

# Creative & Effective Presentations

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Digital Integration Teaching Initiative (DITI)

GRMN3800  
Carolin Fuchs  
Summer 2024



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*NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks*

*Feel free to ask questions at any point  
during the presentation!*

# Workshop Agenda & Outline

1. Learn guidelines, best practices, and tips for making a PowerPoint presentation
2. Explore options for advanced design
3. Learn how to consider accessibility in designing presentations
4. Explore key functions through hands-on practice

Slides and handout available at:  
<https://bit.ly/su24-fuchs-powerpoint>



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# Getting Started: The Basics

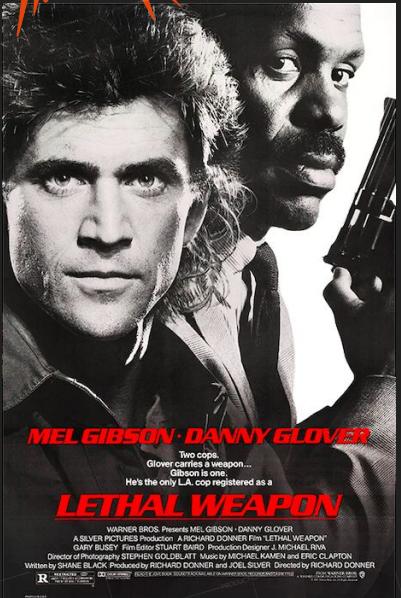


# Discuss: What design features make for an effective or ineffective presentation?





# Blockbuster Movie Poster Design Trends Have Changed Greatly Over 40 Years



1987



Posters that once featured only core characters originally posed in a single shot frame have now become posters that feature most if not all named characters presented through distinct headshots superimposed during post-editing. This reflects a film industry that has fallen into deeper and deeper dependence on digital technology for the benefit of production efficiency. Personally I find it a loss in the artistic merit of these marketing objects which possibly reflects a similar artistic loss in the films themselves. In this way the change in how posters get made functions as a metonymy for how the film industry as a whole has evolved. The use of *Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One* here is in a way ironic, since lately Tom Cruise's entire career seems to revolve around an implicit critique of the very digital overdependence his own film's poster perfectly reflects. It's hard to say, then, to what degree I can take this critique seriously regardless of how many cliffs he drives a motorcycle off of.

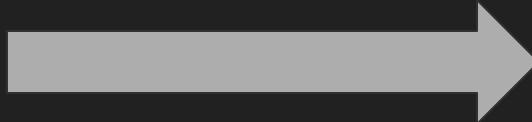
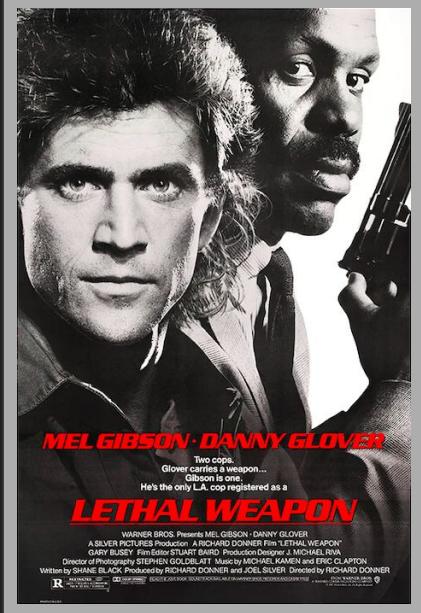


2023



# Blockbuster Movie Posters: Then vs Now

1987



2023



Core characters

Single shot with minimal editing

Most if not all named characters

Distinct headshots digitally superimposed

# Organize your Points

- Treat your presentation like any other form of argument, explanation, or narrative—be intentional, and organize your slides carefully.
- Put main ideas front-and-center. Additional detail can go in the “Notes” section.
- Use signposts to orient your audience.



# Keep it Simple

- Less is more
- Slides should be clear, concise, and above all, understandable.
- Nothing in your slide should be superfluous.
- Slides need plenty of “negative space.”

