

Chapter 12

Presentation Skills

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12.1 Introduction

The ability to present facts and ideas in both oral presentation of written material using appropriate information technologies and skill in today's information and digital age. Among the numerous instances where such skills are needed are: presenting an assignment report in class in one of your courses; defending your final year project work before a panel of examiners, presenting yourself and resume during a job interview, defending a business idea and plan before a bank loan officer, and so on. This chapter aims to develop and improve your knowledge and skills in presenting written up ideas in the above and other settings.

12.2 What is a presentation?

Presentation is the practice of explaining the content of a topic to an audience, who may be experts on a topic or news learners of a topic. A presentation is a means of communication which can be adapted to various speaking situations, such as talking to a group, addressing a meeting, or briefing a team. A presentation usually involves orally explaining facts and ideas on a topic to an audience, often complemented with the presentation or display of previously prepared information written on paper or displayed with computer to support or illustrate the explanations.

A presentation requires properly or optimally interrelating at least the following seven elements or components, each must be adequately considered and planned for in order to ensure a successful presentation:

(a) Objectives

- (b) Facts and ideas
- (c) Audience
- (d) Presenter
- (e) Venue
- (f) Technology
- (g) Media

(a) *Objectives*: This is the aim of a presentation, consisting of one or more envisaged impact or consequences of the presentation. Every presenter wants her presentation to have a great impact on the audience, thereby creating value of the audience and/or the presenter. Examples of presentation objectives are: most of the students learning a presented topic very well; a lecturer getting high ability-to-teach ratings among students; a student receiving very high mark for his defence of the final year project; most farmers making use of the findings of a research after listening to a presentation by the researcher; a bank approving a loan for an entrepreneur to expand a his business.

(b) *Facts and ideas to be presented*: Facts are pieces of information that are true or proven true. Ideas are propositions that may or may not have been prove to be true. Facts concerning the topic of a presentation can be obtained from authentic reference sources such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, manuals, maps, government gazettes, published government or company statistics or documents, published research results in quality journals and books, etc. The rule here is that you must be sure about the truthfulness of a piece of information before it can be considered to be a fact instead of opinion. Ideas are opinions, propositions or conclusions by you or other people that have not been verified to be true or not by research or other means. The more widely you read on a topic, the more you come across various ideas some of which you might want to include in your presentation. Note that information about the authors and sources of facts, as well as ideas by others that you consider important must be recorded cited in the documents prepared for the presentation. A few of them should also be referred to while speaking in the presentation. Getting appropriate facts and ideas for a presentation takes substantial time. For instance a teacher spends weeks studying and learning about a new topic before writing out the lesson notes and

assignment and test questions, and compiling the appropriate reading material for her students. The teacher also spends some hours rehearsing a particular lesson note before stepping in the classroom to deliver it. A researcher spends months investigating a topic before delivering a short 30-minute presentation on the research. An entrepreneur often spends months or years collecting information before putting together a plan for a new business to be defended in support of a bank loan application.

- (c) *Audience:* This is the group of people to which the presentation is to be made. The audience may be students, panel of assessors of students' projects, a job interview panel, a bank loan application assessment officer, or a large number of people in an auditorium. It is very important to know the expected size and characteristics of the audience so that all the remaining five elements of the presentation can be prepared for to suit the audience. The nature and characteristics of the audience usually influence the types of objectives to be aimed for, and the facts and ideas that would be appropriate for the audience.
- (d) *Presenter:* The person who is going to present the facts, ideas and materials to an audience. The presenter may be a student, a teacher or lecturer, or a company executive. A presenter must prepare very well for each and every presentation in terms of knowledge of facts and ideas on the topic generally so that he can confidently answer questions that may be asked on the topic that he might not have covered in the presentation. The presenter must dress appropriately for the topic and audience, must be confident, and must be able to speak clearly and eloquently. All these skills demand continuous practice.
- (e) *Venue of the presentation:* This is the location where the presentation will take place. This may be a classroom, an auditorium, an office or a company board room. Ensure that the venue is well prepared to ensure convenience for all who will be at the presentation. Also ensure that all the equipment or facilities that you will need or use during the presentation are in place, and test them out before the presentation takes place.
- (f) *Technology to be used:* This comprises all equipment and techniques to be used for editing, formatting and delivering the facts or ideas before and during the presentation. In the

olden days, presenters used paper and handwriting techniques to complement their speaking abilities. Later, technologies that enabled the production and overhead projection of transparencies were also used. Nowadays, various modern information technology hardware and software are being used to facilitate the preparation of materials for and actual delivery of a presentation. Examples are PowerPoint presentation software, smart digital white boards, public address systems, overhead projection equipment, etc.

