

## Elements of a Good Seminar T.D. Murray

Adapted from “Seminar Presentation, Charles Gardner Shaw”

The ability to address an audience is an art possessed in varying degrees by each of us. Public speaking is a necessary requisite for any profession, and since it is an art, one's proficiency can be enhanced by attention to details, by practice, and by observing others. Practice followed by criticism is the quickest and surest way to improve one's public performance.

The points that follow are based on watching and listening to students and professors for many years.

### **1. Your material**

- a. Title – the title of your talk should reflect its content.
- b. Know your material well. This requires substantial preparation and rehearsal – the more, the better.
- c. Organize your material into Introduction, Body/Discussion, and Conclusions. A good talk is clear, logical, and easy for the audience to follow, even if they don't understand everything you discuss.
- d. Be as brief as possible; omit unnecessary material and focus on the main ideas; otherwise, it wastes time and confuses the audience.
- e. Your talk should pass the “so what?” test. In other words, when finished the audience should understand why the material you just discussed is important and be able to answer the question “so what?”

### **2. Your presentation**

- a. In scientific reporting, the focus is on the material; the speaker's style and personality should enhance, not distract from, comprehension.
- b. Do not repeat your name or the title of your presentation if your introducer has given it for you.
- c. Do not immediately ask for the lights to be lowered before beginning your talk. It's better to give a few introductory statements prior to lowering the lights.
- d. For a seminar, give some preliminary comments describing why you selected this topic. Describe the scope of the talk during your preliminary comments so the audience knows what to expect. If necessary, tell why the topic is relevant to plant pathology.

- e. Maintain eye contact throughout your presentation. Look only at what you want your audience to look at.
- f. Speak slowly, clearly, and use appropriate volume. Use modulation and emphasis; avoid a monotone. Enunciate carefully, especially if you have an accent that may make it difficult for the audience to understand.
- g. **TALK, DON'T READ!** Avoid using notes; your slides should contain your queues. If you must, keep your presentation organized by using notes in outline form, preferably on small cards.
- h. Do not attempt to discuss more information than is possible in the time allowed. Usually three or four related, fundamental points can be discussed in a 30-minute talk.
- i. Define all abbreviations and acronyms used in your presentation. Although they may be familiar to you, not everyone in the audience may understand them.
- j. **Keep your presentation within the time limit prescribed and allow enough time for questions.** Remember that the actual presentation usually takes longer than it does during rehearsal. Follow the “one slide per minute of presentation” rule of thumb to keep your presentation within the allowable time.
- k. When possible, practice in the room in which you will give the talk so you are familiar with the position of the projector and surroundings of the podium. Check your slides from the back of the room to make sure they are visible to audience members in the back row.

### **3. Visual aids and their use**

- a. Tables and figures are invaluable aids to comprehension if they are simple, clear, and readable. They can confuse, obfuscate, and frustrate the audience when they are overly complicated or not readable.
- b. Avoid looking at the screen while speaking since it makes it difficult for the audience to hear you. If you must face away from the audience to point to the slide, raise your voice slightly to compensate.
- c. Use a pointer to draw attention to specific points on the screen. Use the pointer carefully and deliberately so it is not a distraction.
- d. PowerPoint allows an almost infinite number of color combinations; however, restrict yourself to no more than four per slide and be consistent within your presentation. Do not change color combinations with each slide. Select color combinations that provide good contrast between the background and foreground. Avoid color combinations such as red/blue, red/green, and orange/green, which are difficult to see, especially for people with color-blindness.

#### **4. Personal idiosyncrasies**

- a. Avoid annoying or distracting actions, gestures such as pacing, scuffling, shuffling papers, and inserting "er" or "ah" between words or sentences.
- b. Avoid holding your hand (or anything else) in front of your mouth or face, while speaking. Beverages can be distracting. Have a small bottle of water ready if your mouth becomes dry (a common symptom of nerves).
- c. Use good posture, and look alert.
- d. Be relaxed and self-confident, but not too much of either.
- e. Be enthusiastic about your subject; your audience will be more attentive and responsive.
- f. Avoid telling jokes. Translations of jokes are rarely successful.
- g. Only rarely should you apologize; good preparation will eliminate the need to apologize.

#### **5. Conclusion of your talk**

- a. End your talk with an appropriate and obvious concluding sentence.
- b. Avoid ending with a "thank you". The audience should thank you for the information you have just presented. A better ending is "I'll be happy to take questions."

