

Formatting PowerPoint Presentations

Guidelines for Effective Design



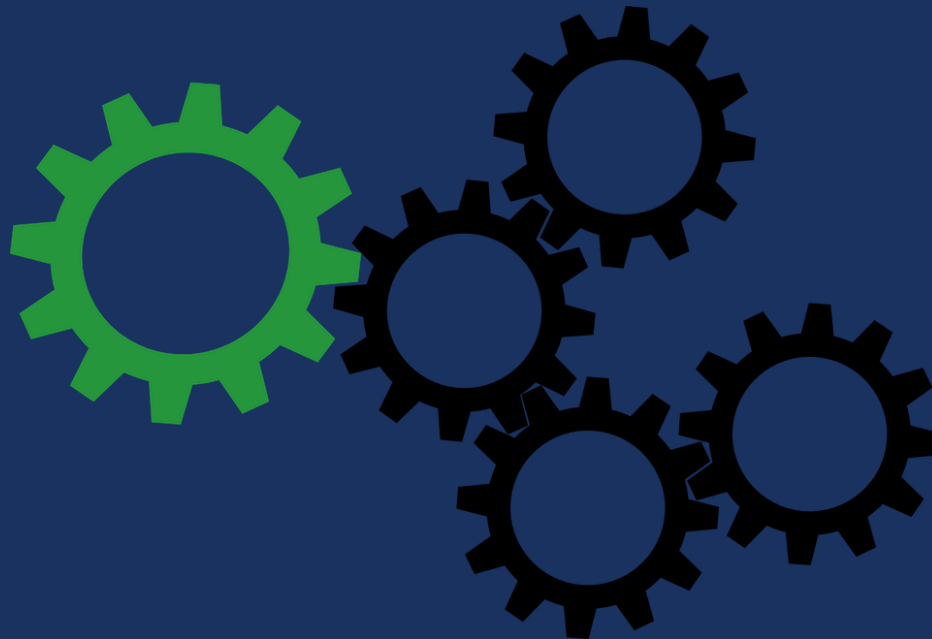
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
PROGRAMS