(g) *Media to be used:* These are the physical objects in which the facts and ideas will be written or recorded, formatted and embellished, or memorized. The media could be the presenter himself or herself, *and/or* paper, *and/or* computer media, *and/or* other media. Note that the use of '*and/or*' here means that any or all of the media types can be combined as appropriate for use in a particular presentation. Writing or recording involves organizing in the media various objects that represent the facts and ideas, such as written text, images, audio, video, etc. Formatting and embellishing involves using various means to improve how the objects are read, seen, heard or understood by the audience, such as using different appropriate font types and sizes and colour, fore and background colours, image types, clarity and sizes, audio and video types, clarity and length, etc. Memorization involves the presenter ensuring that he or she can readily speak about some of the facts and ideas from memory.

12.3 Key Presentation Activities

A presentation involves the following four main groups of activities, performed in sequence: planning and preparation, rehearsal, anticipating and answering questions, the actual presentation, evaluating the presentation.

12.3.1 Planning and preparing the preparation

Adequate preparation or planning is the fundamental secret of a successful presentation. This is because a person who does not plan or prepare for any activity is prepared to fail. Preparation means you must always must plan, prepare for, or get ready and effectively combine the seven elements of a

presentation explained in the preceding section: Also important to keep in mind is that preparation takes time and must be done systematically much within the time between knowing you need to deliver a presentation and the time you actually do it. Prepare everyday of that time by doing little of it every day. The following words of advice elaborate further some of the points presented under each of the seven elements explain above.

Target your Audience:

- Consider your audience carefully. You must know and plan your presentation strategies to suit the characteristics of the people you will be speaking to (e.g. colleagues, students, the public etc.) You must be able to reach them through your presentation. Else you might as well be presenting to the deaf and blind!
- Keep it simple - don't let the message be overwhelmed with technical jargons, which only suit specialized and expert audiences.
- Respect your audience – do not antagonize or fool around with them.
- Do not bore your audience with too much detail.
- If you sense that the audience is showing boredom, reduce the details, shift to the next sub-topic
- Use interesting stories, humour and variation in how you speak to keep the audience engaged.

Know your Facts/Ideas:

- Know your subject or topic very well so that you know what you are talking about.
- Keep effective control over the information you plan to or actually deliver to the audience.
- Answer all questions you are asked carefully, and say so if you cannot. Do not claim or pretend to know everything.

When speaking:

- Work on yourself to be an effective speaker. Some people are born with excellent speaking ability, but most can learn to do so with training and continuous

- practice. Ask any newscaster, radio talk show host, or preacher. .
- Choose and use the right words: what you say and how you say is very important, so state your point or position, explain your ideas, use examples.
 - Use short sentences, short words, active tenses.
 - Follow the acronym CLAP in the voice you use in speaking, i.e. let your voice be Clear, Loud, Assertive, and Pause regularly for listeners to digest what you have said.
 - Use effective body language: make confident eye contact with random members of the audience as you speak; move around if possible; use hand gestures; don't back the audience while speaking.

Use of Memory and Reminder aids:

- Use prompts, scripts and notes to remind you of points you need to cover during the presentation and when.
- Learn and use a script for formal presentation to large groups : small note cards or PowerPoint note page can be used;
- Underline key words that will best remind you what you want to say.

Presentation equipment, media and materials:

- If you plan to use equipment such as computer displays, software or sound equipment, make sure the equipment is in good working condition, and check the equipment out before the presentation begins to ensure that they do not disappoint you.
- You often would need to provide, display or project overhead some prepared material to complement your speech. Don't use written materials containing too much text.
- Enrich and liven up your material with images, graphs, tables and careful use of colour.
- You can make use of graphs instead of text or tables in representing facts and ideas.

PowerPoint slides:

- PowerPoint slides, if you use them, should be organized and presented in the sequence of topic of the presentation, table of content, followed by slides that provide the titles, labels or very short summaries of the facts and ideas being presented, then further slides for the conclusion, recommendations, etc.
- Each slide should have title for its content, and then the content itself bullets in the form of topic or subject labels with bullets.
- There should not be too many slides.

12.3.2 Rehearsing

This is another key strategy to successful presentation. You should note and implement the following strategies:

- Write down what you would say during the actual presentation, ensuring that you use short sentences and words, active tenses and avoid long sentences and big words.
- The rehearsal should mimic as much as possible how you want to actually deliver the presentation.
- Ensure you use CLAP when rehearsing (i.e. let your voice be Clear, Loud, Assertive, and Pause regularly, as you would in the actual presentation).
- Use your slides as an aid as you intend to do during the actual presentation. Don't read through every word on the slide.
- Practice in front of a mirror, time yourself and get it right.
- Give the talk to a friend, accept criticism and be ready to change.
- Rehearsal should be repeated as many times possible to get it right and give you adequate confidence.
- Don't memorize your rehearsal with the intent of remembering and off-loading it verbatim. If you do, forgetting some part of the memorized rehearsal would confuse you.
- You can use your cell phone cameras to record your rehearsals. This will help you spot and overcome any annoying mannerism you may have.