#### **6. Questions and discussion**

- a. A seemingly simple, obvious, or stupid, question may not be so. Answer every question with honesty and dignity. If the point raised has been covered, briefly summarize your previous statements and amplify if you can.
- b. Wait to hear the entire question before you start your answer.
- c. In general, questions are held until the speaker has completed his or her presentation. However, some questions are most appropriately asked and answered during the presentation. If you are interrupted by a question, don't become confused or flustered; answer it briefly and go on. If the point raised will be adequately covered later in your presentation, so inform the questioner and continue your presentation.
- d. Never ridicule or argue with a questioner – he or she might turn the tables on you! Differ and discuss, but with dignity and decorum; maintain a professional demeanor. Rarely, if ever, are you going to face a hostile or reluctant audience; most audience members are there because they are interested in your topic and wish to know more.

***Please provide constructive praise or criticism by commenting on the following aspects of the presentation:***

Speaker Name:

Reviewer Name:

Content

Was the topic introduced clearly?

Were the objectives of the presentation clearly stated?

Were the data clearly described?

Were conclusions clearly summarized?

Was the significance of the research made clear?

Mechanics

Was the speaker audible and readily understood? Were eye contact and gestures adequate?

Were contents of slides clearly visible?

Was the pace of visual presentation appropriate? (Too many slides? Too few?)

Did the speaker stay within his or her time?

Please provide an overall score for this presentation from 0 (poor) to 10 (excellent) and any additional comments you think appropriate.

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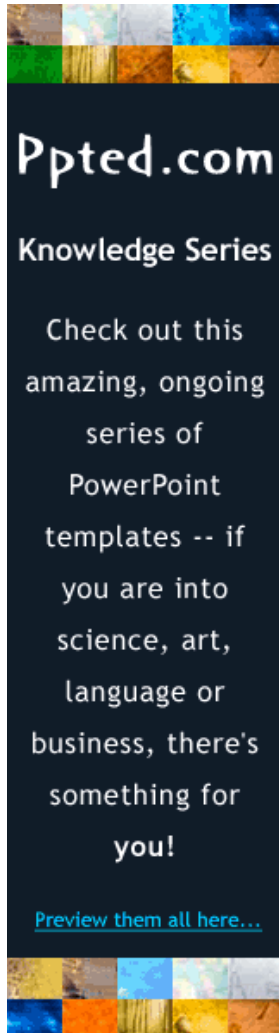
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## [Ideas](#)

# Overview of Using Copyrighted Material in Your Presentation

By Dave Paradi

Also by Dave Paradi:

[Choosing Colors For Your Presentation Slides](#)

[Survey Shows How To Stop Annoying Audiences With Bad PowerPoint](#)



## [Introduction](#)

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## About Dave Paradi

Dave Paradi is known as *The Office Technology Lifeguard* because he rescues people from "Death by PowerPoint" and other electronic sins. His articles, special reports and books help you quickly and easily leverage the technology you already own to save time and make money. Get your free 5+1 day Leveraging Microsoft Office course with 20 tips on Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook and more great tips every two weeks by signing up at his web site:



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## Introduction

Many presenters use copyrighted material in their [presentations](#), but not everyone understands how to use it properly. This overview is intended to help you identify when you may want to seek more advice on using a

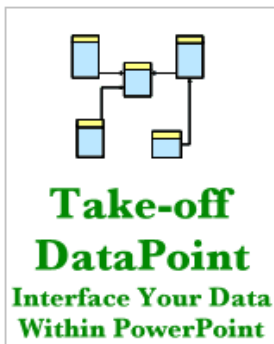
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copyrighted piece of work. This is not intended to be a legal opinion and you are advised to seek your own legal opinion before you proceed in these areas. Having said that (for legal disclaimer purposes), here are some areas to keep in mind.

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## What is Covered by Copyright

Copyright generally covers any original expression of ideas. This expression can be in many different formats, including cartoons, books, music, videos, photographs, movies, audiotapes, written works, drawings, [artwork](#), speeches and slides. Regardless of how the format is represented, whether in a physical form such as a printed book or CD or in electronic format such as a graphic file or [MP3](#), the copyright still applies. Regardless of where the item is stored, whether in a home, office or on the Web, the copyright still applies. And even if the copyright symbol (©) is present or not, the copyright still applies.

