

Writing a PowerPoint Presentation

Why write a PowerPoint presentation?

A PowerPoint presentation is similar to a poster presentation, only the information is on computer slides rather than actual posters. They are usually used to accompany an oral presentation; they should enhance the oral presentation. You can incorporate audio and visual media. They are often used to share information with a large group, such as at a professional conference, classroom presentations, and meetings. It should be more like an outline of your presentation.

There are three main elements to a PowerPoint presentation: text, images, and tables or graphs. Text allows you to reinforce main points as well as key terms and concepts. Images illustrate or highlight main points. Tables and graphs present information in a way that is easy to understand and see.

What should be included in the PowerPoint slides?

The slides for a PowerPoint presentation should be more like an outline. Text is often listed rather than written in full sentences. The following are a few of the things that can be presented on a PowerPoint slide:

- Graphs and/or tables
- Definitions
- Lists
- Essential facts
- Necessary images

Note: As with any type of writing, consider your audience, purpose (persuasive, informative, etc), and occasion (classroom presentation, professional conference, business meeting, etc).

Do:

- Choose a single background for the entire presentation.
- Use simple, clean fonts.
- Use a font size that can be seen from the back of the room.
- Write in bulleted format and use consistent phrase structure in lists.
- Provide essential information only. Use key words to guide the reader/listener through the presentation.
- Use direct, concise language. Keep text to a minimum.
- Provide definitions when necessary.
- Use white space to set off text and/or visual components.
- Make sure each slide logically leads to the next.
- Use a heading for each slide.

Don't:

- Clutter the slide with graphics.
- Use complicated fonts.
- Add superfluous information.
- Put down every word you are going to say.
- Use images if they will distract.
- Use hard to read color combinations, like black on blue. Try to use high contrast combinations.