

Pointers for Perfect PowerPoint Presentations

Independent Study in Psychology
Fall 2010

Content



Content

- Your presentation is a SUMMARY of your senior thesis
 - You need to figure out what your main/most important point in your research is and present just that
 - You want to be precise, including only the basic information necessary to understand your thesis

Hint: Pick one background and don't change it

Sections

- **Title** (title, name, and college)
- **Introduction** (introductory points/citations)
- **Method** (include example items for surveys; if you don't want to discuss the number of participants, demographics, etc., you can include them on your slide and make sure that the audience has enough time to see the information)
- **Results** (include graphs and figures - the audience should be able to "look at" your slides rather than "read" them)
- **Discussion**
- **Questions**

Each figure begins on a new page

(include the figure caption on the same page as the figure)

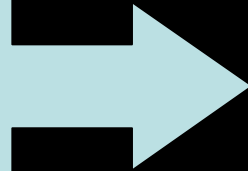
Title

You want a CATCHY and INFORMATIVE title that draws in your audience and gives them an idea about what your senior thesis examined

Introduction

- **ATTENTION GRABBER** (make your opening sentence an interesting question or dilemma about human nature/people)
- Provide a direct background (briefly cite key studies) leading up to your main hypothesis

“Here is
what we
know”



“Here is the
gap my
project fills”

Methods

- Present only the essentials
 - You can always answer questions about extraneous details at the end during the Q&A
 - Give the audience a sense of what it would have been like to be in your study (sample questions, stimuli, etc)
 - Set up any big qualifications that will be followed up during the discussion portion of your presentation
- Include the number of subjects, relevant demographics, etc., but don't belabor this

Results and Discussion

- It often makes sense to discuss each result as you present it, which blurs the line between results and discussion
 - This allows the audience to directly connect specific results with specific conclusions
- Use figures whenever possible; avoid tables
- Forget statistical results entirely:

~~$F(3,37)=21.07, p<.001, \eta^2=.23$~~

Discussion

- End your presentation with a pure discussion session (What is the important take away message?)

If there's time (and only if) you could:

1. Note limitations and qualifications
2. Note and discuss the direction future research could take
3. Note and discuss how your results add to or change the existing literature

- At the conclusion:
 - Tie your talk back to the opening of your introduction
 - Repeat the take away message

Questions?

- A simple question slide can be used to:
 - Invite your audience to ask questions
 - Provide a visual aid during the question period
 - Avoid ending a presentation abruptly

Slide Structure



Slide Structure

- Write in point/bullet form, not complete sentences
- Include no more than 4 to 5 points per slide
- Less is more (that is, do not put every last thought on a slide)
- Use citations sparingly and only when essential

Slide Structure - Bad

This page contains too many words for a presentation slide. It is not written in point form, making it difficult both for your audience to read and for you to present each point. In short, your audience will spend too much time trying to read the paragraph instead of listening to you.

