

What is *Microsoft PowerPoint*?

Microsoft PowerPoint is a full-featured desktop presentation program. It is part of the Office suite and can be purchased separately. A presentation can be a collection of slides relating to a specific topic, which may be shown while the topic is discussed or may be shown as a continuous show. From the presentation slides, handouts, speaker notes, or outlines can also be prepared. *PowerPoint* contains graphic tools and many kinds of pictures and graphs to be imported. A *Macintosh* version is available which functions almost identically to the *Windows* version. Presentations created in either platform can be run from the other, without any conversion needed.

Hints for Good Presentations

The following are some general tips and suggestions for preparing presentations, creating materials, and giving presentations.

Preparing for the Presentation:

1. Consider the theme.
 - What is the purpose of the presentation?
2. Know the audience.
 - Gear the information to what is known about the audience.
 - Try to take the audience's perspective.
3. Select materials.
 - What is the best way to present the theme?
 - What is the time frame?
 - How much time to prepare?
 - How much time for the presentation?
 - What materials are needed?
 - What will the materials cost? Is it cost-effective?
 - Will there be visual elements such as photos, logos etc.?
 - Will they need to be scanned?
4. Always be yourself!

Preparing the Materials:

Many desktop publishing tips hold true when creating materials for presentations. The following are some things to consider:

1. Contrast
 - Use dark text on a light background when producing overhead transparencies.
 - Use light text on a dark background when producing slides for a computer slide show. (Yellow text on dark blue background works well.)
2. Balance (Proportion)
 - Each slide should be balanced within the slide, just like a written document should be balanced, to make it easier to read.
 - Text with bullets should be left-justified.
 - Graphics should be off-center to leave room for text. This helps to lead the eye to the text.
 - Center titles only and an occasional quote.
3. Capitalization
 - Use in moderation.
 - Seldom use all caps, except in short titles.
 - Capitalize the first letter of important words for a more formal look.
 - Capitalize the first letter of each line for a less formal, more open look.
4. Simplicity
 - Six to eight words to a line.
 - Six to eight lines per slide.
 - No more than two fonts per page. (Avoid the “Ransom Note” affect.)
 - Use Sans serif fonts when using projection.
 - Use large font sizes. (32, 24 points)

Font Notes:

There are two types of fonts: Serif and Sans Serif. Serif fonts have little “wings” on the characters (such as the font this document is written in). Sans serif fonts do not have “wings”. (This is a Sans Serif font called Arial.) Serif fonts are easier to read because the wings allow the eye to follow the flow of characters and should be used when there is a lot of text. (The best serif font to use is Times-Roman when dealing with a lot of text. This is a font used by most newspapers for the main body of text.) Serif fonts are good headlines, effects and for projection.

When choosing a font, think about the following: aesthetics (how it looks); who the audience is; what kind of impression or idea is to be achieved; and, how much text is involved.

5. Emphasis

- Never underline, unless necessary.
- Use *italics* to emphasize a single word or passage of text or for showing humor or irony.
- Use **bold** for headings, to add emphasis and authority to a word or phrase, or to add contrast of light and dark.
- Use color, if possible,

Color notes:

- Color draws attention to and increases a willingness to read the information. It also helps to increase motivation and participation. When using color, stick to a common set of colors throughout the entire presentation and limit the number of colors used. Lighter colors on a dark background work well when using projection facilities.
- Dark blue conveys a conservative but credible feeling. Blue is a soothing color and can reduce the viewer's blood pressure and heart rate. The combination of a blue background with yellow or white foreground text and graphics is the easiest to read.
- Red or orange backgrounds heighten emotions. These colors can signal excitement or alarm and increase blood pressure and heart rate. However, reds and oranges don't translate well to the TV screen. Use them with caution. They cause images to "bleed" on the screen. Maroon or burgundy might be a better choice.
- Green stimulates interaction. Deep forest green, olive green, or teal green will illicit opinions and is useful in education and training oriented presentations.
- Gray is neutral. Neutrality may be advantageous or not depending on the content and context of the visual.

6. Graphics

- Graphics should be off-center to leave room for text. This helps lead the eye to the text.
- Charts and graphs should be large enough to read from anywhere in the room.
- To show trends, use a line graph.
- To compare information, use a bar graph.
- To compare parts of a whole, use a pie chart.
- When using charts and graphs, use six or fewer items to be compared per chart.

7. Authoring
 - There are many software applications called “authoring” or presentation packages that can be used to create presentations. Many of the packages come complete with graphing and charting capabilities; a built-in outline; and, print capabilities for the screens to be used by the author or the audience. With a computer and a projection device, transparencies are not necessary. The presentation can be driven by a keyboard, mouse, or set to run automatically at specific timed intervals. Some of the more widely used applications are: Microsoft PowerPoint, Harvard Graphics, Asymetrix Toolbook, and GoldDisk Astound. Netscape and word processors, such as Microsoft Word and Wordperfect can also be used.
8. Notes
 - Notes to assist in a presentation can be written on the paper parts of the transparencies or on printouts of the software application presentation screens.
 - Always print out copies of each “slide” on paper to test the view.
 - When using transparencies, number them in order of their use.
9. To create “slides/transparencies”
 - Slides may be defined as overhead transparencies, computer screen pages, or actual camera slides. Transparencies may be created by printing directly to a transparency created for use with a laser or inkjet printer; by printing the information onto a piece of paper and using a transparency maker; or by obtaining transparencies created for a copy machine and using a copier.
10. Be consistent
 - From slide to slide and in everything throughout the presentation, be consistent.

Giving the Presentation:

1. If possible, test run the presentation in the room it is to be given, with all of equipment necessary.
2. Review the topic before beginning the presentation.
3. Maintain eye contact with the audience.
4. Keep the lights on as much as possible.
5. Keep the presentation as interactive as possible.
6. Do not read the visual to the audience—the audience should be able to read.
7. Control with the visual:
 - Use color.
 - Reveal one point at a time, if possible.
 - When using an overhead, turn off the projector to get attention.
8. Review what has been covered to end the presentation.