

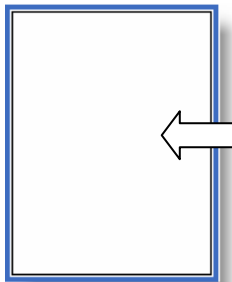
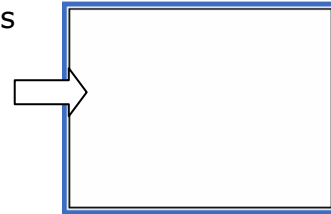
PowerPoint: Design Considerations

The following guidelines are general in nature. Keep in mind that *Microsoft PowerPoint* can be used for something as simple as a one-slide lesson plan as well as for self-running presentations that last several minutes. Once created, presentations can take the form of transparencies, Web-based presentations, and 35-mm slides, as well as class handouts, flash cards, bulletin board materials, and more.

As with all things, there are exceptions to every rule. But, in general the following rules will help in creating interesting, professional-looking, and pleasing presentation slides whatever final form they may take.

1. *PowerPoint* gives the user the capability of including many different special effects inserted as custom animations or slide transitions. Care should be taken not to overuse these special effects.

2. Use **landscape mode** to create presentations to be viewed on a computer monitor or television screen. In most cases, this will be the default view.



For slides to be printed for use as handouts, bulletin boards, notebook covers, or other projects, **portrait mode** will be fine.


To change from landscape to portrait or vice versa, click on **FILE > PAGE SET UP > SLIDES**.

3. Special considerations should be given to presentations to be viewed through compressed video networks [distance learning] or on a television screen.

- a. Using 48-point bold font is best.

- b. Using 40-point bold font is the minimum for ease of reading. Smaller fonts cannot be read easily on television screens.

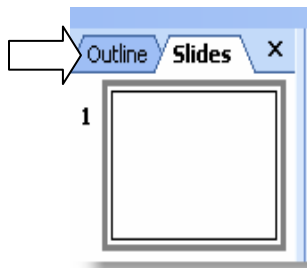


- c. Reds and oranges tend to vibrate on screen. Avoid using these colors.
 - d. Any lines on the slides need to be at least six pixels wide.
4. Simple designs are best.
- a. Leave “white space” on each slide. These are areas on slides where no text or graphics appear.
 - b. Use legible text.
 - i. Generally use sans-serif fonts such as Arial, Helvetica, or Verdana. (Readability of printed text is usually easier with serif fonts.)
 - ii. Align text on the left or center it. Avoid justified text as it is difficult to read.
 - iii. Avoid words in all caps.
 - iv. Avoid italics. Use an alternative color text to emphasize something.
- 

This word is the most **important**.
- v. Use no more than three changes in font style in one presentation; two would be better.
 - vi. For presentations to be delivered in front of an audience, follow the “Rule of Six.” Avoid using more than six lines of text with a maximum of six words per line on any slide. Using 20-25 words maximum is actually best. **Note:** This rule does not apply to presentations where the user has control as in self-paced teaching modules.
- c. Remember that in oral presentations, slides are intended to help get the speaker’s message across, not to be the message itself. If everything the speaker plans to say appears on the slides, the audience does not need the speaker.

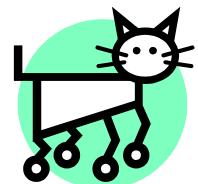


- d. Create a natural “path” for the eye to follow as the audience reads the text. For example, do not have a clip art object facing or pointing off the right side of the slide if the text related to the object is on the left of the object. Use clip art objects and other graphics to enhance the user’s ability to read the slide. They should not distract attention from the text.

