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Using Presentation Software

About Using Presentation Software

When giving speeches or presentations, visuals can enhance the experience for an audience. Presentation software is an outstanding tool for creating fluid, engaging visuals to use when you present.

In this project, you will identify topics that can benefit from the use of presentation software, understand best practices for designing engaging and informative visuals, create clear, concise, and visually pleasing slides, and demonstrate the ability to present using presentation software as a tool.

Resources

The following is a list of resources available in your digital project on Base Camp. Some of these resources, such as evaluations, are also available on the Resources section on Base Camp.

Project Checklist

Evaluation Resources

Introduction and Assignment

Introduction

Many of us have seen a presentation in which the speaker masterfully used presentation software. In such a presentation, the audience is fully engaged and focused on the speaker. The visuals on the screen enhance every word they utter.

Some of us have also witnessed less effective presentations dominated by too much information or poorly chosen images that distract the audience from the speaker's message.

Your Assignment

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to introduce or review basic presentation software strategies for creating and using slides to support or enhance a speech.

Overview: Select a speech topic that lends well to a visual presentation using technology. Use the content of this project and your own research to help you develop your slides. Give a 5- to 7-minute speech using the slides you developed.

Your speech can be humorous, demonstrative, or informational, and it may include stories or anecdotes.

Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



Video: Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.



Interactive Activity: Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.



Resource: Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.



Weblink: Return to your digital project when you see this icon to link to a website or Base Camp location.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the Project Checklist.

Learning in Using Presentation Software

Assess and Reflect



To assess and track your knowledge, complete the activity below by listing what you already know and what you wonder about the topic today. Add up to five items to each list. After you complete your project, you will have an opportunity to review your answers and add what you have learned.

Know

For example: I know how to identify topics that could benefit from the use of presentation software.

Wonder

For example: I wonder how to create clear, concise, and visually appealing slides.

Competencies

The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.

- Identify topics that could benefit from the use of presentation software.
- Recognize and describe best practices for designing engaging and informative slides.
- Create clear, concise, and visually pleasing slides.
- Demonstrate the ability to present using presentation software as a tool.

Using Presentation Software

Why Use Presentation Software

The primary reason for using presentation software during a speech is to increase engagement. Strong, well-designed visuals can improve your audience's response in a way words alone cannot. Powerful visuals reinforce key points, and presentation software is an excellent tool to organize your visuals.

When to Use Presentation Software

Two factors to consider when deciding to use presentation software for an in-person presentation are the size of your audience and the venue.

If you are speaking to a large room filled with many people, presentation software can help to engage audience members farther back in the room.

Whether your presentation is in person, virtual, or hybrid, presentation software is an excellent solution when your topic benefits from reinforcement through visual support.

Write Your Speech

There are steps you can take to make sure any speech you give that uses presentation software is a success.

Regardless of the topic, you need to write your speech before you create a visual aid, including presentation slides. Begin by defining your objective. A speech with a clearly defined objective can lend itself more readily to the use of slides. Your objective can help you identify information to support your key points and give you a good indication of where a slide is necessary or helpful. Main ideas, key concepts, important names, data, and statistics are all examples of information that could benefit from the use of a slide.

The process of developing a speech using presentation software is similar to writing any other type of Toastmasters speech. The primary difference is that as you write, you can indicate where you would like to place a slide to support your content.

Plan Your Slides

Once you know your topic, summarize and outline each section of your speech and determine approximately how many slides you will need per section. Whenever possible, organize your content so that related topics appear next to one another on the slides. This way, your speech will be easier to follow.

As you work through this process, realize you may need to re-evaluate the order of your speech based on the outline of your slides.

Choose a Template

When your outline is complete, it is time to create your slides. You can use a pre-existing slide template available in most presentation software programs, or you can create your own design. Search the program you are using for templates that work well for your presentation.

Save Your Design

If you choose to create your own slides, consider saving the basic design as a template to use for other projects.

Consider Color Options

There are infinite color options when you develop your slides. A good, basic way to choose color is to use complementary colors when designing background, font, and detail.

Use Complementary Colors

Complementary colors are colors that produce a strong contrast and reinforce each other when placed next to or near each other. Example pairings include:

- Red and green
- Violet and yellow
- Blue and orange

Adhere to Brand Standards

When you create a presentation for an organization such as a nonprofit or a company, you may be required to use brand colors in order to adhere to brand standards. Brand standards are set by an organization as a part of their visual identity.

Use a Color Wheel

Refer to a color wheel to see how different colors relate to one another and to get ideas for color usage. Be aware that too many colors can divert attention away from your presentation. Limit your selections to a few colors to use throughout the slides of your presentation.

White Space

White space, or neutral, open space, increases legibility and viewer comprehension. Allow for white space in the layout of your slides. After you have created each slide, make sure some areas are free of text or graphics.

