

Participating in Seminars – Step by Step Guide to Speaking

Here is a step by step guide to speaking in seminars (*adapted from Cottrell, 2003: 101*):

Step 1: Before you go to the seminar

- Make a decision to speak at least once during the group – even if it is only to agree with what someone else has said.
- Get to know other group members, if possible, so you feel more at ease.
- Turn up before the start time so you have time for a chat.

Step 2: During the seminar

- Sit next to someone you find reassuring.
- Whilst other people are speaking note down points that you want to make as they come to mind.
- Think of an example, or evidence, or an illustration to support your point or someone else's point.
- If you are nervous, breathe out more slowly than usual.
- Take your time when speaking.
- Make eye contact with the other students (not just the tutor).
- Be brief. When you have made your point, stop. Avoid going back over what you have already said.
- Be clear. If something sounds confused, say something like 'I'll make that clearer', or check that people have understood.
- Speak up so everyone can hear you. If people cannot hear what you are saying, you may have to say it all over again.
- Act confident, even if you do not feel it.
- Make sure that your body language shows that you are an enthusiastic and involved member of the group.

Step 3: After the seminar

- Congratulate yourself on any progress.
- Keep any mistakes or stumbling in proportion – it is not the end of the world.
- Decide what you will do next time.