

PowerPoint Stylesheets

THE PP cognitive style is propagated by the templates, textbooks, style-sheets, and complete pitches available for purchase. Some corporations and government agencies *require* employees to use designated PP Phluff and presentation logo-wear. With their strict generic formats, these designer stylesheets serve only to enforce the limitations of PowerPoint, compromising the presenter, the content, and, ultimately, the audience.

Here we see a witless PP pitch on how to make a witless PP pitch. Prepared at the Harvard School of Public Health by the “Instructional Computing Facility,” these templates are uninformed by the practices of scientific publication and the rich intellectual history of evidence and analysis in public health. The templates do, however, emulate the format of reading primers for 6 year-olds.

Instructional Computing Facility

Guidelines for Preparing Slides

Instructional Computing Facility

Harvard School of Public Health

Stylesheet-makers often seek to leave *their* name on *your* show; “branding,” as they say in the Marketing Department. In case you didn’t notice, this presentation is from the “Instructional Computing Facility.” But where are the names of the people responsible for this? No names appear on any of the 21 slides.

Instructional Computing Facility

No More than One Topic per Slide

What about them Sox hey?

Harvard School of Public Health

But this breaks up the evidence into arbitrary fragments. Why aren’t we seeing examples from actual scientific reports? What are the Sox (a rather parochial reference) doing here? The inept PP typography persists: strange over-active indents, oddly chosen initial caps, typographic orphans on 3 of 4 slides.



Jane said, “Here is a ball.
See this blue ball, Sally.
Do you want this ball?”

Sally said, “I want my ball.
My ball is yellow.
It is a big, pretty ball.”

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Use the 6 X 6 rule:

**6 lines of text
6 words per line**

Harvard School of Public Health

This must be the Haiku Rule for formatting scientific lectures. At least we’re not limited to 17 syllables per slide. Above this slide, the rule can be seen in action—in a first-grade reading primer. The stylesheet typography, distinctly unscientific, uses a capital X instead of a multiplication sign.

Instructional Computing Facility

Outline Formats are Easier to Follow

Harvard School of Public Health

Why is this relevant to scientific presentations? Are there other principles than ease of following? Didn’t the *Harvard Business Review* article indicate that bullet outlines corrupted thought? Text, imaging, and data for scientific presentations should be at the level of scientific journals, much *higher* resolution than speech.