October 2023

‘Death by bullet points’

## Introduction

Do you secretly wish that the next person hired in your organization does NOT know how to use PowerPoint? If you ever sat through a presentation of a100 slides in B&W—and with each bullet point read word for word—the answer might be yes.

Outlined below are recommendations on how to effectively use bullet points in presentations [paradoxically using bullet points to make the case for fewer bullet points].😊

## Recommendations

1. Keep the bullet points short.

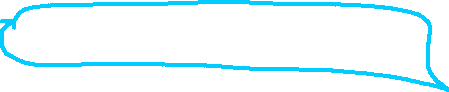
* Less is more.
* ‘6 by 6’ guideline.
* 6 bullets or less on slide.
* 6 words or less each bullet.
* ‘6 by 6’ is benchmark…not an edict.

1. Keep presentations short.

* 15 slides / 20 minutes.
* If longer, segment presentation into:
* Logical sections.
* And / or logical separate meetings.

1. Use visual elements and less text.

* Visuals help capture the audience’s attention.
* Visuals include graphs, diagrams, tables, pictures, & videos.



1. Avoid using bullet points on every slide.
2. Animate bullet points.

* Reveals information one bullet at a time.
* Focuses audience and presenter on the salient points.

Text

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

1. Use parallel structure and symmetry.

* Write bullet points in the same format.
* Start each with an action verb.
* Keep each to approximately the same length.
* Add periods to end of each bullet.

1. Do not read bullets aloud.

* Bullet points are headlines, not subtitles.
* More words on a slide:
* The more likely they are read.
* The less likely they are remembered.

1. Ask for help. For example:

* Colleagues to edit drafts.
* Agency communications team for templates.

## Summary

Presentations—and bullet points—are valuable.

Follow these recommendations and improve your presentations.

## References

[How to get the most out of a PPT presentation](https://insite.watech.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/How%20to%20get%20the%20most%20out%20of%20a%20PPT%20presentation_1.pptx)