident is to prepare a strong open and close. The audience tends to remember this more than the middle section.

We can usually assume that an audience will only remember three things from a presentation so it's important to identify what those key messages are before you start and weave it into the presentation. Aim to repeat those messages 3 times in similar but slightly different ways or using the same soundbite.

Find your own tone to sell you and your brand. Know what your voice sounds like and use it to its advantage.

Tone is two things;

1. Note variety - this is your voice being on different notes, which keeps the audience interested. You can have note variety but no emotional variety. This voice can sound a bit "staged".
2. Emotional variety - is when you show through your voice how you feel about what you're talking about and therefore how you want the audience to feel. Think about this - do you want them to feel excited; committed; hopeful; serious. Decide on what emotion you want to leave them with and incorporate this into how you're speaking

You need to get both right.

Also remember: **Held hands = held tone.** Getting your hands right - keeping them relaxed, open and using gestures can help make your tone more interesting.

Think about how you want your audience to feel about what you're saying and make sure you use the same "song" in your voice.

Some people go up at the end of a sentence when they talk - even when they are not asking a question. This can lower status if it sounds like you're always questioning.

## Hand gesture

Use your hand gestures to create visuals that make sense of the concept. This way the audience has a number of cues to remember the data or information.

Make sure the hand gestures back up the words that you are saying. This is called congruence.

- Do not point at people when you speak as they feel they're being told off
- Do not push away hands as it can alienate.
- Keep your hands open and relaxed and this way you will look trustworthy and open.

## Emphasis

Be aware of how you emphasize words. Ensure you match emphasis, hand gesture, hand position and tone to create a congruent message.

## Umms and Errs

When we're thinking, we can use all sorts of space fillers. They detract from the message.

We mostly only hear 1 in 10 words when we speak. So we need to make sure that the one they hear isn't UM!





## SECTION 3

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## 3 RULES OF Q&A

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1. 3 ways to avoid a question
2. 3 ways to ask a question
3. 3 ways to answer a question

### 3 ways to avoid a question

1. **Bridging** - answer the question briefly then follow with what you want to say.
2. **Flagging** - helps your audience to remember the key bit of information
3. **Hooking** - you leave a bit of the answer out which suggests the next question

When you get asked a question in the media there can be a few reasons you want to avoid. A few reasons may be;

1. It can't be answered simply and if you did answer it simply you may be misrepresented. Or you may not have an answer.
2. It's not the area you think is important and don't want to public to concentrate on.
3. The questioner's reasoning may be flawed in your view and you need to get the topic back on track.

Whatever the reason these three approaches can help you stay in control of the interview.

**Bridging** is a way of moving the subject from their question to your pre-prepared response. It can also be about moving the subject back onto the topic that you feel is relevant. There are various ways to do it but here are a few examples:

- Yes that is interesting, I believe....
- I understand (summarise what they're asking ) is important and we also need to....

Bridging is a way of changing subject "gears" and moving on to a different subject or topic area.

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### Being on the other side of bridging

If you are in a committee and a witness is bridging here are two approaches you could take:

- Thank them for their answer then re-ask the original question
  - Clarify that they are not answering your question and re-say it.
- 

**Flagging** is a way of highlighting something to help focus the listener to a key bit of information.



For example;  
What we found to be the **most important** area was...  
The **key thing** here is ...  
What **your viewers** may find interesting is...

A listener or viewer's attention will be attracted by the words **important** and **interesting**. This will encourage them to listen to the information that follows.

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### Being on the other side of Flagging

If you have a witness that is doing this, thank them for the extra information they have given you and get them back on purpose. Don't be distracted by their response.

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**Hooking** is when you leave out a bit of information that you know will interest the person asking the question.

For example:  
We will be doing a survey this quarter.  
We have some more results on that

Another way of hooking is to understand the passion and interest topics of the presenter and mention the area. For example if you know they are interested in the topic of agriculture issues you may simply say " This links to agricultural issues" and leave it there. If they are curious about it there is a chance they will want to ask you more.