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## Usage of Copyrighted Works

Any time you use a copyrighted work, you must have permission from the owner of the work. The author or creator of the work may not be the owner of the work, so you must be careful in determining the true owner of the work. To use their work, you must have written permission to do so. The owner may ask how you want to use their work and how many times you will use it before they decide on how much they will charge you in order to use the work. In some cases, certain uses will be allowed and others not permitted for the same copyrighted work. Consider all possible uses you may have for the work before you approach the copyright owner so that you can negotiate an agreement that is fair for both parties.

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## Getting Permission for Usage

Depending on the type of copyrighted work, the process for getting permission to use the work is different. Here are some general guidelines for some of the most common types of copyrighted works.

**Written Works** - There is a concept called "fair use" that is not clearly defined, but some people have used it to try to copy large sections of copyrighted works illegally. The basic concept is that you can quote another work without obtaining permission as long as you don't quote too much. There is no clear rule as to what "too much" is, but the guideline I

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use is a maximum of two paragraphs. You should always attribute the quote to the source text so proper recognition is given. If you want to use a longer portion of a written work, you will need to seek permission from the owner, which may be the author or the publisher.

**Drawings/Cartoons/Photographs** - There is no usage of these graphical works that is permitted without permission. This may surprise many people who think that a cartoon or drawing can be freely used once it has been published in a newspaper, book or web site - it is not the case. There are some cartoons or photographs where you can arrange permission through syndicates or associations that cover many artists and offer a single place to pay for usage of a large number of works.

**Music** - The [music industry](#) has made the process of getting permission for use relatively straightforward through a few industry associations that arrange for permission to use entire libraries of music. The three main groups in North America are:

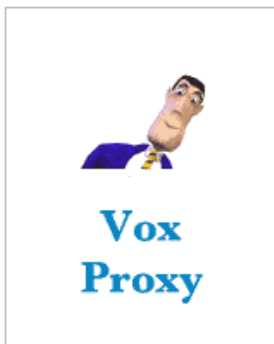
- ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) - <http://www.ascap.com>
- BMI (Broadcast Music Incorporated) <http://www.bmi.com>
- SOCAN (Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada) <http://www.socan.org>

You can get more information about licensing at their web sites as listed above.

**Video/Film/TV** - The video industry does not have a single source for gaining permission to a library of works, so you will have to approach the producer of each work to arrange permission. A production company may be willing to allow you to use any work in their library if you want to access many video segments through one agreement.

**Spoken Word** - In general, you need permission from the person who is speaking in order to use their words, either in audio or written format. In some cases, the speaker has assigned the rights to a producer or other entity, in which case you will need to find out who owns the copyright in order to arrange to use the work.

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### An Easier Route

As you can see from the information above, arranging use of a copyrighted work may involve some work on your part. One alternative is to create your own copyrighted work that you can use as many times and in any way you want. There are now many freelance cartoonists, poets and musicians who will create a work according to your specific needs and assign you all



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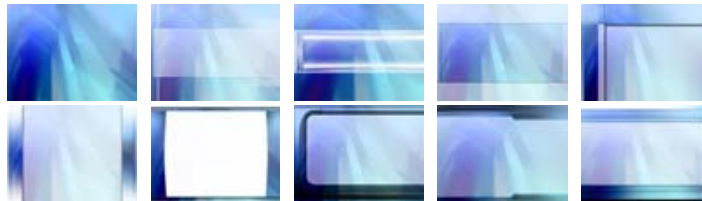
Using copyrighted material can be effective in your presentation, as long as you obtain the appropriate permissions in advance and respect the rights of the owner of the work.

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By Dave Paradi



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### About Dave Paradi

**Dave Paradi** is known as *The Office Technology Lifeguard* because he rescues people from "Death by PowerPoint" and other electronic sins. His articles, special reports and books help you quickly and easily leverage the technology you already own to save time and make money. Get your free 5+1 day Leveraging Microsoft Office course with 20 tips on Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook and more great tips every two weeks by signing up at his web site:



[Communicate Using Technology](#)

### Introduction

Too many experts look at [PowerPoint](#) from the technical perspective - what features do people use and how to use the features. My recent survey took a different perspective. For the first time, the audience

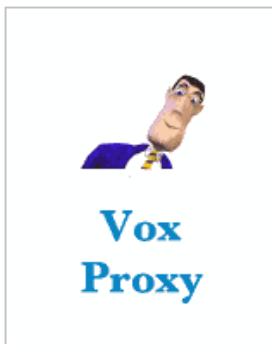
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perspective on [PowerPoint presentations](#) was considered. In September of 2003, I asked 159 people what they found most annoying about the PowerPoint presentations that they see. The results of this survey have important insights for presenters at all levels.

