

# Developing PowerPoint

fact sheet

## Guidelines for the Development of PowerPoint Presentations

There are two major ways to improve your PowerPoint.

- 1) Improve your content and presentation style (see the "Presentation skills" fact sheet) and/or
- 2) Improve presentation readability.

This fact sheet provides suggestions for improving readability.

### 1. Make your slides readable – Use appropriate Font types, Font size and color contrasts

**1. Font type.** Use Sans Serif fonts such as are **Arial, Verdana, Tahoma,** and **Helvetica** for text and for headings. **Bold** typefaces are preferred.

**2. Font size.** What counts is the size of letter people see. The following shows the Sign painter's "rule of thumb" for print size

Size of letter (when on a sign or projected)	Can be read from
2.5 cm (1")	3m (10 ft)
5 cm (2")	6m (20 ft)
7.5 cm (3")	9 m (30 ft)

The following font sizes often project to be large enough for people to see:

**Headings: 32 pt.** or larger

**Sub headings: 30 pt.** or larger

**Text: 28 pt.** or larger

**Bold** is better than **standard** text.

### Color contrasts

1. **Backgrounds.** Backgrounds should be simple, avoid graphics, and use just one color.
2. **Text and background** should be of high **contrast**. If the background is dark, the text should be very light in color. If the background is light, the text should be very dark in color.



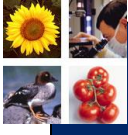
**Examples of Good** color contrasts:

Yellow on violet	Black on white	Yellow on dark blue	Dark red on white	Dark green on white	Dark blue on white	Black on yellow	Violet on white	White on reddy brown
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**For more information:** International Programs [ip.ucdavis.edu](http://ip.ucdavis.edu)

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## Color contrasts (continued)

3. Avoid color combinations such as red on green, red on black, dark green on black, or blue on black.

**Note:** About 10% of people have difficulty distinguishing reds and greens.

### Examples of Poor color contrasts



4. Do not use shades of gray together, either as graphical features, background, or text.
5. Number of colors – Keep it simple. **Don't use multiple colors – It's distracting and hard to read**

**Simple test for readability** – After preparing your slide, push back from your desk – a meter or two and see if you can read your slides on your computer screen. Even better – before your talk – put up some slides and check readability from different parts of the hall.

## Avoid animation

1. Avoid excessive animation which can distract and become annoying.

## Layout suggestions

1. **Use high-contrast clear pictures.** Black and white line drawings are preferred over gray scale graphics. Graphics that contain mainly bold areas of bright color are preferred over black and white. Patterned areas should be limited.
2. **Slides should be simple.** Have no more than three ideas on each slide and use less than six lines of text (this does not include the heading or title). Don't have your entire talk on your slides!
3. **Avoid columns** – rather use lines of text of 28-39 characters. Bulleted lists are an exception. If you have bulleted lists side-by-side, then the text of one list should be a different color or on a different colored background than the other to prevent confusion.
4. **For maps or charts**, color is preferred over gray scale. Text on maps or charts should be large and clear.
5. **Text effects**
  - a. **Avoid italics** and **AVOID ALL BOLD AND CAPITALIZED.**
  - b. It is better to Underline, enclose in "quotation marks" or **bold** text.
  - c. Avoid divided words at the ends of lines.



### Keep slides simple.

Use slides as a guide with **key points** only.

(Don't have your entire talk on the slide!)

Reference: Elaine Kitchel <http://www.aph.org/tc/ppguide.html> and Road tools, <http://www.roadtools.com/tips.html>

See "Presentation skills" Fact sheet to improve your content and presentation style.

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