Table of Contents

Slideshows

Introduction to Presentation Software

Presentation software is used for creating slideshow presentations. The two most commonly used programs are Google Slides and Microsoft PowerPoint.

Google Slides is free web-based presentation software and part of Google Workspace. Like Docs and Sheets, it allows real-time remote collaboration. It supports a wide range of multimedia elements, as well as templates to quick-start your project.

Microsoft PowerPoint is part of Microsoft 365 (formerly Microsoft Office). It has advanced design and formatting options and integrates seamlessly with other Microsoft products, so you can easily include Excel spreadsheets or Word documents into your presentations.

Adding, Deleting, and Duplicating Slides

After creating a new Slides or PowerPoint document, you'll see a single title slide. To add more, either use the Ctrl+M shortcut or navigate to the "Slide" menu and choose "New Slide." Deleting slides is as simple as right-clicking on the slide thumbnail and selecting "Delete." Duplicating a slide is similar; right-click and choose "Duplicate Slide." To delete or duplicate multiple slides at once, hold down Ctrl and select multiple slides before right-clicking.
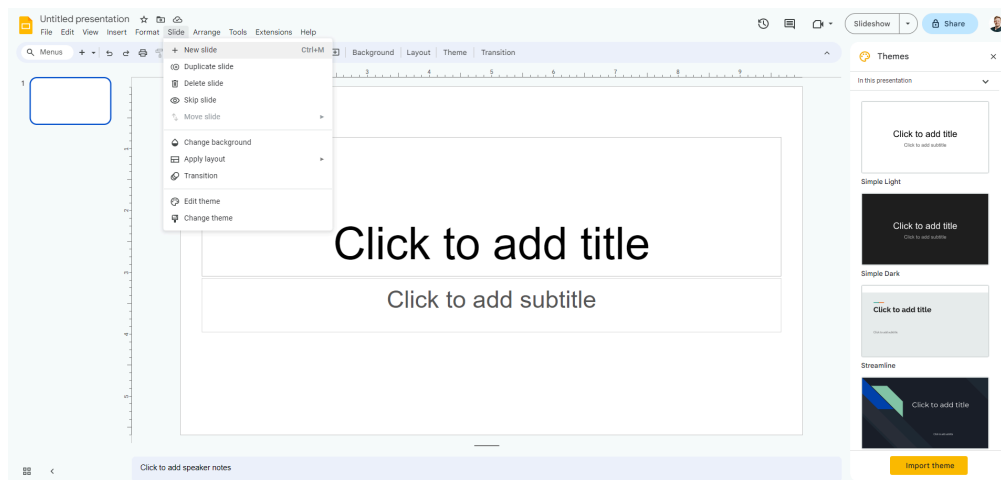
Slide Layouts

Slide layouts are templates that help structure your content. Using a variety of different layouts can make your presentation more engaging and make some information easier to follow. By default the first slide uses the "Title" layout and each slide after that uses the "Body and Text" layout. You can change these in Google Slides by going to "Slide" > "Apply layout".

