

OBJECTIVE OF THE HANDOUT

This handout will help you:

1. Identify the most common problems in technical PowerPoint presentations.
2. Construct clear, message-based presentations.

TECHNICAL EXPLANATION OF TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS

The purpose of technical presentations is to either **inform** about certain technical knowledge, or to **persuade** regarding a certain idea or hypothesis. The **audience** could thus be technical or not.

Technical presentations usually suffer from:

- Too much information and words
- Cluttered organization that leaves the audience confused as to what order to read
- Small and unreadable text

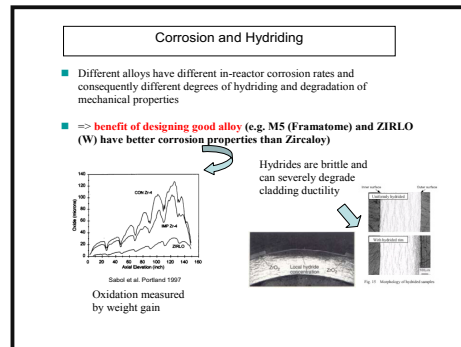
Examples:

Functional Decomposition

Talkie Board

- Card Identification:
 - Identify specific cards.
 - Identify when cards placed or removed.
- Mode Selection:
 - Change between record/play, put on/take off, power on/off.
- Sound System:
 - Record/play messages.
 - Access messages dynamically.
- User Interface
 - Present cards in viewable manner.
 - Controls accessible to teacher, cards to student.

EPICS / PURDUE Glass-AT AMD



Step 1: Include one message per slide (rather than one topic leading to many messages per slide):

Results show that green roofs are extremely effective in diminishing the urban heat island effect.

Chicago City Hall, ILL

Step 1: write a sentence headline that states the main message of the slide

Step 2: find or create visual evidence that supports the sentence headline

Step 2: When it is not possible to support the main message with visual evidence, use design principles strategically, such as highlights/ contrast, and limit the number of items to 6 or less items per slide.



Remember the **design principles** that will **cognitively** and **psychologically** optimize your PowerPoint presentations:

Build your talks around **messages**
 Emphasize **one message** per slide
 Support messages with **visuals**
 Experiment with **size** and **contrast**
 Limit the **number of objects** on each slide

Snow	Sunshine	Rain	Hail
44	51.6	52.8	92.9
30.2	76.1	103.2	102
129	91.8	73.8	75.5
41.7	43.2	106.9	99.1
9.8	112	97	98

TAKEAWAYS

- Effective technical presentations are built on messages, not topics.
- Each slide should communicate one message that is supported by visual evidence.
- If no visuals are available, use bullet lists strategically considering design elements such as contrast and number of elements on the slide (limit to 6).

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS

Use the Assertion-Evidence approach to create message-based slides that are supported by visual evidence: