

DAVID CRYSTAL

Professor

One minute, at the speech rate one imagines to be appropriate for talking to prime ministers, would allow some 200 syllables, with time for breathing. I would probably say 'Please fund the Arts properly, by making a serious contribution to the running costs of organizations and institutions, most of which are struggling to survive'. I would say that four times, one each symbolically in an English, Welsh, Scottish, and Northern Irish accent, slowly descending to my knees, then use 24 of my remaining 28 words to invite him to where I live, to see some of the evidence for himself. I would reserve four words for 'Thank you very much', in the belief that a bit of politeness never goes astray.