

Accessible PowerPoint Guidelines or Best Practices for Effective and Accessible Presentations.

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Introduction

This resource provides practical guidelines for creating accessible, effective PowerPoint presentations. Developed with input from experts at Helen Keller, DeafBlind individuals, and leading voices in the field, it also draws on outside materials and experts such as Edward Tufte and the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB).

Fonts and Formatting

- Slides should follow our template for colors and consistency. In general, light text on a dark background.
- Do not convey information with color alone.

- Use Non-Serif fonts such as Aphont, Verdana, Tahoma and Arial
- Use at least 44-60 point bold for headings and 28-44 for body (preferably 30 or 32 font).
- Use bold or new contrasting colors when you want something to stand out.
- Use Bullets – 5-7 bullets per slide – no more than 6-7 words per bullet.
- If you have a multiple line bullet, keep the bullet single spaced with spacing between bullets.
 - You can do this by highlighting the bullets and changing to single spaced.
 - Keep bulleted points highlighted and right click and select 'paragraph' OR use short cut - Option, Command + M
 - Once in paragraph select Indents and spacing
 - Change the size of before and after spacing to 12
 - This will keep spacing between bullets, but multiple lined bullets will remain single spaced.
- Promoting and demoting text in slides make for easy reading. Use levels under bullet points when desired.
- Use section headers to give participants cues when moving on to a new topic.
- The less clutter there is on a slide, the easier it is to read.
- Each slide should have a unique title or indicate it is a continuation of the same title.

Charts, Images and Videos

- Charts, tables, or graphs should include limited information and should be described using alt text.
- Select images that add meaning, not “fluff.”
- Add alternative text for all images.
 - Select the image and click “format picture/image”. Select “alternative format” and enter text in the textbox.

- All videos should be captioned, audio described, and interpreted with either voice or ASL depending on the primary language of the video.

Tips for Adding “Alt Text” to Images

- Determine the context of the image.
 - Why is the image there?
- Include type of image, title, copyright, caption, supporting details in context of use.
- Be objective (third person), clear (structure & word choice), brief but thorough.
- What information does the sighted person get from looking at the image?
 - Start with the most important/obvious details and work down to less important/obvious details.
 - When in doubt, it is better to describe too much than too little (although save the novel for another time!)
- Check for spelling and grammar mistakes.

Slide Transitions

- Incorporate slide transitions that include sound for hearing/low vision or blind audiences. This gives a clue as to when you are changing the slide.
 - Instructions: With PPT set to normal view, open the slide show menu, and select Slide Transition. Slide transition pane will appear. In the Modify Transition section select sound and then click on the sound you prefer. Our template uses “Whoosh”.

Presentation Content

- Consider all learners – visual, auditory, and tactile.
- Avoid excessive verbiage.
 - Slides should not have all the information - that is why the presenter is there.
- One thought per line.
- Keep bullet points simple and easy to read.
- Power points need to be modified based on:
 - audience
 - length and goals of training
 - personal preferences of presenter
- Power Point is not a curriculum. It should cue the presenter to particular examples and points they want to make.

“PowerPoint is most effective as a visual accompaniment to the spoken word, not as the vehicle for all of the content of a lecture. Do not be shy about blanking the screen on occasion when you need your students to focus on you. You’ll find that blanking the screen is an effective means by which to change the energy from watching and listening to interaction, such as a group discussion or a question-and answer session.”

Quotation adapted from Edward R. Tufte’s critiques of PowerPoint (2003).

Accessible and Alternative Formats

All materials must be both accessible and available in alternative formats for all presenters and audience members.

- Ideally, you will create three accessible formats of your presentation, including (a) an accessible Power Point version, (b) an accessible PDF version, and (c) an accessible text version.
 - If you are unable to easily create or edit PDF documents, an alternative PPT to MS Word export is described below.

- This provides several options for presenters and audiences with various access needs, including the type of device they are using to access your materials.
- PDF and text version of your presentation should be disseminated to all participants the day before a live event or posted alongside the PPT version of a presentation online.

Instructions for Creating Accessible and Alternative Formats

- Step One: Run the Accessibility Wizard.
Go to “file” then “check for issues” then select “check accessibility.” This will help you identify issues with alternative text, reading order and slide titles.
- Step Two: Export to PDF
Select “Acrobat”. Select “Preferences” and make sure to check “enable accessibility and reflow with tagged Adobe PDF”. Select “Create PDF.” Double check that your entire presentation, including image descriptions, was exported to the PDF document. You can check for tagged images by hovering a mouse over the images or testing with a screen reader.
- Step Three: Export your PDF to Accessible Text.
Select “File” in the PDF. Select “Export to” and then “Accessible Text Document.” Check the text document to make sure all image descriptions were exported. You can leave it as a text document or copy and paste it into a Word document if you want to do additional formatting, such as creating navigatable headings.
- Step Two Alternative: Export to Word directly from PPT
You will need to copy the outline section of your PowerPoint. Go to View and click on outline view. Copy the whole outline, paste it to a word document and then number each slide. Make sure they correspond, and all slides were copied. Copy and paste your image descriptions/alt text for applicable slides.

During the Presentation

- Each point should not appear on the slide until the presenter begins to discuss that point.
- Be certain to read each item as it appears on the slide.
- Always remember to say “next slide.”
- Read aloud all text, including alt text, during the presentation.
 - Incorporate description naturally.
 - Tell your story in tandem with your live description.
- Be sure to pace yourself and pause often for interpreters or captioners to catch up as needed.