



# Introduction to PowerPoint

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD POWERPOINT?

PRESENTATIONS OFTEN RECEIVE A BAD RAP—FOR GOOD REASON. WE'VE ALL SAT THROUGH THOSE LONG-WINDED SPEECHES AND HOT MESS POWERPOINTS, WHICH COMPLETELY UNDERMINE THE POINT OF VISUAL PRESENTATIONS.

SO, WHAT DIFFERENTIATES A GOOD PRESENTATION FROM A POOR ONE? CONTENT AND DESIGN. WHILE YOUR SPEECH MAY BE PERFECT, THE IMAGES YOU SHOW CAN GREATLY ADD OR DETRACT FROM YOUR MESSAGE.

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Using the slide themes included in your software is presentation death. They're overused, boring and usually pretty ugly. Create cleaner presentations by starting with a clean presentation and building from there.

Packing too much information into a slide will completely undermine its purpose. Remember: The audience often has to process everything you say while they view the slide. No more than 6 lines of text per slide.

Too many presentations are bullet point crazy. No one will remember 10 bullet points, but they will remember 10 compelling slides. Use each slide to build your case and incrementally tell your story. (Consider your slides to be an outline for what you're saying.) Try to share one idea per slide.

With typography, go for legibility over fun. While you can use a creative font for a slide title, avoid using it for body text. Instead, stick to clean, traditional typefaces like **Helvetica**. And if you're using a dark background, make the text bold for readability.

Chances are you're designing your presentation on a laptop—and that's a much different size than the final presentation screen. When sizing your fonts, keep in mind that the text should be large enough to be read by the person in the back of the room.

In order for your message to pop, you need a high level of contrast between your text and the background. If your background image features a lot of variation, portions of your text may not be legible. In that case, a stylish bar of color behind the image can bring the legibility back while adding visual interest.

A harmonious palette of color can easily enhance the look of your entire presentation. No need for complex gradients or textures here; you can get excellent results with just the right colors. No more than 5 colors.

Use contrasting text colors to draw attention. It's like bold and italic, but better. Use a single color in your selected color palette to emphasize important points in your text. However, make sure not to overdo it.

Images help make your presentation more visual, but don't get carried away with too many on one slide. It's a presentation, not a photo album. Limit your designs to a single image with simple or no text.

There are plenty of clever transitions built into today's presentation software, but most quality presentations do not use any distracting transitions.