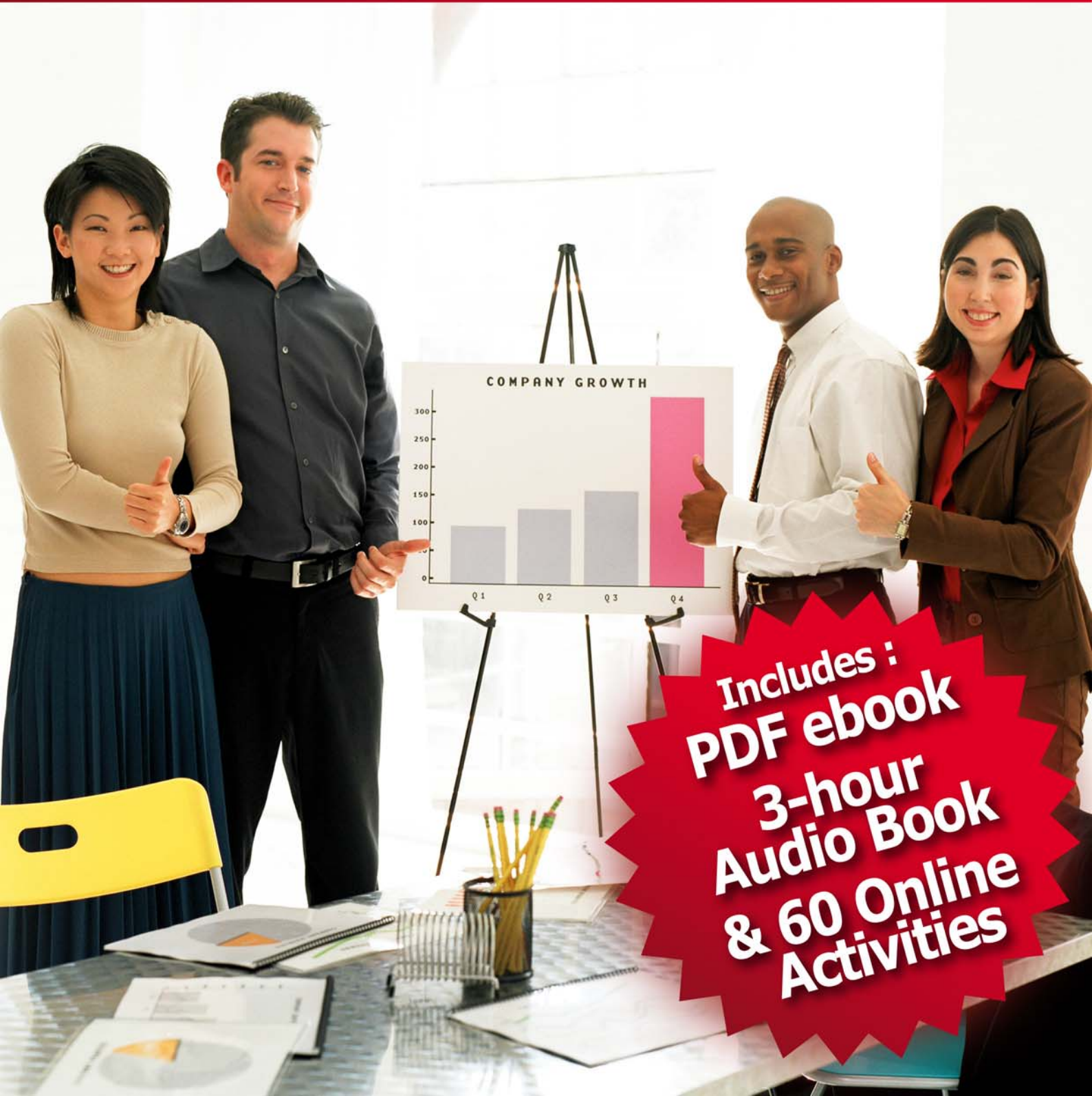




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# Presenting for Success

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## Unit 6 (BEP 106) – Using Your Voice

When I say “using your voice to give a good presentation,” what comes to mind? Perhaps the first thing you think of is speaking fluently and clearly. Another important question is how to emphasize your ideas.

In this episode we’ll be studying these points – how to speak naturally and how to highlight ideas. In addition, we’ll be looking at a few expressions and phrases you can use to add extra emphasis to your presentation.