12.3.3 Anticipating and Answering Questions

This is another secret of successful presentation. The more widely you had read on your topic the more likely you will know about the various issues, perspectives and controversies on the topic and various related issues.

- Plan for possible questions that the audience might throw at you
- Think through reasonable answers to the possible questions beforehand
- Don't be intimidated, you know your subject, don't you?
- Break long questions into smaller units
- Stand over your data, and explain as much as you can
- Tell the truth if you don't know the answer to a question.

12.3.4 At the Presentation

- Think positively about the presentation and don't panic.
- As a person doing the presentation, be neat and tidy, dress well, smile.
- Eat a light meal on the day.
- Be on time.
- Check the hall and make sure everything is in order as you want it to give you confidence during presentation.
- Make sure the technology you will use are working properly.

12.3.5 Evaluating the Presentation

- Always make an effort to evaluate your presentation in order to build upon your strengths and eliminate your weaknesses.
- If the presentation is open to the public ask one of your friends or colleague them to record the presentation for you for later self-review.
- You can also ask a few of your friends or colleagues to assess you and send you an anonymous report on your presentation performance (for example, by word processing and sending the report to you anonymously)

- You can ask someone in the audience you never knew to assess you and post the report to you, in a self-addressed envelope you provide.
- Note that lack of questions after a presentation may suggest that no one was interested in or understood your presentation. This depends on the extent to which you were able to effectively gain and keep the interest of the audience during the presentation. So, you may deliberately leave out one or two very necessary details in your presentation to prompt some members of the audience to ask for further clarifications. However this should be done sparingly and with care, as it may seriously affect the perceived quality and success of the presentation.

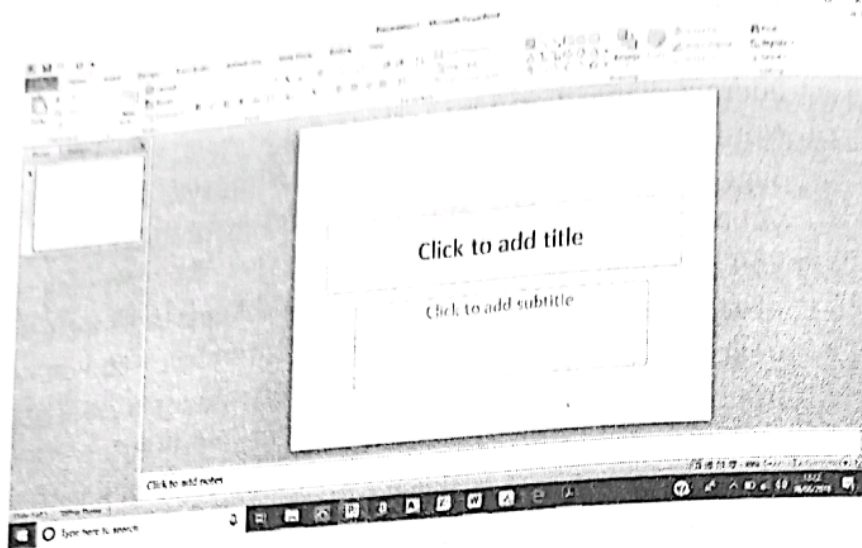
12.4 Using Microsoft PowerPoint

This section briefly introduces you to how to use the Microsoft PowerPoint software to create presentation slides which you can use to guide your presentation. PowerPoint is popular software for preparing slides for projection on a screen during a presentation. You will learn about how to:

- (a) Open and use Microsoft PowerPoint
- (b) Understand the interface of PowerPoint
- (c) Create a slide containing bullets and text
- (d) Import text, tables and images from other software such as MS Word, MS Excel, MS Paint into a slide
- (e) Display the slides during a presentation

12.4.1 Opening and Using PowerPoint

On a desktop or laptop computer, look for the icon for MS PowerPoint and double click it to open the software for use. The image shown below is displayed as the home screen of the software. You are now ready to use it to create your slides.



12.4.2 Understanding the PowerPoint Interface

The home screen of PowerPoint above provides a menu bar comprising tabs that enable you to access various functions you can use PowerPoint to do for you. The tabs are **File**, **Home**, **Insert**, **Design**, **Transitions**, **Animations**, **Slide Show**, **Review**, **View**.

