

Rhetorical questions in presentations

Rhetorical questions are **grammatically questions** but usually clearly don't need an answer. For example, responding to "Why are you sitting in my chair?" with "The reason is..." would usually be weird, as it really means "Please stand up". **Write "Rh" next to any questions below which clearly don't need an answer.** It can depend on context, so think about giving a presentation in front of **your next real presentation audience** (e.g. in front of the other students in this class).

- Do you feel cold?
- Do you like cheese?
- Do you want world peace?
- Have you achieved everything that you have ever dreamed of?
- Have you ever been to Taiwan?
- Have you ever wondered why ice is bigger than water?
- How are you?
- How many people here hate Xmas music in restaurants?
- How many people in this country are truly happy?
- That was a great presentation, wasn't it?
- The king of Bhutan decided to force democracy on his country. What happened next?
- What can we do about the world economy?
- What's the most important chemical in the universe?
- What's the population of Tokyo?
- Who wants to be homeless?
- Why aren't I famous?
- Why do people dream?

Hint: 11 of the questions above are probably rhetorical questions (depending on your audience).

Find the best and worst examples of the ones which you think are actually rhetorical questions. What are the criteria of successful rhetorical questions in presentations?

Compare your ideas with the list of criteria under the fold.

-----fold, cover or cut-----

- Few or no people in the audience know the answer
- The answer is so complicated that it can't really be a question
- The answer is so obvious that it can't really be a question
- The question hooks the audience (= makes them think and concentrate on the answer)
- No one tries to answer, or wonders whether they should answer or not

Find at least one good example of each of those criteria above.

Which are the most important criteria above? Use those to choose the top three rhetorical questions above.

Write similar criteria for and examples of good survey questions.

In pairs, check that all the questions in your presentation are rhetorical questions or survey questions and/ or try to add rhetorical or survey questions to your presentation.

Are there now too many questions to the audience? If so, which would be best to take out?

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