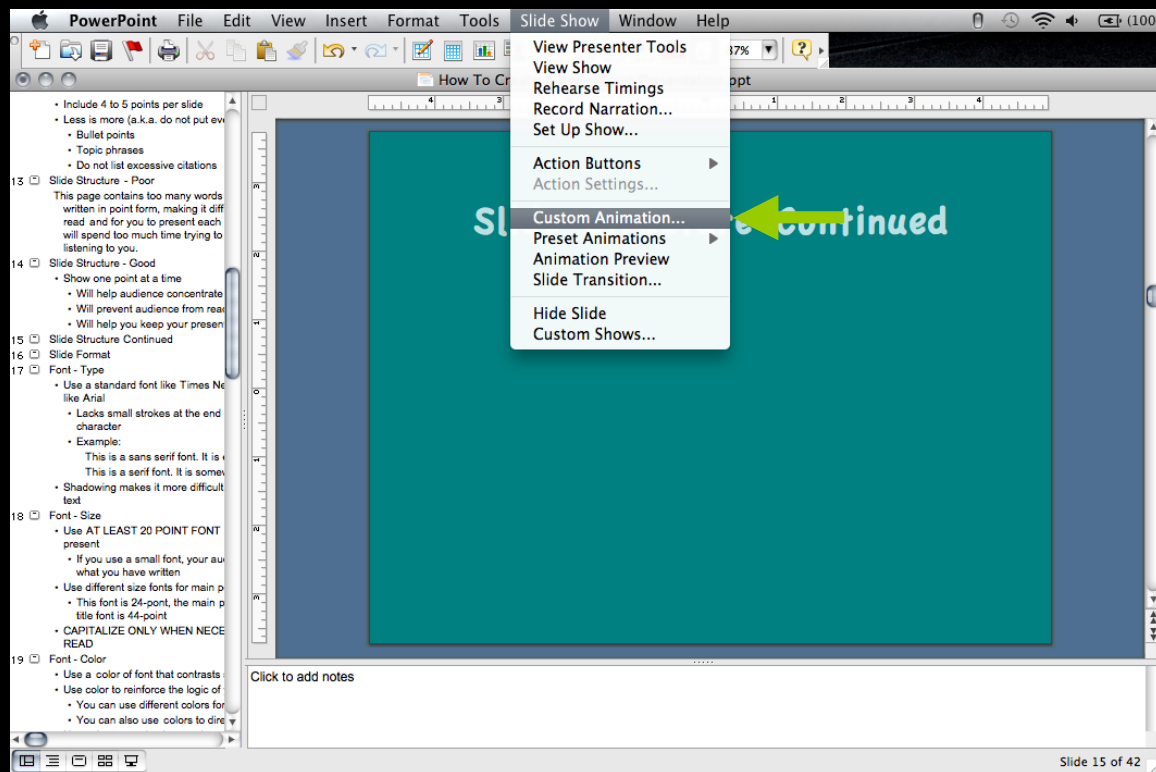


Slide Structure - Good

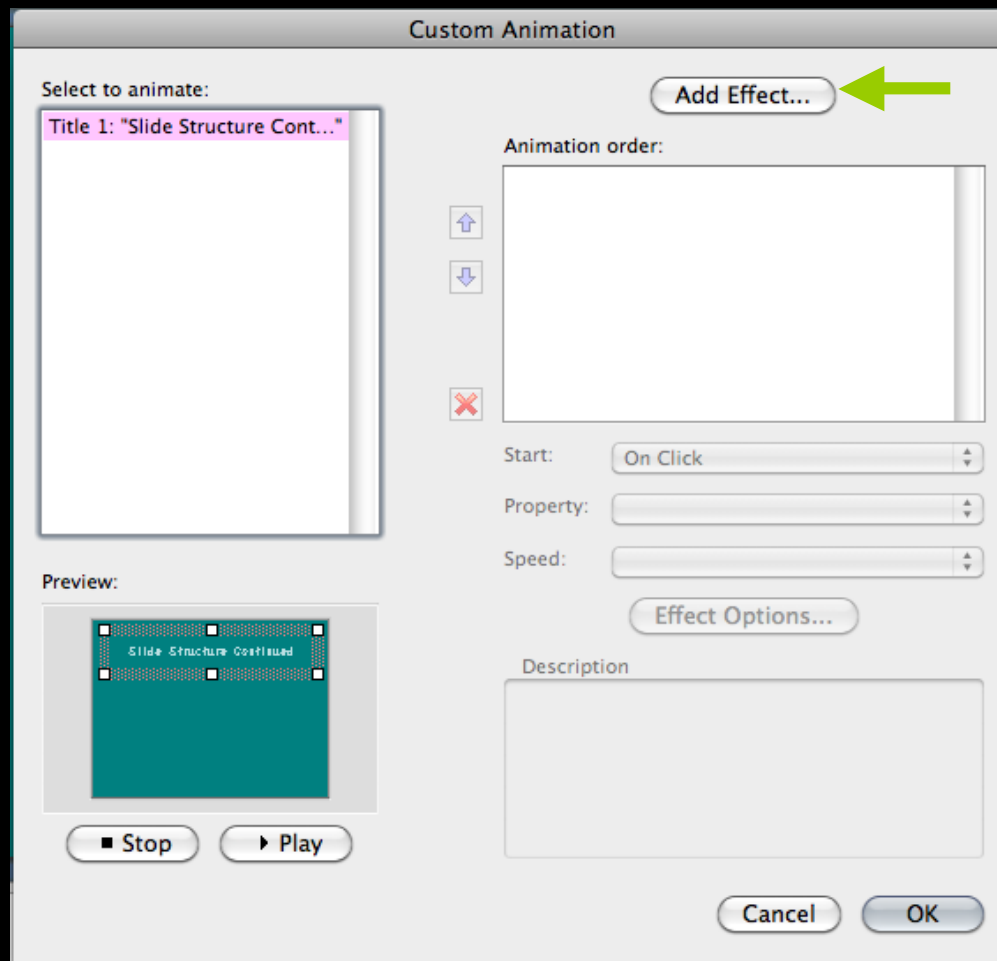
- Show one point at a time
 - Will help audience concentrate on what you are saying
 - Will prevent audience from reading ahead
 - Will help you keep your presentation focused