Today’s listening takes place at PharmaTek, a major international pharmaceutical manufacturer based in Switzerland. Today a group of European journalists are taking a tour of PharmaTek’s new high-potency production center in Beijing, which is scheduled to start making PharmaTek’s new blockbuster medication, Zorax, in the fall of 2007. “Blockbuster” means hugely successful. “High-potency production” refers to using highly potent or very strong chemicals. This is a manufacturing technique that requires state-of-the-art or very advanced technology.

We’ll be hearing PharmaTek employees introduce the new plant. Let’s start with a couple bad examples, where the voice needs a lot of work. Listen to Gunter Schmidt, the manager of Pharmatek’s corporate affairs division. As you listen, focus on his voice. What does he do wrong?

### Vocabulary

**To highlight:** To emphasize something or draw attention to it. “We don’t need to highlight our failures; instead, let’s focus on what we have accomplished.”

**Blockbuster:** Adjective that describes something that is hugely successful. “There weren’t that many blockbuster movies this year, but Rush Hour 3 was definitely one of them – it had spectacular profits!”

**High-potency production:**

This refers to using highly potent or very strong chemicals. This is a manufacturing technique that requires very advanced technology.

**State-of-the-art:** Adjective; describes the most advanced technology currently available. “The best possible protection for the environment comes from using state-of-the-art pollution filtration technology.”

**To be devoted to sth or sby:** To be committed. “We are devoted to serving your needs.”

**Sustainable development:** Refers to development that can be sustained or maintained over the long term. It usually has an environmental meaning: “To protect the environment, it’s important to pursue sustainable development of business and resources.”

**To embody:** To embody means to represent or symbolize. “Our employees’ willingness to donate blood embodies our company’s civic spirit.”



**Gunter's bad version:**

Here at PharmaTek not only are we devoted to improving patients' quality of lives. Simultaneously, we are committed to protecting the environment. That's why the high-potency production center has adopted state-of-the-art "green" technology and advanced international production techniques.

What do you think? It sounds like Gunter has maybe had too much coffee or forgotten to take out his chewing gum, doesn't it?

So what are the main problems with Gunter's speech?

First of all, he doesn't clearly enunciate or pronounce his words, does he? All of us can relate to Gunter's problem: When you're speaking a foreign language, you should actually slow your speech down and do your best to speak clearly. But it's tempting to speed up and blend words together so that you can hide any problems you might have with your pronunciation. However, doing this makes your speech hard to understand.

**Gunter's bad version:**

Here at PharmaTek not only are we devoted to improving patients' quality of lives.

It's almost impossible to clearly make out "not only are we," isn't it?

After a little coaching, Gunter does a much better job. Let's listen to his improved version.

Here at PharmaTek, // not only are we completely devoted // to improving patients' quality of life ...

The words are much more clearly enunciated, aren't they?

Now, let's go back to Gunter's bad example again. What other problems were there with his speech?

**Gunter's bad version:**

That's why the high-potency production center has adopted state-of-the-art "green" technology and advanced international production techniques.

In addition to poor enunciation, Gunter is speaking too fast, isn't he?

Contrary to popular belief, it's actually quite hard to change the speed at which you speak. The rate at which you actually produce syllables or parts of words is called "articulation rate." For most speakers it is fixed, that is, it doesn't change very much, even if they try.

So what does it mean when it sounds like someone is speaking too fast? Well, what it actually means is that they are making fewer pauses.

Making more pauses can be very good for your speech. When you listen to a politician or to a trained speaker, you find that they pause more frequently. Also, the length of the pauses is longer than normal. This gives the impression that

the length of the pauses is longer than normal. This gives the impression that the speech is much slower, and lends an air of strength or authority to the speaker.

Let's listen to a better example, where Gunter makes more frequent and longer pauses.

### **Gunter's good version:**

That's why the high-potency production center // has adopted state-of-the-art "green" technology // and advanced international production techniques.

In this example, Gunter sounds like he has more authority and seems more professional, doesn't he? Speaking more slowly – that is adding more frequent and longer pauses to your speech – will add power to your presentation.

Also, breaking the words down into smaller groups makes them easier to say, which will help your speech become clear and more fluent.

