



Creating Effective PowerPoints

Updated December 2020

PowerPoint has become synonymous with presentations in the classroom, boardroom and beyond. The design, content, and presentation of a PowerPoint slideshow can make or break your presentation. This class discusses tips on creating effective PowerPoints, advanced PowerPoint features for designing slides, and public speaking advice.

Plan Ahead

Many presenters create their PowerPoint presentations without a clear plan in mind. This can lead to an unfocused and confused presentation without a clear goal. Make sure to give yourself time to prepare your presentation. If possible, avoid scrambling to create it the night before you are due to present.

Create an **outline** of what you want to say and build your presentation around it. Consider your **audience**, **message/goal** of the presentation, and the **time** allotted and situation of your presentation. All of these aspects should influence how your presentation is designed and presented.

An example outline

- Plan ahead
 - Create an outline (like this one!)
 - Consider audience, message/goal, time
- Keep it simple
 - Slides = supplement your presentation
 - Keywords
- Make it readable
 - Uncluttered, readable font
 - Larger size
 - Dark text/light background or light text/dark background
- Engage your audience
 - High-quality stock images, NOT clipart to engage your audience
 - Ask them questions, use stories to help your topic stick
- Don't read off your slides
 - Reveal points one at a time w/ animations
 - Use notes, Presenter view
- Create a handout
 - Based on outline – not just slide printout

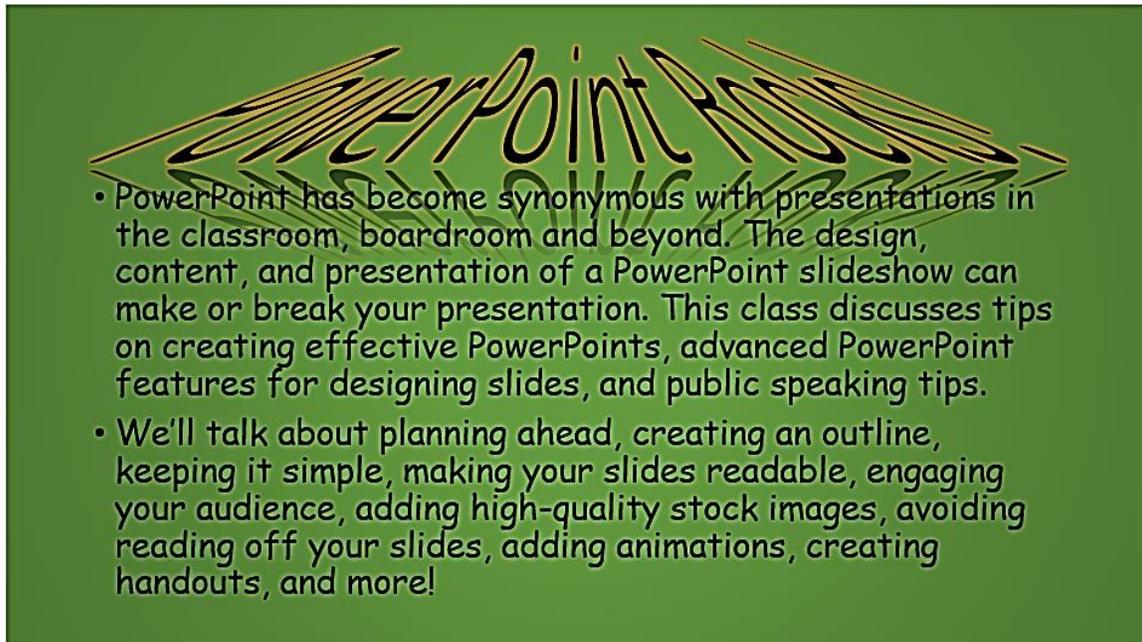
Once you have outlined your presentation, you are ready to begin creating your PowerPoint presentation. As you create your presentation, remember - your slides should supplement your **presentation**. If everything you are going to say is on a slide, there's no need for you!

