13 Patently absurd

Overview
Students match techniques for opening presentations to examples and then give a short, high-impact presentation of a new invention. The class vote for the best invention to back financially.

Preparation
One copy of the worksheet for each student. Cut up the invention cards. Depending on class size, either give an invention to each student in groups of four or with larger groups, have students work in pairs/small groups to present their invention.

Procedure
1. Elicit from students any techniques for creating high-impact presentations. Hand out copies of the worksheet to each student. Have them match the openings with the relevant techniques. Ask which they think are the strongest/weakest, or in which situations they could be used.

2. Explain that the students are going to prepare a 3-5 minute presentation on a new invention to persuade venture capitalists to give them financial backing. Depending on class size, have the students work in groups of four and give one product card to each student. If there are more than four students, have them work in pairs to prepare a team presentation.

3. Ask the students to read the product cards. Use the pictures on the inventions to help them with the vocabulary. Give the students time to prepare their presentations. Encourage them to use one of the presentation openings from the matching exercise and to make up any details about function, materials etc. Remind students they need to show how their invention will make money for inventors. Monitor the activity.

4. Students give over presentations to the rest of the group/class. When they are not presenting, they should take the role of the venture capitalists and be prepared to ask tricky questions about the inventions’ market chances.

5. Ask the class to choose the invention they would back and to give reasons.

Answers
a4 b5 c6 d2 e7 f1 g3

14a Flight to Rubovia

Overview
As an exercise in inter-cultural awareness, students think of questions to ask about the culture of ‘Rubovia’ – an imaginary country. They compare with other students’ ideas, and also with a set of given suggestions.

Preparation
One copy of the worksheet for each student with the bottom section of suggested questions folded under.

Procedure
1. Before handing out the worksheets, read out the first line from the box. ‘You are on your first business trip to Rubovia. Pause and look up, waiting for students to realise that it is an imaginary country. Perhaps play them along a little, if you’re not in Rubovia.

2. When students realise that Rubovia is an imaginary country, continue reading the text in the box, pausing at each full stop for dramatic effect and the students’ comments.

3. Hand out copies of the worksheet, with the bottom part folded under. Make sure the students understand that they shouldn’t look at this part yet.

4. In pairs, students write eight questions in the spaces provided. Make it clear that there are no ‘right’ answers, and the point of the exercise is awareness-raising for doing business in another culture.

5. Ask students to read out their questions to the class. (With larger classes, students can do this stage in small groups.) Write any interesting questions on the board and encourage discussion.

6. Ask students to look at the questions at the bottom of the page. Point out that these are just suggestions, and are not necessarily better or worse than the students’ own ideas. Again, encourage comments and discussion.

7. Regroup the students into new pairs/threes and ask them to choose the ten most important/useful questions. If you have time, try to agree on the top ten questions for the whole class.

14b Business humour

Overview
Students discuss humour in the workplace and then read and re-tell a joke in pairs.

Preparation
One copy of the worksheet for each pair of students. Cut the worksheet into two.

Procedure
1. If you know a good joke, tell it to the students. Discuss their reactions to it. Ask them if they thought it was funny.

2. Divide the class into pairs/small groups and hand out the top of the worksheet. Discuss the questions. Monitor, helping with vocabulary if necessary. Hold a short feedback session.

3. Explain that students are going to prepare a joke for their partner. Then tell them to match their joke to the partner they have been given. Divide the class into small groups (all A students working together and all the B students working together) to prepare to re-tell their jokes. (In a small class, students can be divided into two equal AB groups.)

4. Hand out the correct part of the worksheet to each student. Monitor as students read their joke, helping with vocabulary as necessary. In joke A, make sure students understand the punchline. In joke B, have students re-tell the joke, filling in any necessary words to help them understand the punchline as well.

5. Ask individual groups if they found their joke funny, then ask students to memorise their joke, focusing on the pronunciation of difficult words as necessary.

6. Remind students they need to make the joke as engaging for the listener as possible. Focus on techniques for telling jokes and anecdotes like repetition, pausing for dramatic effect at key points, using a different tone of voice (or even accent) for different speakers. Emphasise that good delivery of the punchline (if there is one) is essential.