Outline

1. Purpose of PowerPoints
2. Overview of Formatting
3. Common Mistakes to Avoid
4. Tips for Great PowerPoints

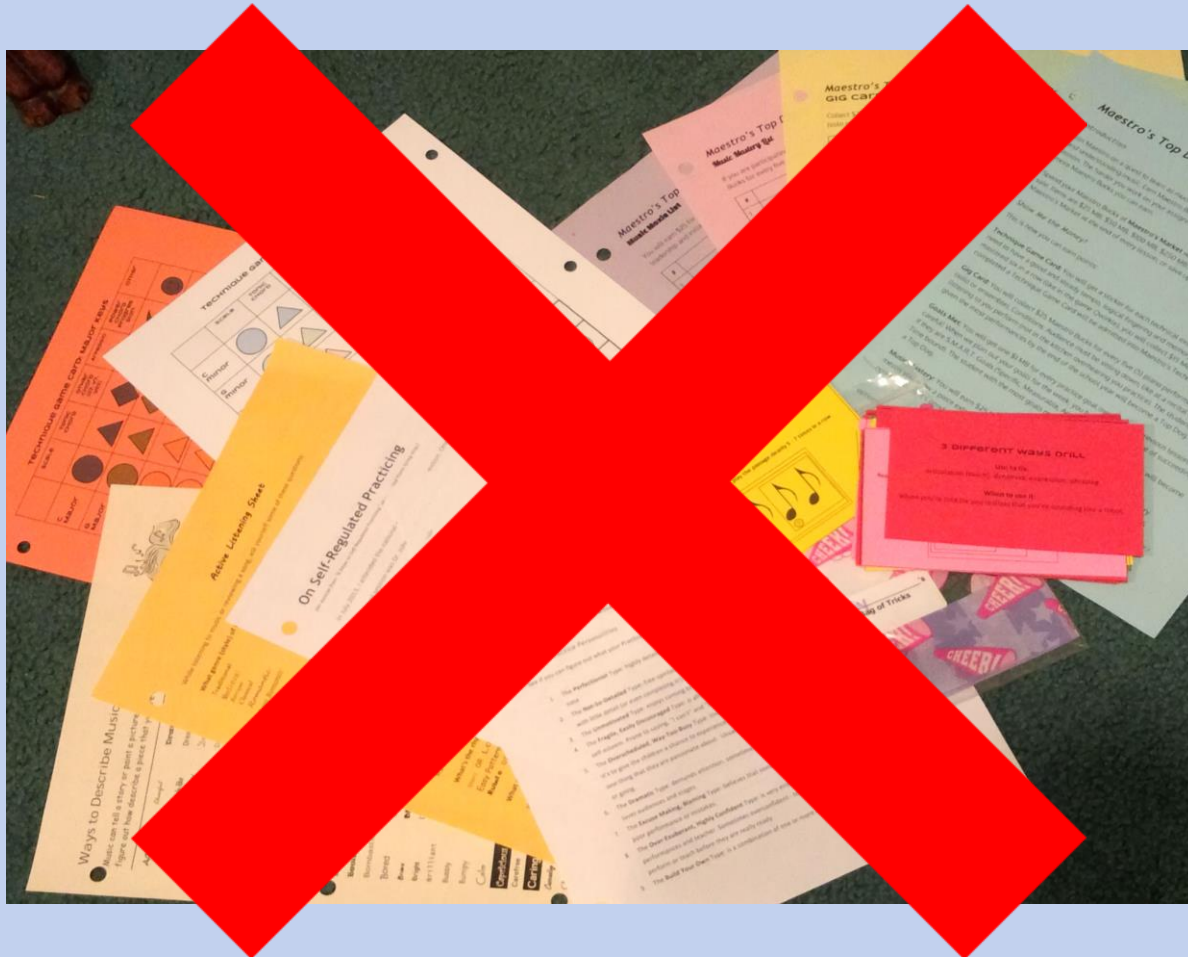
I. Purpose of PowerPoints



PowerPoint is NOT a teleprompter



PowerPoint is NOT a substitute for a handout



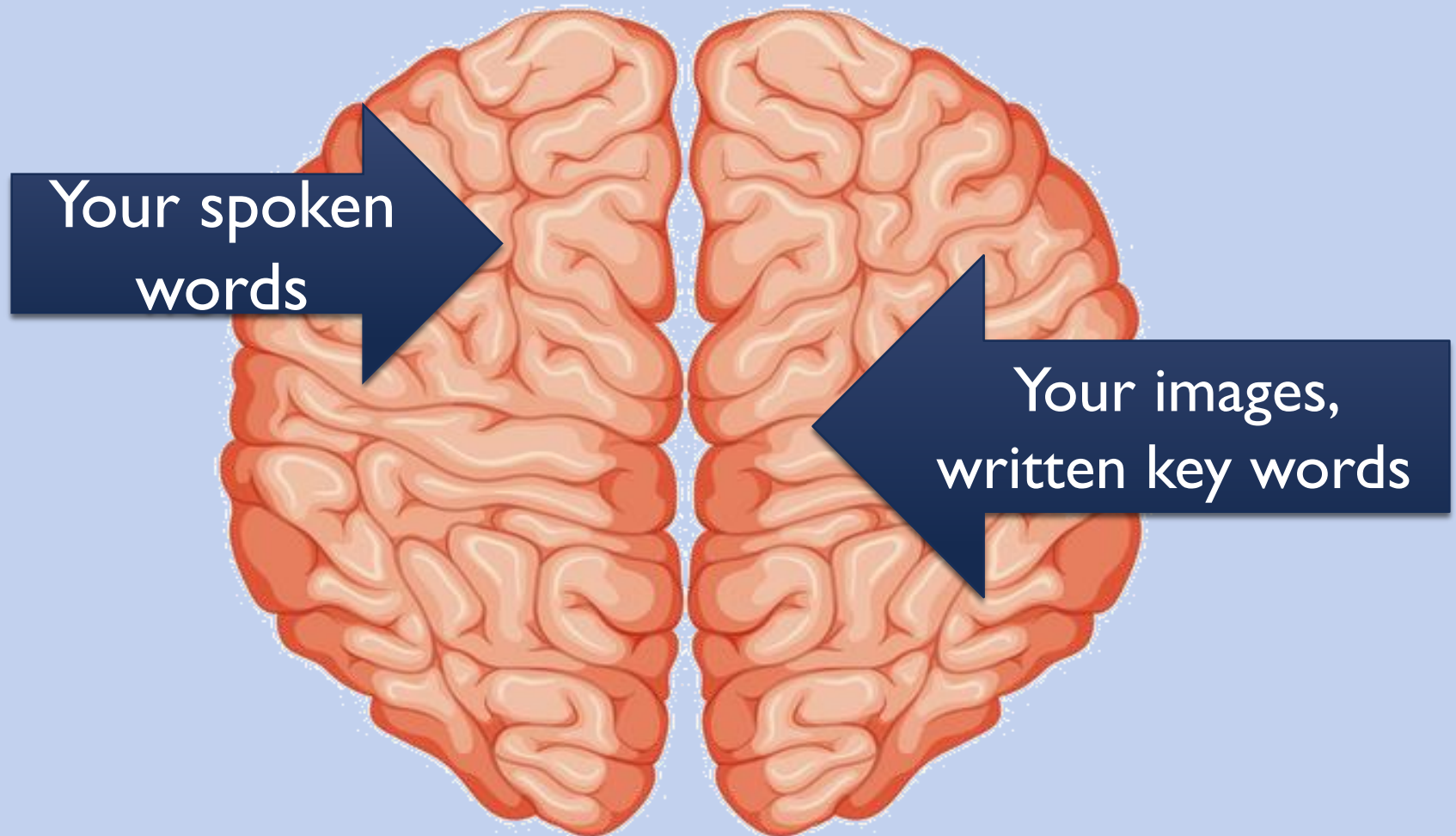
