

# CREATING YOUR PRESENTATION CONCEPT

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Before you start creating a *PowerPoint* presentation file, it helps to get your thoughts down on paper to determine what you want to present and how to present it. The basic preparation includes selecting a subject, identifying what you want to get across to your audience in the time allotted, and determine the flow of the presentation.

## GETTING STARTED

Create a folder for your presentation files. You will be adding multiple files for your presentation to this folder.

## NAMING YOUR PRESENTATION

Come up with a title for your presentation that identifies what you will be speaking about; i.e., *Writing Fiction Versus Non-Fiction*, or *How to Publish Your Story or Book*. If your presentation needs a subtitle, add it to the title.

## CREATE AN OUTLINE

The first file is your *Outline*. It is used to help you organize your thoughts. Take time to think about what you want to get across to your audience. In your word processor create an outline document using bullet points. Don't worry about the order at first, just get your thoughts down. Save the *Outline* file to the folder created above.

Once you have identified all of the individual ideas you plan to use, organize them in the order they will appear in the presentation. You will continue to update the outline as you work.

Expand each of the bullet items with what you plan to say about them when you give your presentation. Keep the bullet titles short, as they will be expanded with associated text.

As you're working, you will find that you may have to add or remove bullets, or even reorder them to make the presentation flow better. Don't start the *PowerPoint* until you have your thoughts organized down to the exact order in which each item will be presented.

If you will be referencing books or articles, have them handy—or at least their full source citation available—before you start. You will need to reference them completely at the end of the handout along with a list of websites if desired.

Don't include information that doesn't apply to the topic of the presentation. If you are teaching *How to Write a Family Story*, then don't include *How to Publish a Book*. Each of these topics, if done well, will take more than one hour and may confuse the audience. Make them two different presentations.

## CREATING THE HANDOUT

The handout should be designed to provide the audience with enough information so they can refresh their memories about your presentation later. Important information should be included in your handout. Always put your contact information in your handout.

By creating the handout before the presentation, you know what you want to present and how you want it presented.

Some people choose to make the bullet list their handout. Others choose to use the expanded *Outline* file as the handout.

If needed, copy your *Outline* file to a new name to be used as your *Handout* file. By creating the handout first, you can see where you are repeating yourself unnecessarily.

It all depends if you wish to take the time to use instructions in the handout, or you want to leave the audience with only the ideas you presented. If I write the handout before I create the *PowerPoint*, it is more organized and I use fewer bullets.

### **HANDOUT LAYOUT**

Be consistent. The information presented in the handout should be in the same order as the information presented in the presentation. The handout provides the audience with a form to follow.

The layout of the handout must be easy to follow. Break the handout into sections. If multiple ideas apply to the same topic, then keep all of the information for that topic in one or two sections.

### **SECTIONS**

*Section numbers* are used in government documents, and are not necessary in a presentation handout to the general public.

The preferred format is to include headings as shown in this document. Text for section headings may be in color, but only one color should be used throughout the handout. Section heading text should be highlighted and may also be in small caps or italics.

Do not use underlines. They are out when making a point in text. This also applies for hyperlinks.

Set tabs to .5 inches (a short tab) to save paper.

The font for the section headings may be a different style, color and size than used in the body text.

### **BULLETS IN THE HANDOUT**

Indent bullets one short tab. If the text in a section has bullets, don't get carried away. Less is more.

When the information being presented is a list, it is not necessary to use bullets. If the information must follow a specific order, then use numbers for the bullets. Indenting bullets or lists one short tab makes them more prominent.

Using fancy bullets may distract some viewers. If you feel you should use a fancy bullet, use a smaller font size, and switch back to the larger font for the text.

### **TEXT WITHIN THE HANDOUT**

Never use all caps except for initialisms like IBM or AARP. Throughout the body the text font style and size should be consistent. It doesn't have to match the title of the handout.

Use of color in a handout should be avoided if the handout is to be printed in black and white. If graphics are included in the handout, they should be in dark enough colors to be seen well.

Text alignment should be the same throughout the document.

When looking at the document, is it pleasing to the eye, or is there a mixture of; font colors, styles, all caps and lowercase, and/or multiple bullet styles and sizes?

Can the reader follow the information the presenter is trying to convey?

Eliminate extra spaces between headings.

All lines must be spaced and indented the same. Eliminate the extra spaces between lines and words.

Test the finished handout by printing it to see how it appears in black and white. Read it to make sure you have included everything you planned to present and nothing more.

**KNOW THE USE OF DASHES**

One dash (-) is a hyphen used to connect compound words, e.g. green-bean.

Two dashes (--) is an “en” dash (the space of the letter N) used as a range of consecutive numbers 1979--2014.

Three dashes (---) is an “em” dash (the space of the letter M) used to extend a thought. When separating a topic title from the defining text use a colon.

**PROOFREAD**

It helps to have someone else read your handout before starting the *PowerPoint*. Like any other written document, they will see problems you missed.

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