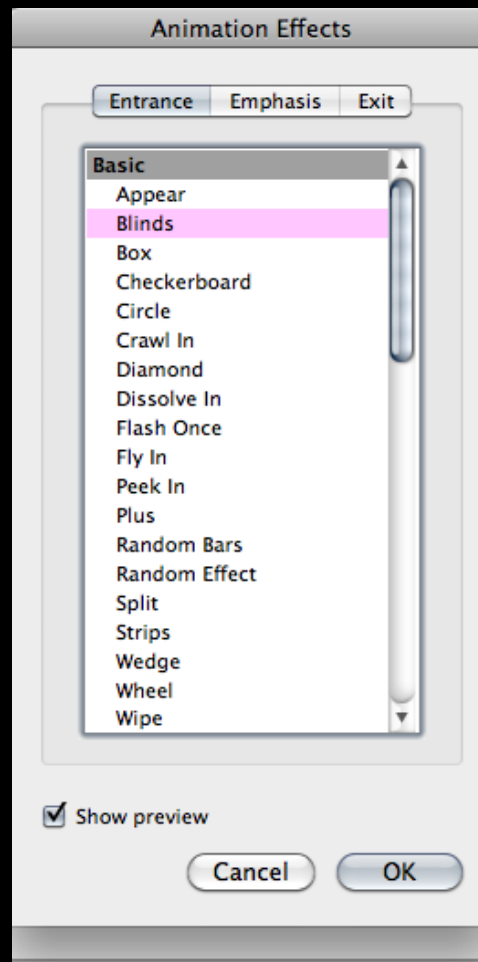
Slide Structure Continued



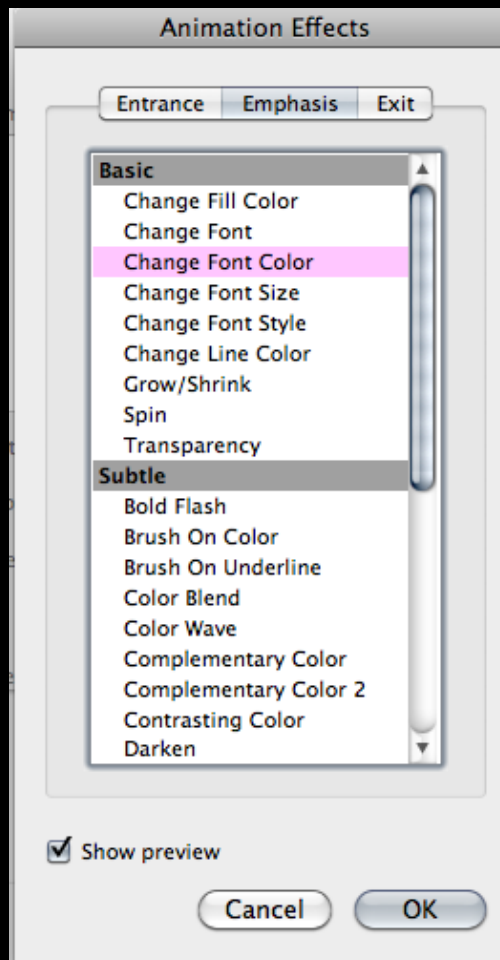
Slide Structure Continued



Slide Structure Continued



Slide Structure Continued



Slide Format



Font - Type

- Use a standard font like Times New Roman or a sans serif font **like** Arial
 - Lacks small strokes at the end of the main strokes of each character
 - Example:
 - This is a sans serif font. It is easy to read.
 - This is a serif font. It is somewhat less easy to read.
- Shadowing makes it more difficult for the audience to read your text

Font - Size

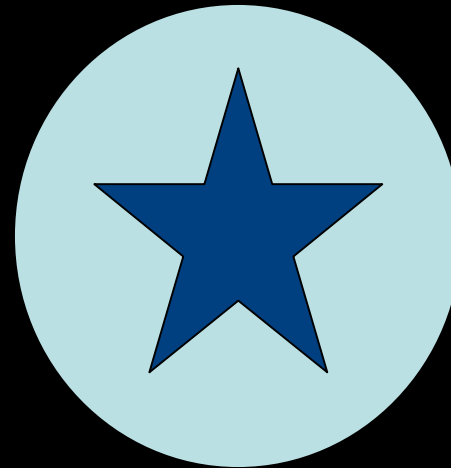
- Use **AT LEAST 20 POINT FONT** for almost everything that you present
 - If you use a small font, your audience won't be able to read what you have written
- Use different size fonts for main points and secondary points
- **CAPITALIZE ONLY WHEN NECESSARY - IT IS DIFFICULT TO READ**

Font - Color

- Use a color of font that contrasts sharply with the background
 - Dark type on a colored background is difficult to read
 - It is OK to use dark type on a very light background
 - By far the most effective is light, bright type on a dark background
- Use color to reinforce the logic of your structure
 - You can use different colors for titles and bullet points
 - You can also use colors to direct your audience's attention
- Use color to **emphasize** a point

Background

- Use either a **dark background** with a light font or a light background with a **dark font**