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### Rating the Annoying Elements

The respondents to this [Web-based survey](#) came from all levels in a variety of organizations and in different countries. I asked each person to select the top three annoying elements from a list of elements and then asked for extra items in a free-form question. The top things that audiences find annoying about bad PowerPoint presentations, with the percentage of people citing this element are as follows.

<b>The speaker read the slides to us</b>	<b>60.4%</b>
<b>Text so small I couldn't read it</b>	<b>50.9%</b>
<b>Full sentences instead of bullet points</b>	<b>47.8%</b>
<b>Slides hard to see because of color choice</b>	<b>37.1%</b>
<b>Moving/flying text or graphics</b>	<b>24.5%</b>
<b>Annoying use of sounds</b>	<b>22.0%</b>
<b>Overly complex diagrams or charts</b>	<b>22.0%</b>

It is clear from the responses that the most annoying aspect of bad PowerPoint slides is the text, not the graphics or [multimedia](#). It is important that a presenter focus on getting short, relevant and readable text on the slides and add to each point with what they say. Simply reading the slides that are jammed with text to the audience is an insult to the audience and the results indicate that by doing this, presenters are severely damaging the message they are trying to deliver.

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### Themes in Audience Comments

Three common themes emerged from the free-form comments:

1. Poor Preparation of the [Presentation](#) - People are very annoyed when the presenter does not even think about the structure of the presentation and simply copies the text of a report onto slides. PowerPoint slides should support the message, not substitute for the presenter or for a more detailed handout. Presenters need to connect with the audience instead of hiding behind the slides.



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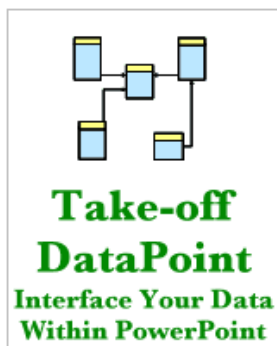
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2. Balance of Slide Elements - People find too much text or too much fancy graphics and multimedia a big turn off. These two extremes do not work well. A balanced approach is called for - text to give context for the audience's understanding of what the presenter will next be speaking about, and graphics and multimedia to add flavor to the text.
3. Not Knowing How to Use the Technology - If presenters are going to use technology during a presentation, they should learn how to set it up, start it up so it looks professional and smoothly move between the slides. Awkward usage of PowerPoint and presentation technology was mentioned a number of times as detracting from the message being delivered.

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## Scope of the Problem

I also asked what percentage of the PowerPoint presentations that people see suffer from these problems. A surprisingly high percentage of presentations suffer from the problems that annoy audience members. A total of 41.5% of the respondents said that more than 40% of the presentations they see contain annoying elements. This indicates how wide-spread the problem is and how much of an issue this is becoming for organizations. Microsoft's statistics indicate that there are 400 million copies of Microsoft Office installed and there are 30 million PowerPoint presentations done each day. The increased reliance on the PowerPoint tool for communicating a message has not worked as well as hoped given the results of the survey. It is clear that many presenters need help structuring their presentation, especially the crucial text aspect.

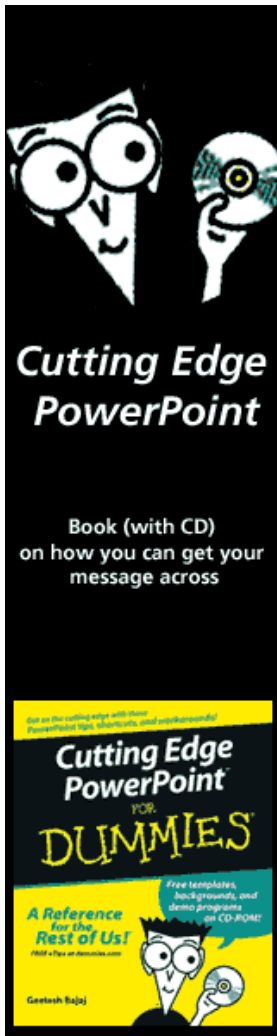
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## Conclusions

Organizations must take steps to properly train their staff in the use of PowerPoint to present information in meetings. It is clear that the tool is a good one, it is just the use of the tool that is at issue. Too many presenters have used PowerPoint slides as a substitute for themselves and think that the slides are the presentation instead of the slides supporting the presentation that they must deliver.

