Top Tips for Good PowerPoint Use

1. **Limit the number of words on each slide:**
   Fifteen words should be the maximum on any slide! The presentation should not be a reading report! Only a few words or a phrase to emphasize or reinforce an idea are all that is needed.

2. **Use a bold, simple and large font:**
   Such as Veranda and Arial (emboldened) as they have high screen legibility. Minimum font size should be 18pt but if possible consider a larger font size to allow for easy reading from the back of the room. Also, keep the fonts consistent throughout the presentation and use no more than two different font types.

3. **Use transitions wisely:**
   You can always tell a new PowerPoint user who has just discovered slide transitions: words are flying in from every direction often with more sound effects than a Star Wars movie. Transitions often distract from the message. Transitions such as dissolve or fade are the least jarring transitions. Consider an alternative when there is a change to a major new topic. For example, Uncover Right-up to subtly indicate that it is a new topic. Slide build transitions should be used when indicating direction (i.e. flow chat, graphs, etc.) For example, use a wipe right when using a line graph, subtly reinforcing the direction of time helping the students to read the graph. Judicious use of transitions can help a student know where you are going, rather than distract them.

4. **Choose a design template where the words are easily distinguished from the background:**
   Avoid busy backgrounds, or ones with hard-to-read fonts, or fonts with equal color density to the background (i.e. the worst case would be bright green letters on a bright red field).

5. **Let the students know where you are going:**
   PowerPoint is great to help students know where you are in a lesson. List the lesson objectives that will be covered, key points, use topic headers at the top of your slides, use thematic images for each subject area, use full screen titles to announce major transitions, include a conclusions/plenary slide (what was covered). The more you help students know where you are going, the more they will stay with you and learn.
6. **Use pictures and graphs:**

The old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words has never been more apt than when used within PowerPoint. Pictures add interest, they can reinforce themes, they can add humor and they can show in a few seconds what it would take minutes to explain.

3 ways to insert images

1. Insert tab > Pictures > Find picture saved on your computer > size as necessary
2. Insert a new slide > click on the image icon within the scaffold
3. Right click and copy an image > go to PowerPoint and right click and paste

Some great sites for finding images are:

- Photopin
- Creative Commons Images
- Flat Icon
- The Noun Project
- Iconfinder

If you use any of these images be sure to credit the page you took the image from by copying the URL either to a slide at the end of your presentation or on the slide itself (make the font 10pt).

See ‘A Picture Paints a Thousand Words’ ([TL.3 U1.A1.T5](#)) for more details

7. **Use Video**

You can insert a video in a similar manner to inserting images.

Choose the insert tab > in the Media section > Video > Choose from computer or from online (OneDrive or Office 365)

A simple way to ‘insert’ a video that is on YouTube or online is to take a screenshot of the video on the Internet, then insert > hyperlink of the video URL to the image.
Some sites to find videos are:

- YouTube
- Vimeo

8. Questions
Ask questions. It sounds obvious, but a lot of teachers will have a fixed set of information they want to present and deliver this information almost regardless of circumstances. Yet, not all students are interested in the same material, and often too little time is spent on the things the students are interested in. (see ‘Using PowerPoint to Engage’ TL.3.U1.T1.A1 for an example)

9. Hyperlinks
Use hyperlinks. Typically, a presentation will be delivered from the first slide to the last slide in a linear fashion. An interactive PowerPoint presentation allows flexibility – slides can be presented in any order, without having to exit show mode, find the next slide, and then hit F5. The best way to create flexibility in a presentation structure is to create index slides – for different topics, curriculum areas, etc. Hyperlink from each item to a sequence of slides, and end the section with a hyperlinked return to the index slide.

If hyperlinks are too complex for your PowerPoint skills, this effect can be hacked by remembering that when in Show mode, entering a slide number then hitting enter goes directly to that slide. Put your first sequence of slides at slide 10, your second at slide 20, and so on. Not elegant – but easy. Visit ‘How to Add a Hyperlink to Another PowerPoint 2013 Slide’ (Dummies.com). To find out more.

When you are ready and feeling more adventures, visit ‘Relational Presentation: the visually interactive side of PowerPoint’ (Office.com) to dive deeper into the power of using hyperlinks to create interaction.

10. Triggers
Triggers can add a whole new dimension into making PowerPoint slides interactive. Create challenges, quizzes, engaging content by placing triggers on text, images, and shapes to cause a reaction / animation. To find out more visit ‘Trigger an animation effect’. To see this from a teacher perspective visit ‘Use triggers to create an interactive slide show in PowerPoint’ (Office.com).
11. Annotation
Sketch and annotate. Don’t just present your slides – write and draw all over them. For pre-planned additions, it might make sense to just use animation to introduce new elements to a slide. But, for real spontaneity, and to respond to unexpected student questions and comments, draw on your slides. Consider the use of a tool such as Papershow if you want to use a real (Bluetooth) pen and paper (covered in tiny dots). An alternative is to use Editable Text Box Objects (see ‘Using Editable Text Box Objects’ U1/A1/T2 and ‘Creating Editable Text Box Objects’ U1/A1/T3 for further details)

12. Live graphs
Collect and display student data. Ask the students a question and use a graph to display the responses. Prepare an activity built around dummy data, and then enter real data into the spreadsheet to build the graph when face-to-face with the students. This technique can be used to show how student results compare to an average data result in an experiment. This can generate useful insight as well as serve as a starting point for further discussion.

13. Use a wireless advance mechanism:
Do not be tethered to your computer. Consider using a very small radio frequency device – they are readily available today and are very simple to use. They typically have just two buttons (forwards and backwards), require no additional software, can be used with virtually any computer, and have an operating range of up to 100 feet. You never have to think about walking over to the computer - your full concentration can be where it should be – on the students!

Remember ‘You’ control the PowerPoint, it does not control you!