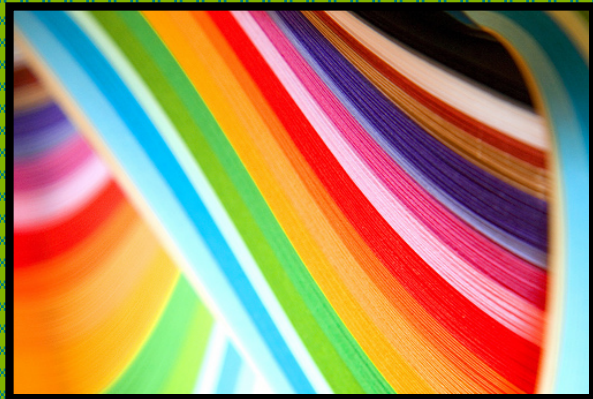


Background Continued

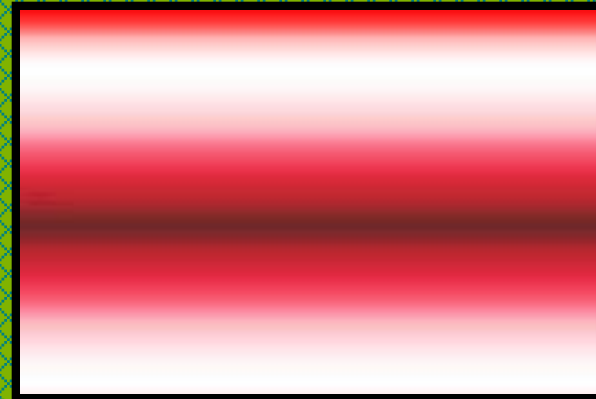
- Use backgrounds that are attractive but simple
- Use the same background consistently throughout presentation
- DO NOT use backgrounds that are very bright or busy- they are not pleasant to look at!
 - Reds and oranges are high-energy but can be difficult to stay focused on
 - Greens, blues, and browns are mellower

Background Continued

Avoid backgrounds that are distracting or difficult to read from



(too many colors)



(too many shades)

Visual Aids and Animation



Professionally Attractive ♥ Visuals ♥

- No flowers or hearts (be careful with irrelevant clip art)
- No excessive colors
- The same **font** and background should be used for all slides
- Avoid fonts that are difficult to read
- A bit of humor can be nice, but it should not be distracting



Professionally Attractive Visuals Continued

- Do not use distracting animation
- Do not go overboard with the animation
- Be consistent with the animation that you use



Slide Transition

- (Normally) use one type of transition throughout the show that does not detract from the presentation
 - But, if a slide needs special emphasis, you might consider using a separate transition for it

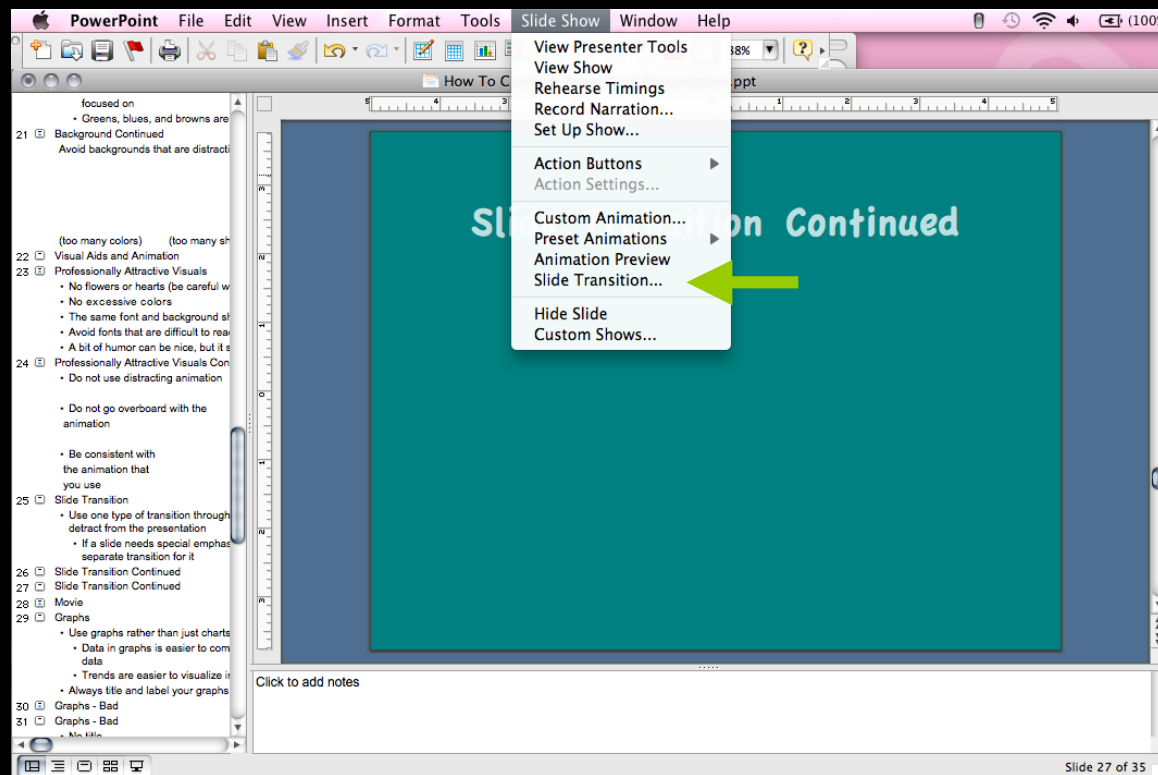
Slide Transition - Bad

- Transitions that take a long time to appear
- Transitions that distract from the content of the slide

