

Quick Tips

for

Using Microsoft PowerPoint

Getting Started

Microsoft PowerPoint allows you to create aesthetic, well organized, and appealing presentations. The quality and delivery of your presentation are still up to you, but presentation software can make your job much easier. Better still, you can now do many things with your presentations—like incorporating graphics, sound, and video—more easily than ever before. This *Quick Tip* will help you get started with Microsoft PowerPoint and give you some guidelines for making your presentations interesting, clear, and compelling.

Using Microsoft PowerPoint

- Once you've started Microsoft PowerPoint, you'll be prompted to select a slide template which will dictate much of the aesthetic layout and design decisions. Select a template that matches the kind of presentation you plan on giving and click **Create**. A good generic template style is *Blends*.
- Next, choose an autolayout for your presentation. Select a slide type that matches the content for that slide.
- At this point, PowerPoint will generate a blank "slide," or a page where your presentation will start. **Save your work immediately!**
- Click on fields once to add text, graphics, or tables, and use the scroll bar to move from slide to slide.
- Use the **Insert** menu to insert new slides, pictures, and movies and sounds.
- Use the **Slide Show** menu to play your show.
- To play your presentation on a computer that does not have Microsoft PowerPoint, click on **File** and select **Pack and Go**.

Guidelines for Presentations

First, select a simple background that contrasts well with the text. Use no more than two fonts (Times New Roman and Arial work well), and make sure your fonts are at least 20 point. Read aloud text you put on the screen, and avoid text-heavy slides: your slides should guide your audience, not compete with you. Most importantly, practice, practice, practice.

There are two kinds of presentations: informative and persuasive. Informative Presentations seek to inform and educate your audience with a particular body of information. Suggestions for informative presentations include: 1) provide your audience with an *advance organizer* (an outline at the beginning of the presentation letting the audience know what to expect); 2) develop each point linearly and completely, stopping frequently for audience questions and participation; 3) conclude with a *summarizer* (a brief review which reiterates key points). Persuasive Presentations seek to get your audience to see a particular viewpoint and, ideally, to adopt it. Try using Stephen Toulmin's Scheme for Rhetorical Argument: have a claim, grounds, a warrant, a backing, and rebuttal. Further information on the Toulmin Scheme is available on the Internet.

Further Resources for Presentations

- For an excellent text on presentations in general, try [How to Prepare, Stage, and Deliver Winning Presentations](#) by Thomas Leech.

- [Using Microsoft Word](#)
- [Using Microsoft Excel](#)