TURTLES

GOOD

Everything you need to know about turtles

By: John Doe

BAD

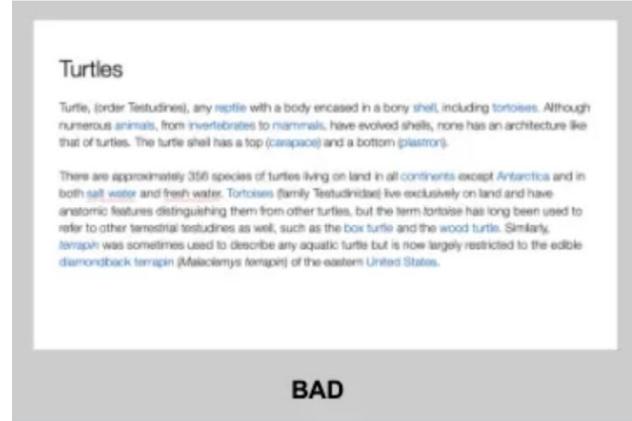
[TED Masterclass](#)



# Limit Bullets and Text



VS.



The audience should listen to you, not read along.

[TED Masterclass](#)



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# Getting Started: Presentation Design and Master Slides



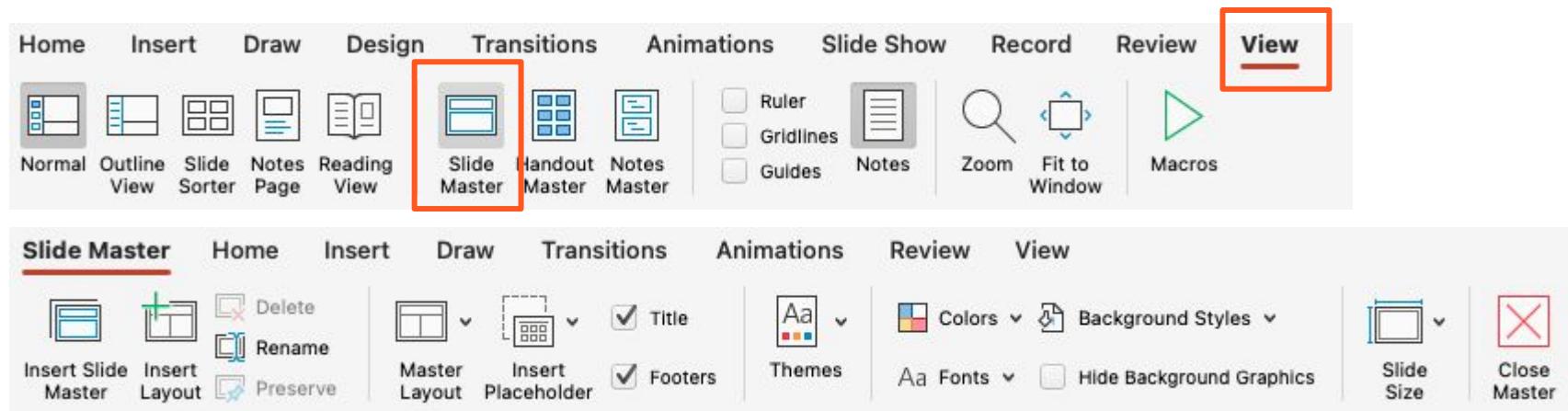
# Design: Select Theme

- Design templates contain color schemes, slide and title masters with custom formatting, and styled fonts.
  - Select the **Design** tab.
  - Select one of the **Themes**—click on the down arrow for the drop-down menu.
  - Select one of the **Variants**.



# Master Slides

- Master Slides provide your presentation with a consistent and professional look that will appear on each slide.
- To set up Master Slides, select the **View** tab and choose **Slide Master**.



# Master Slide Templates

The screenshot shows the 'Slide Master' view in Microsoft PowerPoint. The ribbon at the top includes tabs for 'Slide Master', 'Home', 'Insert', 'Draw', 'Transitions', 'Animations', 'Review', and 'View'. On the far right of the ribbon are buttons for 'Record', 'Comments', 'Present in Teams', and 'Share'. The left sidebar lists 'Slide Master', 'Home', 'Insert', 'Draw', 'Transitions', 'Animations', 'Review', and 'View' again. Below the ribbon are various tools: 'Insert Slide Master' (with 'Insert Master', 'Insert Layout', and 'Preserve' options), 'Master Layout' (with 'Insert Placeholder' and 'Preserve' checked), 'Themes' (with 'Colors' and 'Background Styles' dropdowns), 'Aa Fonts' (with 'Hide Background Graphics' checked), 'Slide Size' (with 'Close Master' button), and a 'Record' button.

The main content area displays a slide with a large title placeholder containing the text 'Click to edit Master title style'. Below it is a subtitle placeholder with the text 'Click to edit Master subtitle style'. At the bottom of the slide are three footer placeholders labeled '5/8/24', 'Footer', and '1/1'.



