



# Building Your First PowerPoint Presentation on a Mac

Now that you know your way around the PowerPoint window, it's time to actually build something. You don't need a complicated subject for your first presentation. In fact, it's better to start with something simple and concentrate on learning the process: create a title slide, add a few slides, enter your information, choose a design, and arrange everything so the audience can follow it easily.

For this exercise, imagine that you're preparing a short presentation about a community organization. The subject isn't important. The same procedure works for a school report, business proposal, club meeting, family history, travel presentation, or almost anything else you might want to show an audience.

## Begin With a Title Slide

Open PowerPoint and select **Blank Presentation**. PowerPoint normally begins with a Title Slide containing two placeholders. Click **Click to add title** and type the name of your presentation. Use the subtitle box for your name, organization, date, or a short description if you need one.

Keep the opening slide simple. Its job is to introduce the subject, not explain the entire presentation. A clear title and perhaps one appropriate image are usually enough.

## Add Your Second Slide

Select **Home > New Slide**. PowerPoint will add another slide and usually give it a **Title and Content** layout. Type a short heading in the title placeholder, then click the larger placeholder and enter your main points.

Remember what we learned in the first article: PowerPoint isn't a word processor. Avoid filling the slide with paragraphs. A heading and three or four short points will usually communicate more effectively than a wall of text. You provide the explanation while the slide reminds the audience of the important ideas.

## Choose the Right Layout

Not every slide needs to look the same. Click the arrow beside **New Slide** and you'll see several layouts designed for different purposes. You might use **Title and Content** for ordinary information, **Two Content** to compare ideas, **Section Header** to introduce a new part of the presentation, or **Blank** when you want complete control over the slide.

You can also change an existing slide by selecting it and choosing **Home > Layout**. Changing the layout doesn't mean starting over; PowerPoint rearranges the available placeholders to match the new design.

## Add and Arrange Your Content

Continue adding slides until you've covered the main points of your subject. For a short presentation, five or six slides may be plenty. Watch the thumbnails in the **Slides Pane** on the left side of the screen because they provide a quick visual outline of your entire presentation.

If a slide is in the wrong place, simply drag its thumbnail up or down. If you decide you don't need a slide, select its thumbnail and delete it. PowerPoint makes it easy to reorganize the presentation as your ideas develop.

## Give the Presentation a Consistent Look

Once you have some content, select the **Design** tab. PowerPoint offers themes that coordinate backgrounds, fonts, colors, and other visual elements throughout the presentation. Click a theme to see what it does to your slides.

Choose something that suits your subject and then stick with it. Constantly changing colors, typefaces, and backgrounds makes a presentation look disorganized. A consistent design helps the audience concentrate on your message rather than wonder what the next slide will look like.

## Add a Picture or Other Visual

Text alone can become monotonous, so add an appropriate visual when it helps tell the story. Select the **Insert** tab to find options for pictures, shapes, charts, tables, icons, text boxes, and other objects.

Don't add graphics merely to fill empty space. A good picture reinforces the point you're making. A chart can make numbers easier to understand, while a simple diagram may explain a relationship better than several sentences. We'll explore these tools more closely in the next article.

## Review the Presentation as a Whole

Before you're finished, look at the thumbnails in the Slides Pane from top to bottom. Does the presentation have a logical beginning, middle, and ending? Does each slide contribute something useful? Are any slides overcrowded?

This is also a good time to check spelling and make sure headings, fonts, and other elements are consistent. Removing unnecessary material often improves a presentation more than adding something new.

## Save Your Work

Press **Command + S** frequently while you're working. If this is the first time you've saved the presentation, PowerPoint will ask for a file name and location. Give the file a meaningful name so you can find it again.

You now have a genuine PowerPoint presentation: a title slide, organized content, several layouts, a coordinated design, and perhaps a visual or two. More importantly, you've learned the basic workflow you'll use almost every time you create one.

The next step is to discover how **pictures, charts, shapes, and other visual elements can turn a collection of slides into a real visual presentation.**