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### Being on the other side of hooking

Don't fall for it. Keep on purpose. Remember witnesses do their background research so will know what interests you. Be careful not to fall for this. If you go off track the result will be less time for questions on other areas that need exploration

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### 3 ways to ask a question

1. **Open**
2. **Focused Open**
3. **Closed**

When you are learning how to ask questions the most important thing to learn is the difference between an **open and closed question**. The main reason for this is that a closed question often gives the person answering free rein to respond however they want.

When we are taught about **closed questions** we are told that they are questions that result in a **YES or NO** answer. In polite society very few people respond to a closed question with one word. In order to look polite they

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**TED's PIE** is useful when learning the different structures of open and closed questions.

**T**= Tell me...  
**E**= Explain...  
**D**= Describe...  
**S**= Show me...

**P**= ...precisely...  
**I**= ...in detail...  
**E**= ...exactly...

**5WH**= ...Who, What, Where, When, Why and How...

So... **Explain in detail where the idea came from?**

Be aware of how you structure the start of the question and you will get better at being more disciplined in your questions.



answer with a longer response.

When in a public arena you want to be in control of the direction of inquiry. If you ask a closed question at the beginning you are in danger of allowing the person to respond in any way they wish.

For example, if you were asked. "Do you agree that we need to act on..."  
The person answering could simply bridge to another topic without much difficulty

For example "What we need to do is...."

They don't even need to navigate the question.

If this was asked using an open question

For example "In what three ways do you think we need to act?"

It is more difficult to avoid a response. Or if you do it is more obvious to the watchers and listeners that you are avoiding it.

TED's PIE and 5WH are simple techniques in remembering how to start a sentence that creates an **Open Question**.

When you get more skilled you can use closed questions after the open questions.

For example: In what three ways do you think we need to act"  
They respond with three examples.

You reply “Will you implement those responses immediately?”

The Closed question when used after an open question narrows down their action.

### So the key message is

- Start with an Open Question
- Know when you are using an Open and Closed Question
- Use a closed question to push for action

### 3 ways to answer a question

#### 1. Parallel threes

#### 2. Antithesis or opposition twos

#### 3. Create a visual message or one short phrase or sound bite.

**Power of 3s** is a technique used in speech delivery and it refers to a collection of three words, phrases, sentences, or lines. This technique allows to express concepts more completely, emphasise the points, and increase the memorability of the message. For example Stop, Look and Listen; I came, I saw, I conquered; or Faster, Higher, Stronger. **Visual 2s** is the use of antithesis (direct opposite of something) in a conversation to attract attention. An example of this is “that’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind” by Neil Armstrong, or “We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.” by Martin Luther King, Jr. **Powerful 1s** is a technique to create a visual message or one short phrase or sound bite to attract your audience.

What is important in all three strategies is that you have a short phrase that is memorable. Ideally you want a phrase that is about 10 seconds long. This helps to be more memorable. You also want to make sure that you use simple words, with less than three syllables as again this makes them more memorable.

The key message here is **PREPARE PREPARE PREPARE !**

## THE MEDIA PANEL

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When you are presenting to a media panel you need to think about where to sit. What is the best place to get the attention of the presenter? Look at the programme before you go on. What are the camera angles they use? Are there better seats than others. You may or may not have control over where you sit but you are more likely to be able to negotiate this if you have a clear idea of what you want.

When in a media panel, make sure you listen. The most important thing is that you have clear short messages to deliver. No matter how the question is phrased, know what you want to say. If you have clarity about your message you will be more likely to speak up and say it. Do not let other people dominate the conversation. Make sure you get your message out. Aim to be polite and courteous as it will make you look good with the public. Aim to stay calm. Be aware or clarify beforehand, if possible what parameters the journalist is working to. Many journalists decide what story they want to discuss and keep the focus narrow. You are less likely to be asked back if you keep straying into new or different territory. Be disciplined about keeping on topic. If, however, you feel other areas need to be explored remember to use bridging, flagging and hooking.