# Presentation Tips: Text



# Keep it Visible: Fonts

- Sans serif fonts are typically the best for presentations.
- Be generous with spacing.
- No more than two complementary fonts (e.g., Arial and **Arial Bold** for emphasis).
- Use mixed case, not all CAPS.
- **Bold** vs. Underline vs. *Italics*

Times New Roman: Keep it Visible

EB Garamond: Keep it Visible

Arial: Keep it Visible

**Droid Sans: Keep it Visible**

Caveat: Keep it Visible

Comic: Keep it Visible

Cambria: Keep it Visible



# Keep it Visible: Colors

- Colors deeply impact visual communication.
- Make color choices that are accessible to everyone (and appropriate for the presentation).
- Ideal color schemes are high contrast.
  - Limit your palette to 3 colors total.
  - PowerPoint offers multiple color palettes.
- NU Colors

Complementary color combinations



Complementary colors | examples  
[Visme Blog](#)

*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*



# Presentation Tips: Images



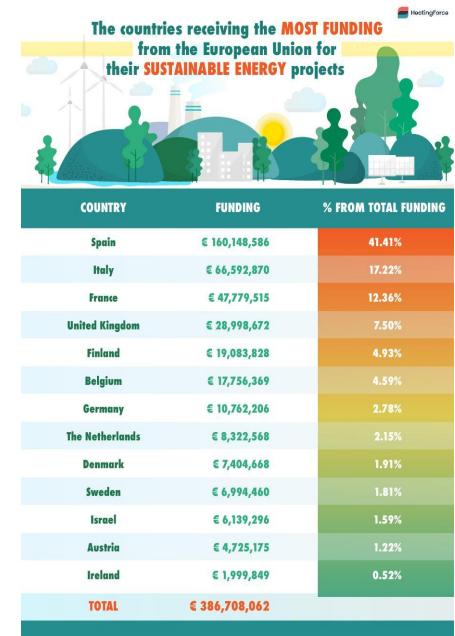
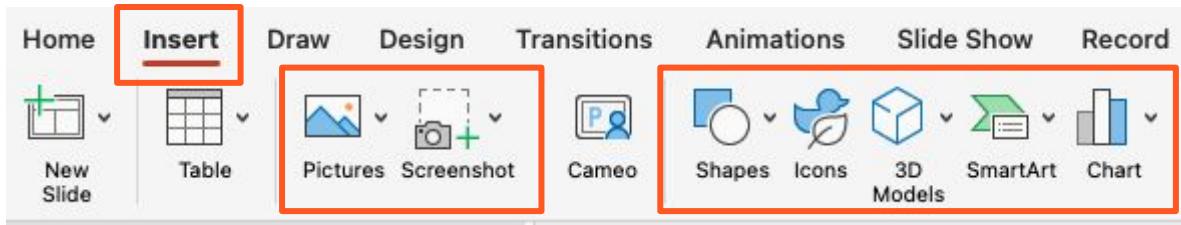
# Use Graphics & Charts

- High-quality, accurate, and self-explanatory
- Prioritize the most important information
- Alt-text for charts should include type (e.g. line), data, and inclusion rationale
- Copyright and fair use



# Inserting Images

- Select the **Insert** tab to add **Pictures**, **Screenshots**, **Shapes**, **Icons**, **3D Models**, **SmartArt**, and **Charts**.



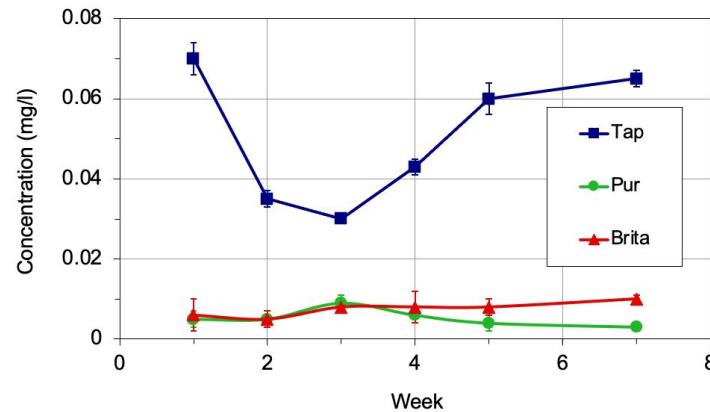
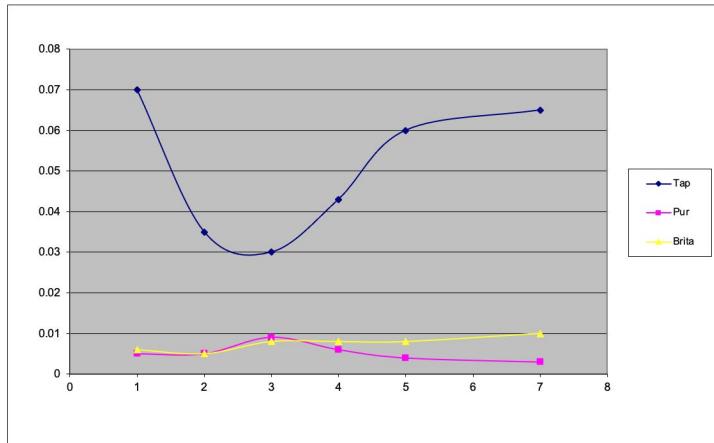
# Graphics & Charts: Keep it Simple