Font

Choose a font that is readable and large enough for audience members to see clearly. Use the same font, titles, layout, and image style throughout your presentation. One easy-to-read, basic font will keep the audience's attention on you and your words rather than forcing them to spend time deciphering your slides. Using many different fonts is likely to distract audience members' attention from your content.

High-Quality Images

Ensure any photographs or graphics are visible and not over-enlarged or pixilated. Choose colors and images that fit your color scheme. Make sure there are no watermarks on stock photos and be cautious of using copyrighted images. If you use images that you did not personally create, cite your sources.

Proofread

Take time to proofread your work. Double-check for spelling and other grammatical errors in every line of text. Pay special attention to headlines, where it is easy to overlook errors. If a friend or colleague is available, consider asking them to review your slides for grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Practice Using Presentation Software

Before your speech, practice using your chosen software and slides. As you rehearse, remember that your slides are not the focus of your speech but are there to support or augment your presentation. Be sure you are able to give your speech without relying upon the slides. Keep your eyes on the members of your audience and away from the screen.

If you need to recite some information included on a slide in your presentation, put the content on cards or in an outline to prevent yourself from reading from the screen.

On the day of your presentation if you are presenting at an in-person or hybrid event, arrive at the venue early. The extra time will give you the opportunity to ensure all necessary technology is working. This includes screens, monitor(s), audio equipment, electrical outlets, and internet. Set up technology and go through your entire presentation, checking for glitches or other issues.

For a virtual or hybrid event, log in to your chosen app ahead of your attendees and confirm that your screen sharing, chat, video, audio, and any other functionality you will be using work as expected.

Be prepared to address any problems that arise. Troubleshooting may be necessary if you experience problems with hardware or software. Issues may include connectivity, broken hyperlinks, or audio problems, among other things.

Present Your Speech

When you present your speech, keep your focus on the audience and engage audience members in a way that keeps their primary focus on your content. If necessary, call out information in your slides to reference points of interest.

If you skip past a slide or a visual does not load immediately, move forward in your presentation. If the skipped information is vital to your main point, return to the slide at the end or stop and review the content verbally.

When you are finished with the presentation, thank your audience. For in-person and hybrid events, courtesy mandates leaving the room in the same condition you found it.



Watch a video on Base Camp to learn more.

Review and Apply

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- What is the best use of presentation software?
- What is the value of leaving white or neutral space in your slides?
- Why is it valuable to arrive at your venue early when presenting in person or hybrid?
- What is the benefit of learning about the app you will use when presenting to a virtual or hybrid audience?

Complete Your Assignment



Project Checklist

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report. First, review your assignment.

This project includes:

- Developing presentation slides
- A 5- to 7-minute speech

The following list includes tasks for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You can use the checklist here or complete the digital version in your project on Base Camp.

Schedule your speech with the Vice President Education.

Select a topic that lends itself well to the use of presentation software.

Write your speech.

Using presentation software, create a slideshow to enhance your speech.

Rehearse your speech.

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Evaluation Criteria



Review the criteria for the evaluation in this project. Your evaluator will use the following scale:

5 – Exemplary 4 – Excels 3 – Accomplished 2 – Emerging 1 – Developing

Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

Presentation Slide Design

- 5 – Slide design is exemplary for readability and visual appeal
- 4 – Slides are designed well for readability and visual appeal
- 3 – Slides are engaging, easy to see, and/or readable
- 2 – Slide design needs improvement
- 1 – Slides are poorly designed or difficult to see and read

Presentation Slide Effectiveness

- 5 – Slides enhance and elevate member's speech
- 4 – Slides make a significant contribution to member's speech
- 3 – Slides enhance member's speech
- 2 – Slides make only a small contribution to member's speech
- 1 – Slides do little or nothing to enhance member's speech

Topic

- 5 – Speech is an exemplary example of the use of presentation software
- 4 – Topic selected is excellent for the use of presentation software
- 3 – Topic lends itself well to using presentation software
- 2 – Topic selection could be improved for more effective use of presentation software
- 1 – Topic does not lend well to using presentation software

Complete Your Project



Once you have delivered your speech and received your evaluation, take a minute to review what you recorded under “Know” and “Wonder” in the Assess and Reflect section at the start of this project. Then add what you have learned while working through this project. Add up to five items.

Learned

For example: I learned the best practices for designing engaging and informative slides.

Before You Move On

Review Your Learning

Review all the material in this project.

Deliver Your Speech

Plan, practice, and deliver your speech.

Receive Your Evaluation

Receive your evaluation and complete any other tasks required by your club.

Assess and Reflect

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Congratulations!

If you have completed every task, CONGRATULATIONS! You have completed your Using Presentation Software project and you are ready to move on to your next project.



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