Today, we will be working with an already created presentation called **BadPowerPoint**. It includes several examples of how **not** to create your PowerPoint presentation. We'll be learning how to fix these mistakes and bad habits today.

To open **BadPowerPoint**:

1. Click the **start** button in the task bar at the bottom of the screen
2. Click on **PowerPoint** to open the program.
3. Select **Open Other Presentations**.
4. Navigate to **BadPowerPoint**. On library computers, the files are located in the **pubdocsshare**s folder. On your own computer, try checking the **Downloads** folder.

Keep It Simple



Slide 1 has far **too much text** on it. Too much text can overwhelm, bore, or distract your audience from actually listening to you!

Keep your slides simple and focused by including only **one major point per slide**. Focus on **keywords** and concepts, not paragraphs of text.

Here's the text from the slide:

- PowerPoint has become synonymous with presentations in the classroom, boardroom and beyond. The design, content, and presentation of a PowerPoint slideshow can make or break your presentation. This class discusses tips on creating effective PowerPoints, advanced PowerPoint features for designing slides, and public speaking tips.
- We'll talk about planning ahead, creating an outline, keeping it simple, making your slides readable, engaging your audience, adding high-quality stock images, avoiding reading off your slides, adding animations, creating handouts, and more!

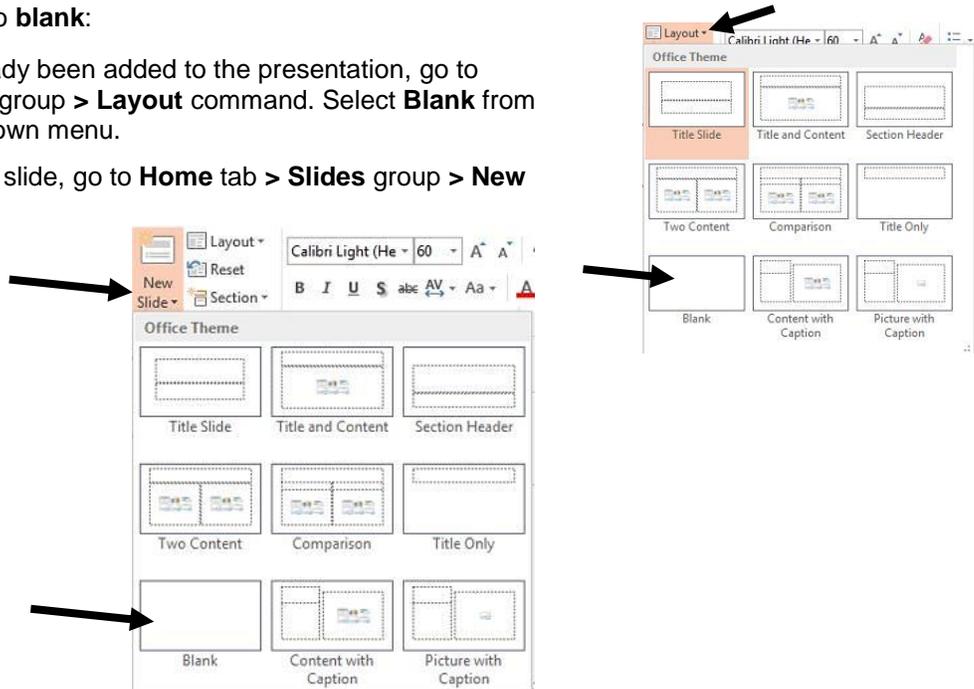
What do we absolutely need to get across to the audience?

What distracts from our message?

One option to keep slides focused is to use the blank slide layout and add textboxes and other content as needed.