A clear structure to the presentation should be created, research done to support the key points and an analysis of the audience to take their needs into account. When creating the slides, presenters must only put the key points on the slide and add to the point with the depth of information that they share verbally. This will lead to more effective presentations and less wasted time. Organizations who find that their staff are primarily



reading reports and calling them presentations may want to eliminate many of the presentations and simply distribute the report electronically for others to review on their own time. This would free up large amounts of time for professionals to attend to higher value work.

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## Introduction

Have you ever been at a presentation where you could hardly make out what was on the screen because the presenter used colors that made it hard to tell what was text and what was background? Have you ever done this in one of your presentations?

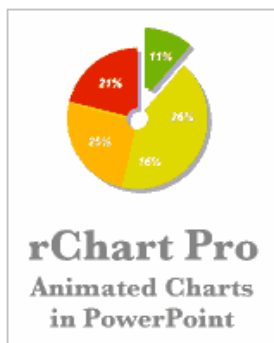
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The choice of colors for [presentation slides](#) is one of the important decisions that must be made at the start of the process of developing your slides. Some organizations today dictate a template with corporate colors that must be used for all [presentations](#) outside the organization as part of a branding initiative. In that case, you have no choice in the colors. But many internal presentations and in many other organizations you can choose your slide colors. So how do you choose? Here are some ideas to keep in mind when choosing colors for your next set of presentation slides.

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## Contrast

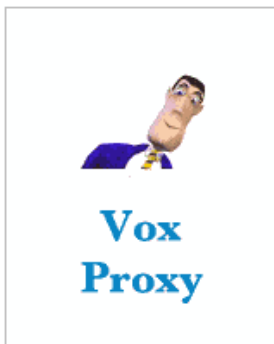
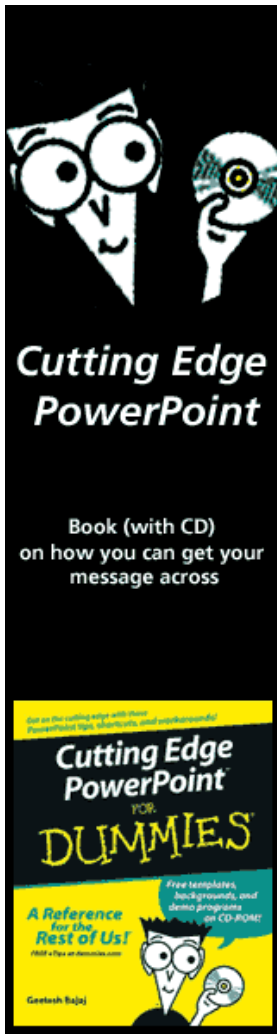
Webster's defines contrast as "To set in opposition, or over against, in order to show the differences between". One of the most common mistakes in selecting colors for presentation slides is to not have enough contrast between the colors chosen for the background and the text or graphics. If you want the audience to see the text or graphics on the screen, they must be in a color that has a high contrast with the background color. This makes the text or graphic appear to float above the background instead of blending into it. In general, this will lead to selecting one of two [color schemes](#) - a dark background with light text and graphics or a light background with dark text and graphics. The further apart the colors are the more contrast they will have and the easier it will be for audiences to see the text or graphic you are using.

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## Emotional Meaning of Colors

Studies have shown that different colors evoke different general feelings in many people. This can be important when selecting colors for your presentation slides since you will want to avoid colors that will negatively impact the message you are delivering. Here are some common interpretations for colors.

Color	General Feelings Evoked
Black	Heavy, mournful, highly technical, formal, death
Brown	Earth, simplicity, outdoors
Blue	Peace, tranquility, trust, confidence, security
Purple	Royalty, wisdom, spirituality, mystery



Green	Nature, environment, health, reptiles, insects
Gray	Conservative, practical, reliability, security, staid
Red	Passion, excitement, love, intensity, heat, aggression
Orange	Warmth, expansive, flamboyant
Yellow	Optimism, happiness, idealism, imagination
White	Purity, reverence, cleanliness, simplicity

Given these general interpretations, you would want to steer away from using too much of colors such as black, orange, gray, red and brown, since they can either be too passive or too aggressive.

