Guidelines for Powerpoint Design

General advice

Ambiguous language (sentence fragments, passive voice, unclear defnitions) weaken important material.

Clipart has no content in it and won't get any points across.

Never read aloud from slides

- It is better to have slides with only images on them and talk about the images dynamically with the audience. That way, they pay attention to what you say and don't just "zone out" staring at the text.

- Keep text at a minimum: use it to show keywords or phrases and then elaborate verbally (not textually) in your talk.

Do not paste whole paragraphs on the slides.

Printed handouts are better.

Creating a new slide

Click on the "new slide" button in the top toolbar

A dropdown menu should appear where you can pick the basic layout you would like to use.

Changing colors, designs, and formats

Click on the "design" button in the top toolbar

A menu should appear with many different designs.

Do not use any designs with:

- An elaborate background

- A dark background

- A brightly colored background

Use backgrounds that have light colors. This will make them seem cleaner

Do not use bold color schemes. Use muted ones so it does not distract from your text.

To add images

Go to "Insert" --> "Picture" --> "from file…" and select your image.

Powerpoint's strong point is displaying graphics while you give your talk, not showing you what you should say.

Adding your own shapes

Go to "insert" --> "picture" --> "autoshapes"

Select the type of shape you want, usually under "basic shapes"

Click and drag the area you want the shape covering

Double click on the shape to change the color and border

Animations

Limit your animations to circles to emphasize either anomalies in data, curiosities, or your main target.

Click on the part you wish to animate

Go to "slideshow" --> "custom animation"

In the new menu, go to "add effect" --> "entrance" --> "more effects" --> "appear"

Typography

Avoid leaving orphan words: words that, though are part of a sentence, are alone on a line.

^ exactly like that.

Sans serif fonts are good for titles

Oldstyle fonts are good for content

Keep your fonts and sizes consistent throughout the presentation

Inserting data

Use tables if your data is simple enough.

Graphs are alright as long as you don't make them too confusing (no 3-d graphs)

If you have tables that don't fit on the slide, include them in your handout.

Go to "Insert" --> "Chart" or "Insert" --> "Table" depending on what you want.

Color Schemes

Use muted colors. This way they don't distract from the background, but still say that you put more thought into this than the last minute.

http://colorschemedesigner.com/

To change the color scheme, go to the design menu and click on "color schemes.

To customize them, click on "edit color schemes" at the bottom.

Make sure the colors don't clash and it does not hurt your audience's eyes.

Bullet lists

Bullet lists are typically too generic. They can communicate only three logical relationships: priority, sequence or simple membership in a set (however nature of the relationship remains unnamed)

They leave out critical parts of a plan and simplify what should be a complex bit of information into a brief list with not a lot to say.

Using multiple hierarchies of bullet lists makes the content extremely choppy and non-narrative.

Further Reading

Edward Tufte, The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint

Templates are also available:

http://coweeta.uga.edu/images/slide_template_black.ppt

http://coweeta.uga.edu/images/slide_template_white.ppt

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http://coweeta.uga.edu/cwt_kb/entry/68/