To change the slide layout to **blank**:

1. If the slide has already been added to the presentation, go to **Home** tab > **Slides** group > **Layout** command. Select **Blank** from the resulting drop down menu.
2. To add a new blank slide, go to **Home** tab > **Slides** group > **New Slide**



Practice Exercise: Adding a Blank Slide

1. Add a **blank slide** after Slide 1.

To add a text box:

1. Click on the **Insert** tab.
2. Click on the **Text Box** command in the **Text** grouping.
3. Click anywhere on the slide to add text **OR** click and drag to draw the text box.



Practice Exercise: Adding a Blank Slide

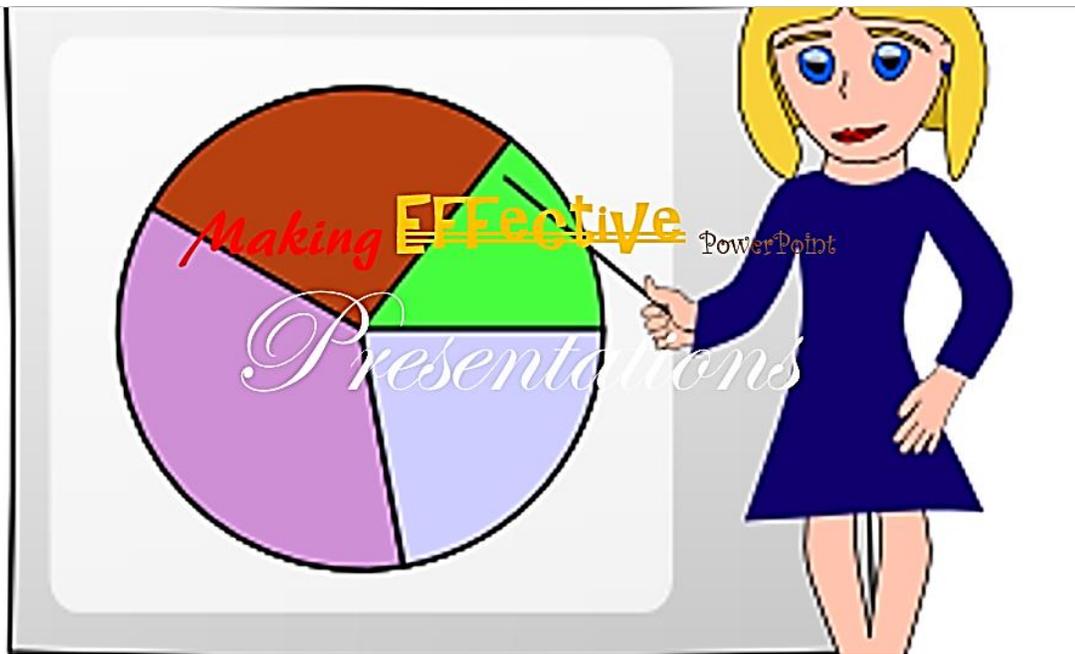
1. Add a **text box** to the new blank slide.
2. Add the text **Keep it simple**.

Make It Readable

Unlike the next slide, you should stick with one or two **readable** fonts. Your audience may be viewing your presentation from a distance. San serif fonts like Arial, Helvetica and Calibri work well. Avoid using fonts that look unprofessional such as *Comic Sans*.

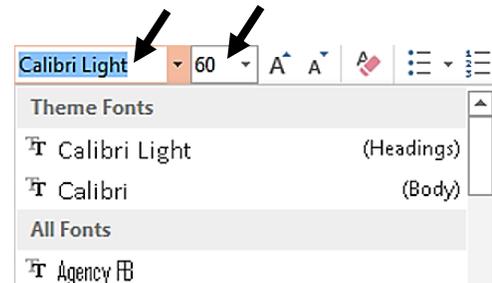
Make sure to also make your text large enough to be read from across the room!

Size 24 is a good starting point.



To change the font and size:

1. Select the text or placeholder to be changed.
2. Go to **Home** tab > **Font** group > **Font** arrow.
3. Select a font from the resulting drop-down menu
4. Go to **Home** tab > **Font** group > **Font Size** down arrow.
5. Select a size from the resulting drop-down menu.



