

Cochise College Center for Lifelong Learning

PowerPoint: Fundamentals with AI

For Lifelong Learners

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Introduction

Welcome to **PowerPoint: Fundamentals with AI**.¹ No previous experience is required — PowerPoint is the world's most popular presentation tool, and it is more approachable than it looks. In this class you will build a real slide presentation from scratch, learn to make it look professional, and then discover how Google Gemini can help you figure out what to say in the first place.

The class runs in three parts. The first two hours cover the PowerPoint skills you need to create, format, and present a slide deck. The third hour introduces Google Gemini as a creative partner that helps you plan and write presentation content from scratch.

Learning Goals

By the end of this class, you will:

- Navigate the PowerPoint interface with confidence
- Create and organize slides with text, images, and transitions
- Apply a theme to give your presentation a polished, consistent look
- Use Google Gemini to outline a presentation and write slide content
- Ask Gemini to refine and tighten text you have already written

What You Need

- Computer with Microsoft PowerPoint installed
- USB drive with the student files (provided by instructor)
- A Gmail account — you will log into Google Gemini in Module 3

A Note on Versions

This handout was written using Microsoft 365. The classroom computers run Office 2019. Both versions include the same core PowerPoint features, so every skill in this class works the same way in either one. You may notice small cosmetic differences — a ribbon icon in a slightly different spot, a menu item worded a bit differently, or a dialog box that looks a little different from what is described here. If a step does not match exactly what you see on

¹Written by George Self with assistance from Claude and Gemini. It was formatted with $\text{\LaTeX}$.

screen, look for something with a similar name nearby — the feature is there.

Module 1: Building Your First Slide Deck

In this module you will open PowerPoint for the first time, learn your way around the interface, and build a three-slide presentation. The goal is to get comfortable with the basics before we add any visual polish.

Activity 1.1: Open PowerPoint and Tour the Interface

⚙️ Getting Started

1. Click in the Windows search bar at the bottom of the screen
2. Type **PowerPoint** and click the **PowerPoint App** result
3. Click **Blank Presentation**
4. Click File → Save As → Browse
5. Navigate to the *Fundamentals* folder on your USB drive and save the file as **My First Presentation**

🔍 Identify the Key Parts of the Screen

1. Locate the **Ribbon** — the toolbar area across the top with tabs such as Home, Insert, Design, and Transitions
2. Find the **Slides pane** on the left — thumbnail images of each slide in your presentation
3. Identify the **Editing area** in the center — this is where you work on the selected slide
4. Find the **Notes pane** at the bottom — click View → Show → Notes if it is not visible

The Notes Pane

The Notes pane is invisible to your audience. Use it to jot down things you want to say while presenting, reminders, or extra detail that does not belong on the slide itself. It is one of PowerPoint's most useful features for new presenters.

Activity 1.2: Build Three Slides

 Slide 1: Title Slide

1. On the first slide, click the *Click to add title* box and type **My First Presentation**
2. Click the *Click to add subtitle* box and type your name
3. Save with **[Ctrl] + [S]**

 Slide 2: A Content Slide

1. Click Home → Slides → New Slide
2. Click the title box and type **Three Things I Enjoy**
3. Click the content box and type three things you enjoy, pressing **[Enter]** after each one
4. In the *Click to add notes* area at the bottom, type a brief reminder:
Mention why these are important to me

 Slide 3: Closing Slide

1. Click Home → Slides → New Slide
2. Click Home → Slides → Layout → Blank
3. Click Insert → Text → Text Box
4. Draw a text box in the center of the slide and type **Thank You!**
5. Select the text, then use Home → Font → Font Size to increase the font to **54**
6. Save the presentation

Activity 1.3: Rearrange and Delete Slides

 Managing the Slides Pane

1. Click Home → Slides → New Slide to add a fourth slide
2. Click Home → Slides → Layout → Title Only
3. Type **Delete Me** as the title of this fourth slide

4. In the Slides pane, click and drag **Slide 4** above **Slide 2**
5. Right-click **Slide 2** in the Slides pane (which now says Delete Me) and choose **Delete Slide**
6. Save the presentation

