



# DO'S AND DON'Ts of Powerful PowerPoint Presentations

Studies show PowerPoints are still one of the best ways to structure lectures, help students organize ideas, and facilitate a deeper understanding of content. However, a **poorly done PowerPoint can reverse these benefits** by distracting students.



## KEEP TEXT TO A MINIMUM

Your audience has to read slides and listen to you at the same time—which can lower retention. Help them by only using text to highlight and reinforce. For maximum impact, use a single powerful word or short phrase.

## USE MORE VISUALS

Visuals are a powerful way to illustrate examples and emphasize facts. They tap into your audience's emotions, making points more impactful.

## STICK TO ONE CORE MESSAGE

Packing too much information into your presentation distracts and confuses your audience, defeating the purpose of having slides.

## FOCUS ON YOUR DELIVERY

You are the presentation, not the PowerPoint. Your voice, body language, and eyes impact how the information is perceived. A poised, natural delivery will complement learning.



## INCLUDE COMPLETE SENTENCES OR FULL PARAGRAPHS

The number one thing that annoys audiences the most is speakers reading directly from their slides.

## MAKE IT TOO COMPLICATED

One image per slide will be more memorable and appealing than many. Make sure your graphics are high quality and infographics are simple, clear, and concise.

## HAVE MORE THAN ONE MAJOR TAKEAWAY PER SLIDE

Break up your bullet points into separate slides. Remember, slides are free, so use as many as you need—just keep your time in mind.

## SKIP REHEARSAL

Although you don't need to have your presentation memorized, it's important to be familiar with the content, so your tone is confident and conversational.



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### Additional Resources

Inoue-Smith, Y. (2015). College-based case studies in using PowerPoint effectively. *Cogent Education*, 3(1).  
Reynolds, G. (2012). *Presentation zen: Simple ideas on presentation design and delivery*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders.