

PowerPoint Usage Tips

1. Purpose of agenda slide in PowerPoint is to get people interested in what you will cover but not to spend time with the details at this point. They may not have had time to look over your paper agenda before class.
2. Most important points should be on slides – not full sentences
 - a. If points are sequential, number them.
 - b. If points are not sequential, use bullets.
 - c. If one point is *much* more important or more of a summary of all the points, try putting it at the bottom of the slide in its own box or otherwise showing its importance graphically.
3. Don't put two main ideas on one slide. All points should be on topic that is represented by the title of the slide and should be of relatively equal importance. If they are not of equal importance, put them in order of importance.
4. Titles should help people understand the points on the slide. Titles act as visual cues for people who momentarily tune out or look down to take notes; consequently, don't repeat titles on two slides in a row.
5. Slide transitions and animations should only be used to make a point or relief; transitions and animations are not meant for every slide. Do not use the same technique over and over.
 - a. Use animation accurately for the information – choose whether the points should come in by main point, second, or third-level points depending on how much time you will spend discussing each point.
 - b. Try dimming previous points if the slide is crowded.
6. If you have more than five bullet points, see if you can chunk them into main and sub-bullet points. Three to five points is ideal. If you're writing short sentences, three points is enough. Strive to have at least 60% white space on each slide.
7. Use slides to start discussions. State problem in the title, discuss, then have solutions on the slide.
8. Put pros and cons or comparative information in columns.
9. It's OK to use humor in images, titles, and animation of slide, but don't overdo it.
10. Be prepared to change the background colors of your presentation to dark background and light text if you are in a bright room.

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11. Emphasize important points by having them appear on the slide *while* you are discussing them -- not before or after you discuss. You need to practice your presentation to do this effectively.
12. Advanced techniques can really make your points memorable:
 - a. Add arrows and animate them to show relationships.
 - b. Use diagrams or charts, photos or images instead of text.
 - c. On slides with many points, dim previous points as new ones enter.
13. Add sound where appropriate – it's great as a wake up or for humor.
14. Cut rather than overload your slides. Put extra info that you *might* want to discuss in your notes. If you have long lists of items on a slide, it probably means you should be creating a handout instead of using a slide.
15. Administrators who see many presentations may be tired of PowerPoint tricks, but most staff aren't familiar with them, so do what's appropriate for your audience.
16. For really excellent speaker notes, use the notes portion of PowerPoint, and once you have your notes settled, import them into Word. You'll have to do some formatting in Word to compact the whole thing, but you can get three or four slides to a page in Word, which allows you to see at least the previous and next slide.