Most of the functions grouped under **File**, **Insert**, **Review**, and **View** tabs are similar to those grouped under the same labels in other Microsoft software, such as Word, Excel, Access, Paint, etc. So they are not explained here, as you are expected to already know about them. The following other functions that can be accessed through tabs on the Menu bar are explained here:

Help: This function is under the **File** group of functions.

- **Help** provides information on how to use the different functions of the software.
- You will need to use **Help** frequently in order to learn more about how to do various interesting things with PowerPoint.

Home: This tab displays the screen shown in the screen above. It is on the Home screen that you will be working to create and edit your slides. The Home screen has five parts:

- **Menu/Ribbons** section. This is at the top, and provides menus and icons for accessing the various functions of PowerPoint.
- **Current slide** pane: This occupies most of the screen in the middle part, and in which is initially shown a white rectangular space (representing a blank slide for you to work on), and in which are displayed two text boxes captioned '*Click to add title*' and '*Click to add subtitle*'. This pane is where you create and edit your slides, one at a time. The top text box is for you to type in the title of the blank slide you are working on, while the bottom text box is for you to type in the content of the slide. You can make each text bigger or smaller, or move to it to a different location on the blank slide. You delete the text boxes or add other text boxes, tables or images as you like. You can also import or cut/paste text, images or tables from other files into any box or any empty part of the white space.
- **Slides/Outline pane.** This is on the left side of the screen. You can select the Slides tab at the top of the pane to display thumbnails of all the slides that you have created as part of the presentation file you opened or are creating, or you can select the *Outline* tab to see the titles of all the slides.
- **Click to add notes section:** This is white line space across the bottom of the **Current slide** pane, where you can add notes to remind you of what to remember or say in respect of the current slide. While your audience see everything on the slide when displayed, only the presenter sees the information in the **Click to add notes section**.
- **Status line** at the very bottom containing such information as 'Slide 1 of 1', 'Office themes', and a few other icons that provide ready access to some functions.

Design: This tab allows you to set up the slide page and its orientation, as well as select from several pre-defined slide background themes and styles, select and apply different fonts, colours and effects to text, etc.

Transitions: This tab allows you to access functions that allow you to select from different slide transitions. Slide transitions are motion effects that occur in **Slide Show** view when you

move from one slide to the next during the show. You can control the speed, add sound, and even customize the properties of transition effects.

Animations: This tab allows you to access functions that allow you to select from different movement or animation of objects included in each slide. The objects include text, images, shapes, tables, SmartArt graphics, etc. Animation enables you to give the objects visual effects, including how they appear (entrances), disappear (exits), changes in size or colour, and even movement.

Slide Show: This tab enables you to display the slides in your PowerPoint presentation file in an automated sequence controlled by your mouse clicks or key presses. You can use the Slide Show during the design of any or some of the slides to see how the slide would actually display when projected on a screen, so that you can modify it as necessary. You also use Slide Show during the actual presentation.

12.4.3 Creating your first slide containing bullets and text

Imagine you being in the audience at a presentation and seeing the following slide displayed on the project screen. You might be wondering how this slide was created including the animations of some separate objects on it that you might have seen. You are now going to learn how to use PowerPoint to create this slide as your first slide.

Means of Transportation

Human have developed diverse ways of moving themselves or objects from one place to another including from our planet earth to other planets.

Humans now use different types of vehicles to travel or move things:

- On LAND (e.g. car, bus, truck, motor bike, bicycle, using animals, on foot, etc.
- In the AIR (e.g. aircraft, spacecraft, drones)
- On WATER (e.g. canoe, boat, ship)
- In WATER (submarines).

Question: Can you think of other ways human travel or move things around?

Examples:

	School bus
	Aircraft
	Motor bike
	Car
	Race car
	Spacecraft

Before you begin, note carefully the following:

- (1) The slide was designed to contains the following six separate objects:
 - (a) Object 1: Text box with borders containing the slide title at the top.
 - (b) Object 2: Text box with no borders containing the paragraph that starts with "Humans have developed ..."
 - (c) Object 3: Text box with no borders containing the paragraph that starts with "Humans now use ..."
 - (d) Object 6: Text box containing the question at the bottom
 - (e) Object 4: Text box containing the label "Examples:"
 - (f) Object 5: Table containing examples and names of types of vehicles
- (2) The six objects on the slide were designed to appear not all at once, but in the logical sequence 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 4.
- (3) All objects move unto the slide in the same manner: each *Fly* quickly unto the slide from the bottom of the screen.

- (4) How to create and edit text boxes on a slide in PowerPoint is exactly the same as it is done using Microsoft Word.
- (5) How to create and edit a table on a slide in PowerPoint is exactly the same as it is done using Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel. You can even use Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel to create the table and then import or cut/paste into the slide.