Practice Exercise: Changing Font and Font Size

1. Select the **Making Effective PowerPoints** text box.
2. Select a **readable** font.
3. Make sure the sizes are the **same** and readable **from a distance**.

Color also influences how readable your presentation is. Use a **dark font color** on a light background and a **light font color on a dark background**.

To change font color:

1. Select the text or placeholder to be changed.
2. Go to **Home** tab > **Font** group > **Font Color** arrow.
3. If the desired color is available under **Theme Colors** or **Standard Colors**, select the color.
4. If the color isn't available, click on **More Colors**.
5. Select the desired color from the **Standard** or **Custom** tab.



Practice Exercise: Changing Font Color

1. Change **Making Effective PowerPoint Presentations** to a **single, readable** color.

Engage Your Audience

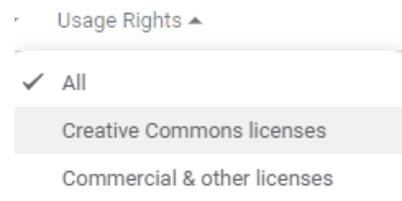


Images can be a great way to engage your audience. Don't use pixelated or blurry clip art images, as seen in this slide. Choose high quality stock images that are related to the topic you are discussing. **Just because an image is posted to the Internet doesn't mean you can use it for free!** Avoid copyright infringement by only using free stock images from the sites below or your own images.

Download high quality stock images for free from pexels.com, stocksnap.io, freeimages.com, morguefile.com, commons.wikimedia.org, and pixabay.com.

You may also use Google Image search to locate royalty free images:

1. Go to **google.com**
2. Enter a search term, such as **sleep**. Press **Enter**.
3. Click on **Images** under the search box at the top of the page.
4. Click on **Tools**.
5. Click on **Usage Rights** and choose **Creative Commons licenses**



To save an image from the Internet:

1. Place the cursor over the picture
2. **Right-click** on the picture; a menu appears
3. Click on **Save Image As...**
4. The Save As dialogue box appears on the screen. Select a location to save the file.
 - o *In Class*: Click on the **down arrow** in the Save in box. Click on **classlogon7**, then click on the **pubdocsshare folder**
 - o *Own Computer*: Select the location where you would like to save the file. A common place to save a picture is in the **Pictures folder** on the computer.
5. **Name or rename** the file in the file name box.
6. Click the **Save** button



Change Slide Background

Changing the slide background allows you to customize the colors or image used in your presentation. To change the slide background:

1. Go to **Design** tab > **Customize** group > **Format Background**.
2. The **Format Task pane** will open on the right hand side of the screen with the following options:
 - Solid Fill
 - Gradient Fill
 - Picture or Texture Fill
 - Pattern Fill
3. To apply these changes to all slides, click **Apply to All**.