Slides Pane Tips

- Drag thumbnails in the Slides pane to reorder slides at any time
- Right-click any thumbnail for a menu of common slide actions
- **[Ctrl] + [Z]** undoes any accidental change

Activity 1.4: Apply a Theme

Give the Presentation a Consistent Look

1. Click the Design tab
2. Browse the *Themes* gallery and hover over several themes to preview them on your slides
3. Click a theme you like to apply it to all slides
4. Browse the *Variants* section on the right side of the Design tab and try a different color variation
5. Click **Slide 1** in the Slides pane and confirm the theme looks good on the title slide
6. Save the presentation

Themes

A theme instantly coordinates colors, fonts, and backgrounds across every slide. Applying one is the single fastest way to make a presentation look professional. You can change the theme at any time without losing your content.

Module 1 Checklist

1. Open PowerPoint, create a blank presentation, and save it
2. Identify the Ribbon, Slides pane, Editing area, and Notes pane
3. Create three slides with title, content, and closing layouts
4. Add presenter notes to a slide
5. Reorder and delete slides in the Slides pane
6. Apply a theme and color variant to the whole presentation

Module 2: Images, Transitions, and Presenting

Your presentation has content and a theme. In this module you will add an image to make it more visual, apply transitions between slides, and then run the full slideshow just as an audience would see it.

Activity 2.1: Insert and Format an Image

Add a Photo to Slide 2

1. Click **Slide 2** in the Slides pane
2. Click Insert → Images → Pictures → This Device
3. Navigate to the *Fundamentals* folder and select **learner_at_laptop.jpg**
4. Click **Insert**

Resize and Position the Image

1. Click the image to select it — drag handles appear around the edges
2. Click Picture Format → Size → Width and type **3.5** then press **[Enter]**
3. Drag the image to the right side of the slide so it sits beside the bullet points without covering them

Apply a Picture Style

1. With the image still selected, click Picture Format → Picture Styles
2. Hover over several styles to preview them

3. Click one you like to apply it
4. Save the presentation

Image Tips

- Always drag a corner handle (not a side handle) to resize without distorting the image
- Images should support your message, not compete with your text
- If text becomes hard to read, try moving the image or reducing its size

Activity 2.2: Add Slide Transitions

→ Create Smooth Movement Between Slides

1. Click **Slide 2** in the Slides pane
2. Click the **Transitions** tab
3. Click through several transitions in the gallery — each click previews and applies it to Slide 2, so keep clicking until you find one you like
4. Click **Slide 3** and apply a different transition
5. In the *Timing* section of the Transitions tab, notice the *Duration* setting — lower values make the transition faster
6. Save the presentation

Transition Tips

Use subtle transitions for professional presentations. Fancy spinning or bouncing effects can distract your audience from your message. The *Fade* and *Push* transitions look clean in almost any situation.

Activity 2.3: Run the Slideshow

See Your Presentation as Your Audience Will

1. Click the **Slide Show** tab
2. Click **From Beginning**
3. Click the mouse or press the spacebar to advance through each slide
4. Notice the transitions you applied between slides
5. Press **[Esc]** to end the slideshow early, or let it run to the end
6. After exiting the slideshow, click **Slide 2** and look at the Notes pane to confirm your presenter note is still there
7. Save and close the presentation

Presenter View

When connected to a projector, you can use *Presenter View* to see your notes and the next slide on your own screen while the audience sees only the current slide. Click **Slide Show** → **Monitors** → **Use Presenter View** to enable it.

Module 2 Checklist

1. Insert a photo from the Fundamentals folder
2. Resize and position an image without distorting it
3. Apply a Picture Style to enhance the image's appearance
4. Add transitions to individual slides
5. Run the slideshow from beginning to end
6. Understand how Presenter View separates your notes from the audience view

Module 3: Building a Presentation with Google Gemini

The hardest part of any presentation is not the software. It is figuring out what to say. In this module you will ask Google Gemini to build an entire presentation for you on a topic of your choice, review it and ask for changes right there in the chat, then

download it and give it a final polish in PowerPoint — often cutting your preparation time to a fraction of building from scratch.