PowerPoint is NOT a file of facts and figures



PowerPoint is a separate and distinct tool for your presentation



PowerPoint is a way to reach the other side of the brain



Clothes make the (wo)man!



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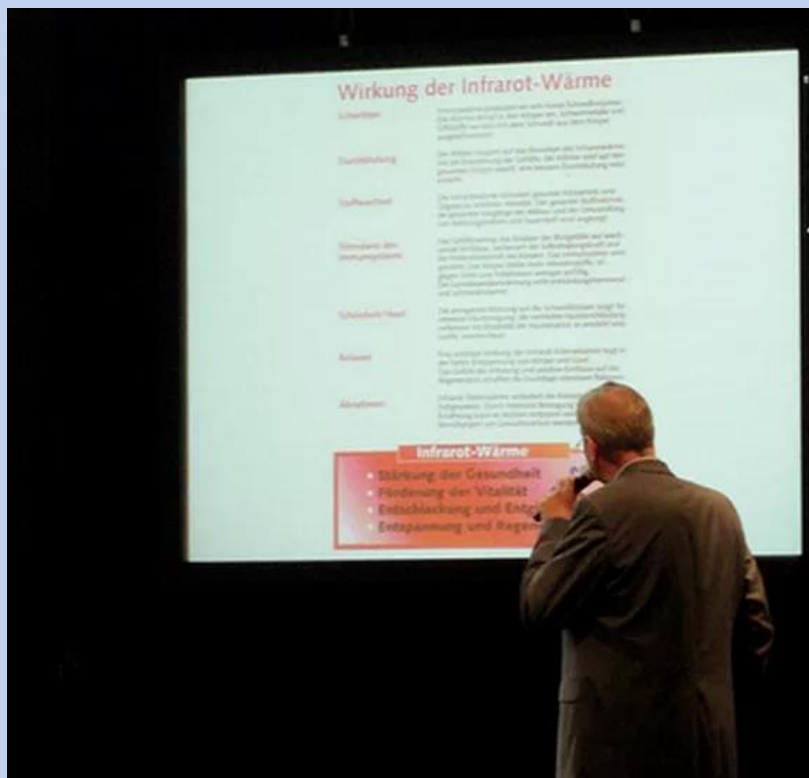