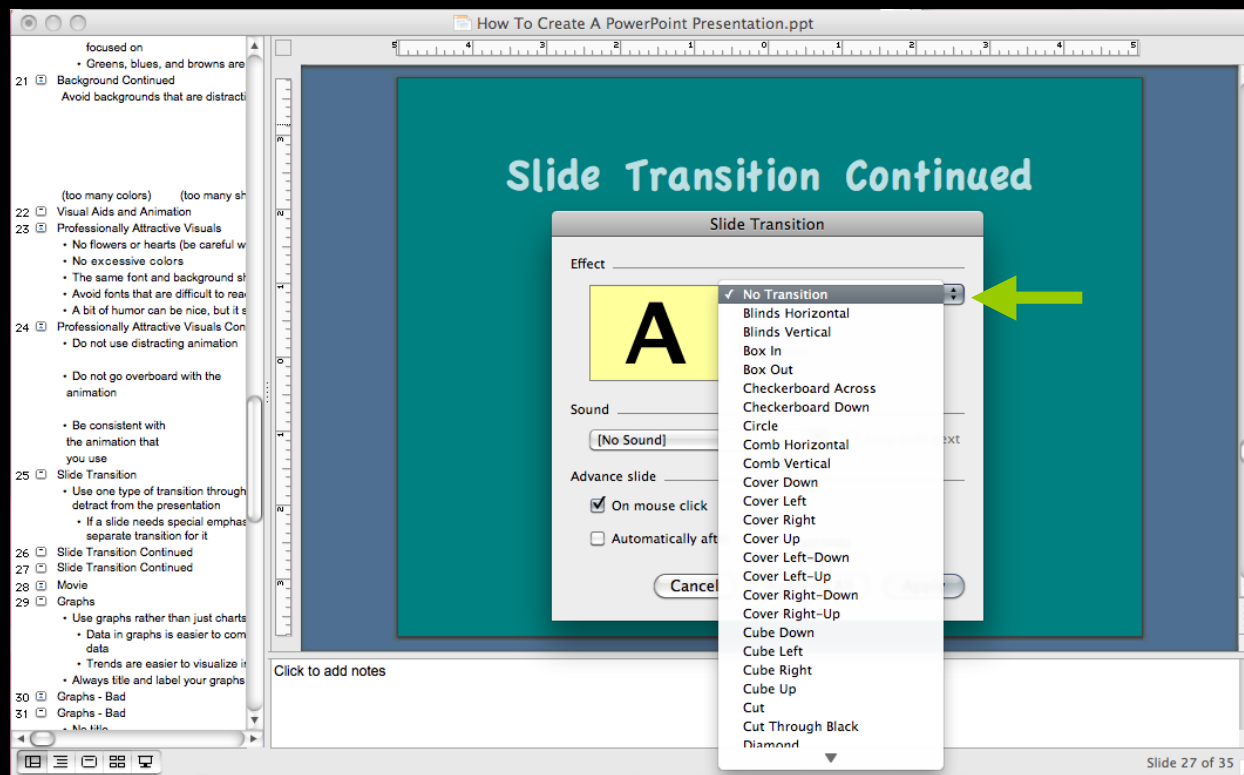
Slide Transition - Good

- Slide transitions should not distract from the content of the presentation
 - The best transitions blend into the overall presentation; not even noticed