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## Color Combinations to Avoid

Some colors should not be used together for a variety of reasons, so here are some combinations to avoid:

**Red & Green** - these two colors clash with each other and are very hard to read. Also, people who are red-green color blind will not be able to figure out what you are trying to say on the slide.

**Orange & Blue** - another pair that causes a disturbing effect on readers as the colors seem to vibrate against one another.

**Red & Blue** - these two colors just do not have enough contrast to be seen well when used together. This combination also seems to suffer a further loss of contrast when projected on a screen.

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## Color Combination Suggestions

The two color schemes that I suggest you use in presentation slides are either a dark background with light text and graphics or a light background with dark text and graphics. Here are the specific colors that I suggest for each color scheme.

### Dark Background with Light Text and Graphics

Background - a [dark blue](#) (navy shade) or dark purple

Text and Graphics - white or yellow

Accent Colors - red, lime green, [camel](#) orange, light blue



The dark blue or dark purple background gives good emotional feelings as the predominant color on the screen and the yellow and white text and graphics have good contrast with the background. The accent colors should be used to highlight a word or portion of a graphic, not overused or they will become annoying.

#### Light Background with Dark Text and Graphics

Background - warm beige

Text and Graphics - dark blue, black, dark purple

Accent Colors - dark green, burgundy

The beige background combines the emotional impact of brown and white without gaining too much of the negative effect of these colors such as boring and staid. The dark text and graphic colors provide enough contrast to make the item stand out on the screen. The accent colors again are for emphasis and should not be overused.

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#### Background Graphics or Patterns

Many presenters want to make their slides more visually appealing by having a graphic or pattern as the background of the slide. This should be used with caution. Many times, the graphic or pattern has areas where the background color changes shade from dark to light or from light to dark. This means that the background is not actually one uniform shade and it makes picking a contrasting text and graphic color very difficult. I have seen slides where the text is visible on the first few words of a line but then disappear into the background for the rest of the line because of a change in the background. If you want to use a graphic or pattern, I suggest that it be very subtle, so there is very little difference between the lightest shade and the darkest shade in the background. One effect for graphics or logos is to use an embossing effect where the graphic looks like it is slightly raised in the background but the effect is very subtle and does not cause large changes in background color shade.

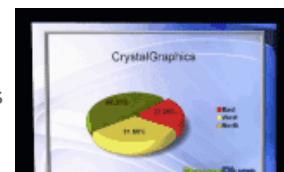
By carefully selecting the colors for your next slide presentation, you can increase the impact your message will have on your audience.

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## Microsoft Office PowerPoint

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# Choose the right colors for your PowerPoint presentation

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**Applies to:** Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2003

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Color can be a powerful tool for presenting information. It conveys meaning and influences attitudes. The colors you choose and the way you use them together can have a strong impact on your audience, ensuring the success of your presentation.

This article provides some suggestions for color selection, to make your presentations more effective and impressive.

## Understanding the relationship between colors

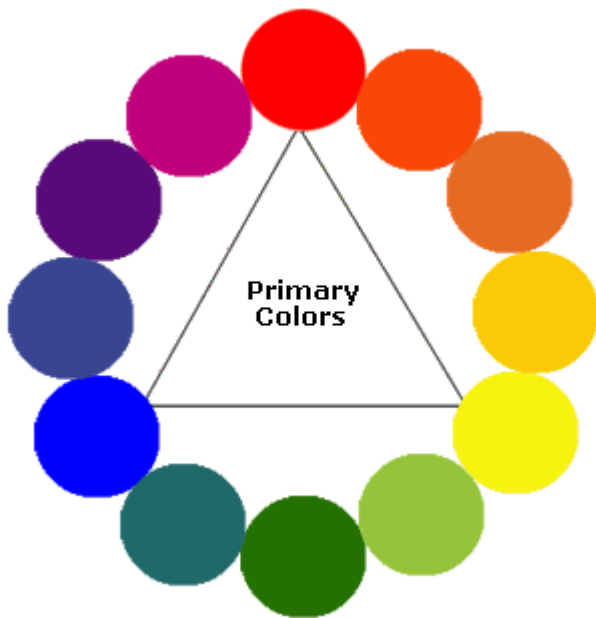
To understand color, a good place to start is the color wheel. The color wheel contains 12 hues, and illustrates the relationship between colors.