Practical Assignment:

Now make a serious effort to re-create the above slide with to contain the six objects and with the objects designed to fly unto the slide from the bottom of the screen in the logical sequence 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 4, as explained above.

Hints: Use the following steps:

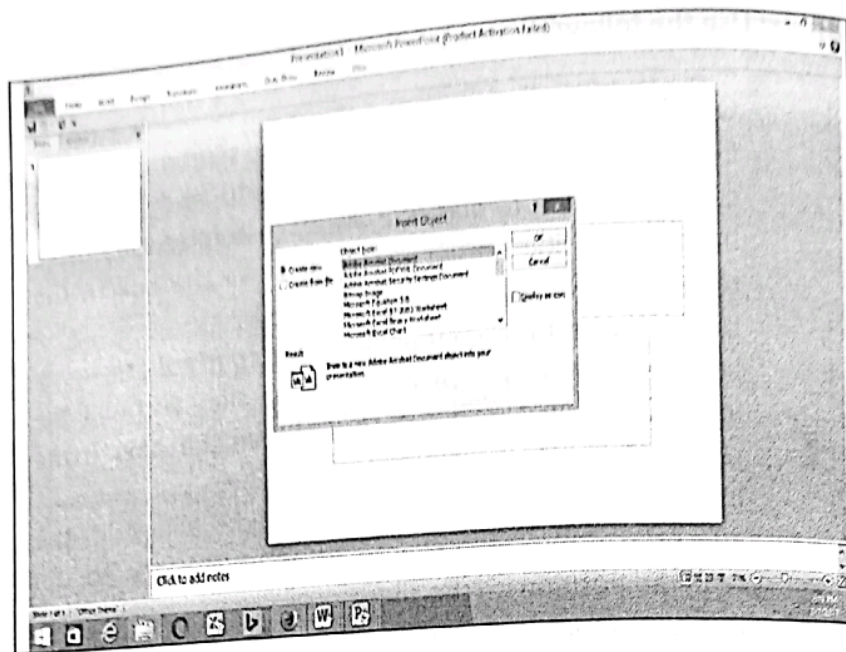
1. Open PowerPoint to display the Home screen.
2. Edit "Means of Transportation" into the text box containing *Click to add title*. Next, customize the box to have visible line borders. Finally, move the box to the top of the slide and centre it there.
3. Delete the text box containing *Click to add subtitle*.
4. Insert a new second text box on the slide and edit the information in Object 2 into it. Move the box to the required position on the slide.
5. Insert a third text box on the slide and edit the information in Object 3 into it. Move the box to the required position on the slide.
6. Insert a fourth text box on the slide and edit the information in Object 6 into it. Move the box to the required position on the slide.
7. Insert a fifth text box on the slide and edit the information in Object 4 into it. Move the box to the required position on the slide.
8. Use Microsoft Word to create a table that contains the images and text in Object 5. All the images are available in SmartArt graphics in Microsoft Word. You may need to resize the images to fit into the small cells of the table. Then cut and/paste the table from Word and paste on the slide. Move the table to the required position on the slide.
9. Save your work.

12.5 Importing objects into your slides

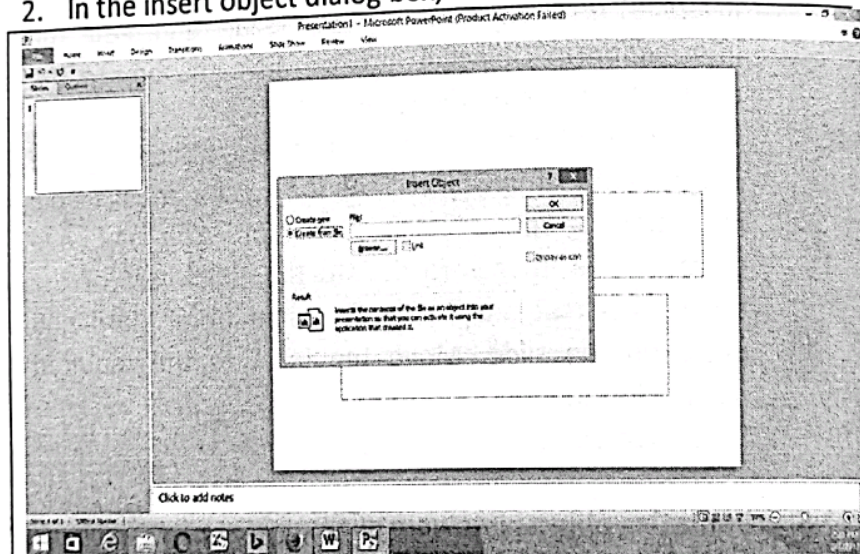
On the Home screen, right click the grey area of the Slides pane under the last displayed thumbnail image. Then select New Slide to begin to create a new slide.