Slide Transition Continued




Slide Transition Continued



Slide Transition Continued

Slide Transition

Effect _____



Slow
 Medium
 Fast

Sound _____

Loop until next

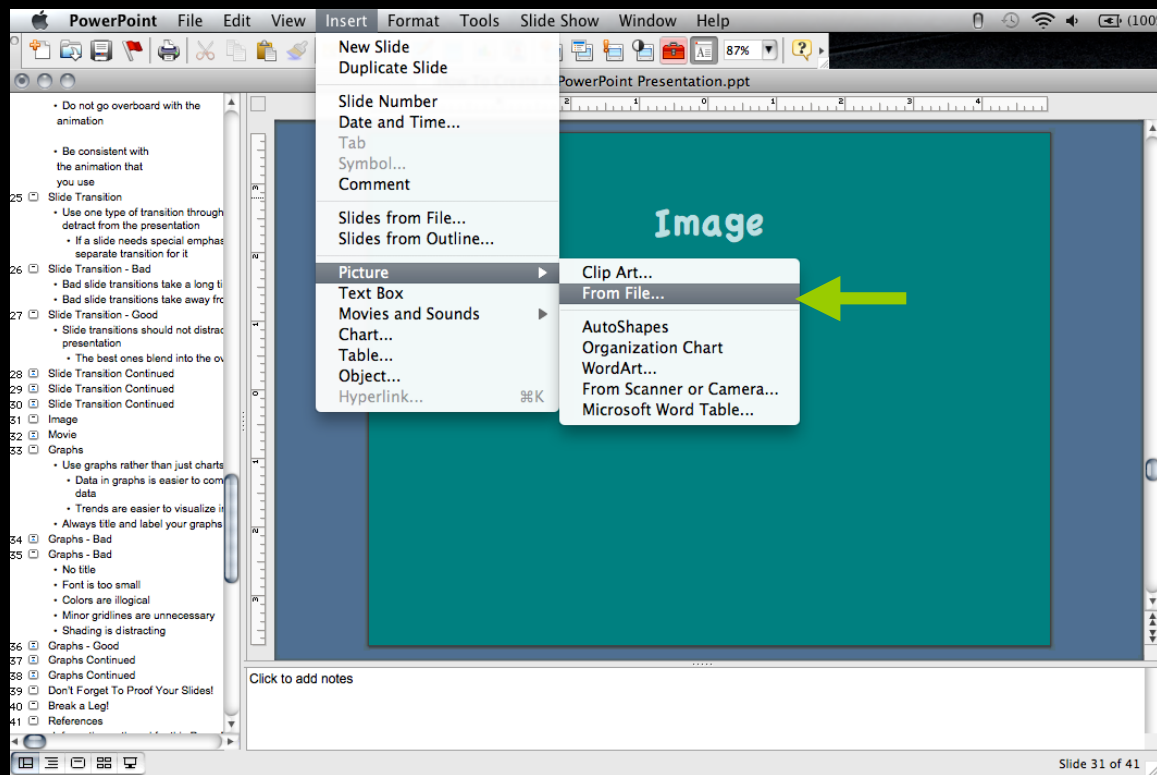
Advance slide _____

On mouse click
 Automatically after seconds

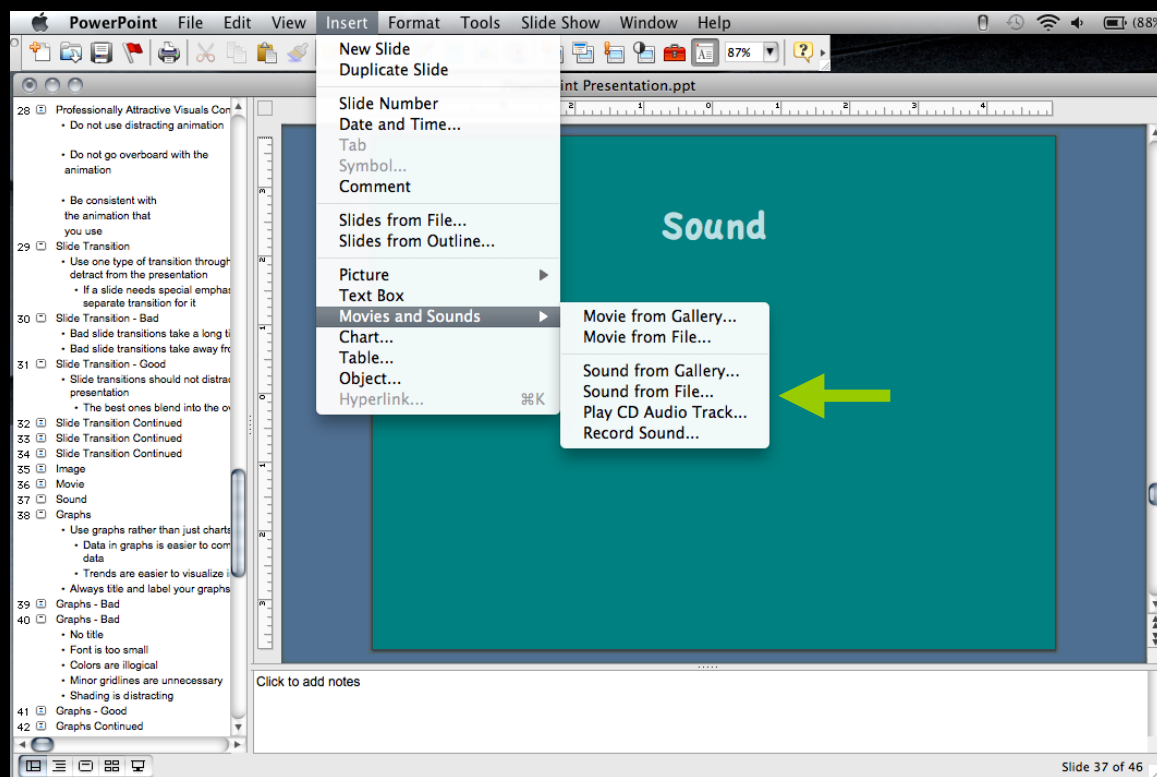
← Speed