### Things to think about in a panel:

- Where are you sitting and what is your eyeline to the interviewer and the camera? How will the camera film you? Think of this BEFORE you get to the studio. Watch the programmes before you turn up.
- Plan and practise delivering your message beforehand if you can.
- Practice with your team beforehand – even if it's just for 5 minutes! Don't wear anything too distracting. Keep it simple.
- Have some phrases

### Influencing on a panel

A simple way to influence on a panel is to summarise what other people have said in your own words and then adding your point. This can even work if you agree with parts of the argument of someone from another party.

Show that you are reasonable and honest and not afraid to agree with the opposition.

## After the panel

Be clear about the type of media messaging you conduct **before, during and after** a panel. If you use social media be clear what is being said and ensure you can influence the reaction.

## INTERVIEWS AFTER A CRISIS

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Politicians are often asked to comment after a crisis. Be prepared for this. What constituents and audiences expect is for you to care.

Show your concern. Tell them what action you are going to take and if necessary put it into perspective. You may want to ensure people keep calm. Use your emotional intelligence and seek advice if in doubt. Many political careers have been cut short because they didn't think of the impact of their words after a crisis.

Think of the three things people worry about after a crisis – the people involved, the environment after the crisis and potentially the safety of their property.

The same rules for all messages apply. Plan your message, plan for difficult questions, and think through what could happen. Also know who is interviewing you and the type of news outlet it is. This will help you understand the types of questions they may ask you.

## SPOT QUESTIONS

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If something has happened in the country or in the news there is a chance you will be asked to deliver an answer on the spot. If you know something has happened, it is good practice to think what you'd say. **Plan and Prepare** if you can. If you can't think of deferring it and say you are making a comment later. If you need to answer immediately use the 3,2, or 1 technique if you can.

Often in the media there are 3 types of person they want to interview

**The Victim** - is the person who has suffered an injury or injustice

**The Villain** - is the one to blame

**The Vindicator** - is the one who has and can solve it

Be aware of which role you are being cast in before you decide to say yes.



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## SECTION 4

# COMMUNICATING WITH COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## COMMUNICATING WITH COLLEAGUES

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### Leadership

What type of leader are you? A leader that inspires and encourages action from their members can achieve great results.

Some members get disinterested when they don't feel their presence makes a difference. Encouraging them to be part of the process is key to engagement.



**Authoritative** style helps in getting work done but the leader runs the risk of being seen as an autocrat, often inviting criticism. On the other hand Collaborative style is more democratic and involves a participatory approach. However, too much of **collaborative** style paves the way for open disagreement at times when the leader needs to take a firm action, thus causing significant delays.

It is up to the chair and vice-chair to use the style they feel would best fit their committee. A chair with the combination of both is more likely to succeed.

### Rapporteur

Rapporteurs play a vital role in the work of committees. Rapporteurs are committee members appointed by chairs to take notes during the sessions and develop a draft report. They thus play an important role in report writing. In UK, Committees are increasingly using rapporteur technique to enhance the quality of their reports. This style involves all the committee members of a committee as rapporteurs as opposed to a few.

In Rapporteur style, small sub-committees of 3-4 members are formed. Every week each sub-committee members work as rapporteurs. They conduct in-depth research on a topic and present their findings to other committee members. This approach results in the reduced amount of work for individuals at the same time improving the quality of research and depth of understanding.

Members in UK have found that they are more effective as they can manage their time efficiently.



## Team contract and clarity

How do you work as a team?

Clarity and communication is key to great teamwork. Think about discussing the obvious – especially with new members. People can worry about upsetting other people. By being clear, people feel confident about how to work in the team.

Here are some questions you could ask each other:

### The team

- How do you contact each other – do you have each other's numbers?
- Do you meet outside of the session?
- How do you use social media as an individual or as a group?
- When do you prepare? Are there ways to improve your preparation?
- When do you plan our questions? How do you allocate questions?
- How do you interject?
- What happens if people ask a very long question?

