

Tips for designing and delivering PowerPoint presentations

1. Create a simple design template.

- Do not fill your slides with as much information as possible.
- Consistency with font, colours, background, throughout is essential.
- Consistency of headers adds professional feel.
- Use colour wisely. Stick to one or two colours per slide.

2. Use appropriate font and size (and be consistent).

- Use sans serif fonts (such as Arial Rounded MT Bold).
- Use font size above 16 point for text. Anything smaller is difficult to read.
- Use colour / bold type to highlight key words.
- Avoid using too many italics.
- Follow the 6×6 rule:
 - No more than 6 lines of text per slide.
 - No more than 6 words in each line of text.

3. Use good quality images.

- Images should reinforce and complement your message.
- They should be impactful, not space-fillers.
- Empty space on the slide will actually enhance readability.
- Don't clutter the slide with images unless they add value.
- Clip art generally lacks emphasis.

4. Avoid too many special effects.

- Tend to distract from your message and get old quickly.
- Transitions, text fly-ins, animations and sounds may reduce the professionalism you desire to portray.
- Special effect should impact the presentation, not detract from the presentation.

5. Limit the number of slides.

- Limit the number of slides according to the time you have available.
- Rushing through the presentation distracts the audience and does not get your message across.
- A good rule of thumb is one slide per minute.

6. Do not read from your slides or speak to them.

- Don't face the screen and read your slides (the audience will get bored, stop listening and not get your message).
- Use the slides to trigger your comments or to pace yourself, but do not read them.
- Remember that your slides are only there to support, not to replace your talk!
- Elaborate and expand upon your slides, rather than the audience just reading all the text on the screen.

7. Have a clear structure.

- An intro slide helps your audience know what you're going to be talking about.
- Plan what you're going to include as text, versus what could be shown as graphics.

8. Technical problems when using PowerPoint.

- Check equipment beforehand.
- Know how and where to access technical support.
- Have copies of printed slides as a back-up.
- Provide a handout for the audience that includes key images.

References:

Glynn, D. (2022) *5 tips for designing better PowerPoint slides*. Available at: [5 tips for designing better PowerPoint slides | The Thread](#) (accessed 9th September 2025).

Hopkins, D. and Reid, T. (2024) *The academic skills handbook. Your guide to success in writing, thinking and communicating at university* (2nd edition). London: Sage.

The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) (2024) *7 Tips for Designing and Delivering PowerPoint Presentations*. Available at: [7 Tips for Designing and Delivering PowerPoint Presentations | Media & Technology Support Services](#) (accessed 9th September 2025).