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2. Overview of Formatting



WHICH PRESENTATION DO YOU WANT TO ATTEND?



Why does formatting matter?

- Readability
- Varying levels of English proficiency
- Maximum impact, efficiency



Preparing to Format: Know your audience

Why should the audience care?

How will this idea make life easier or better?

What action should the audience take?

Check the Guidelines

- How long should it be?
- Q & A time?
- Computer compatibility?



3. Common Mistakes



Writing EVERYTHING on the slide

Some people just feel better when they write every single word on the slide. It makes it easier to remember what they want to say. Unfortunately, this does not give the listeners a good feeling. Why should I listen to this person reading to me if I can read by myself? Besides, what is he or she saying, anyway? I'm busy reading the slide. Or maybe this is going to be so long that the listeners even decide that this is just too boring to deal with...

Forgetting to KISS: Keep It Short & Simple

- Rule of Six
 - Limit each bullet to 6 words
 - Limit bullets per slide to 6
- Remove extra, unnecessary words
- Use reduced grammar



Overusing Media!

Problems in Large Cities

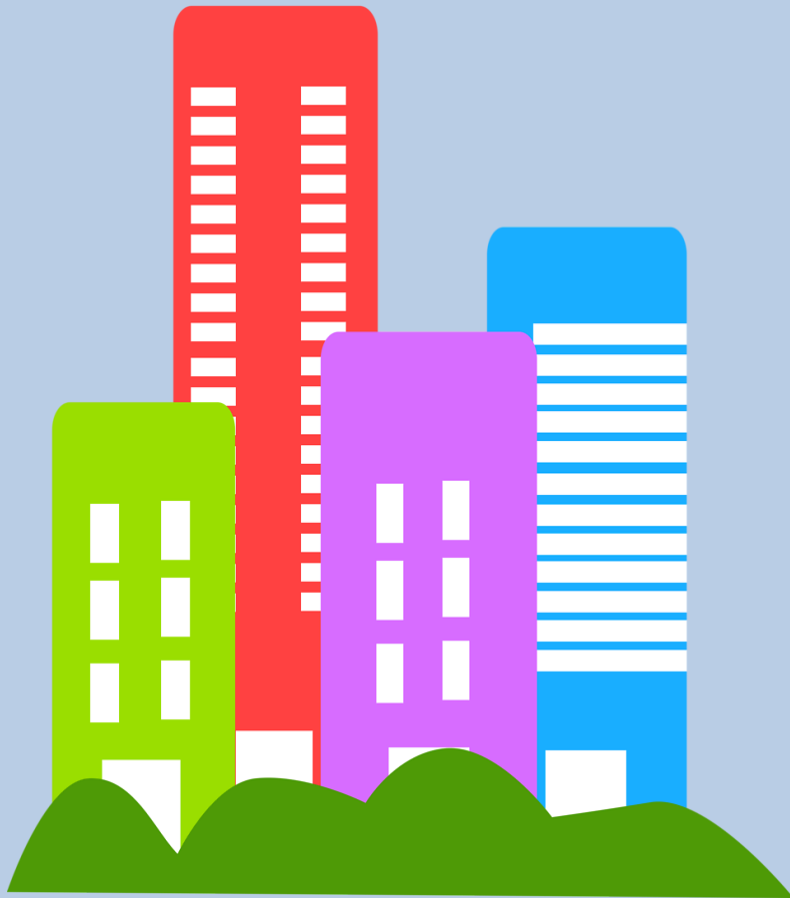


Cities all over the world are getting bigger as more and more people move from rural to urban sites, but that has created enormous problems with respect to environmental pollution and the general quality of life.

