



Giving the Presentation From Your Mac to the Big Screen

You've created your slides, added the right pictures and graphics, checked your spelling, and saved the presentation. Now comes the part PowerPoint was designed for: **giving the presentation to an audience.**

A good slide deck certainly helps, but PowerPoint can't make the presentation for you. Your job is to know your material, speak to the audience rather than the screen, and use the slides as visual support. PowerPoint includes several tools that can make that job easier, including Slide Show, Presenter View, speaker notes, and rehearsal features.

Practice Before You Present

Don't let presentation day be the first time you've watched your slides from beginning to end. Select the **Slide Show** tab and start the presentation from the beginning. This lets you see essentially what your audience will see.

Move through every slide and practice what you intend to say. Don't memorize a speech word for word. Instead, become familiar enough with your material that the slide reminds you what you want to discuss. You'll sound more natural and spend more time looking at your audience.

Rehearsal also tells you whether the presentation is too long. If you've been given 20 minutes, prepare something that comfortably fits within that time rather than hoping you can race through the final six slides before someone pulls the plug.

Use Speaker Notes

PowerPoint allows you to attach **notes** to individual slides. These notes can contain reminders, facts, names, statistics, or other information you want available without putting it on the screen.

Speaker notes are particularly useful because they help keep the slides uncluttered. Instead of putting a paragraph on a slide because you're afraid you'll forget something, put the details in your notes and leave only the essential information on the slide. Notes are for **you**, not the audience.

Meet Presenter View

When your Mac is connected to a second display or projector, **Presenter View** can give you a private control center while the audience sees only the presentation.

Depending on your setup and PowerPoint version, Presenter View can display the current slide, the upcoming slide, your speaker notes, and presentation controls. It can also help you keep track of elapsed time. This lets you see what's coming next without turning around every few seconds to stare at the projection screen. Before an important presentation, connect your Mac to the actual display equipment if possible and make sure Presenter View works the way you expect.

Moving Through Your Slides

During the presentation, you can advance through slides with the keyboard, mouse, trackpad, or a presentation remote. PowerPoint provides several navigation methods, so use whichever feels most comfortable.

Keep the mechanics simple. The audience shouldn't notice that you're operating PowerPoint. If you're constantly looking down for the right key or struggling with a trackpad, you're losing contact with the people you're trying to reach. A little practice makes moving through the presentation almost automatic.

Don't Read the Screen

This deserves special emphasis because it is probably the most common PowerPoint mistake. **Don't turn your back to the audience and read your slides aloud.** Your audience can read.

Put short points, important numbers, quotations, photographs, charts, and other useful visual information on the screen. Then explain what those things mean. Look at the people in front of you and talk to them. If you need detailed reminders, that's what your speaker notes are for. The slide should prompt the discussion, not become the discussion.

Check the Equipment

A beautiful presentation isn't much help if your Mac won't communicate with the projector. Before the audience arrives, test the entire setup whenever possible. Make sure you have the correct cable or adapter, verify that the display is showing what you expect, and check the sound if your presentation includes audio or video.

If you're presenting away from your own computer, keep a backup copy of the presentation available. Also consider whether any video or other content requires an internet connection. Technology has an uncanny ability to behave perfectly during rehearsal and develop a personality five minutes before the audience arrives.

What If Something Goes Wrong?

First, don't panic. Most audiences are remarkably forgiving about technical problems.

If a slide doesn't advance, a video refuses to play, or the projector suddenly goes blank, keep talking if you can. You know the subject; PowerPoint doesn't. A presentation should never depend so completely on the slides that you can't continue without them.

Knowing your material is the best backup system you can have.

Finish With the Audience, Not PowerPoint

Your final slide might summarize the main idea, invite questions, provide contact information, or simply say thank you. Whatever you choose, don't let the presentation simply trail off because you've reached the last slide.

Finish your thought, look at your audience, and make it clear that you've reached the conclusion. If questions are appropriate, invite them and leave the final useful slide visible while you respond.

PowerPoint can provide the structure, visuals, notes, timing, and technical assistance, but **the presenter provides the presentation**. Know your subject, practice beforehand, keep the slides simple, and talk to the people in the room.

Do that, and PowerPoint becomes what it was meant to be: a tool that helps **you** communicate.