

Guidelines for Making Visual Aids for Presentations

One of the most frequent complaints about medical educational presentations is that many speakers use slides that are difficult to read or that are too complicated or "busy". A simple rule of thumb: if you can hold the slide up at arm's length and read it easily, it's not too busy. The following guidelines come from expert speakers and educators who know how to get a point across without confusing an audience. You want your presentations to communicate as effectively as possible. Following the recommendations below will help you to accomplish this goal.

Guidelines for Legible Slides

- ! All word slides should have **no more than 7 lines** (including title) and each line should be **no longer than 27 characters** (including spaces).
- ! Each slide should be devoted to **one single concept**.
- ! Keep each slide **simple** and in **outline form**.
- ! Do **not** put text in all capitals--it's less readable that way.
- ! Be certain to break down complicated concepts into a **series** of simple slides.
- ! One **key** word is often more effective than a sentence.
- ! If you are using graphs, charts, or other non-verbal material, consider splitting the material into two or more graphs, or put complicated graphic material **in your handout** rather than a slide.
- ! Avoid using complicated tables as slides.
- ! Avoid using distracting backgrounds or colors that contrast poorly in slides.
- ! Make sure you **spell check** everything correctly in your slides. There's nothing quite like a spelling error in a medical presentation to make people doubt whether you really know what you're talking about!

A Good Presentation Slide Should Be:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional• Concise and to the point• Spelled correctly• Sharp and attractive• Easy to read