VS.



# Graphics & Charts: Readability is Key



Which chart is more effective in a slide deck? What attributes should charts and graphs like these have to be readable in a presentation?



# Presentation Tips: Animation Effects & Transitions



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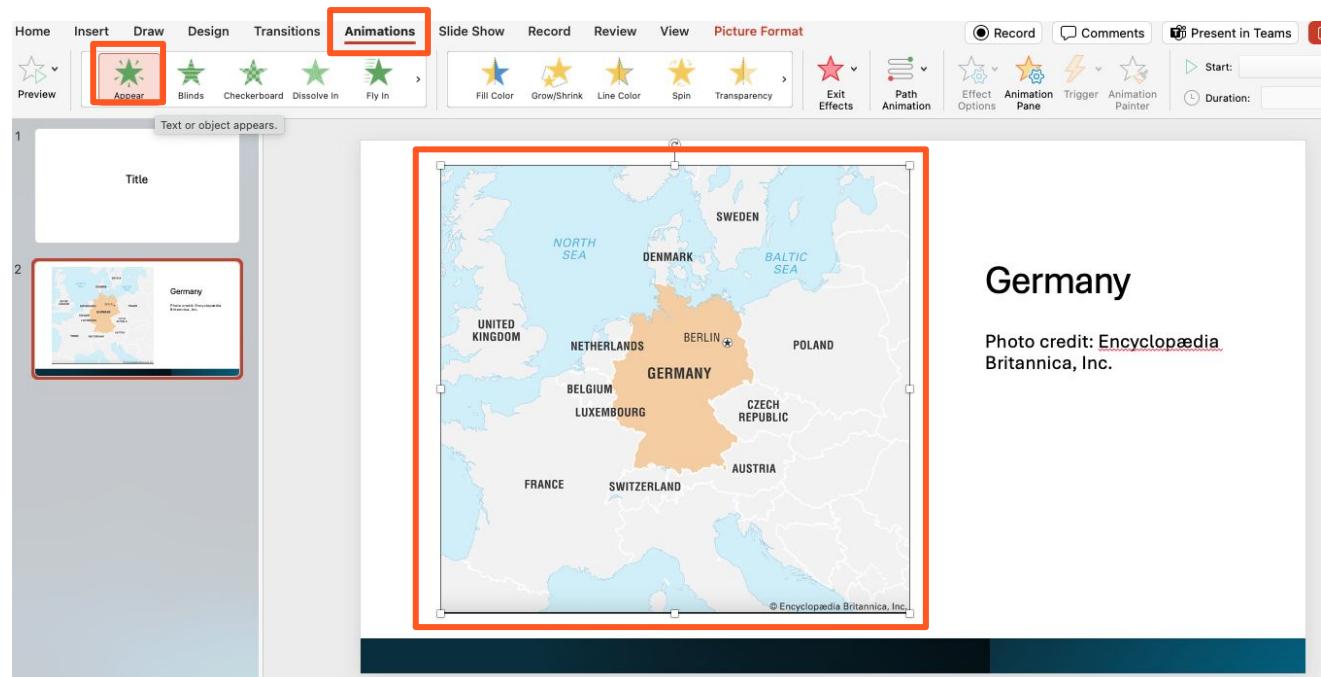
# Use Animations Judiciously

- Animations can add flair to your slide transitions.
- However, using too many of them can make the presentation look less serious.
- The type of animation matters—use it to enhance the points you're making.



# Adding Animation Effects

- To use PowerPoint animations, select the tab **Animations**, select the object to animate, and click the animation you would like.



Germany

Photo credit: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.



# Adding Slide Transitions

- Slide transitions animate the movement from one slide to the next.
- To use PowerPoint transitions, click on the tab **Transitions** and select the type of transition you would like.