← Sound

Image



Sound

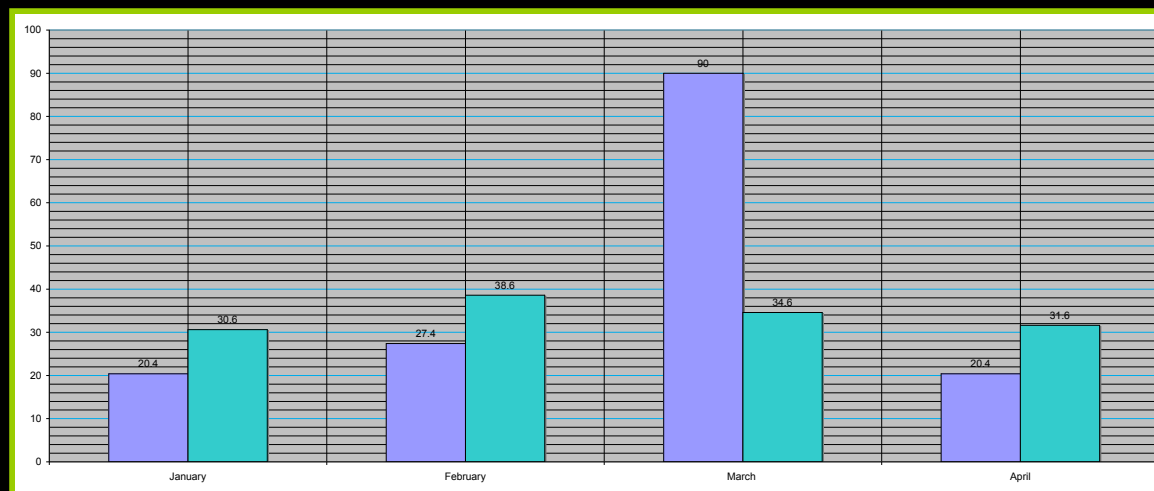


Graphs

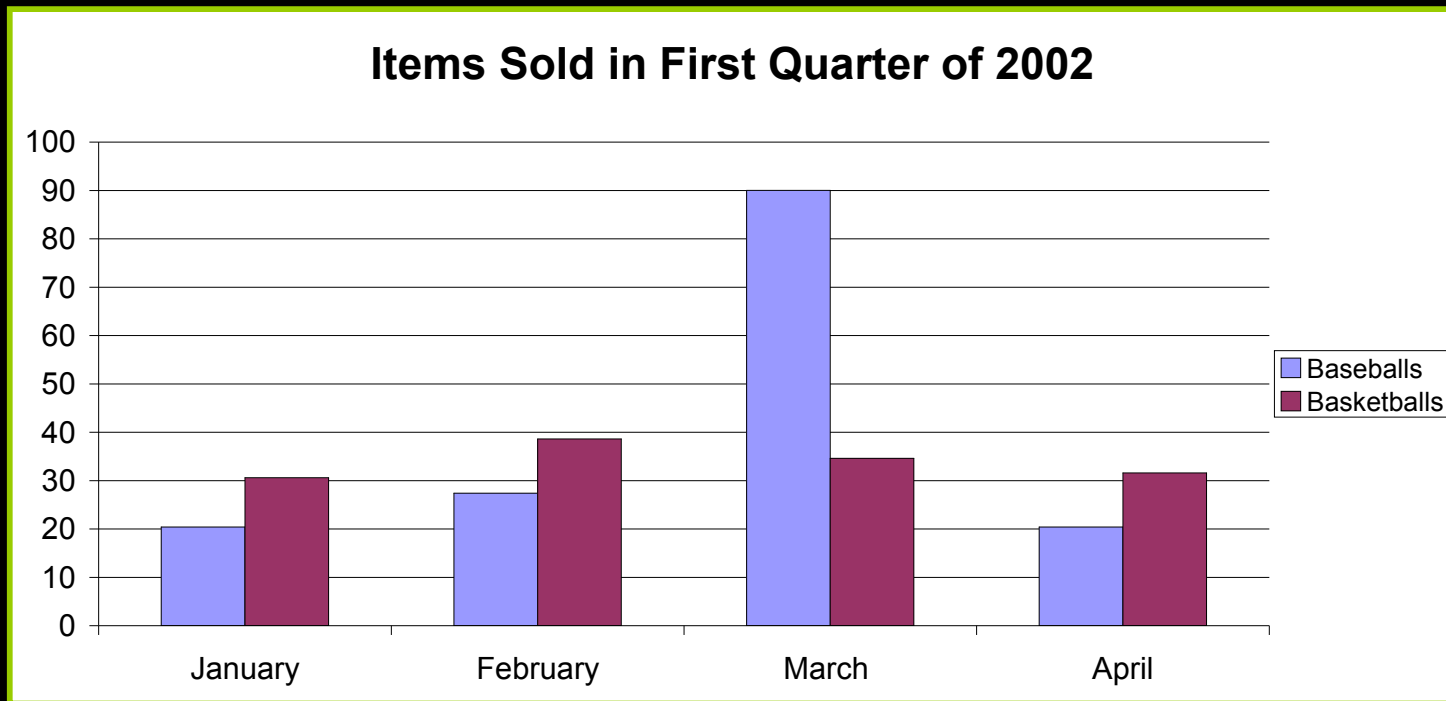
- Use figures and charts rather than just words
 - Data in graphs are easier to comprehend and retain than is raw data
 - Trends are easier to see in graph form
- Always title and label your graphs and axes