A. How to import from Microsoft Excel into PowerPoint

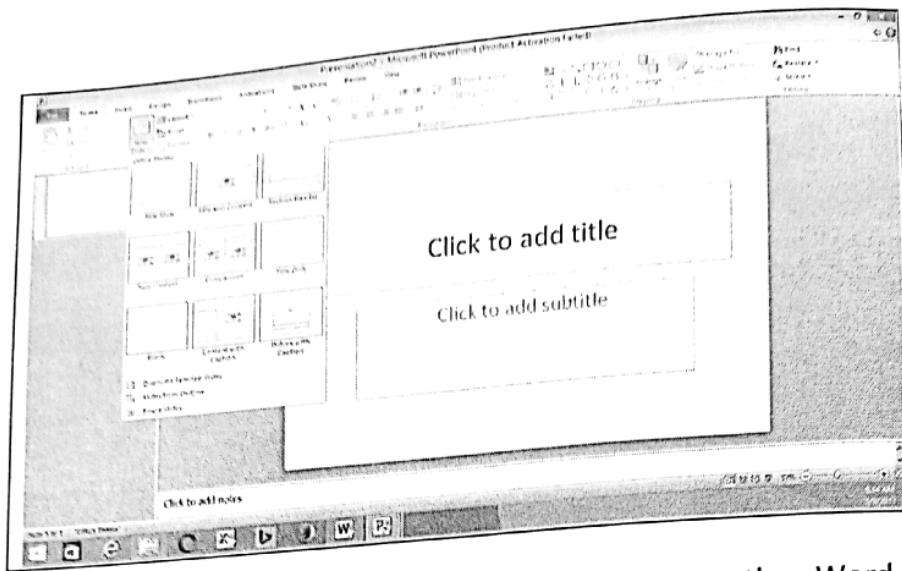
1. On the insert tab, in the text group click *Object*.



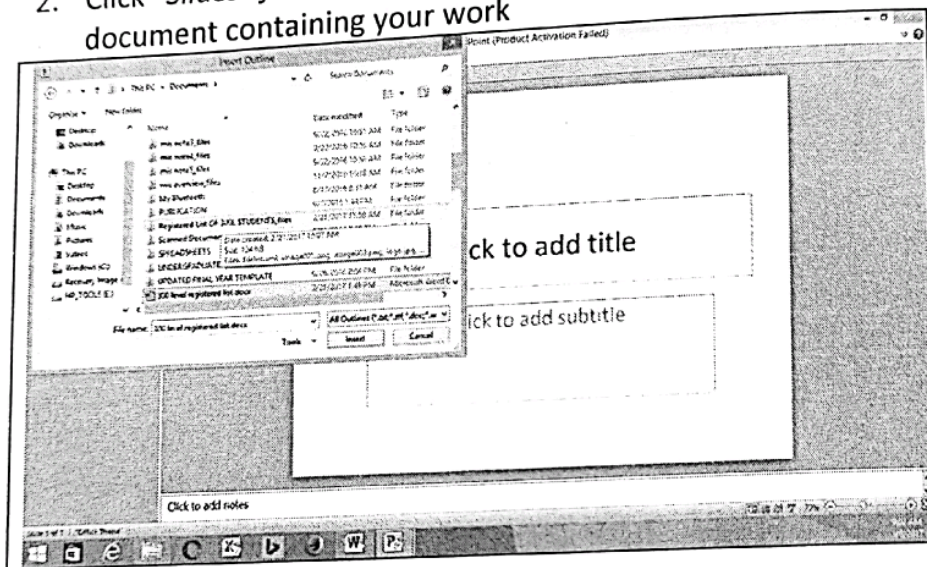
2. In the insert object dialog box, select *Create from file*.



