

General Guidelines for PowerPoint

Overall Tips

- Be consistent with the look and feel from one slide to the next.
- General rule is one slide per three minutes of speaking time.
- 6x6 Rule – Slides should have not more than six lines of text per slide with no more than six words per line.
 - No sentences.
 - No punctuation.
 - Use active verbs to start bullets.
 - Avoid divided words at the ends of lines.
- Six slides with nothing but words call for a visual slide to break things up.
- Each slide should contain main points, not the entire text of your presentation.
- Remember your slides are not your presentation.

Fonts

- Use a single font throughout your presentation.
 - Sans serif fonts should always be used for text and for headings of more than one line. Good choices are Ariel, Verdana, Tahoma, and Helvetica. Bold typefaces are preferred.
- Headings should be 36 pt. or larger.
- Sub headings should be 30 pt. or larger.
- Text should be 24 pt. or larger if possible.
- Avoid Italics.
- Use boldface to emphasize key points, be careful not to overuse.
- Do not use all CAPITAL LETTERS or underline text.

Colors

- Backgrounds should be simple, not graphical, and should usually be one color.
- Text and background should be of high contrast. If the background is dark, the text should be very light in color. If the background is light, the text should be very dark in color. Some good color combinations for text and backgrounds are yellow and violet, yellow and dark blue, dark red and white, dark green and white, dark blue and white, black and yellow, and violet and white.
- Certain colors should not be used together: Red and green, red and black, dark green and black, or blue and black should not be used together as background and text, or as graphical features.
- Red text is very hard to read on a large screen.
- Shades of gray should not be used together, either as graphical features, background, or text.
- Where bulleted lists occur side-by-side, text of one list should be a different color or on a different colored background than the other to prevent confusion.

Animation

- Acceptable animation features include fly in from left, peek from left, wipe right, and appear. Except for appear, animation features should always present text beginning on the left, as in normal reading style. Flying characters, spiraling design elements, or elements entering from bottom or right should be avoided unless they are used to denote directionality of movement of an element.

Graphics

- Graphics used in a PowerPoint presentation should be of high-contrast and have good clarity. Black and white line drawings are preferred over gray scale graphics. Graphics that contain mainly bold areas of bright color are preferred over black and white. Patterned areas should be limited, if possible.
- Where maps or charts are included, color is preferred over gray scale. Text on maps or charts should adhere to large print guidelines.
- If you must present a lot of detail break it up into two or more charts.
- Use simple tables to present numbers.