Themes and Backgrounds

You can up the visual appeal of your presentation with themes and backgrounds. Go to "Slide" > "Change background" to choose a color or upload a custom image. For preset themes, go to "Slide" > "Change theme." You can make global changes to all slides or apply different themes and backgrounds to individual slides.
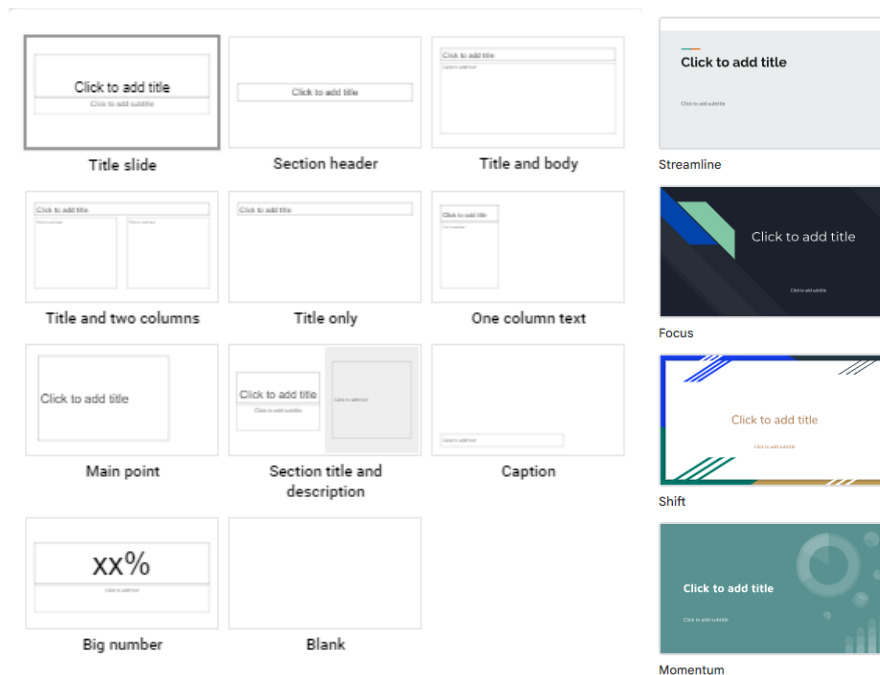

Text Boxes

Text boxes let you add and format text anywhere on your slides. To add a text box, navigate to the "Insert" menu and select "Text box," then click on the area of the slide where you want the text to appear. You can resize, move, and format these text boxes much like you would in a word processing program. The "Format options" in the toolbar also offer advanced customization like drop shadows and reflections.

Inserting Images

Images are arguably even more important to a slideshow presentation than text. Slideshows should supplement what a presenter is saying, and visual aids are a good way to support what you're saying rather than distract from it.

To insert an image, go to "Insert" > "Image." This lets you upload a file, search the web, or link via a URL. You can adjust it by right clicking and going to "Format options".
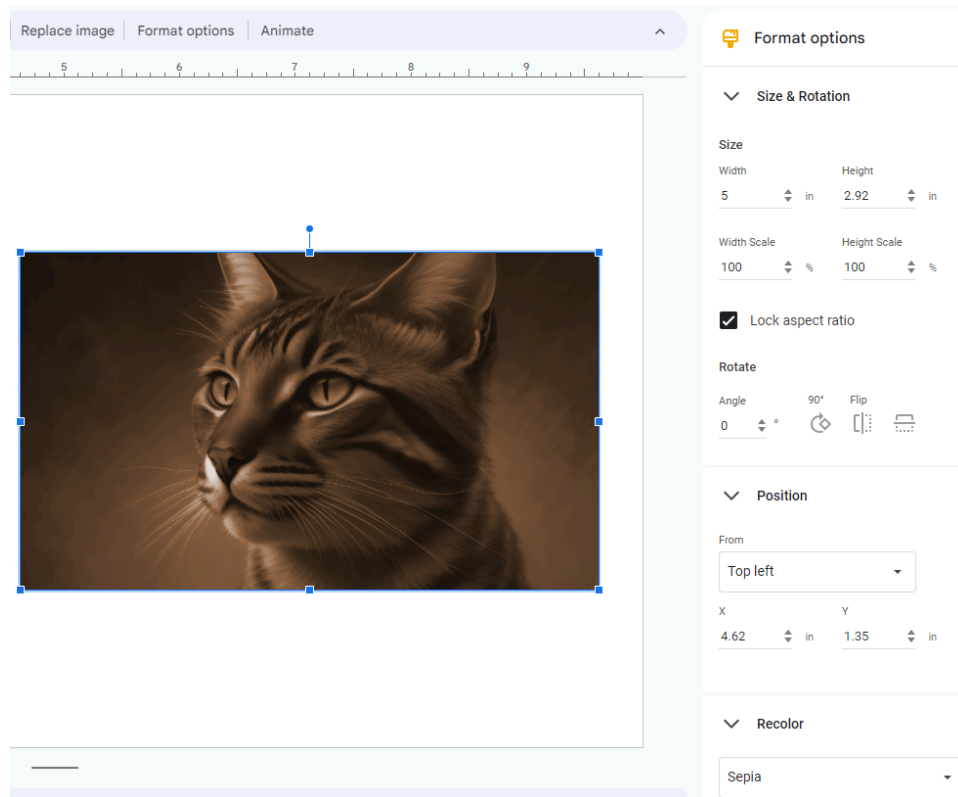
Embedding Audio and Video