-Alan Dundes



Appropriate Use of Media



“Cities are getting bigger and that has created enormous problems with respect to environmental pollution and the general quality of life.”

-Alan Dundes

Overusing Formatting!

❑ Problems in Large Cities

- Crime

- Traffic

- Pollution

❖ Problems in Rural Areas

- ✓ Poverty

- ✓ Lack of Education

Appropriate Use of Formatting

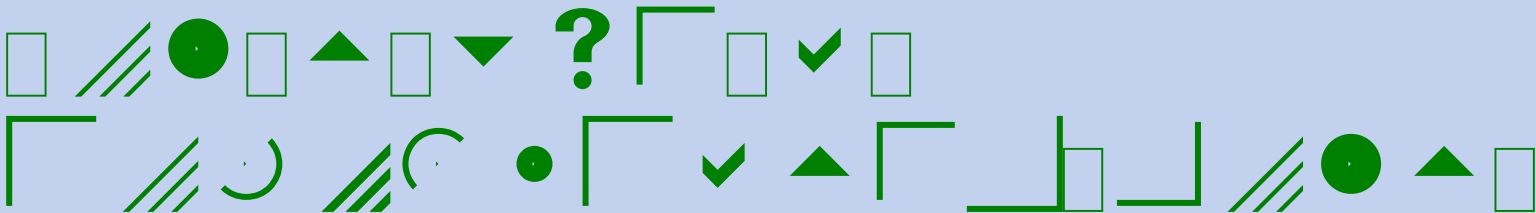
■ Problems in Large Cities

- Crime
- Traffic
- Pollution

■ Problems in Rural Areas

- Poverty
- Lack of Education

Overdoing Fonts and Colors!

- If you use a small font, your audience won't be able to read what you have written
- CAPITALIZE ONLY WHEN NECESSARY.
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU ARE SCREAMING!!!!
- 
- Don't use font color that does not contrast with the background color
- Use consistent colors throughout the presentation

Using Too Many Images!



