



Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science  
Société canadienne de science de laboratoire médical

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# PowerPoint Best Practices

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A guide to creating  
Amazing presentations

# What is the goal?

- To keep your audience awake and attentive
- To engage the audience with content
- Individuals can use the content later in their profession



# Pros to using PowerPoint

- Enhances interest, clarity and retention
- It illustrates concepts
- Reinforces the content



# Cons to using PowerPoint

- Deriving the meaning from bullet points can be challenging
- It is dependent on technology
- The audience may not take notes



# Choose a Theme

- Keep it simple
- Choose a white or light background
- Avoid flashy designs or busy colors
- Use a maximum of three colors
- Use the same template throughout the entire presentation



# Fonts

- Limit your font variety – be consistent throughout
- Be aware of readability – make sure it is large enough to read from the back of the room (Tip: can you read it from 6 feet away?)
- Use sans serif fonts – avoid script texts
- DO NOT TYPE IN ALL CAPS



# Colour

- Use colour sparingly
- Make sure your text is legible
- Don't use colour for emphasis – use **bold** instead



# Text & Content

- Keep text to a minimum
- Explain visuals and graphics
- Use the notes area to explain bullets
- Slide content should be used to support & strengthen your message
- It should not eliminate the need for the presenter to speak





# Images & Graphics

- Illustrate concepts through visuals such as:
  - tables, diagrams, flow charts graphs
- Only use visuals that support content
- Use notes section to explain visuals



# Images & Graphics

- Obey copyright laws, site your sources
- Use quality visuals
- Graphs & Tables – make sure it contains limited data so the message is clear & easy to read



# Using Video

- Use it sparingly
- Include a link to where the video can be found (ensure you have internet access)
- Keep copyright laws in mind & site your sources
- Remember to provide transcripts or closed captioning



# Citations

- It's important to cite your sources.
- This includes your content, tables, images, and videos.
- Just because it's on the internet doesn't mean that it is "public domain"



# Citations - continued

- Use an abbreviated form on your slides to save space.
- Include a full list of citations at the end of the presentation.



# Length

- Keep it as short as possible
- Chunk your content
- Keep it clear
- Think about attention span
- Less is more – create an easy to follow presentation



# Interaction

- Break up content with questions for the audience
- Include a poll question before your next slide
- Include a brief quiz at the end of your presentation



# Animations & Transitions

- Just **don't** do it
- It detracts from content
- It can get very busy very quickly
- If you must use for emphasis, use sparingly





# Notes

- Make your presentation available for printing
- Include notes – generate a PDF with notes to distribute
- Or a PDF with an area for people to take their own notes



# Quality check

- Do a spell check
- Check all of your facts
- Have another person or colleague look at it beforehand
- Practice before presenting



# Remember...

- PowerPoint is a great presentation tool
- If not done correctly, it can bog down your audience
- Before you start, think about your goal or purpose



# Remember...

- It should enhance & give structure
- It should not be the vehicle of your information
- Keep it simple and easy to follow for your audience

