



Microsoft PowerPoint

Putting Your Idea on Screen

PowerPoint presentations are a very versatile tool for reaching your audience base however before you create your presentation, you have to understand who you are speaking with. PowerPoint expresses your ideas on a screen projected for an entire audience to see what you are trying to get across. If you know your audience, a meaningful quote or tasteful cartoon related to your subject is a great way to begin your presentation. With new audiences or serious topics, it is better to emphasize professionalism. In these cases, it is best to maintain focus and keep the presentation straightforward.

After you understand who your audience is, you can begin to assemble the design. Take time to choose colors, fonts, and images to convey your message. Use personal designs or colors to show who you represent or the topic you are speaking about.

For example, a presentation with different shades of yellows and greens may convey a military atmosphere or a presentation with purples and pinks may not correctly portray a government or leadership oriented presentation.

Basic Designs

Overview – Once you have picked a topic, select a color scheme from a list of the basic designs located in your PowerPoint program. PowerPoint offers several different color designs that can be used to project your image.

Color Schemes – A color scheme is defined as “all the colors in your presentation and how they complement each other for the best viewing”. Do not use grey text with black backgrounds or teal text with purple backgrounds.

Fonts – Fonts can add a lot of character to your presentation but beware of the type of fonts you choose. Not all fonts on **your** computer are available on another computer. Most compatible fonts: New Times Roman, Arial, Verdana, Garamond, Comic Sans, Century, and Courier.

Graphics – Graphics are the most useful tool for PowerPoint because they reflect your thoughts. Words are helpful and bullet points can impact your thoughts, but images add description to your presentation. Do not overuse images because you want your audience to focus on you, not the screen.

Templates

Overview – If you do not find a color scheme that best reflects your topic, PowerPoint offers several templates to choose from. These templates come with predefined colors and fonts that complement the background images. Templates are excellent ways to use a common graphic or background that continues to reinforce your topic.

Fonts – If the font that comes with the template does not fit your topic, you may change to a different font; however keep these things in mind: Not all fonts on **your** computer are available on another computer. Most compatible fonts: New Times Roman, Arial, Verdana, Garamond, Comic Sans, Century, and Courier.

Graphics – Graphics can be a little trickier with templates because the templates already have a common graphic used as a background. See “Basic Designs” for additional information. You may individually select slides to remove your template background so graphics do not cover your professional background. Remember to not overuse images because you want your audience to focus on you, not the screen.

Animation

With computer technology in today’s world, animation is very common. Animation is also useful to draw the attention of certain words or graphics in your presentation. You may also use animation to hide text until you are ready to show the audience to keep their attention on the current topic however you want the audience to listen to you, not watch the cartoon or “fly-ins” on the screen. Use animation as emphasis, **not** as a common tool or you will lose the audience’s attention.

Sound

Using sound is strongly discouraged as a common tool within your presentation because not all atmospheres allow for speaker systems and repetitive “zips, zings, and whistles” can become annoying audiences. Music that plays in the background can be soothing and a strong complement as long as you are not trying to speak over the music. If you have to think whether or not music or sounds are appropriate in a certain part of your presentation, most likely they **are not appropriate**.

Secret Slides

A great way to show your audience you are prepared is to anticipate their questions with secret slides. Using hidden slides gives you the advantage of having lots of detailed information on hand in case you need it. Secret slides during the question and answer period can easily address more specific questions. When you design hidden slides, use the same template you used for the initial presentation. Hidden slides can be placed anywhere within the presentation. To hide a slide, select it and go to SLIDESHOW, then HIDE SLIDE. In the slide sorter view, hidden slides will appear with a gray box around them but will not appear in your slideshow. When you are ready to access a certain hidden slide, right-click with the mouse or remote and select GO from the menu and choose either BY TITLE or SLIDE NAVIGATOR. The hidden slides will appear in either menu with parentheses around the number. Be sure to label these hidden slides clearly so you will find them easier.