Adding audio can give your presentation an extra layer of information or mood. To add audio, go to "Insert" and select "Audio." You can upload an audio file from your computer or Google Drive. Once added, an audio icon appears on the slide, and you can set it to play on click or automatically as the slide appears.

Videos can make your presentation more interactive and engaging. To embed a video, navigate to the "Insert" menu and choose "Video." You can add video links from YouTube or video files from Google Drive. Once embedded, you can trim the video, set it to autoplay, or loop it, providing a range of options to suit your presentation needs.

Transitions and Animations

Transitions and animations add a dynamic element to your slides and can make them more engaging. Go to "Slide" > "Slide transition." This opens a sidebar where you can pick from various styles and set the speed of the transition. Animations for individual elements can be added by selecting the element, then going to "Slide" > "Animate." Here you can select the type of animation and its timing relative to other elements. For example, you can have an image fade in a few seconds after the slide begins, or have it set to fly in from the left after clicking. Be careful not to overdo it with transitions and animations if you're going for a professional look. If there's too much going on, your slides will be overwhelming and may come off as tacky.


Grid View / Slide Sorter

This view displays all your slides as thumbnails in a grid format, which makes it easier to rearrange slides. Select the grid icon on the bottom-left (Slides) or bottom-right (PowerPoint) of your screen. Within this view, simply drag slides to reposition them or use the right-click menu for additional options.

Importing Data and Charts

You can embed charts or tables from Google Sheets by going to "Insert" > "Chart". You'll be given the option to link the data to a Google Sheet, which will update in real time. If you update the data in Sheets, you can just refresh it in Slides without having to re-import the whole thing.
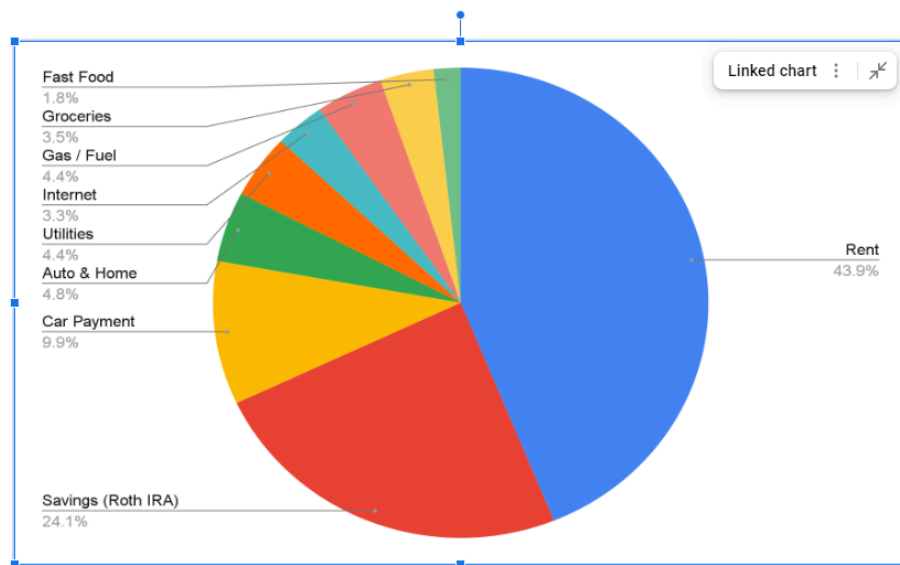
Collaboration, Sharing, and Version History

One of Google Slides' standout features is its collaboration capabilities. By clicking the "Share" button in the upper-right corner, you can invite others to view, comment on, or edit your presentation in real-time. Multiple people can work on the presentation simultaneously, and all changes are automatically saved. You can even assign tasks and leave comments for specific team members by highlighting text or objects and choosing the "Add a comment" option.