Now, let's listen to another bad example. This time, we'll hear Tanya Witherspoon-Chen, who is corporate communications manager for PharmaTek China, the company's joint venture in China. She is trying to give the same speech that Gunter just did.

### **Tanya's bad version:**

Here at PharmaTek not only are we devoted to improving patients' quality of lives. Simultaneously, we are committed to protecting the environment. That's why the high-potency production center has adopted state-of-the-art "green" technology and advanced international production techniques.

It's painful to listen to, isn't it? What's the problem? Well, she has enough pauses, but they are not in the right places. This sounds not fluent or "choppy." "Choppy" means she stops in all the wrong places. Tanya needs a little coaching: She needs to divide her words into grammatically logical groups. To help herself speak more fluently, she needs to use longer and more frequent pauses.

Let's listen to Tanya giving the same presentation, but this time she has received some coaching and she does a much better job. Also, she has added a few words to give special emphasis to her talk.

### **Tanya's good version:**

Here at PharmaTek, // not only are we completely devoted // to improving patients' quality of life. // At the same time, // we are totally committed // to protecting the environment. // That's why the high-potency production center// has adopted state-of-the-art "green" technology // and advanced international production techniques. // Thus we achieve a high level of protection // for the environment and for workers. // Also // this serves as a model of excellence for other production lines. // And above all // it embodies PharmaTek's commitment // to sustainable development. // So, please come this way // and I'll be glad to show you the production line ....

We've already talked about pausing. Tanya has arranged her words into grammatically logical groups, such as adverbial phrases, subjects, predicates, and so on. Listen again:

Here at PharmaTek, // not only are we completely devoted // to improving patients' quality of life. // At the same time, // we are totally committed // to protecting the environment.

There are clear pauses after "PharmaTek," "devoted" "life," "time," and "committed." These pauses break the speech down into logical groups. Note that Tanya could have even added more pauses if she wanted to. For example, she could have said, "not only // are we completely devoted // to improving // patient's quality of lives." Even with more pauses, as long as Tanya divides her speech into grammatically logical groups, she will sound fluent. To sum up, "not fluent" or choppy speech comes from improper pausing, not from pausing too much.

Now, there is another level that we need to pay attention to when we talk about voice. That is "intonation" or the rise and fall in pitch. For example, in English, as you know, most "yes/no" questions have a rising intonation:

- Are you free for dinner?
- Have you finished the report?

On the other hand, Wh-questions (where, when, who, etc.) have a falling intonation:

- What are you doing later?
- How is the report coming along?

Going back to Tanya's speech, when do you hear rising intonation and when do you hear falling intonation?

Here at PharmaTek, // not only are we completely devoted // to improving patients' quality of life. // At the same time, // we are totally committed // to protecting the environment. //

The pitch goes up at the end of the first sentence after "quality of life" and down at the end of the second sentence after "protecting the environment." Why is that? Well, in English, basically, intonation goes down at the end of an idea: "Not only A" (rising intonation) "but also B" (falling intonation).

Listen to another example.

// That's why the high-potency production center// has adopted state-of-the-art "green" technology // and advanced international production techniques. //

The intonation rises after "production center" and "green' technology" and finishes at the end of her idea (and of her sentence) which is after "techniques."

## Presenting for Success

Listen to a few more sentences with rising and falling intonations.

- Our products range from high-end industrial printers // to low-end consumer models.
- Success in business requires four things: Hard work, vision, luck, and good relationships.
- This is not a matter of cutting costs, // but of increasing profit.

Good, so far we've covered two major parts of making your voice smooth and fluent – pausing and intonation. Now, we're going to look at the third important element in using your voice to give a good presentation: stress and emphasis.

Going back to Tanya's speech, did you notice anything different about the content compared to the bad example? To emphasize her points, she has made use of some intensifying or strengthening adverbs, such as "completely" or "totally."

not only are we completely devoted // to improving patients' quality of life. // At the same time, // we are totally committed // to protecting the environment.

This type of adverb is sometimes called an intensifier. Listen to some more examples of their use.

- There is absolutely no room for compromise on this issue.
- This is a terribly important problem to tackle.
- As far as I can see, we have completely failed in implementing this marketing plan.
- In the past six months, we have totally succeeded in meeting our targets.
- We really need to reinvent our whole branding strategy.
- This market is highly competitive.

