

Planning a PowerPoint Presentation

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Your PowerPoint presentation should do the following:

- ✓ Ensure key points get covered
- ✓ Keep the audience interested
- ✓ Be easy to follow (for the speaker giving the presentation *and* for the audience listening to the presentation)

Tips for Planning and Designing a PowerPoint Presentation

1. Before you start, think about the intended audience for the presentation and decide on the purpose of the presentation: To inform? To persuade? To entertain? All three?
2. Decide which points to project as PowerPoint slides. **Not all points and sub-points need to be on a slide.** As the speaker, you will fill in the gaps, make transitions, and provide specific examples during your presentation.
3. Use what you know about essay structure to organize the presentation. You'll need an introduction, body, and conclusion.
4. Choose the best method of organization for your particular presentation—essentially the same organization you might use for a scholarly paper.
 - a. Will it outline the scientific method from hypothesis to conclusion?
 - b. Will it be chronological (to trace the history or evolution of something, or to explain a process)?
 - c. Will it be persuasive, perhaps with a problem-then-solution structure?
 - d. Will it be climactic, building to the most important point?
 - e. Will it answer the journalist's questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how?
 - f. Will it . . . ?
5. Your opening slide should include the title of the presentation and your name. If you have a sponsoring agency or department, be sure to have its logo (or at least the name of the agency/department) somewhere on that first slide.
6. Often your closing slide will include a list of sources/resources you've mentioned during your presentation.
7. Shoot for 6-12 slides total, depending on the length of your presentation.

8. Limit the amount of text on each slide. Use “white” (open) space. Be simple and concise. Generally, use words and phrases, not complete sentences. Try not to exceed 7 lines per slide.
9. When possible, use numbered or bulleted lists. Be sure every item on the list is parallel with the others. For example, be sure they are all nouns—or all verbs—or whatever.
10. Use a large enough font (18 or 24 for standard text, 30 or even 45 for titles/headings). Stand back five or six feet from your (standard sized) computer screen. If you can read your text from that distance, your font is probably large enough.
11. Be sure the design of the template is consistent with the tone and content of your presentation. (For a presentation on the writing habits of college freshmen, a notebook-lined background would probably work better than a background of green butterflies.)
12. If you design your own slides, use dark text on a light background, limit or avoid the color red, and avoid distracting wallpaper backgrounds.
13. While clipart or photos can add interest, don’t clutter your presentation with them. Don’t feel as though you have to have a graphic of some kind on every slide.
14. It’s fine to imbed an Internet link—but keep in mind that doing so means that you’ll be dependent on a reliable Internet connection for your presentation to succeed.
15. Use the same transition between slides. That is, don’t *dissolve* from slide 1 to slide 2, and then *checkerboard across* from slide 2 to slide 3. That’s just too distracting, and soon the audience will be noticing the technology more than the content of the presentation.
16. Edit your slides for grammar and punctuation.
17. When you’ve finished designing your PowerPoint presentation, go to “File” and print it out using one of the many options under “Print All Slides.” For example, you can print it out one or two slides at a time with lines for you to jot your notes. Then you’ll deliver your presentation from those notes.
18. Ideally, you will have a remote-control “clicker” to advance your slides so that you won’t be tethered to your computer during your presentation.