Going to "File" > "Version history" allows you to return to a previous version of your slideshow, which is helpful if you've accidentally deleted something or if you change your mind about any updates you've made. You can even give names to specific versions of your presentation.

Rehearsing Your Slideshow

It's important to rehearse your slideshow before you present. Press F5 or click on "Slideshow" in the top-right corner. This displays your slides as they will appear to your audience during the presentation, so you can practice your delivery and timing. This is especially important if your slideshow is timed. Use the arrow keys or a clicker to navigate between slides (if the slides aren't timed) and hit the escape key to exit Slideshow mode when you're done.

Speaker Notes and Presenter View

Speaker notes are essentially a hidden script for the presenter, which can give you cues that aren't visible to the audience. Look for the text bar below your slide that says "Click to add speaker notes". If it's not there, go to "View" > "Show speaker notes". Whatever you type will be saved specifically for the slide you're working on.
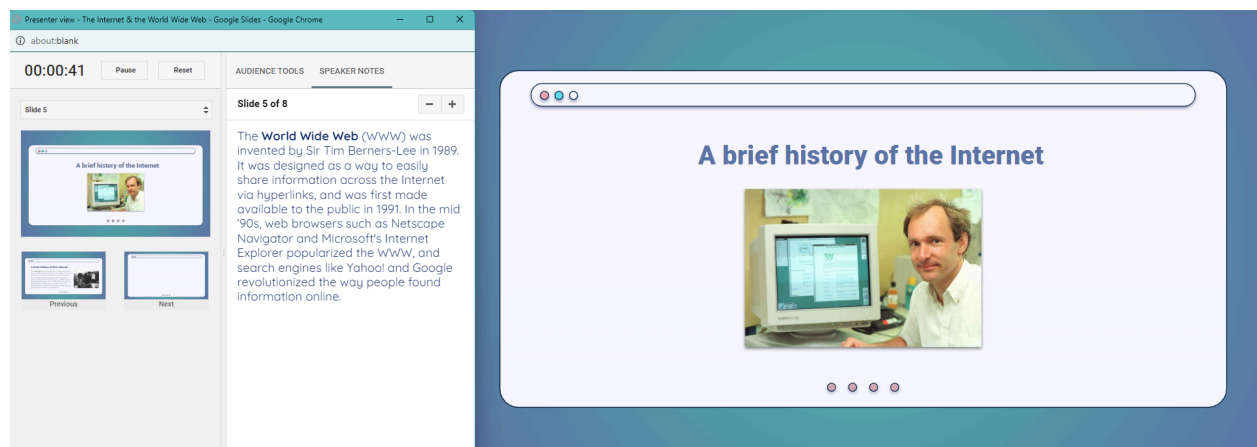
What the presenter sees vs. what the audience sees

To use speaker notes during your presentation, go to "Presenter view" by clicking on the dropdown arrow next to the Slideshow button. In this mode, the presenter and the audience see different screens. The presenter's screen shows the current slide, upcoming slides, and the speaker notes, while the audience only sees the current slide.

To set this up, make sure that your computer is connected to a second display like a projector, TV, or another monitor. Usually the software will automatically recognize the setup and display the presentation properly. If you encounter issues, go to the display settings of your operating system and select "Extend Display."

Add-Ons and Extensions

Google Slides supports tons of add-ons and extensions. These tools range from advanced diagramming capabilities to interactive quizzes that engage your audience. To explore and integrate available options, go to "Extensions" > "Add-ons". This opens the G Suite Marketplace, where you can browse and install a variety of tools. Some popular add-ons include "Pear Deck" for interactive audience participation and "Lucidchart Diagrams" for intricate charting and flowchart creation.