Making PowerPoint Slides
Avoiding the Pitfalls of Bad Slides

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Tips to be Covered

- Outlines
- Slide Structure
- Fonts
- Colour
- Background
- Graphs
- Spelling and Grammar
- Conclusions
- References
Outline

- Make your 1\textsuperscript{st} or 2\textsuperscript{nd} slide an introduction or outline of your presentation
  - As previous slide shows

- Only place main points on the outline slide
Slide Structure – Good

- Use 1–2 slides per minute of your presentation
- Write in point form, not complete sentences
- Include 4–5 points per slide
- Avoid wordiness: use key words and phrases only
Slide Structure – Bad

- This page contains too many words for a presentation slide. It is not written in point form, making it difficult both for your audience to read and for you to present each point. Although there are exactly the same number of points on this slide as the previous slide, it looks much more complicated. In short, your audience will spend too much time trying to read this paragraph instead of listening to you.
Slide Structure – Good

- Show one point at a time:
  - Will help audience concentrate on what you are saying
  - Will prevent audience from reading ahead
  - Will help you keep your presentation focused
Slide Structure – Bad

- Do not use distracting animation
- Do not go overboard with the animation
- Be consistent with the animation that you use
Fonts – Good

- Use at least an 18-point font
- Use different size fonts for main points and secondary points
  - this font is 24-point, the main point font is 28-point, and the title font is 36-point
- Use a standard font like Times New Roman or Arial
Fonts – Bad

- If you use a small font, your audience won’t be able to read what you have written.

- CAPITALIZE ONLY WHEN NECESSARY. IT IS DIFFICULT TO READ.

- Don’t use a complicated font.
Use a colour of font that contrasts sharply with the background
  ◦ Ex: blue font on white background

Use colour to reinforce the logic of your structure
  ◦ Ex: light blue title and dark blue text

Use colour to emphasize a point
  ◦ But only use this occasionally
Using a font colour that does not contrast with the background colour is hard to read.

Using colour for decoration is distracting and annoying.

Using a different colour for each point is unnecessary.
- Using a different colour for secondary points is also unnecessary.

Trying to be creative can also be bad.
Use backgrounds that are attractive but simple

Use backgrounds which are light

Use an interesting background that relates to the topic as a way to keep the audience focused.
Avoid backgrounds that are distracting or difficult to read from
Always be consistent with the background that you use
Use graphs rather than just charts and words
- Data in graphs is easier to comprehend & retain than raw data
- Trends are easier to visualize in graph form

Items Sold in First Quarter of 2002

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Graphs – Bad

- January: Blue Balls (20.4), Red Balls (30.6)
- February: Blue Balls (27.4), Red Balls (38.6)
- March: Blue Balls (90), Red Balls (34.6)
- April: Blue Balls (20.4), Red Balls (31.6)
Spelling and Grammar

- Proof your slides for:
  - spelling mistakes
  - the use of repeated words
  - grammatical errors you might have made

- If English is not your first language, have someone else check your presentation!
Conclusion

- Use an effective and strong closing
  - Your audience is likely to remember your last words

- Use a conclusion slide to:
  - Summarize the main points of your presentation
  - Suggest future avenues of research
  - Reference all sources.
End your presentation with references and possibly a simple question slide to:

- Invite your audience to ask questions
- Provide a visual aid during question period
- Avoid ending a presentation abruptly