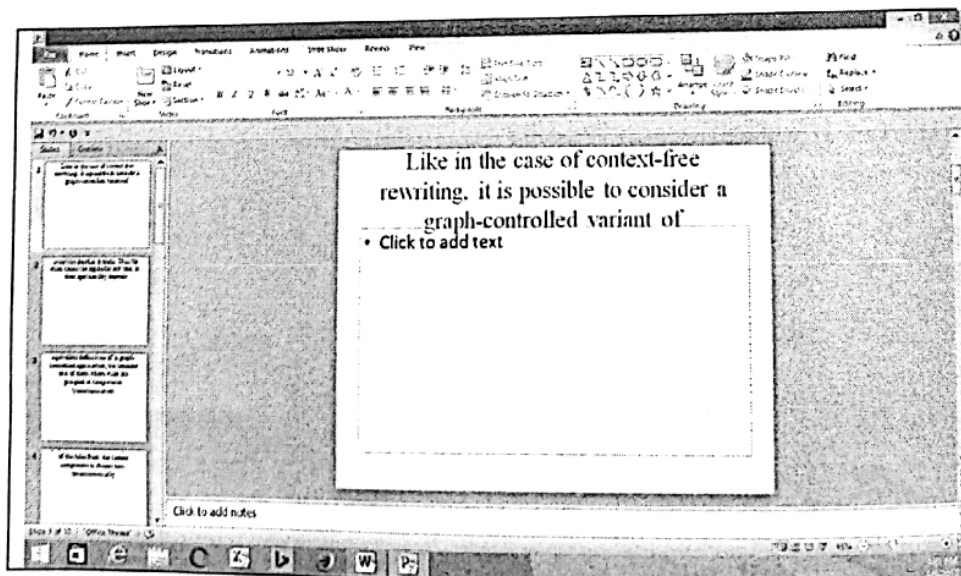
3. Click *Browse*, and in the browse dialog box, browse to and select the Excel workbook that contains the information that you want to insert on your slide.



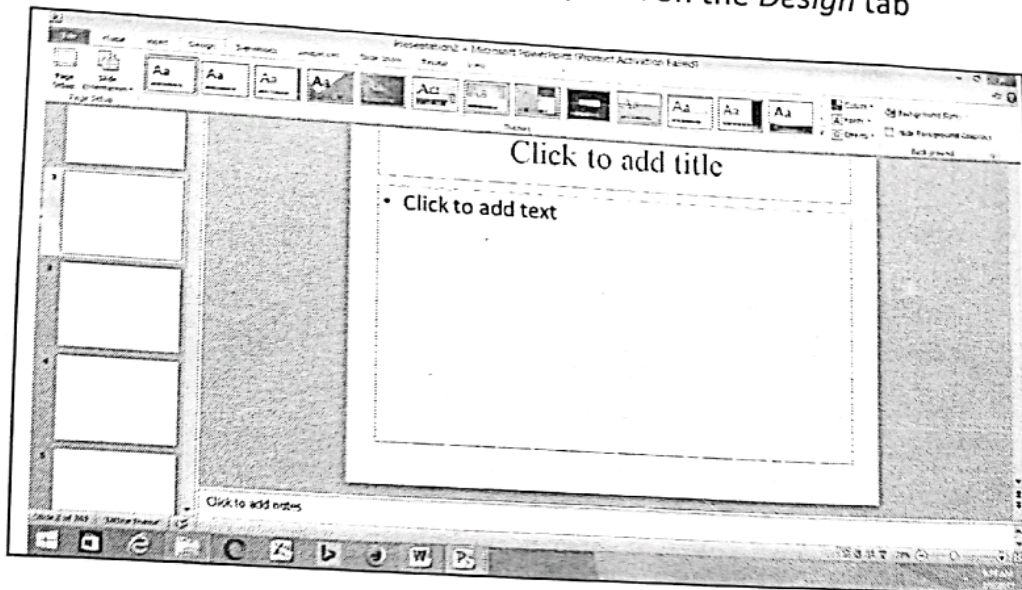
2. Click *Slides from Outline*, then navigate to the Word document containing your work



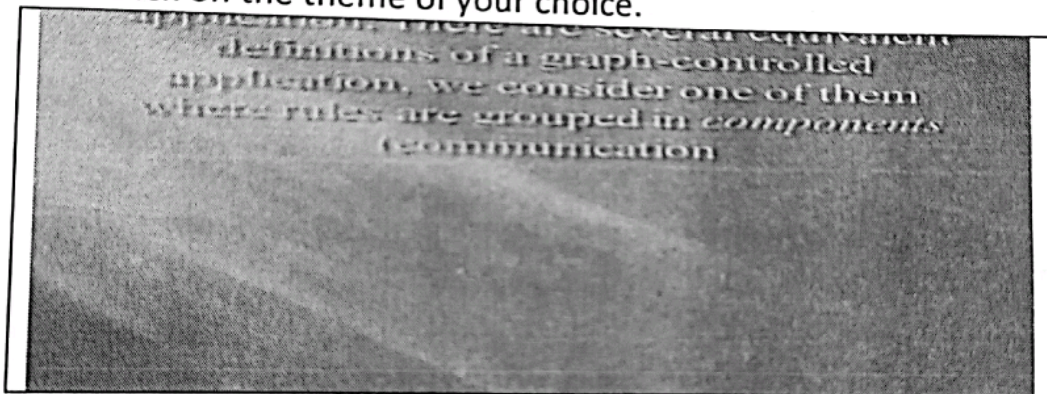
3. Click *Insert*.