One thing you might have noted from these examples is that we frequently use our voice to add extra emphasis to intensifying adverbs. That is, instead of just saying, "We are totally committed," we can say "We are totally committed." Let's call this extra emphasis "stressing a word." Using your voice to stress key words is another important strategy that good presenters use. Let's take a look at a couple more examples from Tanya's speech. Which words are emphasized?

// That's why the high-potency production center// has adopted state-of-the-art "green" technology // and advanced international production techniques.

Did you hear the stress on "state-of-the-art" and "advanced.". These are key points, things that differentiate PharmaTek from the competitors, so Tanya wants to give them special emphasis.

// Thus we achieve a high level of protection // for the environment and for workers.

In this case, Tanya stresses the word "and" to highlight the point that protection for workers is important.

It's important to be conscious of how stress can change meaning. Listen to these two examples.

1. Our sales have improved in Western Europe.
2. Our sales have improved in *Western* Europe.

What's the difference in meaning between these two sentences? By stressing Western, the second sentence makes it sound like our sales have improved in Western Europe, but not elsewhere in Europe – perhaps not in Central or Eastern Europe.

So far today we've already studied pausing, intonation and stress. Now, let's finish off by looking at a couple words and expressions that Tanya uses to add emphasis to her speech.

// Also this serves as a model of excellence for other production lines. // And above all // it embodies PharmaTek's commitment // to sustainable development.

"Sustainable development" refers to development that can be sustained or maintained over the long term. It usually has an environmental meaning: To protect the environment, it's important to pursue sustainable development of business and resources.

"To embody a commitment" is a good collocation or word partnership that you should learn. "Embody" means to represent or symbolize. So PharmaTek's high-tech, green production lines embody—that is represent or serve as symbol of—its commitment to long-term, sustainable growth.

Now, compared to the bad example we examined at the beginning, what words has Tanya added her to make her ideas clearer and to give emphasis to key points? She has added "And above all" to the last sentence to give special weight to PharmaTek's commitment to sustainable development. What are some other phrases you can use to add special emphasis to your key ideas? Let's look at some examples:

- In particular, improving quality is very important.
- Above all, we need to think of more ways to improve sales.
- Without a doubt, opening up new markets is our greatest challenge.
- I'd like to emphasize our complete dedication to this project.
- What's especially important is that we consider this challenge from all angles and take into account different perspectives.

Good, now let's practice what we have just learnt.

Imagine you are giving a speech to introduce your new factory to some journalists. You have to make three key points: Your new production center uses advanced technology, protects the environment and workers, and embodies your commitment to sustainable development. In a moment, you'll hear a cue or hint reminding you of these three points. Then, you'll have a few seconds to think. After the beep, make a sentence that includes all three key ideas. Be careful to

put your words into logical grammatical groups to sound smooth and fluent. Also, think about intonation: For example, the pitch should fall when you at the end of your idea. Finally, you should try using your voice or some emphasizing words to add special stress to a key point or two. Are you ready? Let's give it a try:

**Cue:** Uses advanced technology / protects the environment and workers / embodies our commitment to sustainable development.

**Learner:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did that go? Listen to an example answer.

### Example Answer:

Our new production center // uses *advanced* technology // *completely* protects the environment // *and* workers // and // above all // embodies our commitment // to sustainable development.

Keep in mind that there are many possible correct answers. Rewind and try it again. Try stressing different words and using different intensifiers and emphasizing expressions. What happens when you put the words in a different order? Experiment.

Now that you've finished that, you'll probably be thinking of more ways to practice.

One good way to build fluency is to record yourself reading aloud. Work on the strategies we've learned today: First, before you read, mark pauses on the paper with a pencil. You can also use arrows to mark intonation, either up or down, and you can underline words you wish to stress.

You should practice "anticipating," that is reading ahead. While you're making a pause, look at the next group of words. Focus on putting the words into grammatically logical groups. Don't be afraid to pause frequently and to make longer pauses. You can always practice speeding up later if you want.

And that's about all for this episode on using your voice to give a good presentation. We've covered pausing, intonation and stress. We've learned how to combine these elements to make your voice sounds confident, fluent and strong.

