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# Creating PowerPoint Presentations with Audio Narration

Tips & Techniques for Designing Online Lectures  
Using PowerPoint

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# Introduction

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PowerPoint can be an excellent visual tool to deliver instructional presentations. When using PowerPoint it is important to remember that slideshows should enhance your presentations, not detract from them. This guide contains known best practices and simple tips that will help you create quality online presentations using PowerPoint.

## When to Use PowerPoint

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Before creating your PowerPoint presentation you should review your material to determine if PowerPoint is the most effective way to deliver the instructional content to your students. Remember that in the online classroom, a PowerPoint presentation must be accompanied by recorded audio in order to provide your students with the same quality lecture experience they would receive in the face-to-face classroom. With that in mind, there are some cases in the online classroom in which it would be more effective to use PowerPoint as well as some instances where PowerPoint may not be the best delivery method.

### Best Cases for Using PowerPoint Online

PowerPoint is best used for the following types of online presentations, which can enhance online instruction:

- Short presentations (5-15 minutes) that expand upon or supplement a particular topic or subject
- Reinforcing difficult concepts such as working through mathematical problems, explaining hierarchy or organization
- Introducing and explaining visual concepts or simulating a process

### When Not to Use PowerPoint

Like any technology tool, there are some cases in which PowerPoint may not be the best option for delivering instructional content, such as the following:

- Describing concepts or topics that require a lot of text, complex formulas, or equations.

# Preparing Your Slides

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## General Presentation Design

- Use the standard presentation template provided by EP for consistency.
- The main title slide should contain the name of the topic that is being presented. Do not include page numbers, dates, module numbers, or your course number so that the presentations can be easily moved around in the course and repurposed each semester.
- Proofread everything, including visuals such as graphs, charts, or tables.

## Text

- Font size must be large enough to be easily read. Size 28 to 34 font is recommended. No slide should contain text with a font size below 24.
- Avoid using too many sizes of fonts; this can be distracting to the viewer.
- Overuse of text is a common mistake.
  - Too much text makes the slide unreadable. Stick to a few key words to guide your presentation.
  - Large blocks of text should only be used when quoting and should convey the entire message.
  - Follow the “6 x 6” rule - Avoid more than six lines/bullets of text, or six words per line/bullet.
- Consider making your point with graphics instead of text. If your students are reading the slides they are not paying attention to what they hear.

## Graphics

- Use quality graphics. Be careful about stretching or scaling graphics within the slide as this often causes the images to look blurry or disproportionate when viewing the presentation.
- The SmartArt feature, images of processes, or pictures can be used to convey concepts and ideas in a more interesting way than text alone.

## Charts

- PowerPoint deletes portions of charts and worksheets that are imported from Excel, keeping only the leftmost 5.5 inches. Plan ahead.
- Charts should be clear and clean. Avoid clutter and “chart junk” or decorative imagery not directly linked to the topic.

## Excitement

- Slides should retain a professional look and feel. You don't want to distract your students with excessive animation.
- Sounds and transition effects can be annoying. Use sparingly if not at all.
- Animation effects can be interesting when used in moderation.
  - Too much animation is distracting.
  - Consider using custom animation to demonstrate processes or problem solving.
  - Animation of talking points or images is normally unnecessary.
- Consider embedding video clips in your presentation. They will be captured along with all other slide content when you "deliver" the presentation using one of the PowerPoint recording tools.

## Recording a PowerPoint Lecture:

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Recording the audio narration for the PowerPoint presentation is the final step to prepare it for online delivery. The following guidelines should be used to help you maximize the quality of the presentation.

### Preparing to Record the Presentation

- Choose a recording space that is quiet where you will not have interruptions, distractions, or background noise.
- Use the headset microphone that has been provided for you.
- Record the PowerPoint presentation using the "Slide Show" option in PowerPoint so that the recorded result will be full screen.
- Close all other applications on your computer, especially any that have visual/auditory alerts (e.g., email/IM client or other system notifications).
- Have your script ready if you are using one, if not it is recommended that you prepare some notes to highlight key talking points to keep you on track during the presentation. This also lessens the chance that you will have awkward pauses during the presentation or too many "ahs" or "ums" as you are speaking.

### Opening

- Welcome the students to the presentation.
- Briefly state the topic you will be discussing.

- Briefly summarize the highlights of the presentation.
- If this is a continuation of another presentation, let the students know that it is the second, third, etc. part of the topic presentation.

## Speaking

- Relax! Make sure you are in a comfortable and quiet environment.
- Talk at a natural, moderate rate of speech.
- Project your voice.
- Speak clearly and distinctly.
- Repeat critical information.
- Pause briefly to give students time to digest the information on each new slide.
- Don't read slide text word-for-word. The students can read it far faster than you can talk.
- If using a script, try not to sound as though you are reading word for word from paper. Using a sheet of key talking points may work better for you than a script.
- Be personable yet professional. Don't be afraid to personalize the lecture with short words of advice, a personal experience or scenario, or some subject related humor.
- Be enthusiastic. Students are taking your course because you are an expert in the field. Don't shy away from sharing relevant professional experiences. Your enthusiasm for the subject matter will be contagious.
- Do not use the mouse pointer to point to words on the slides; this can be distracting to the viewer.
- Do the cursor to direct students' attention to important parts of graphics is encouraged.

## Conclusion

- Concisely summarize your key concepts and the main ideas of your presentation.
- Resist the temptation to add a few last impromptu words.
- End your talk with a summary statement or question you have prepared.
  - What do you want students to do?
  - What do you want students to remember?
  - If there are additional presentations direct students to the next one.
  - If you would like students to read, answer a discussion question, work a practice problem, instruct them to do so at the end of the presentation.

## After Recording the Presentation

- Play back the recording in its entirety to make sure that you are happy with the result.

- If you notice that there are any obvious quality issues or errors you should record the presentation again. The students will be grateful for the time you have spent to provide them with a quality learning experience!