

PowerPoint Tips

You will often be required to produce a PowerPoint to accompany an oral presentation (see **Oral Presentations** handout). Even if your oral presentation does not need the use of PowerPoint, there are certain benefits to using it:

- Helps order your presentation
- Makes you less reliant on notes or cue cards
- Helps illustrate key points to your audience
- Helps signpost shifts between key points
- Can provide a distraction for the audience if you're uncomfortable with people looking at you during your presentation

Because teaching staff like to use PowerPoint, as a student you will most likely have seen it in action and be an experienced observer of it. In other words, even if you haven't made one before, you will have an idea of what is effective and what doesn't work so well. Keep these in mind when you are making your own PowerPoint. The following suggestions are designed to complement your own PowerPoint design sense.

Preparation Tips

- Finish preparing your oral presentation before beginning your PowerPoint
- Your PowerPoint should work from and enhance your oral presentation, not the other way around
- Begin early because PowerPoints always take longer to create than you would expect
- Match PowerPoint slides to your cue cards so that you have a good idea of the sequence of your slides
- If you can, trial your PowerPoint in the venue a few days before you are to give the presentation to make sure that:
 - the equipment works
 - your font sizes and illustrations are large enough and colours contrasting enough for your audience to see
 - your audio-visual insertions play properly (make a note of a suitable volume)
 - you have the slides in the correct sequence
- Make sure you proof-read your PowerPoint before you present it; there's nothing worse than everyone in the room staring at your spelling mistakes
- it can help to have someone else look it over beforehand, too; a second pair of eyes may pick up things you have missed

Design Tips

- Your first slide should show the title of your presentation
- The next slide should be an overview of your presentation to indicate the main points to the audience
- Your final slide (apart from your references, if you have any), should repeat the overview slide, so you can recap your main points at the end
- Don't overload your slides with too much information to be read
 - generally, try to keep to the 6x6 rule: no more than six points per page and six words per point
- If using pictures, make sure you reference them correctly (see **APA Referencing: A Guide for Ara Students**. Usually, the source will be cited on the slide and a slide at the end will contain a full reference list for the whole presentation)
- Make sure the words on your slide are large enough for people to read easily, even from the back of the room
 - font size should typically be between 18 and 36 point font
- Make sure you choose a font colour appropriate to your background
 - dark colours on light backgrounds tend to work well, and vice versa, but yellow on white backgrounds and red on purple work poorly
- PowerPoint has many interesting visual features but it is not necessary to use all of them in one session
 - simplicity is best; do not distract your audience from the content of your presentation
- There are many different design themes you can choose from the Design tab on the banner at the top of the page
 - choose one that suits the tone of your presentation (i.e. don't choose a playful design if your presentation is on a serious topic)
 - choose one **that** is appropriate to your audience

Presentation Tips

- Don't read directly off the PowerPoint; audiences may get restless when presenters are reading what they can read themselves
- Give the audience a chance to read the slide before speaking
- Don't move too quickly to new slides before giving the audience a chance to read them, because this may frustrate the audience
- Consider giving the audience a printout of your slides so they can take notes
- Consider arranging for the audience to access an online copy of your PowerPoint slides. Knowing this at the start of your presentation allows your audience to better focus on your presentation, as they need not take too much notes.