

General Tips

- Plan the whole presentation before you start to compose slides. Your goal is to cultivate interest and spark curiosity. Choose your content selectively.
- Set objectives for your talk and state them visually in one of the first few slides.
- Provide an outline so that your audience knows where you are going and what the important points are.
- End your presentation with conclusions.
- Use one slide per minute as a rough guide when creating your PowerPoint.

Stylistic Tips

- Many templates provided within the PowerPoint package distract from a presentation and use up much of the projected real estate. It is often better to create your own minimal master and style including a small logo.
- Create high contrast slides by using either dark text on a light background or light on a dark background.
- Use fonts that are commonly found on all computers such as Arial (sans serif) or Times New Roman (with serifs). Use a serif font for paragraphs of text but sans serif for headlines and short bullets.
- Font sizes should be judged in relationship with the projection screen but for large audiences, larger fonts are preferable. Text with all capitals is hard to read.
- Decide if you want to use stepped bullet points or ‘all text at once’ slides.
- Be consistent throughout all slides with text style and form.
- Use *italics* and **bold** for emphasis only.

Content Tips

- In general, use a 7x7 maximum rule – 7 words on 7 lines of text with a 25-word maximum per slide. Your slides should show key points from your paper and not be copied directly out of your paper.
- If abbreviations or jargon are used, these should be explained.
- Inclusion of video clips (make sure that the clip is in the same file location as the overall PowerPoint presentation), animation (such as using motion paths creatively) can keep an audience interested. Mix graphics and pictures with text.
- Humor is an important part of any presentation but should be used appropriately.
- Always attribute quotations used.
- In general, too much of anything will tend to attract boredom.
- Graphs captured directly from Excel will not likely be best for projection. It is often better to create simpler, bolder versions in PowerPoint.
- Make sure that you have a title, your name, and affiliation on the first slide and your contact information at the end of the presentation.

Delivery Tips

- Your audience will likely read ahead and not listen to you. A complete text slide will be read by your audience faster than you can speak it. Let them read the slide. Your job is to elaborate on the key points.
- Never introduce a slide with “I know you can’t read this but...”
- Don’t put information at the very bottom of a slide as it would be likely missed by many in a flat auditorium.
- Have a backup plan if a hyperlink to a website may not be available.
- If you want to engage your audience and stop them looking at the screen, use the B (for black) or W (for white) keys to blank out the screen image.
- Discretely number your slides to keep track. You can jump to any slide at any time if you have numbered it and can remember it. Typing the slide number and keying ‘Enter’ will send your presentation to the required slide.
- If you do not need to be tethered to a lectern, use a remote slide changer to allow you to selectively address sections of your audience.
- Give yourself the option of immediacy by using a laser pointer.
- Look at your audience as much as possible.
- Either keep the lights on or dim them as totally blacking out a room will engender drowsiness.
- Remind your audience that your slides are not the totality of your message and that you are adding important information that is spoken with your projected message.
- Research shows that students recall 70% of material covered in the first 10 minutes and only 10% in the last 10 minutes. This is not a reason for raising one’s voice at the end.
- Make the end of your presentation memorable. Bring your presentation to a strong conclusion that brings things together but also inspires new questions.

Presentation Tips

- Practice several times beforehand to check overall timing, slide sequences, animations, links etc.
- If possible, check the room for darkness, connectivity from laptop to the presentation equipment including audio, and to the Internet in advance of the presentation.
- Check the projector for resolution and, if possible, for color rendition when loading your presentation.
- Make sure to speak slowly and clearly and at a volume that can be heard distinctly at the back of the room.

References

The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint (Tufte, 2003)

PowerPoint Antidote (Norvig, 2000)

<http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/improving-powerpoint-style-presentations/32126>