7. Students then cross-pair and tell their jokes to a new partner. Remind them not to look at the text of the joke but to re-tell it as best they can from memory. Hold a short feedback session to find out students’ reactions to the jokes and if they enjoyed the re-telling.

15 Buzzword Bluff

Overview
Students play ‘Buzzword Bluff’ – a game of bluffing and persuasion – by giving real and made-up definitions of business buzzwords.

Preparation
One copy of the worksheet for each student. Cut the buzzword definitions and team A and team B.

Procedure
1. In pairs, students read the definitions of bear and heavy hitter and decide which is the true definition (bear = a timid or pessimistic investor; heavy hitter = a top-class salesman).

2. Students underline useful phrases for bluffing in the sample definitions. As you know, ... (with a medium voice) ’... seriously’ ... (with a heavy voice) ‘... state the case’ ... (with a slow voice) ‘... say, in fact, ...’ / ‘... really, how absurd?/In reality, ...’ / ‘You’ve heard of ... (with a serious voice) / ‘... you’ve never heard of/Have you heard of ... (with an excited voice) / ‘... of course, let’s be serious’ / ‘... of course, you’re serious’ / ‘... of course, you’re right’.

3. Then ask students to memorise their joke, focusing on the key words to help them or to sketch out the joke in diagram form. Model the pronunciation of difficult words as necessary.

4. Divide the class into AB teams. Explain that the objective of the game is to fool the other team by giving convincing bluffs and perhaps making the true definition less obvious by adding distracting details.

5. Hold out the correct buzzwords and true definitions to each team. Help each team with vocabulary as necessary. Give students time to prepare their bluffs and decide who will give the true definition. Encourage students to develop definitions in their own words, and not just to read out what’s on the paper.

6. Chair the game, encouraging the ‘listening’ team to listen carefully to the definitions and to try to choose the ten most important/useful questions. If you have time, try to agree on the top ten questions for the whole class.

7. When pairs have finished the activity, each student gives their presentations to the rest of the class. Depending on class size, either give an invention to each student in groups of four or with larger groups, have students work in pairs/small groups to present their invention.

8. As a follow-up or for homework, you could ask students to prepare a written report of their partner’s activities.

16a Reporting activities

Overview
Students prepare reporting by interviewing each other about business activities and then reporting back to the rest of the class.

Preparation
One copy of the worksheet for each pair of students. Cut the worksheet into two.

Procedure
1. Divide the class into A/B pairs. Hand out the correct half of the worksheet to each student. Give them a few moments to read their cards and think about the questions they need to ask. If students work in the same company and know each other well, they should be encouraged to ask questions appropriate to their functions in the company, or to adopt the questions to their real business activities. With a weaker class, you could elicit the wording of the questions before students interview each other.

2. Student A asks Student B questions using the cue on the card and takes notes of B’s answers. Students then swap roles. Set a time limit of 15 minutes for this stage. Monitor and check for correct question forms.

3. When pairs have finished the activity, each student reports their partner’s activities to the rest of the class. If your class is very large, group three or four pairs together for the reporting stage.

4. As a follow-up or for homework, you could ask students to prepare a short written report of their partner’s activities.

16b Can you see me?

Overview
Students order a jubilant dialogue based on a videoconference and match various cooltalk definitions to cards connected to using equipment. As a follow-up, students discuss the pros and cons of videoconferencing.

Preparation
One copy of the worksheet for each student.

Procedure
1. As a warm-up, ask students some general questions to establish the topic. Have you ever used chat programs on the Internet? Was it for pleasure or business purposes? Have you ever tried videoconferencing? What was it like? Was it easy to use?

2. Check/Pairs: pretty (used as a moderator to mean ‘quite’), to hear with someone, to adjust and listen.

3. Hand out copies of the worksheet to each student. Give them time to do the re-ordering task. Then check the answers.

4. Have students do exercise 2 and then check the answers. (Both volume and the focus can be adjusted but only volume can be turned up.) Divide the class into pairs and elicit further possible definitions.