# Presentation Tips: Audio, Video, & VoiceOver

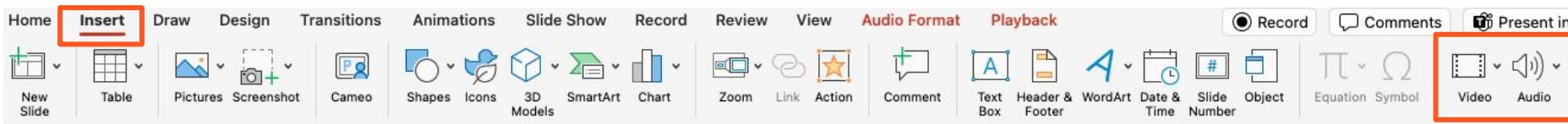


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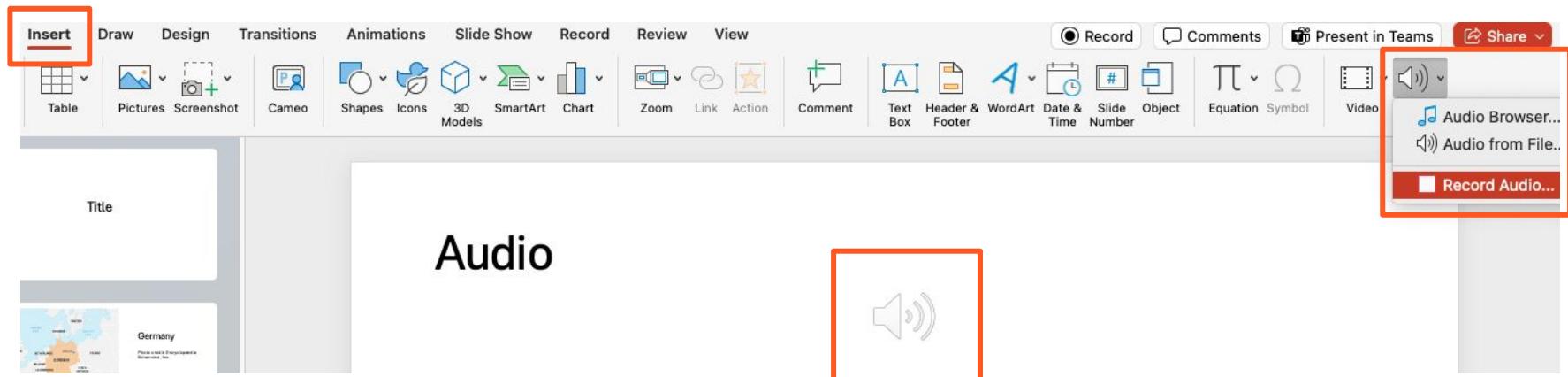
# Adding Audio/Video

- When you add audio, you can upload it from your computer or record your own audio within PowerPoint.
- When you add video, you can link to an online video or upload one saved to your computer.
- Select the **Insert** tab, click the text box where you would like to add video or audio, then select **Video** or **Audio** and choose the source.



# Adding a Voiceover

- Voiceover is available at the top-right when you select the **Insert** tab.
- Click **Record Audio** on the dropdown menu for **Audio**.
- OR select pre-recorded audio from your computer or browser in the dropdown menu.