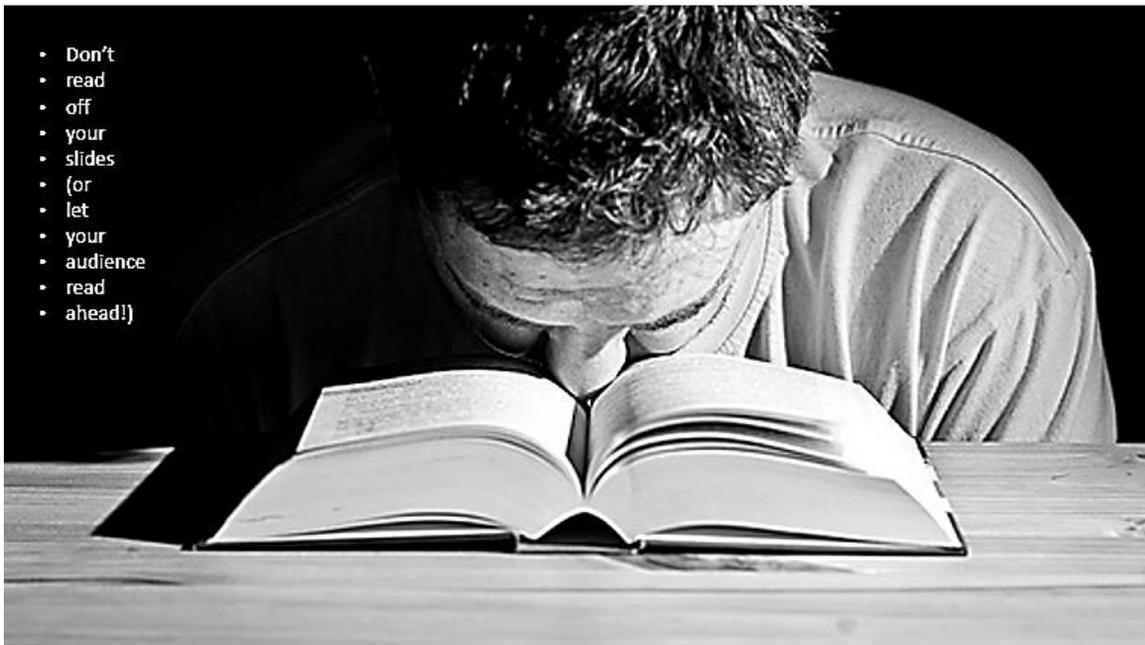


NOTE: To fade a picture background, adjust the **Transparency**.

Practice Exercise: Changing Slide Background

1. Change the background of Slide 3 to a **high-quality stock image** associated with sleep.
2. Delete the **textbox**. The image is enough to get the message across.

Don't Read Off Your Slides



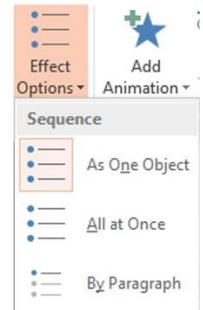
Use animations to reveal your points one-by-one. This keeps your audience engaged and stops them from reading ahead. Keep your animations simple and consistent for a professional appearance.

To reveal points one-by-one with animations:

1. Select the text, images or other content you want to animate.
2. Click on the **Animations** tab.
3. Click the **Animation** gallery **More** arrow, which displays a drop-down gallery of options.



4. Select an animation option, such as **Grow and Turn**.
5. Go to **Animations** tab > **Animation** group > **Effect Options** command.
6. Select **By Paragraph**.



Practice Exercise: Animations

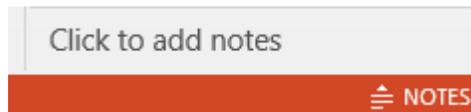
1. Select the textbox on Slide 4 and animate it so the bullet points appear **by paragraph**.

Presenter Notes

You don't have to memorize your entire presentation! Use **Presenter Notes** to add additional talking points to your slides. These notes won't be revealed to the audience during your presentation.

To add a note:

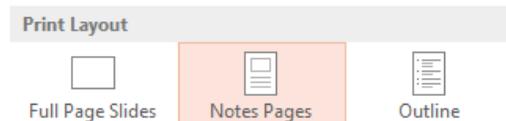
1. Click on **Notes** in the status bar at the bottom of the screen.
2. A text area appears. Click in this area and begin typing.



The notes area will scroll to accommodate longer notes. To resize the notes section:

1. Move your mouse to the **top border** of the area.
2. When a **two-headed arrow** appears, **click and drag** to resize the notes section.

Notes are only visible in **Presenter View** or on printed documents. To print out slides and notes, select **Notes Page** in **Print Layout**.