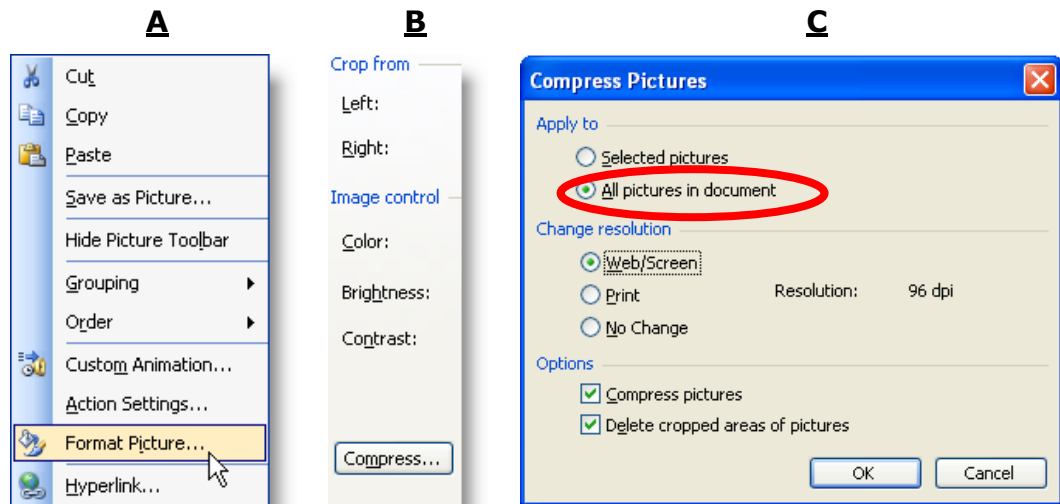
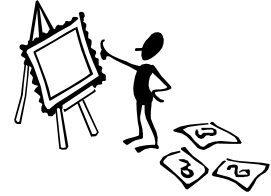


5. Keep the material organized. Storyboard the slides on paper before creating them, or use **OUTLINE VIEW** to help organize ideas. An Outline View tab will normally be visible in the left pane when *PowerPoint* is first opened. If the pane is not open click on **VIEW > NORMAL (RESTORE PANES)**. For older versions of *PowerPoint* without panes, go to **VIEW > OUTLINE**.

- a. Use one idea per slide, or use progressive disclosure, which means that one idea is revealed at a time. This can be set up by going to **SLIDE SHOW > CUSTOM ANIMATION > EFFECTS**.
 - b. Headings at the same level (title, bullet item, sub-bullet item) on different slides should be in the same size and color text and in the same position on each slide.
 - c. Common elements should be the same on all slides, for example, bullet shape and color.
 - d. Use no more than three **custom animations** and **slide transitions** throughout the presentation rather than alternating among several. Never use **random** effects or transitions because this can be irritating to an audience.
6. Think visually, but use graphics only when they enhance the slide presentation or add to the message.
 7. Use appropriate clip art objects. For example, do not use a cartoon if the message on the slide is serious.
 8. Balance the placement of the clip art objects with the text on the page. For presentations to be shown on a television set, do not place clip art objects in the bottom one-third of the slides.



9. Be consistent in the type of clip art objects used. If nine out of ten slides have line-drawn clip art on them, do not use a cartoon on the tenth slide.
10. Color graphics are good, but black and white or gray scale graphics can also be effective.
11. Photographs are appropriate in many cases. *PowerPoint* can handle large numbers of photographs in one presentation. To reduce the file size of the completed presentation, however, right-click on a photograph. Click on **FORMAT PICTURE > COMPRESS > ALL PICTURES IN DOCUMENT**.



12. Use charts, graphs, maps, signs, and symbols to represent ideas graphically. Keep this formula in mind. People remember:
 - a. 20% of what they see
 - b. 40% of what they see and hear
 - c. 70% of what they see, hear, and do
13. Color choice is important.
 - a. The best combination to use for ease of readability is dark blue with yellow or beige text. There has to be high contrast between text color and background color in order for the text to be legible.

- i. Keep color blindness in mind, and never use combinations such as green text on red backgrounds that people who are color blind cannot differentiate between reds and greens and will not be able to read the slides.
 - ii. Combinations such as black on dark blue cannot be read by anyone.
- b. Green background colors stimulate interaction and are good to use in education and training. Yellow font color works well on green.
- c. Keep the audience in mind when designing color schemes. For example, when giving a presentation to a Mississippi State University Alumni Association meeting, maroon and white would be better color choices than red, white, and blue.