Be sure to do the exercises in the study notes, where you'll find vocabulary definitions and more language practice. Also, if you haven't already, sign up for our online exercises at [www.businessenglishpod.com](http://www.businessenglishpod.com) for further targeted practice on the skills and language you've learned in this and other episodes.

Thank's you for listening! Our next episode will focus on questions and answers.

## **Study Strategy**

Improving your voice takes a lot of practice. Here's a great way to do it: Choose a text you like. It could be anything – something from a novel, or from work; a poem or the lyrics to a song; it could even be an email that you have written or, especially, part of one of your presentations that you write down. (Normally, you probably shouldn't write down too much of a presentation – it's better to speak naturally. But a great way to get over your stage fright at the beginning of a talk is to write down and memorize the first 2-3 minutes of your presentation.)

After you have chosen your text, use the strategies and techniques we have learned in this episode to mark pausing, stress and intonation: First mark pauses. Use two slashes (//) every place you think you should briefly stop. At the same time, underline words that you wish to stress. Note that it is usual to pause after stressed words. Finally, mark intonation with up and down arrows. Remember that the intonation usually goes down at the end of an idea.

After you've finished marking your text, practice it a few times. Then record yourself speaking it. Work on fluency. Try pausing and stressing in different places to see how these differences affect the meaning.

By practicing a text this way at least once a week, you will quickly improve your voice skills.

**Language Review**

**A. Review of useful language and vocabulary**

To review useful language covered in this episode, fill in the blanks in the sentences below. Review how we use intensifiers such as “totally,” “terribly,” “highly,” etc. to add emphasis to a sentence. After you’ve finished, try saying the sentence with different stress and intonation. Using the techniques we’ve practiced, strive for fluency and impact.

- Our products range from <sup>1.</sup> h\_\_\_h-end industrial printers to <sup>2.</sup> l\_\_\_-end consumer models.
- Success in business requires four things: Hard work, <sup>3.</sup> vi\_\_\_on, luck, and good relationships.
- This is not a matter of <sup>4.</sup> c\_\_\_\_\_g costs, but of <sup>5.</sup> in\_\_\_\_\_g profit.
- There is <sup>6.</sup> a\_\_\_\_\_ly no room for <sup>7.</sup> c\_\_\_\_\_se on this issue.
- This is a <sup>8.</sup> t\_\_\_\_\_bly important problem to tackle.
- As far as I can see, we have <sup>9.</sup> c\_\_\_\_\_y failed in <sup>10.</sup> im\_\_\_\_\_g this marketing plan.
- In the past six months, we have <sup>11.</sup> t\_\_\_\_\_y succeeded in meeting our targets.
- We really need to <sup>12.</sup> rein\_\_\_\_\_nt our whole branding strategy.
- This market is <sup>13.</sup> h\_\_\_\_\_y <sup>14.</sup> c\_\_\_\_\_ve.

**B. Emphasis Phrases**

The following sentences have been jumbled. Put them in order. Then underline the phrase that is used to add emphasis to each sentence.

1. improving particular is quality very in important  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. all we need to of above more improve ways to sales think  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. doubt opening greatest new markets without is our up a challenge  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. like to complete our to dedication project this emphasize I’d  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. account angles important is especially we consider this that and challenge from all into take perspectives different what’s  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Language Review Answers**

**A.**

1. high; 2. low; 3. vision; 4. cutting; 5. increasing; 6. absolutely; 7. compromise; 8. terribly; 9. completely; 10. implementing; 11. totally; 12. reinvent; 13. highly; 14. competitive.

**B.**

1. In particular, improving quality is very important.
2. Above all, we need to think of more ways to improve sales.
3. Without a doubt, opening up new markets is our greatest challenge.
4. I'd like to emphasize our complete dedication to this project.
5. What's especially important is that we consider this challenge from all angles and take into account different perspectives.

**Links** (click a link to open the exercise)

[BEP 106e – Making your Introduction - Quiz](#)

[BEP 106e – Making your Introduction - Gap-fill](#)

[BEP 106e – Making your Introduction - Dialog & Vocabulary Definitions](#)

[BEP 106e – Making your Introduction - Language Review 1](#)

[BEP 106e – Making your Introduction – Language Review 2](#)

[BEP 106e – Making your Introduction – Language Review 3](#)

[BEP 106e – Making your Introduction – Vocabulary Flashcards](#)

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