Choose Your Topic

Pick any topic you know or care about. If nothing comes to mind, here are three suggestions:

- **A place I would like to visit** — describe the location, why it appeals to you, and what you would do there
- **My favorite hobby or pastime** — explain what it is, how you got started, and why you enjoy it
- **Something I know a lot about** — share your expertise on any subject, from gardening to cooking to local history

Activity 3.1: Ask Gemini to Build Your Presentation

🗨️ Let AI Create the Whole Deck

1. Open a private browsing window — this keeps you signed out after class so the next student doesn't see your account:

*In Firefox: click the menu button (three lines, top right), then choose **New Private Window***

*In Chrome: click the menu button (three dots, top right), then choose **New Incognito Window***

2. In the private window, go to <https://gemini.google.com>
3. Sign in with your Gmail account
4. Click in the Gemini chat box
5. Type the following prompt, replacing *[your topic]* with your chosen topic, and press **[Enter]**:

I need to create a 5-slide PowerPoint presentation about [your topic]. Can you create that presentation for me to download?

6. Wait while Gemini builds the presentation
7. Click the **Open** button that appears to open the deck for review

How to Write a Good Prompt

Gemini responds to the detail you give it. If your topic is broad, add more context: *"My audience is older adults who may not be familiar with this topic"* or *"Keep the language simple and friendly."* Then ask again.

Activity 3.2: Review and Refine the Deck in Gemini

☰ Fix Anything Before You Download

1. Scroll through the slides Gemini generated and read each one carefully
2. Decide whether anything needs to change — a title, a bullet point, a fact, or the tone
3. In the Gemini chat box, describe the change you want, for example:

Please shorten the bullet points on slide 3 to no more than ten words each.

4. Watch the deck update in the chat and check that the change looks right
5. Repeat with additional requests until you are happy with every slide

Activity 3.3: Download the Presentation

⬇️ Get the File onto Your USB Drive

1. Click the **Export** button on the slide deck in Gemini's response
2. Choose the **PowerPoint (.pptx)** option
3. After the download is ready, click the Windows search bar, type **File Explorer**, and open it
4. Click *Downloads* in the left sidebar and find the file you just downloaded
5. Right-click the file and choose **Cut**
6. Navigate to the *Fundamentals* folder on your USB drive, right-click an empty area, and choose **Paste**

Activity 3.4: Tweak the Presentation in PowerPoint

Polish the AI-Built Deck with What You Learned

1. Open the presentation file from the Fundamentals folder in PowerPoint
2. Click the Design tab and apply a theme you like, using the same steps from Module 1
3. Click the Transitions tab and apply a transition to Slide One
4. Click Transitions → Timing → Apply to All
5. Save the presentation
6. Run the slideshow from beginning to end to see your finished AI-assisted presentation

Module 3 Checklist

1. Sign in to Gemini and ask it to build a complete slide presentation
2. Review the AI-generated slides and ask Gemini for changes
3. Download the finished presentation and move it to the Fundamentals folder
4. Apply a theme, image, and transition to polish the downloaded presentation
5. Save and run the finished presentation

What AI Does Well Here

Gemini is especially useful for the blank-page problem: when you know your topic but are not sure how to structure, write, or design a full presentation. Once Gemini gives you a complete first draft, you are free to review it, ask for changes, and then polish it in PowerPoint. Think of it as a finished draft that you make your own.

Final Words

Congratulations on completing PowerPoint: Fundamentals with AI! You have built two presentations today: one by hand to learn the tools, and one with Gemini as a creative partner. Those two skills together are more powerful than either one alone.

PowerPoint handles the how of presenting. Gemini helps with the what. Between them, you have everything you need to create a clear, polished presentation on any topic you care about.

Ideas for Practice

- A family history slide deck to share at a reunion
- A presentation about your neighborhood or town for a community meeting
- A simple photo slideshow with captions for a special occasion
- A summary of a book, trip, or project you want to share with friends

Ask Gemini to help you outline any of these, then build them in PowerPoint.