### Behaviour

- How do you behave with each other?
- What happens if someone talks too much and doesn't enable the best witness session? How do you communicate this back to the committee member?
- How do you evaluate success and improvements?

### Engagement

- Do all members suggest witnesses?
- Do you suggest inquiries or letters to write to ministers?
- How do you engage your constituents in a cross party nature?
- Do members suggest visits to local areas of interest linked to inquiries you are covering?
- How do you engage your network of contacts?

# APPENDIX 1

## PRESS RELEASE FRAMEWORK

Subject Line	**PRESS RELEASE**
Headline in Subject	
Top Line (5WH) (Who, what, where, when, why and how)	
Tell the story - in 300-400 words MAX One idea per paragraph. Keep paragraphs short.	Don't be tempted to put in the background information. This section should only contain information on the story.
Para 1 Para 2 Para 3	
Put in a quote (in italics)	Use a quote to give insight and a personal touch Don't use it to give information. Or use jargon - it sound like a person actually said it
<b>A quote</b> should be one or two sentences long. Write it here.	" ....."
<b>Notes to the editor:</b> This might also include who is available to interview and when they are free.	
<b>Background information on the story or the person.</b>	
<b>Press contacts:</b> Name, mobile, email	
Press kit - where to get it online	
Photos or videos they can use.	
Times available	

## SPEECH PREPARATION

Meeting / Speech / Panel or Interview	
Topic?	Who will be there/ interview you/ on the panel?
Your key message?	What are their interests?  What are they likely to say or speak about?
Outcome: What is your desired outcome? (E.g. what do you want people to remember)  What are the others desired outcome? (E.g. their message/ agenda)	
Ideas or opening (what if, numbers, imagine or set the context)	Ideas for closing (parallel, opposition or a summary phrase)
Key messages and phrases 1. 2. 3.	
Things to think about e.g. where your feet are, the chair, the microphone, the cameras	How to engage listeners. Who are the listeners/ viewers/ audience? What topics are they interested in?
Possible challenges	How to deal with them:

# APPENDIX 2

## UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

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Everybody has some form of bias. It's useful to be aware of two types of bias: Prescriptive and Descriptive Bias.

These are simply expectations people put on women.

Some people expect women and girls to behave in a particular way. They **prescribe** certain things like how women and girls "should" behave

Some people **describe** women and girls in a particular way. This is usually based on their own beliefs about what women and girls "should" look like. It can also link to their own expectations of the roles women "should" take.

The more we learn about the brain and society the more we realise that these descriptions and expectations are simply made up expectations not realistic biological or neuro-typical traits. In short, they are not based on any facts.

**Harvard IAT tests – Implicit Association Tests**  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

You can increase your awareness about your bias when you do the Harvard IAT Test. Follow the instructions and find out where your bias may lie. Do it as quickly as you can to get the most accurate results. **Remember women can be biased against women too.**

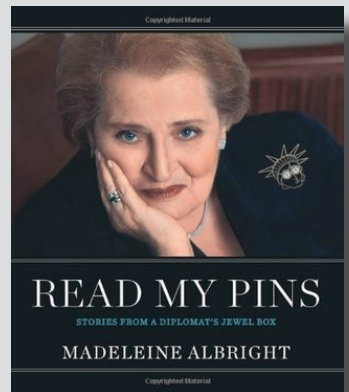
## MEDIA & WOMEN'S CLOTHES

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It is difficult to stop the media doing things you don't want. You can get clever about it though.

Madeleine Albright, was the first female US Secretary of State. She got fed up with people talking about her clothes so she decided to turn things around. Every time she went out in public she wore a relevant brooch or "pin". Each pin represented what she wanted to talk about that day.

Her brooches then had their own story. Her book "read my pins" and later an exhibition of her "pins" had their own fame and ensured she got her message out to the people that mattered.

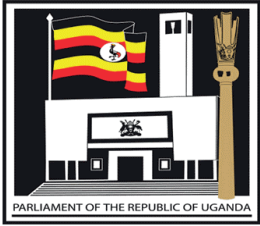








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