

DESIGNING THE SLIDES

THE ASSIGNMENT

For the Graphic Design module of the Capstone, you will be designing a minimum of six slides to support your presentation. One of those slides will show an ad or poster you will pitch as a way to promote your ideas. You will also write a brief description of the strategy behind your design. You can choose between either the Clarity Guitars case study or the Capstone Challenge for your project. For the Clarity Guitars assignment, we've provided all the necessary graphics. You can find them in the Capstone assets folder.

For the Capstone Challenge, you'll be providing your own graphics.

Whichever project you choose, the design portion of the Capstone has two components:

The first lesson ends when you submit a first draft of your slides and an accompanying written design strategy for peer review.

The second lesson ends when you've revised your slides and presented them along with your speech in The Final Push. Your efforts will be graded by your peers.

Let's talk about your strategy.

In our design course we looked at the power of good design practice, and at how universal design principals apply to virtually any project involving visual communication. Here in the capstone, your work will be quite specific. You'll be using what you've learned about writing, design, and public speaking to produce a presentation to be graded by your peers.

Before you begin designing your slides, take another look at the videos that follow, which we've borrowed from the design course. They'll help you think about inspiration, organization, type and color.

Slide design presents a unique challenge. Unlike posters or websites, presentation slides serve as an extension of the speaker and don't typically work on their own. A well-designed slide should convey information, but not so much information as to distract from the presenter. After all, your audience is there to see you.

You may want your slides to be showy or you may want them to be very simple, or even impressionistic. The choice is yours and will reflect your preferred style of presentation. While there's no right answer as to how "designerly" your presentation slides should be, there is one critical requirement: your work should be clear, well-organized, and easy for your audience to understand.

We've included a reading - Aim for the Rectangle Outside the Box - from the Graphic Design Course that may help you think about the relationship between slides and the presenter.

What steps should you follow?

The Template: Start with designing a slide template that will suit your needs. Since you'll most likely want consistency throughout your slide deck, your template will be your best ally in building your presentation. Slide templates typically include unique layouts for title slides, text slides, acknowledgements, and possibly artifacts. Try to anticipate what types of slides you'll be needing and design your template accordingly. And remember that, in the design stage, you can use Latin text as a placeholder. It might be helpful to review the reading on templates, which we've also included below, in case you missed it in the design course.

Designing the Slides: Remember that you have total control over how your slides will look. A presentation slide is, in fact, nothing more than a rectangle, and that rectangle belongs entirely to you. Recall the tricks and techniques we covered in the design course, and make them work to your advantage.

One of your slides should show an ad or poster that you would use to promote your idea to a broader audience. Again, this is your chance to be wildly creative or conservative and businesslike; it all depends upon your message, your imagined (or real!) audience, and your own style.

Unlike a written memo, which should always follow clear-cut rules, a presentation can reflect the speaker's personality. In designing your slides, think about what you'll be saying in your presentation, and how you'll be saying it. (It's okay to have fun!)

The Written Description: Along with your first draft, submit a very brief description of your talk and how your slides will support it. Because, as we've said, presentation slides don't typically work as standalone compositions, your description will help your peers better understand how your slides will be used to compliment your spoken presentation.

The First Draft: Once you're happy with your draft slides and written summary, submit them for peer feedback, then be certain to provide feedback to at least two other learners. As you've seen in the design course, the critique is the most useful way for design students to problem-solve and learn.

Do your best work here. Never think of your first draft as being halfway to doing your best work. The draft should always be your best effort. That's why we call it a first draft and not a rough draft.

The Final Project: After you've received feedback on your slides, revise them to reflect any improvements you feel appropriate and start filling in the final content. When your slide deck is complete, incorporate it into your final presentation, which you will then share with your peers

for grading. This will be the same rubric-guided grading process you used on your final poster project in the last module of the design course.

In grading the work of your peers, be respectful and specific. And be sure to share constructive comments as well. It's amazing what you can learn through the process of prescriptive analysis. Spend quality time here and I guarantee it will help you grow as a designer.

Now go make something beautiful!