# PowerPoint Designer

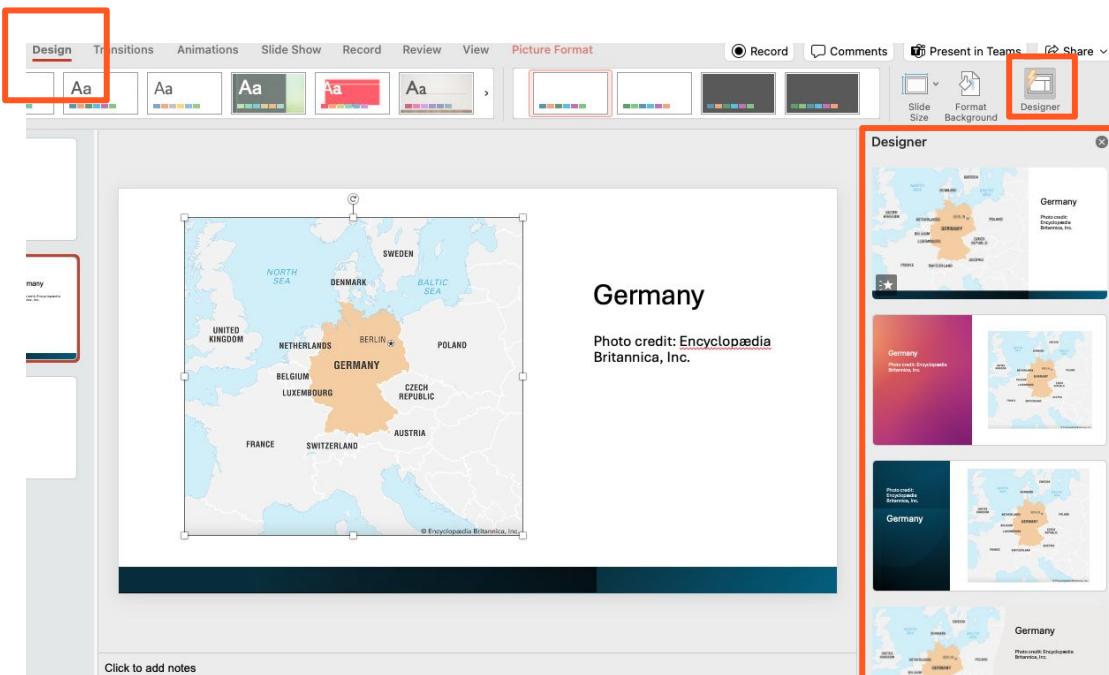


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# Using PowerPoint *Designer*

- Designer automatically generates design ideas for you to choose from.
- Insert one or more pictures, a list of items, or a list of dates.
- Select the **Design** tab and then **Designer**.
- Select a design from the list.



# Accessibility

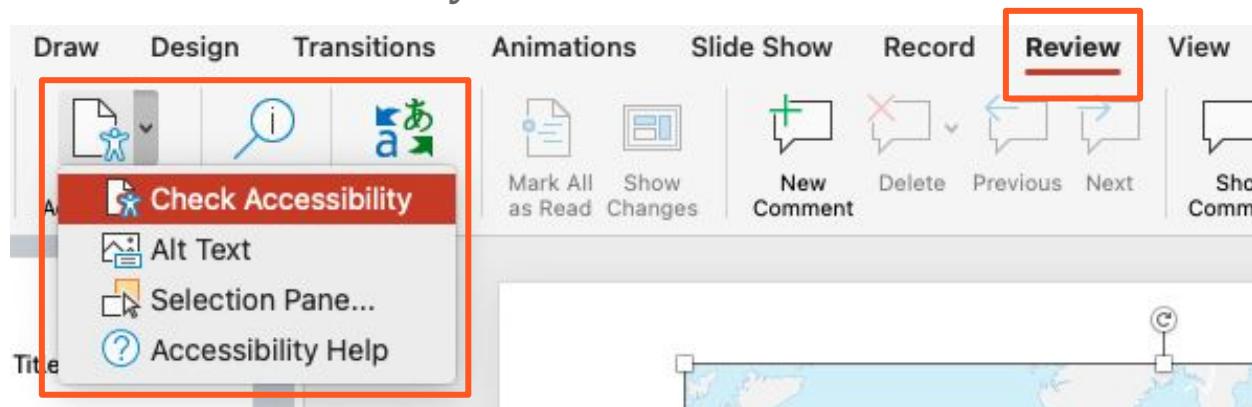


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# Improve Accessibility

- Accessibility Checker verifies your presentation against a set of standards that identify possible areas of concern for people who have disabilities. Running the Accessibility Checker is a critical process in optimizing your presentations for accessibility.
- Select the **Review** tab and **Check Accessibility**.



# Example: Alt Text Error



Click to add notes

Germany

Photo credit: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

**Accessibility**

- ▼ Errors
  - ▼ Missing object description
  - Picture 6 (Slide 2)**
- ▼ Warnings
  - ▼ Check reading order
  - Slide 2

Keep accessibility checker running while I work

**Why Fix?**  
Alternative text for images and other objects is very important for people who can't see the screen. Screen readers read alternative text aloud, so it's the only information many have about the image. Good alternative text helps them understand the image.

**Steps To Fix:**  
1. Right-click the object, then select View Alt Text.  
2. If the object is meaningful, type a description of it in the text box on the Alt Text pane; otherwise, if the object is purely decorative, select the Decorative check box.

*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*



# Example: Adding Alt Text

The screenshot shows a presentation slide with a map of Germany. A context menu is open over the map, with the 'View Alt Text...' option highlighted by a red box. To the right of the map is an 'Alt Text' panel. The panel contains the following text:

How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind or low vision?  
- The subject(s) in detail  
- The setting  
- The actions or interactions  
- Other relevant information

(1-2 detailed sentences recommended)

A map showing Germany and the surrounding countries.