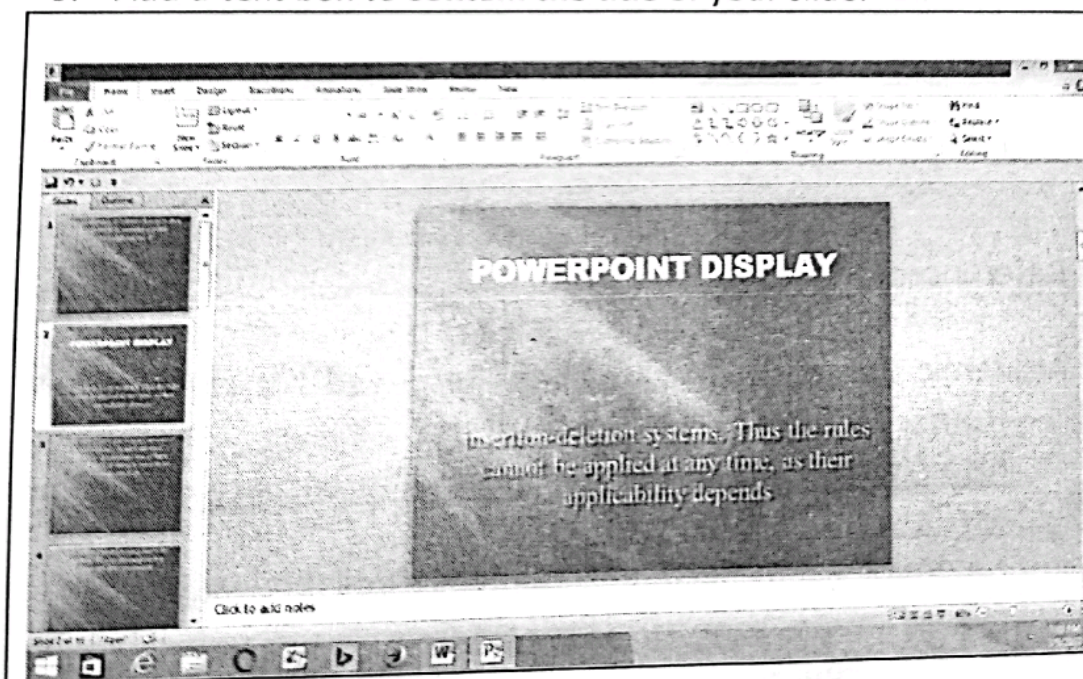
4. Next, you may want to beautify your slide using a background theme. To do this, click on the *Design* tab



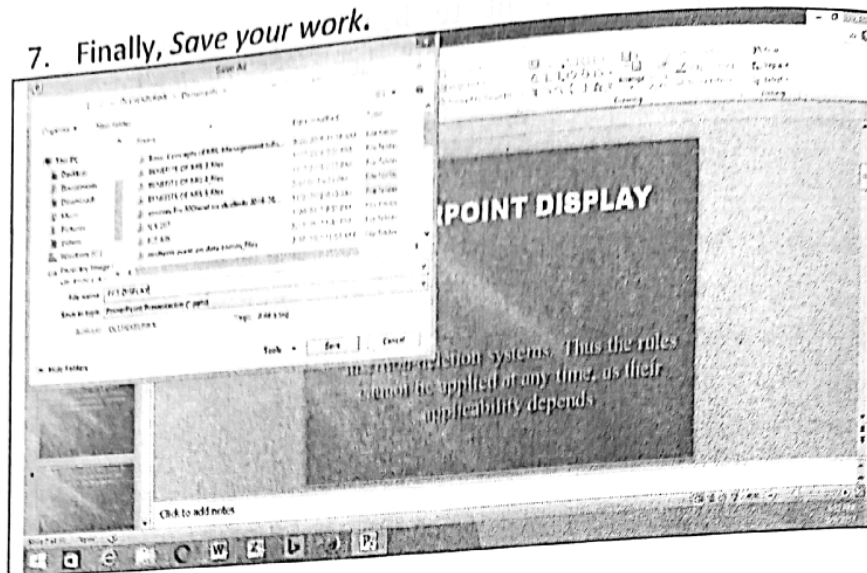
5. Click on the theme of your choice.



6. Add a text box to contain the title of your slide.



7. Finally, Save your work.



12.6 Showing slides during a presentation

To see how any of your created slides would display when displayed on the screen:

1. Click Slide Show on the Home menu,
2. Select *From beginning* (i.e. first slide) or *From Current Slide*.
3. Click the mouse each time you want a new slide to display, or you want the next object to appear on a slide.

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