

You can make a presentation of a ho-hum topic a little more dramatic by adding color, animation and sounds. This feature can be a two-edged sword that can hurt your presentation. These tips will help you make a solid, effective presentation.

The Message is the Thing

The goal of your presentation is to deliver your message. If something detracts from the message, delete it. This may mean that you have to remove that really neat .WAV file of Homer Simpson you've found if Homer isn't totally on point.

You are the Presenter

Your presentation can not stand alone, it's more than a bunch of PowerPoint slides. Your audience isn't there to look at your slides, they're there to hear what you have to say. You need to talk and explain what you want the audience to know. Don't just read the screen to them.

Spelling and Grammar

Nothing says "ignore me" like a *"misspelled word"* or bad grammar. As soon as your audience spots one of these bush league errors, they put you into the category of people that either don't know or don't care, and you can lose their respect, and even worse, their attention. Either way, this is very bad news. Use spell check, and read your presentation carefully looking for things that spell checkers can't catch, like "your and you're".

Remember your Audience

Your presentation should be designed with an audience in mind. Consider their tastes, likes, and dislikes when writing your presentation. Slang references to 'da hood would be acceptable if your audience were gang members, but expect it to be poorly received in a boardroom downtown.

Don't be afraid to be politically incorrect. For example, if your audience is women, use softer fonts and colors. They'll feel more comfortable, and receive your message in a more favorable light.

Be Consistent

All your slides should have the same general look and feel. Use a small number of fonts throughout the entire presentation, use the same or very similar backgrounds to make your presentation more cohesive.

Consider the mood created by Color

Review [this information regarding Color Theory](#). If you want excitement think "hot color", reds and oranges, for a relaxed presentation use "cool colors", blues and greens.

Background

The stuff you want your audience to know is going to be the foreground. The background is there to be felt more than seen and shouldn't be noticed. Use muted and neutral colors that contribute to your overall color scheme. NEVER use a visually active background that will detract from the foreground - your message.

Limit what goes on each Slide

If you put the entire text of the Declaration of Independence on one slide, it won't be read. Limit the text to about 25

seconds of reading. That way your audience may actually read what you say. That is the thing you want.

Don't clutter your slide with several images, each will take a certain amount of time for the viewer to digest, and too many will detract from the others. Stick with 3-5 visual elements per slide.

Don't Overdo the Effects

Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should. If every letter flies in from a different direction, and each letter is accompanied by a laser sound the audience is likely to be turned off. Use those effects to highlight or call attention. Remember, if every word is BOLD the effect isn't noticed.

The other side of the coin is also true. Too little effects make for a boring presentation. Use them but sparingly and *for a purpose*.

Don't Step on Yourself

Rehearse your presentation to get the timing down. Be careful not to be talking about item A, as item B whooshes onto the screen. People aren't like computers, they're not multitasking and can only do one thing at a time.

Take Your Time

Give your audience time to digest your first point before moving on to the second. If you allow a few seconds for "cogitation" they'll retain what you say better.

Be Technically Competent

Nothing ruins a great presentation like not being able to run it. If possible, make a dry run on the computer you'll use in the room you'll be in. Consider lighting, sound volume, and the overall comfort level of your audience.

And Finally, Ignore these Tips

For every rule there is an exception. For example, a single red slide in the middle of a blue presentation will get the audiences attention. BE WARNED this kind of thing can backfire on you, and have the opposite effect you intended.

Grades

Yes, you will be graded, here's what I base it on. [Grading Rubric](#).

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[c10, c11, c12](#)