

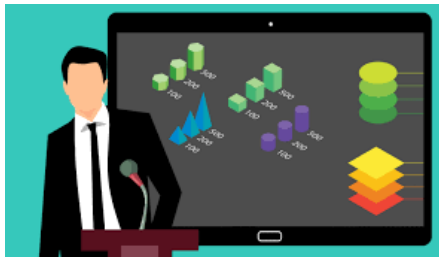
# Formatting Presentations

## A Guide to Formatting High Quality Presentations

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### Why Does Formatting Matter?

Formatting, or appearance and layout, is an often-overlooked aspect of creating a presentation. Beyond making things look nice, formatting is an important aspect of representing your information clearly and accurately so your audience can understand your message. Poor formatting sends a negative message and may hinder your ability to communicate effectively.



Clear, consistent formatting sends the message that the presenter cares about their content and engages the audience to do the same. When presenting information, the formatting demonstrates the presenter's intent. If it is messy and poorly planned, it sends a message to the audience that the information is unimportant to the presenter. Poor formatting makes a poor first impression about the presenter and fails to establish necessary credibility regarding their expertise.

Unclear, inconsistent formatting can create confusion. Employing a consistent format also improves efficiency, as a standard approach becomes habitual for presenter and audience alike.

### How Should I Format My Teaching Presentations?

The following are recommendations for formatting your PowerPoint presentations for the classroom. This information is based on researched best practices and experiences at our institution.

- Use a sans serif font, such as Arial, Calibri, Tahoma, or Helvetica. Serif fonts are harder to read.
- Select a single font for headlines and a different font for the body.
- Use a font size of 24pt or larger.
- Use a light (white) background with a dark (black) font.
- Have a title slide that lists the presenters.
  - Do not include the date of the presentation.
- The second slide should be reserved for session objectives.
  - Students should have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn.
- Use a different color for headlines.
- Use consistent transitions, if used at all.
  - Transitions will not translate to PDF for student reference in Brightspace.



- Use good quality images and label them within the image if labels are needed for clarification.
  - Use diverse images to be representative and inclusive.
  - When selecting images, be aware of negative stereotypes and other messages that could offend the audience.
- Use an appropriate number of slides. A general rule of thumb is one slide per minute of presentation.
  - Plan accordingly so you don't rush through the end of your presentation because of time!
  - All presentations must end on time due to recording and scheduling constraints.
- If you need to emphasize content, use **bold** or a larger font.
- Limit the use of punctuation marks.
- Limit the number of bullet points on a slide to six or less.
- Be consistent with image positioning and sizing.
- Leave empty space around charts and visual images.
- Be mindful of word choices.
  - Use the [MCW Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Glossary](#) as needed to aid in appropriate term usage.
  - Rather than using “man,” “woman,” “boy,” or “girl,” say “male” or “female.”
  - Rather than using “African American” or “Caucasian,” use “Black” or “White.”
- When using ARS questions:
  - Title the question slide, such as “ARS Question #1.”
  - Capitalize and bullet the answer choices, such as ABCD.
  - Clearly indicate the correct answer using a consistent format (such as bold) on the following slide.
- Incorporate a slide announcing a “Break” at the one-hour mark of a longer session.
- List ages without abbreviations, such as “40-year-old.”
- Provide a summary slide of key takeaways. These should be tied to your session objectives.
- Use your last slide to provide contact information for students who have questions.



## What Formatting Mistakes Should I Avoid?

- Using italics or underlines to emphasize content.
- Using more than four fonts in a presentation.
- Using patterned backgrounds as they reduce readability.
- Excessive wording on slides.
- Using full sentences rather than shortened phrases. You should limit each line to 6-8 words.
- Using abbreviations or acronyms
- Using all caps for emphasis. This reads as screaming at the audience. Only use all caps in the headline of the slide, if at all.
- Using incorrect spelling or grammar.

## What Resources Are Available to Help Me?

- [Reflection Checklist for Assessing Bias in Teaching Materials](#)
  - Use this after creating your presentation to double check that you are not presenting biased information.
- [MCW Institutional Brand Templates](#)
  - Must be logged on to Infoscope to access
- [Clinical Key](#)
  - Database that includes medical graphics, images, and other multimedia complete with citations
- PowerPoint
  - You can double check your formatting by running an Accessibility check within PowerPoint itself.
    - Click on the icon in the lower left corner of the screen that says “Accessibility: Investigate.”
    - Read through the inspection report screen that pops up to see suggestions for changes you can make to your presentation.