Practice Exercise: Presenter Notes

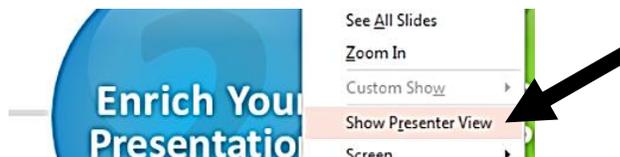
1. Click on **Notes slide view** in the status bar to open the **Notes Pane**.
2. Add a note to **Slide 4**.

Presenter View

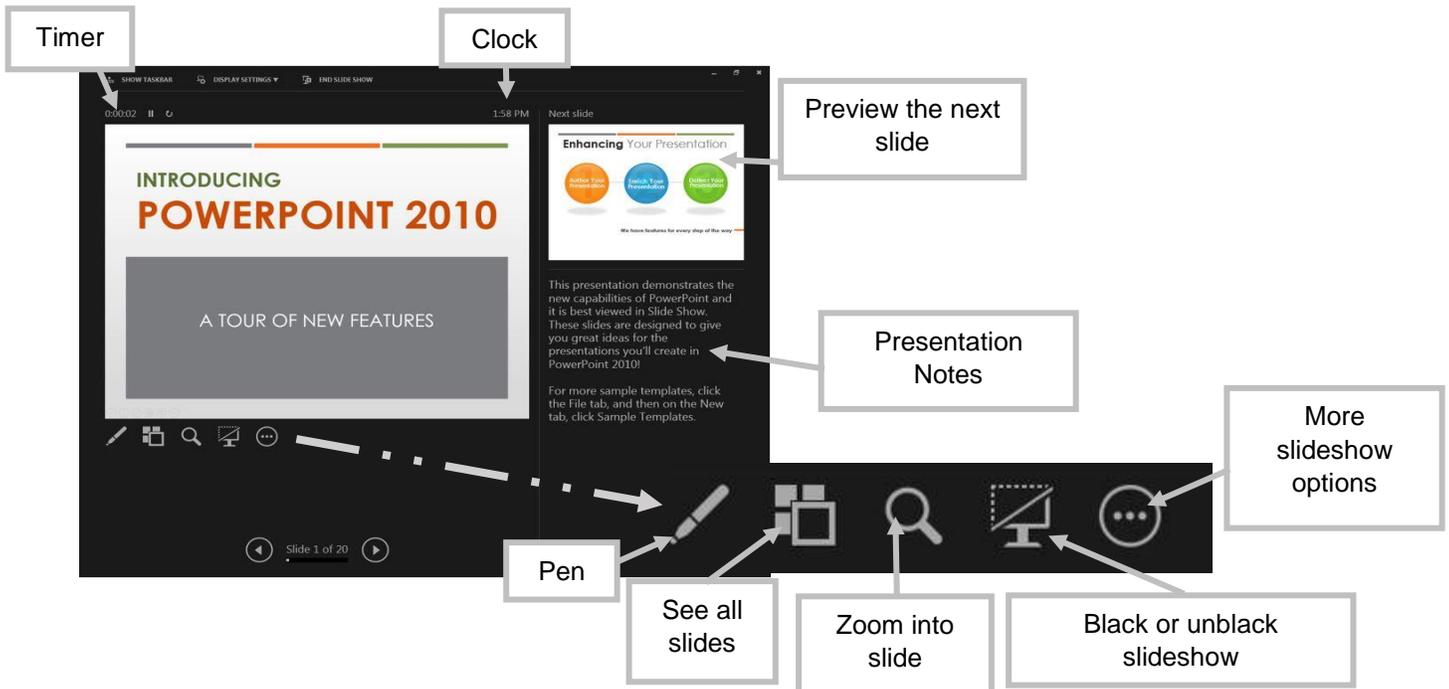
PowerPoint 2013 offers improved presenter tools to help make sure that the presentation goes smoothly.

To use the Presenter View:

1. Click on the **Slide Show View** icon in the tool bar.
2. After the slideshow view appears, **right click** on the slide and select **Presenter View** from the resulting menu.



