

# Effective PowerPoint Design

Peter Murdoch  
Learning and Teaching Support

Copyright © 2012 The University of Adelaide

## Principles of good presentation design

- **Develop and use a slide template**
  - provide a consistent look and feel to your presentation
- **Make sure the text is readable**
  - use large text that contrasts well with the background
  - use a minimum of different styles and fonts
- **The text should convey your key points simply**
- **Avoid the overuse of images and special effects**
  - only use them if they support your presentation
- **Respect for copyright and moral rights**

## Using a design template

- Create a common, unified look for all slides
  - build your own or select a pre-defined template
  - establish the basic layout for slide elements
  - set the basic font size for headings and text
- choose a design that suits your presentation
- choose a colour scheme that is high contrast
  - dark on light, or, light on dark – not like this
- some colour combinations are difficult for people with colour blindness

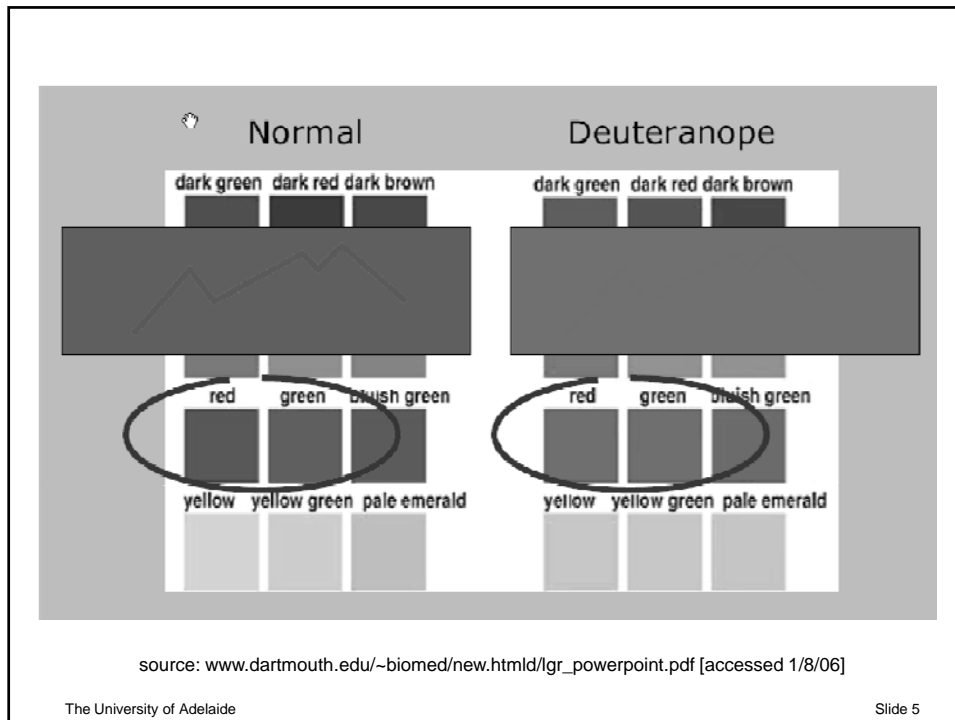
Yellow text on a white background is difficult to read.

But, if you put a darker color behind it, you can read it.

Bright colors with little contrast don't read well either.

Text reads better when the background color is high in contrast.

source: [ucce.ucdavis.edu/files/filelibrary/5401/9368.ppt](http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/files/filelibrary/5401/9368.ppt) [accessed 1/8/06]



## Tips for using text

- use fewer fonts, in larger sizes
  - preferably keep the font size to 18pt or above
  - san serif fonts are easier to read at smaller sizes
- limit the use of bold, italics and underlining
  - overuse can reduce their impact
- don't use fancy fonts – they are difficult to read
- limit the amount of text on a slide
  - the audience will read the slides and forget to listen to what you are saying

## 'Space' is not a dirty word

### HEADING

Intro intro intro intro intro  
intro intro intro intro intro

### Subheading

Text text text text text text  
text text text text text text

### Subheading

Text text text text text text  
text text text text text text

### HEADING

*Intro intro intro intro intro  
intro intro intro intro intro*

### Subheading

Text text text text text  
text text text text text

### Subheading

Text text text text text  
text text text text text

## ALL CAPS was OK for the Romans



Photo from Stock.XCHNG  
www.sxc.hu

USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS FOR A LARGE BLOCK OF TEXT MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO READ. IT DOES NOT ALLOW FOR PATTERN RECOGNITION WHICH IS AIDED BY THE USE OF LOWER-CASE LETTERS.

### USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS

Using all capital letters for a large block of text makes it difficult to read. It does not allow for pattern recognition which is aided by the use of lower-case letters.

## Bold is not always beautiful

Whole paragraphs set in bold type do not necessarily provide the right amount of emphasis to bring to the reader's attention the importance of the point being made.

**MAIN HEADING**  
**Subheading 1**  
**Subheading 2**  
*Subheading 3*

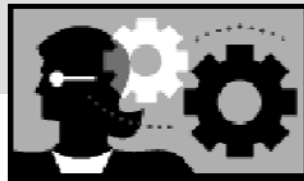
Whole paragraphs set in bold type do not necessarily provide the right amount of **emphasis** to bring to the reader's attention the **importance** of the point being made.

**Main Heading**  
SUBHEADING 1  
**Subheading 2**  
SUBHEADING 3

## Using images

- use photos and illustrations to enhance your presentation content
- use sparingly - avoid image clutter
  - try not to use more than two images per slide
- use charts and graphs if appropriate
  - to present statistical or tabular information
- always use a copy of your original and resize it to suit the size needed on your presentation
  - save the images at 72 or 96 dpi: screen resolution

## Using special effects



- **only use animations if they support your presentation**
  - inappropriate animations draw attention away from the text on the slide and the speaker
- **only use audio and video clips if they support your presentation**
- **avoid using too many slide transition effects**
  - keep to one or two slide effects in your presentation

Animation from Microsoft Office Online, Clip Art & Media, office.microsoft.com/en-au/clipart/, 9/2/08.

## Respect copyright and moral rights

- **If you have used someone else's ideas or text or included any copyright materials**
  - always remember to cite the original source of any text, pictures or other items which are not your own
  - If you have a lot of references put them on an extra slide or provide them as a handout
- **Moral rights of authors/creators**
  - right of attribution
  - right against false attribution
  - right of integrity