Applying a Distracting Background

- **Avoid backgrounds that are distracting or make reading difficult**

- **Always be consistent with the backgrounds that you use**

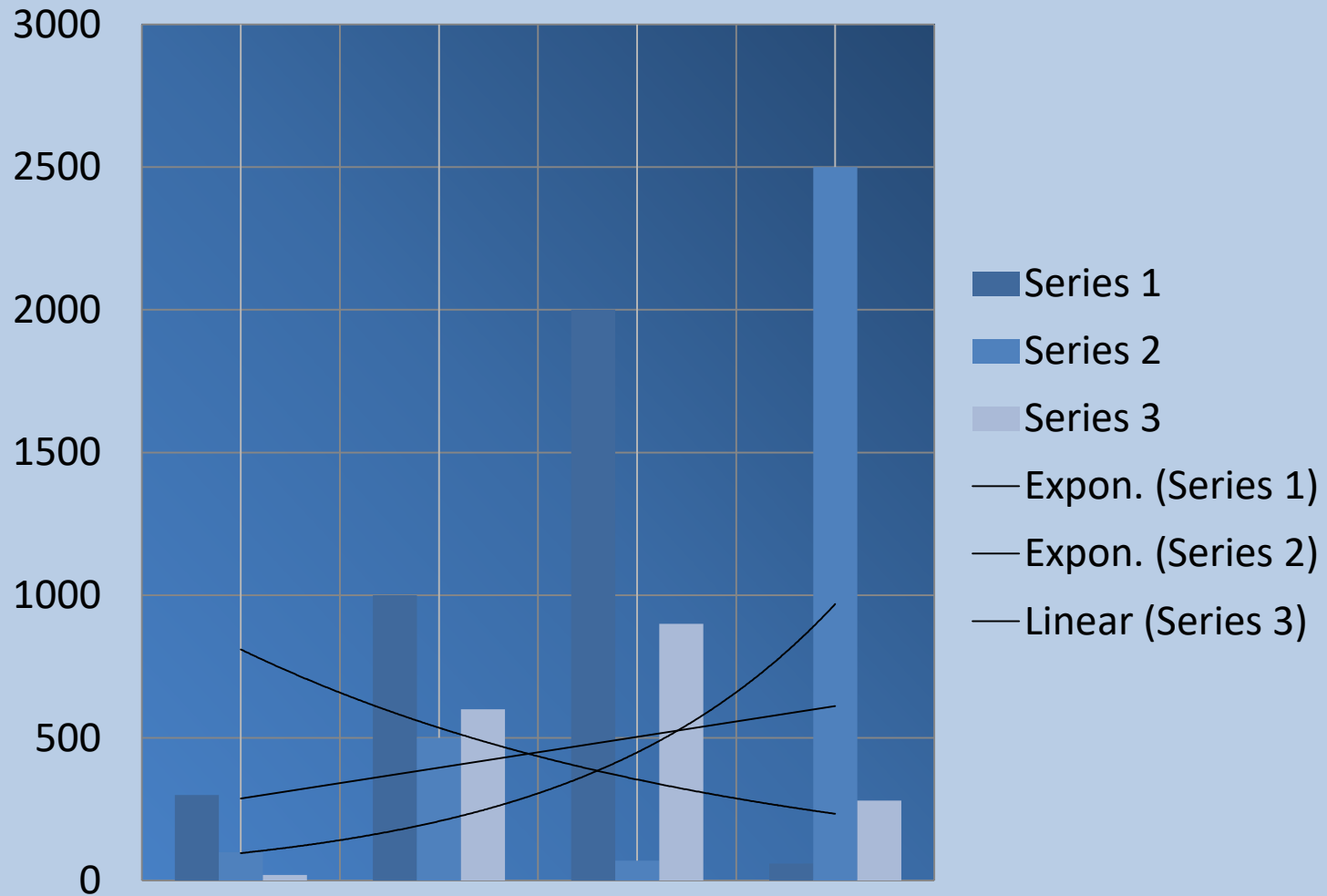
4. Tips for Great PowerPoints

A+

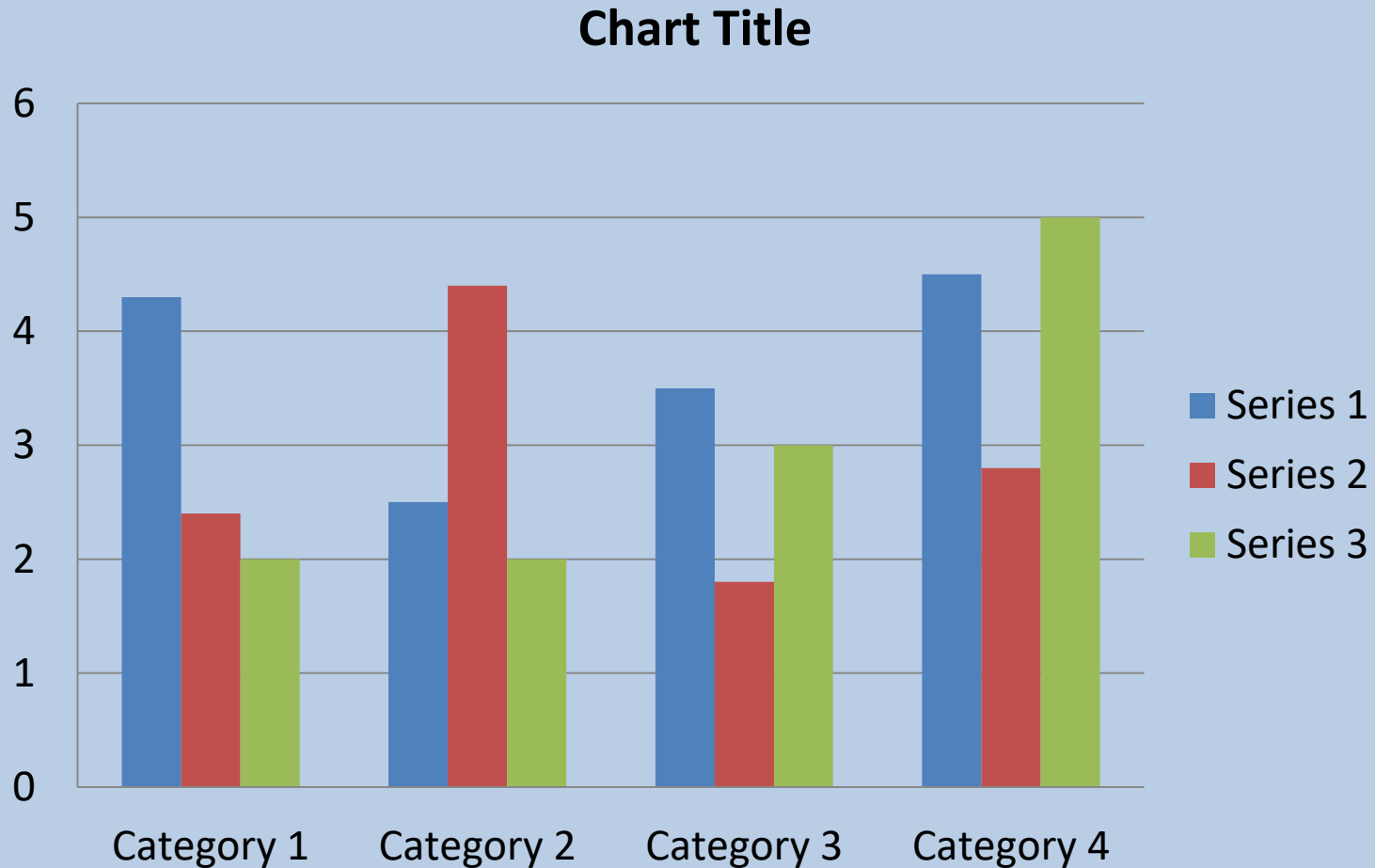
Use Graphs Carefully

- Always title your graphs
- Avoid unnecessary gridlines
- Use clear labels
- Use color/shading carefully

Example of a Hard-to-Read Graph



Example of a Easy-to-Read Graph



Use Visuals



But unrelated images are distracting.



Keep Wording Simple

- Use key words
- Avoid idioms
 - May not be understood by audience

Check Your Spelling and Grammar

- These mistakes can be very distracting.
- These mistakes make a bad impression.
- **Solutions**
 - Use PPT Spell Check
 - Write your text in Word, check, and copy/paste to PPT
 - Ask native speaker to proofread

Use Parallel Grammar

Not Parallel

Intelligent Transport Systems often include

- Secure logins
- Need expert staff
- To budget a large amount of money

Parallel

Intelligent Transport Systems often include

- Secure logins
- Expert staff
- A large budget

Use Parallel Formatting

Content

- Titles
- Headings
- Bullet points
- Numbering

Visual

- Colors
- Size
- Animation
- Background
- Fonts

Check PPT Slides in the Presentation Room

- Test slide background themes for contrast
- Test with lights on and off
- Test colors with window curtains open and closed



Bring Presentation Back-Up

- Save your PPT on your USB
- Email your PPT to yourself
- Print four slides to a page and photocopies
- Handouts can stand alone if needed



Final Thoughts

Set a Professional Tone with Formatting and Design

- Avoid unnecessary or childish images
- Model the formatting of respected professionals
- Convey quality with mature design

Reference

Rutherford, A. J. (2001). *Basic Communication Skills for Technology*, Delhi, India. Pearson Education Asia.