In Presenter View, slide notes and additional presentation options are available.



Prepare for Disaster

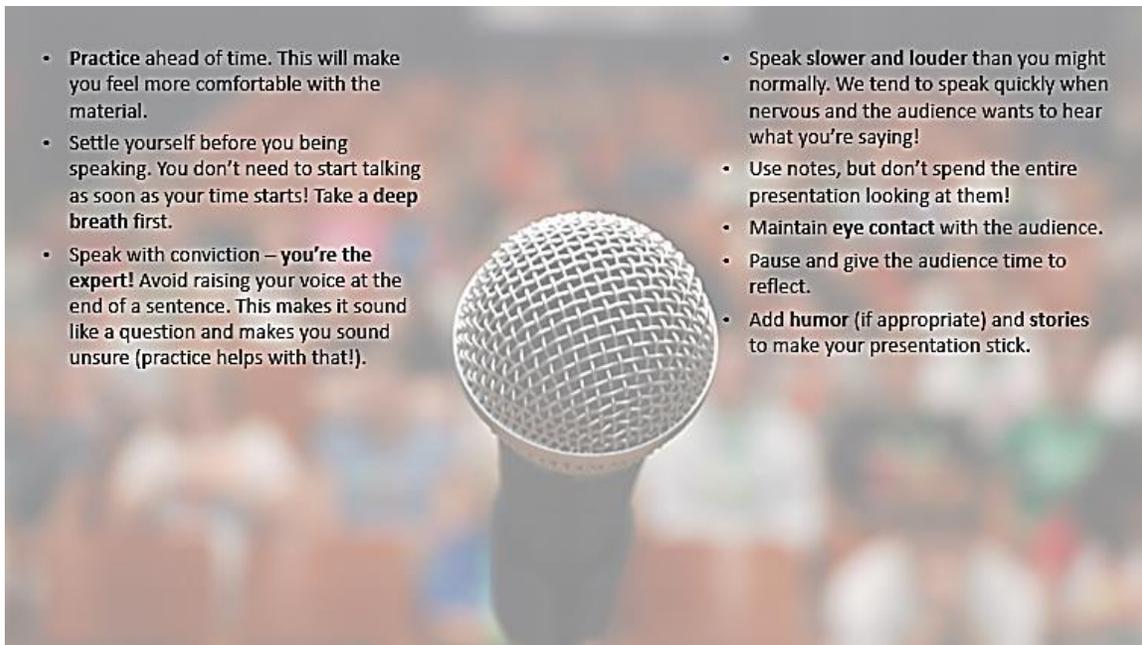
Make sure your presentation is saved in multiples places in case of technology failure. This could include:

- a flash drive or other external storage device
- emailing a copy to yourself
- saving a copy on the computer
- cloud storage options such as Google Drive, Dropbox or OneDrive.
 - For more information on cloud storage, check out the *Dropbox* class.

If possible, set up the slideshow ahead of time to avoid cutting into your presentation time. This also gives you time to troubleshoot any potential issues.

Tips on Public Speaking

Slide 5 is looking pretty good already! Practice what we've learned by identifying **keywords** and removing excess text, **increasing** the font size, and **animating** the bullet points!



We'll also talk about those public speaking tips:

- **Practice** ahead of time. This will make you feel more comfortable with the material.
- Settle yourself before you being speaking. You don't need to start talking as soon as your time starts! Take a **deep breath** first.
- Speak with conviction – **you're the expert!** Avoid raising your voice at the end of a sentence. This makes it sound like a question and makes you sound unsure (practice helps with that!).
- Speak **slower and louder** than you might normally. We tend to speak quickly when nervous and the audience wants to hear what you're saying!
- Use notes, but don't spend the entire presentation looking at them!
- Maintain **eye contact** with the audience.
- Pause and give the audience time to reflect.
- Add **humor** (if appropriate) and **stories** to make your presentation stick.

