

How to describe your design work in English

(10 writing or speaking tips for non-native English speakers)

- 1. Prepare your pitch.** Think about how you can explain your idea to the client in the clearest way possible. It's your job to show them all the unique details. If you can't explain it clearly, they may feel it's not a successful concept.
- 2. Explain your process and intentions.** It's also a good idea to explicitly describe your decisions and the message you intend your design to convey for the client. Just because it seems obvious to you doesn't mean they'll catch it.
- 3. Make a connection.** Try to connect with your client by researching them first. If you know more about what they do, like, and need, it will be easier to help them. Also, be friendly and ready to make some small talk.
- 4. Be confident and enthusiastic.** It's really important to speak with confidence when you present your ideas to your client. If you don't seem confident, they will not be confident in working with you either. Even if you don't have all the answers to their questions, you can be confident in your willingness and ability to find a solution and get them what they want. Be enthusiastic when you describe your ideas too! It's contagious!
- 5. Keep it simple.** It's common for creative professionals to try to use more complex language when explaining their work. The best descriptions are ones that anyone can understand, so try to think of a way to explain that will be clear to everyone and tells an interesting story. It doesn't have to be a long description; in fact, shorter is better. However, it does need to effectively convey the most important points of the design and what they mean.
- 6. Choose the best vocab.** Try to choose words that suggest emotion or action. This will create a more powerful message for your client and their audience. (This is especially true for the text you use within your design.) There are a lot of adjectives in English, but the subtle differences between words can really change the feeling that you convey. For example, think about the differences between these words: dark, sinister, somber, black, dim, drab, etc.
- 7. Use a good dictionary and thesaurus.** It takes time and patience to find the best words to describe your work but it is time well spent. Merriam Webster's [Learner's Dictionary](#) for ESL and [Thesaurus](#) are my recommendations. Look at designers that do work similar to yours and research the words they use as a starting point.
- 8. Learn to use phrasal verbs.** These are used very frequently in English and you will sound more natural if you can learn to use them correctly. [Phrasal Verb Demon](#) is a site that explains and gives examples of how to use them.
- 9. Try to use idioms, similes, and metaphors.** Do you know the difference between [idioms](#), [similes](#), & [metaphors](#)? These can be useful tools for describing your work, but are difficult for non-native speakers to master. The Grammarly blog has descriptions and examples of each one, to help you in no time flat! (an idiom for very quickly)
- 10. Check your work!** If you're writing, do a spell check, [grammar check](#), and get a native speaker or English coach to look over your work before you share it with your client. If you're speaking, practice your pitch with a native speaker or coach to be sure your description is correct and easy to understand.

For more tips on using English to share your creativity with the world, visit [Artglish.com!](#)