On the color wheel, the 12 hues are separated into three distinct groups:

- The primary colors: red, blue, and yellow. In theory, all other colors can be derived from these three.
- The secondary colors: green, violet, and orange. These are created by combining the primary colors.
- The tertiary colors: red-orange, red-violet, blue-violet, blue-green, yellow-orange, and yellow-green. These are made from combinations of the first six colors.

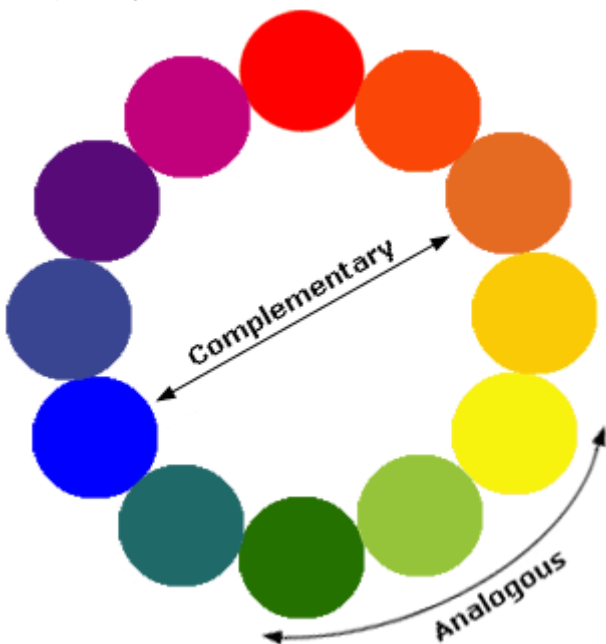
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Original page: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint/HA010120721033.aspx>



Colors have specific relationships depending on their location on the color wheel.

- Colors opposite one another are called complements. Complementary colors contrast each other to create a dynamic effect.
- Colors directly next to each other are called analogous. Each color has two analogous colors (one on each side of it). Analogous colors used together create a harmonious and unified feeling because two of the colors contain the third. In the example below, the first color (yellow) blends into the third (the green) by way of the middle color (yellow-green).



## Color selection tips

When you're choosing your colors, consider your audience. The challenge is to strike a balance between professionalism and attractiveness. The following tips may help you choose the appropriate colors for your audience.

## Color combinations

- Use the predefined color schemes in Microsoft PowerPoint®, which successfully combine colors, to format your presentations.
- Color combinations may look different when projected. If possible, test your presentation on the projector to verify that the colors work well together. This will allow you to make changes before the presentation, if necessary.
- Certain color combinations provide high contrast for ease of reading. For example, the following combinations of text color on background color work well: green on purple, white on black, violet on yellow, blue-green on red.
- When using graphics in your presentation, try to choose one or more colors from the graphic to use as text colors. The color combinations will tie the elements of your slides together for a uniform look.

## Background color

- As a guideline, pick a background color and use three additional colors of text for maximum impact.
- Consider both color and texture for backgrounds. Sometimes a neutral background with a pleasing texture will work better than a solid color.



- When using multiple background colors, consider using analogous colors; the colors will blend together without detracting from the foreground text. You can further contrast the foreground text by using a complementary text color.

## Color purpose

- Use colors sparingly for more effect, and to avoid overwhelming the audience.
- Similar colors may interact differently; a slight variation can change the tone or feel of the information.
- Use color to indicate relationships between information, to convey a particular message, or to emphasize the information. If the message isn't clearly illustrated by a particular color choice, don't use that color.
- Certain colors have common associations in society, such as red with warning or green with go. Use these color associations to illustrate your point, but proceed with caution, because these associations can differ depending on the nationality of the audience.

The same information written in different colors can convey different meanings. For example, you can greatly emphasize the meaning of the word hot by using red and orange font colors. Blue font, on the other hand, will detract from the meaning of the word.

# HOT HOT

## Color and accessibility

- According to various sources, 5 percent to 8 percent of men have some form of color blindness, red-green being the most common. For this reason, it's a good idea to limit the use of red and green to high contrast color combinations.
- Avoid relying exclusively on color to present information; everyone, including blind and sight-impaired individuals, should get all of the information from your presentation.

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