

# Tips for Effective PowerPoint Presentations

<https://www.ncsl.org/legislators-staff/legislative-staff/legislative-staff-coordinating-committee/tips-for-making-effective-powerpoint-presentations.aspx>

## Fonts

- Select a single sans-serif fonts such as Arial or Helvetica. Avoid serif fonts such as Times New Roman or Palatino because these fonts are sometimes more difficult to read.
- Use no font size smaller than 24 point.
- Use the same font for all your headlines.
- Select a font for body copy and another for headlines.
- Use bold and different sizes of those fonts for captions and subheadings.
- Add a fourth font for page numbers or as a secondary body font for sidebars.
- Don't use more than four fonts in any one publication.
- Clearly label each screen. Use a larger font (35-45 points) or different color for the title.
- Use larger fonts to indicate importance.
- Use different colors, sizes and styles (e.g., bold) for impact.
- Avoid italicized fonts as these are difficult to read quickly.
- Avoid long sentences.
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms.
- Limit punctuation marks.
- No more than 6-8 words per line
- For bullet points, use the 6 x 6 Rule. One thought per line with no more than 6 words per line and no more than 6 lines per slide
- Use dark text on light background or light text on dark background. However, dark backgrounds sometimes make it difficult for some people to read the text.
- Do not use all caps except for titles.
- Put repeating elements (like page numbers) in the same location on each page of a multi-page document.

## Design and Graphical Images

- Use design templates.
- Standardize position, colors, and styles.
- Include only necessary information.
- Limit the information to essentials.
- Content should be self-evident
- Use colors that contrast and compliment.
- Too many slides can lose your audience.
- Keep the background consistent and subtle.
- Limit the number of transitions used. It is often better to use only one so the audience knows what to expect.
- Use a single style of dingbat for bullets throughout the page.
- Use the same graphical rule at the top of all pages in a multi-page document.
- Use one or two large images rather than several small images.

- Prioritize images instead of a barrage of images for competing attention.
- Make images all the same size.
- Use the same border.
- Arrange images vertically or horizontally.
- Use only enough text when using charts or graphical images to explain the chart or graph and clearly label the image.
- Keep the design clean and uncluttered. Leave empty space around the text and graphical images.
- Use quality clipart and use it sparingly. A graphical image should relate to and enhance the topic of the slide.
- Try to use the same style graphical image throughout the presentation (e.g., cartoon, photographs)
- Limit the number of graphical images on each slide.
- Repetition of an image reinforces the message. Tie the number of copies of an image to the numbers in your text.
- Resize, recolor, reverse to turn one image into many. Use duplicates of varying sizes, colors, and orientations to multiply the usefulness of a single clip art image.
- Make a single image stand out with dramatic contrast. Use color to make a dramatic change to a single copy of your clip art.
- Check all images on a projection screen before the actual presentation.
- Avoid flashy images and noisy animation effects unless it relates directly to the slide.

## **Color**

- Limit the number of colors on a single screen.
- Bright colors make small objects and thin lines stand out. However, some vibrant colors are difficult to read when projected.
- Use no more than four colors on one chart.

## **General Presentation**

- Plan carefully.
- Do your research.
- Know your audience.
- Time your presentation.
- Speak comfortably and clearly.
- Check the spelling and grammar.
- Do not read the presentation. Practice the presentation so you can speak from bullet points. The text should be a cue for the presenter rather than a message for the viewer.
- Give a brief overview at the start. Then present the information. Finally review important points.
- It is often more effective to have bulleted points appear one at a time so the audience listens to the presenter rather than reading the screen.
- Use a wireless mouse or pick up the wired mouse so you can move around as you speak.
- If sound effects are used, wait until the sound has finished to speak.
- If the content is complex, print the slides so the audience can take notes.
- Do not turn your back on the audience. Try to position the monitor so you can speak from it.