

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION TIPS

- PowerPoint is a visual tool; it is **not** your presentation. Don't put all that you have to say in PowerPoint, only your key points.
- Select a PowerPoint theme – not just black text on a white background, but color and borders or graphics. See PowerPoint's Design tab for some options.
- Use color judiciously, e.g., a dark background with gray text is very hard on the eyes. Light backgrounds are preferred. Usually the overhead lights are dimmed for PowerPoint presentation projection.
- Avoid using much red or green; some members of the audience could be color blind!
- OLLI does not use a color printer or copier for making handouts, so if you intend to request hardcopy handouts from your PowerPoint pages, do not use yellow on white backgrounds and avoid using blue (which often does not photocopy well.) Black text on white background is what the copier will produce. Use PowerPoint's Print Preview option to view the black on white potential output. Ask OLLI staff for suggestions, if unsure.
- Use an Outline (a feature built into PowerPoint to keep your text organized – this is to benefit you – find under View Outline) while building the presentation.
- Have a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Develop a Title Page for your starting point. Include title of talk, your name, and your contact information.
- Present a brief overview of what you plan to cover, either for the current day or over the entire course.
- Use bullets, not sentences, if at all possible, and skip “the,” “a,” and “He, She, It” for brevity. No need to end bullets with a period.
- Keep text on each page to not more than six bullets. If there are tables or graphs, reduce the number of bullets and make each one relevant to and descriptive of the table or graph.
- For each key thought, add a page.
- Page titles should be in 28 - 32 point font at least, text in at least 20, but 24 point is better. Page titles are optional.
- Try to avoid using the bottom line of the page; some members in the back row might have to stand up to see that line.
- Use slide numbers on the page – it is helpful for YOU. But keep them small.
- Animation (see the Animation tab) helps keep it lively. Try highlighting one bullet at a time.
- Use photos, icons, videos. (See PowerPoint's Insert tab.) Any pictures or other graphics will liven up the presentation and maintain the interest of the audience.
- Illustrate your points with the Internet wherever relevant – it is a great resource! All of OLLI's classrooms have live Internet connectivity. Sometimes Internet service gets interrupted during presentations, so staff strongly recommends you download Internet videos to your device as a backup before your presentation. Use the PickVideo.net program to download and embed any YouTube clips.
- Don't be afraid to summarize at the end.
- Last page should include your email address, in the event of further questions. This is also a good way to indicate that the presentation is over. Alternatively: “Any Questions?”

References:

- *The Skillful Teacher: Building Your Teaching Skills* by Saphier, Haley-Spera, Gower: RBT.2008
- Instructor Resources, <https://olli.gmu.edu/for-our-instructors/>
- OLLI Discussion Guide on the OLLI website