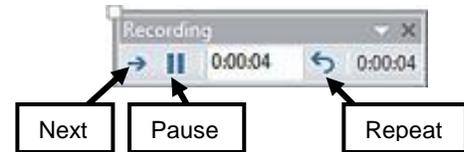
An easy way to practice with your slide show is to **Rehearse Timings**. To rehearse timings:

1. Go to **Slide Show** tab > **Set Up** group > **Rehearse Timings** command.

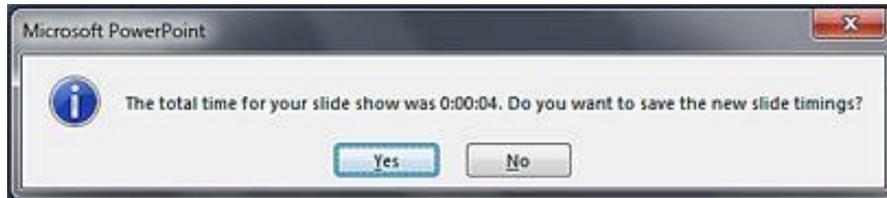


2. The slide show begins and the **Recording** toolbar appears. The slide timing box begins timing the presentation.
3. Timing buttons on the Recording toolbar:

- To move to the next slide, click **Next**.
- To temporarily stop the time, click **Pause**. A dialog box will appear
- To restart the time after pausing, click **Resume Recording** in the dialog box.
- To restart the time for the current slide, click **Repeat**.



4. After setting the time for the last slide, a message box displays the total time for the presentation and asks, **Do you want to keep the new slide timings to use when you view the slide show?**



- To keep the recorded slide timings, click **Yes**.
- To discard the recorded slide timings, click **No**.

Timings are visible in **Slide Sorter** view.

Create a Handout

Creating a handout allows your audience to pay more attention to your presentation (no need to take notes!) and helps you get your points across to those unable to attend your presentation.

Your handout **should not** be a simple printout of your slides. Remember: your PowerPoint is there to supplement your presentation. Without you talking, your slides won't make any sense! Using the outline you created before starting in PowerPoint, write up a summary document of your presentation. Include graphics and charts as needed.

The following bullet points are a (short) example of what your handout might look like. Look familiar? It's a fleshed out version of our outline from earlier!

Tips for Creating Effective PowerPoints

- **Plan ahead:** Many presenters create their PowerPoints without a clear plan in mind. This can lead to an unfocused and confused presentation without a clear goal. Plan what you want to say ahead of time and build your presentation around it.
- **Keep it simple:** Your PowerPoint slides are there to supplement your presentation. Don't overload them with paragraphs of text or lots of bullet points. Try to keep to **6 words** on a line and a maximum of **6 lines** on a slide.
- **Make it readable:** Be aware that your audience is often some distance from your slides. Use **uncluttered, readable fonts** in a size that is large enough to be viewed from a distance. Use **dark text** on a **light background** and vice versa.
- **Engage your audience:** Use high-quality stock images rather than clipart to engage your audience. Engage your audience with your presentation as well. Ask them questions and use stories to help your topic stick after your presentation is done.
- **Don't read off your slides:** Or let your audience read everything! Reveal points one at a time to prevent the audience from reading ahead and tuning your presentation out.

Learn More about Creating Effective PowerPoints

Books Available through CLEVNET

Forsyth, Patrick. *The PowerPoint Detox: Reinvent Your Slides and Add Power to Your Presentation*.
London: Kogan Page, 2009.

Kosslyn, Stephen Michael. *Better PowerPoint: Quick Fixes Based on How Your Audience Thinks*.
New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Roam, Dan. *Show and Tell: How Everybody Can Make Extraordinary Presentations*.
New York: Penguin, 2014.

Teteak, Jason, and Dale Burg. *Rule the Room: A Unique, Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Making a Successful Presentation*.
New York: Morgan James Publishing, 2014.