Mark as decorative

Generate alt text for me



# Accessibility Resources

- Northeastern University Library [Accessibility Hub: Presentations](#)
- [WebAIM Color Contrast Checker](#)
- [Alt Text](#) for images
  - Concise and contextual
  - [“It’s Complicated”: Negotiating Accessibility and \(Mis\)Representation in Image Descriptions of Race, Gender, and Disability](#) by Bennett et al. (2021)



# Big Takeaways



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# Be Consistent & Organized

- Be intentional about design choices and keep it simple.
- Be consistent in font, font size, color scheme, animation effects, design, formatting, etc.
- Set up master slides before you build content slides.
- Organize content with section headers and signposts.
- Choose images/graphics mindfully, and don't mix visual types on a single slide.
- Limit bullets & text on slides—keep negative space.



# PowerPoint: Demo/Hands-On Practice, Q&A, & Discussion



# Demo/Hands-On Practice

1. Identify your hands-on practice and troubleshooting needs—this practice time should work for you.
2. Practice setting up master slides.
3. Practice adding video or audio clips to your presentation.
4. Practice adding voice over to your presentation.
5. Try using *Designer* to set up a practice slide.



# Accurately Representing Data in Visuals and Infographics

—Developed in collaboration with BARI



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# Data Presentation Tips

- **Create your own tables**, or make sure to use only images that are shared with permissions that support reuse—and always cite your sources!
- **Be sure to present your data *accurately***—be mindful that your charts, graphs, maps, and infographics are scaled and structured to present data and conclusions *completely* and *correctly*.
- **Use visual representations of numbers**—this will help concretize abstract concepts.
- **Label judiciously**, but don't overwhelm the viewer with dense text.
- **Beware of trying to make too many points in one graphic**—focus on the big takeaways.



# Limitations of Some Data Presentation Methods: Charts, Graphs, Diagrams, Maps

- The **structure** and **scale** of charts and graphs could be **manipulated** to amplify or diminish differences.
- **Different types** of graphs and charts work better for some types of data than others—for example, a pie chart and a line graph might not both be able to represent the same data accurately.
- A chart with **too much information** will be difficult to understand, but **too little information** could be an indication that data has been cherry-picked to support an argument.
- There is **limited space** in a visualization for in-depth analysis; nuances can be flattened and obfuscated.



# Misrepresentation of Data

From D.B. Resnik, in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*:  
“The concept of ‘misrepresentation,’ unlike ‘fabrication’ and ‘falsification,’ is neither clear nor uncontroversial. Most scientists will agree that fabrication is making up data and falsification is changing data. **But what does it mean to misrepresent data? As a minimal answer to this question, one can define ‘misrepresentation of data’ as ‘communicating honestly reported data in a deceptive manner.’”**

This [\*\*online book from The Data School\*\*](#) covers some common ways data could be misrepresented at multiple points in the process of gathering, analyzing, and presenting findings on data-based research.

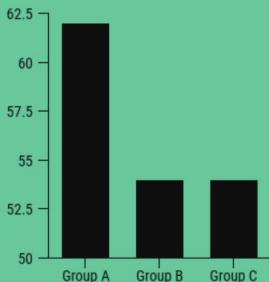


# Limitations of Charts, Diagrams, Graphs, & Maps

1

## OMITTING THE BASELINE

In most cases, the baseline for a graph is 0. But writers can skew how data is perceived by making the baseline a different number. This is known as a “truncated graph”.



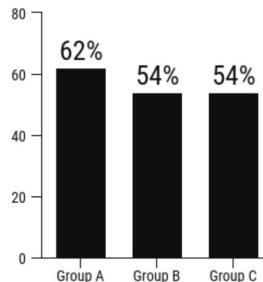
MISLEADING

- Starting the vertical axis at 50 makes a small difference between groups seem massive
- Group A looks much larger than Groups B and C

VS

ACCURATE

- Starting the vertical axis at 0 offers a more accurate depiction of the data
- The difference between the groups does not seem as dramatic



Consider these questions as you review the examples in this section:

- What **commonalities** do you notice among the more misleading and more accurate versions of graphs and charts in these examples?
- How would you define “**accuracy**” in the context of data presentation? Why is that question essential to ask?
- In what **contexts** does it make the most sense to use these kinds of visuals to present data? Are there other times where they’re inappropriate? How so?

