



USING PRESENTATION SOFTWARE

LEVEL 3 PROJECT



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INTRODUCTION



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.

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.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the Project Checklist on page 12.



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.

ASSESS YOUR SKILLS

Evaluate your current skill level by rating each statement.



Select the appropriate number based on your skills today:

5
EXEMPLARY

4
EXCEL

3
ACCOMPLISHED

2
EMERGING

1
DEVELOPING

Pre-Project					Statement	Post-Project				
5	4	3	2	1	I can identify topics that could benefit from the use of presentation software.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I understand best practices for designing engaging and informative slides.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I can create clear, concise, and visually appealing slides.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I demonstrate the ability to present using presentation software as a tool.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I recognize how this project applies to my life outside of Toastmasters.	5	4	3	2	1

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

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 she utters.

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 messages.

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 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.

You may also consider presentation software 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.

Be Aware of Whitespace

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.

Consider Your 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.

Use 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.

Be Sure to 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 her 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.

PREPARE THE VENUE

On the day of your presentation, arrive at the venue early. The extra time will give you the opportunity to ensure all necessary technology is working. This includes screens, audio (if your presentation uses sound), and electrical outlets. Set up the computer and go through your entire presentation, checking for glitches or other issues.

Be prepared to address any problems that arise. Troubleshooting may be necessary if you experience problems with hardware or software. Issues may include 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 you, not the screen. If necessary, gesture to the screen 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. Be courteous by leaving the room in the same condition you found it.

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?
- List some strategies for keeping your audience focused on your presentation instead of your slides.
- Why is it valuable to arrive at your presentation venue early?

COMPLETE YOUR ASSIGNMENT



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

Review: Return to page 3 to review your assignment.

Organize: Use the Project Checklist on page 12 to review the steps and add your own. This will help you organize and prepare your assignment.



Schedule: Work with the vice president education to schedule your speech.

Prepare: Prepare for your evaluation. Review the evaluation resources on pages 14–16 and share all resources with your evaluator before your speech. You may choose to share your evaluation resources online.



PROJECT CHECKLIST

Using Presentation Software

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.

This project includes:

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

Below are tasks you will need to complete for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You may alter the following list to incorporate any other tasks necessary for your project.

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.

EVALUATION FORM

Using Presentation Software

Member Name _____ Date _____

Evaluator _____ Speech Length: 5 – 7 minutes

Speech Title _____

Purpose Statements

- The purpose of this project is for the member to introduce or review basic presentation software strategies for creating and using slides to support or enhance a speech.
- The purpose of this speech is for the member to demonstrate his or her understanding of how to use presentation software, including the creation of slides and incorporating the technology into a speech.

Notes for the Evaluator

During the completion of this project, the member reviewed or learned about presentation software and the most effective methods for developing clear, comprehensive, and enhancing slides.

About this speech:

- The member will deliver a well-organized speech on any topic. The topic should lend itself well to using presentation software.
- Watch for clear, legible, and effective slides that enhance the speech and the topic.
- The speech may be humorous, informational, or any style of the member's choosing.
- The speech should not be a report on the content of the "Using Presentation Software" project.

General Comments

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

5 EXEMPLARY	4 EXCELS	3 ACCOMPLISHED	2 EMERGING	1 DEVELOPING	
Clarity: Spoken language is clear and is easily understood					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Vocal Variety: Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Eye Contact: Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Gestures: Uses physical gestures effectively					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Audience Awareness: Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Comfort Level: Appears comfortable with the audience					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Interest: Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Presentation Slide Design: Slides are engaging, easy to see, and/or readable					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Presentation Slide Effectiveness: Slides enhance member's speech					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Topic: Topic lends itself well to using presentation software					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Using Presentation Software

This criteria lists the specific goals and expectations for the speech. Please review each level to help you complete the evaluation.

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



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