Bad Graphs

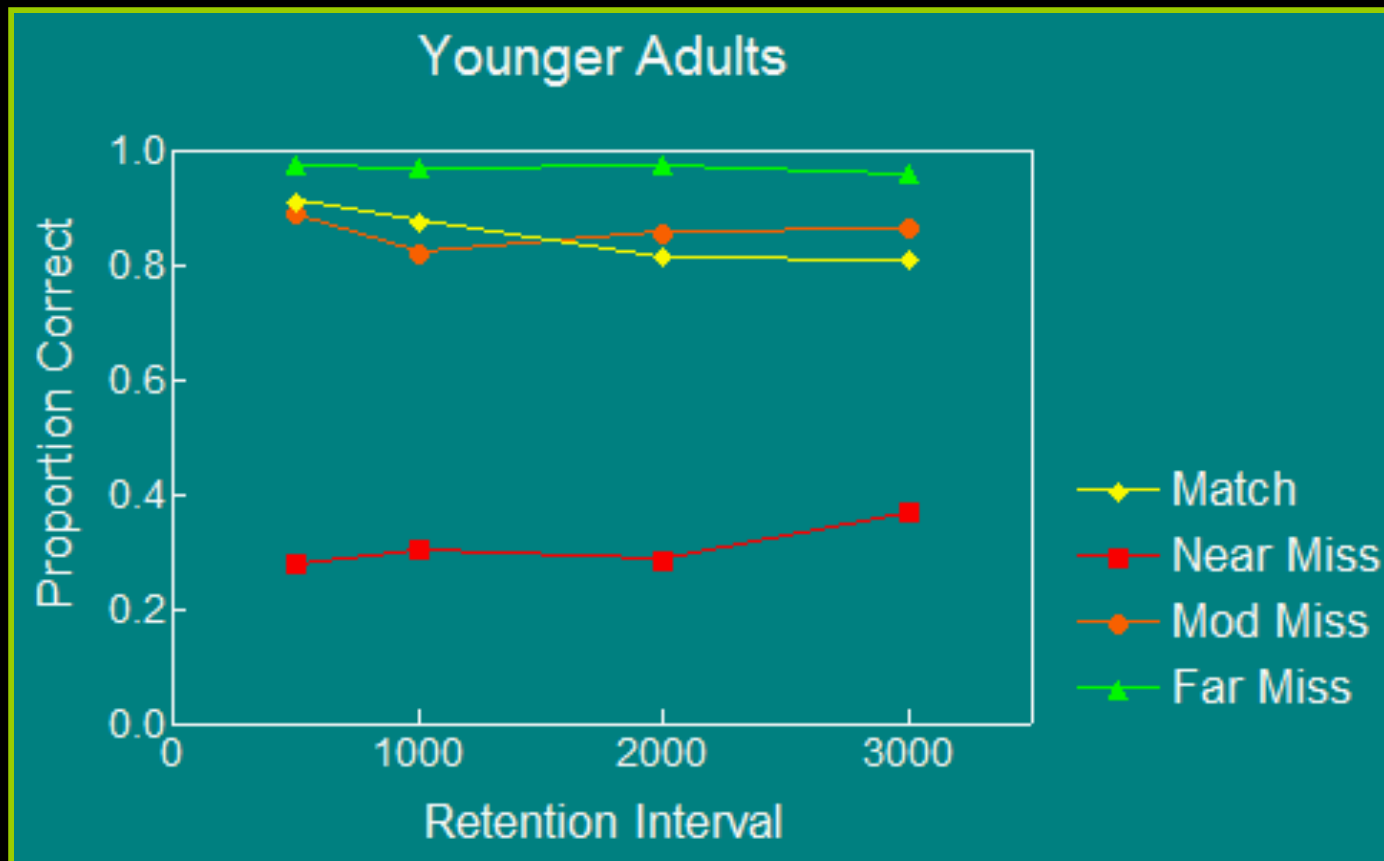
- No title
- Font is too small
- No logic to the colors
- Gridlines are unnecessary
- Shading is distracting



Better Graphs



Even Better Graphs (Graphpad Prism)





**Don't Forget
to Proof Your
Slides!**

References

Information gathered for this PowerPoint was taken from the “Microsoft PowerPoint Tutorials” (<http://www.electricteacher.com/tutorial3.htm>).