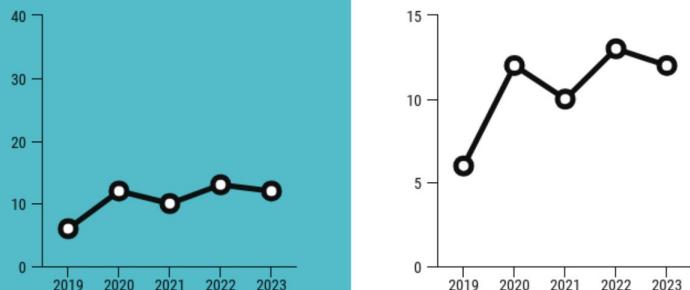


# More limitations with presenting data using CHARTS and DIAGRAMS:

2

## MANIPULATING THE Y-AXIS

Expanding or compressing the scale on a graph can make changes in data seem more or less significant than they actually are.



😢 MISLEADING

- The scale is disproportionate to the data, making the change over time seem small

VS

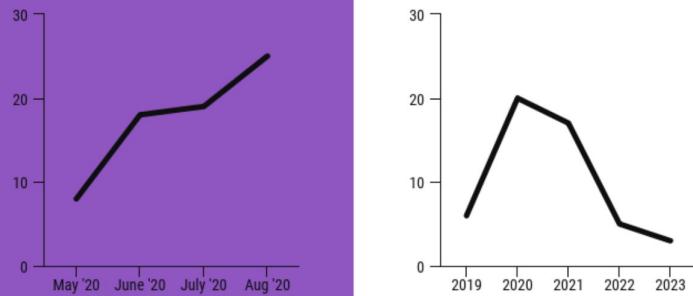
😊 ACCURATE 😊

- The scale is proportionate to the data, showing a greater change over time

3

## CHERRY PICKING DATA

Writers may only include certain data points on their graphs to reinforce their narratives. This can create a false impression of the data.



😢 MISLEADING

- Only a few months out of the year are graphed, depicting an upward trend

VS

😊 ACCURATE 😊

- A much wider date range is graphed, revealing an overall downward trend
- This graph shows the bigger picture

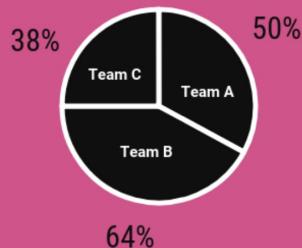


# Limitations with presenting data using GRAPHS and MAPS:

4

## USING THE WRONG GRAPH

The type of graph you use should depend on the type of data you want to visualize. Using the wrong type of graph can skew the data. Writers will sometimes use the wrong type of graph on purpose.



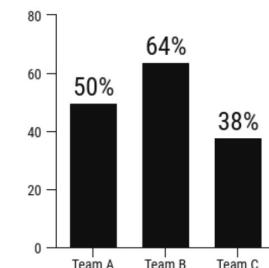
😢 MISLEADING

- Pie charts are used to compare parts of a whole, not the difference between groups
- A different type of graph should be used to compare the three teams

VS

😊 ACCURATE 😊

- Bar graphs are better for showing the differences between groups
- This chart is a better visualization of the data



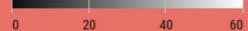
5

## GOING AGAINST CONVENTIONS

Over time, we have developed standards for how data is visualized. Flipping those conventions can make a graph confusing or misleading to readers.



Individuals per km



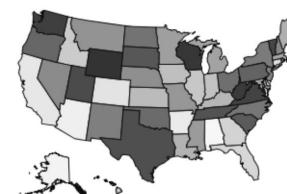
😢 MISLEADING

- Normally, darker shades are associated with density on a map but here, dark has been used to depict lower population density
- This graph can confuse and mislead readers, who expect dark to represent a higher population density

VS

😊 ACCURATE 😊

- This map follows the convention of using lighter shades for lighter density and darker shades for higher density
- Readers will intuitively know how to interpret the data



Individuals per km



# Thank you!

—Developed by Vaishali Kushwaha, Adam Tomasi, Julianna Wessels, Sara Morrell, Emily Sullivan, Javier Rosario, and Dipa Desai

- For more information on the DITI, please see:  
<https://bit.ly/diti-about>
- Schedule an appointment with us! <https://bit.ly/diti-meeting>
- If you have any questions, contact us at: [nulab.info@gmail.com](mailto:nulab.info@gmail.com)
- We'd love your feedback! Please fill out a short survey here:  
<https://bit.ly/diti-feedback>

