

5 Tips for Using CTL's PowerPoint Template

1. **USE AN ACCESSIBLE TEMPLATE:** Start with the sample PowerPoint file or [the most recent templates provided by CTL](#). (Open the template and SAVE AS a new .PPTX file to begin.) **Always use the placeholders, layouts, and theme in the CTL template.** If you import slides from another presentation, make sure to reuse them *without their source formatting*. Otherwise, content won't be universally accessible.

2. **USE PLACEHOLDERS:** The placeholders are the boxes with dotted borders which will hold the slide's content. The template has placeholders in each slide layout. For each new slide, choose the layout whose placeholders best match the objects you want on that slide. All content must be edited using a placeholder on the applied slide layout. **Every slide must have a unique title* in a true "Title" placeholder as a minimum.** Its text, which can be hidden behind an image, if necessary, must be different from the title on every other slide. Beyond the title, only use the text, table, chart, and picture placeholders for the most universally accessible presentation.

The title and text are entered by clicking inside their placeholders and typing. Clicking on the icons for the "Insert Table" and "Insert Chart" placeholders will open the appropriate prompt that can be stepped through to enter the data and customize the object's design. Click on the "Pictures" placeholder icon to browse to a saved image file and insert it on a slide. **All flowcharts, "Smart Art", or other grouped objects should first be saved as pictures before using the image ("Pictures") placeholder.** And while it's best to create tables and charts via the table or chart placeholder so that the original data is saved with the presentation, these objects can also be saved as pictures and then imported using the image placeholder.

3. **PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE TEXT*** and **USE ONLY PROPERLY SOURCED IMAGES:** Alternative text ("alt text") is required for digital accessibility. This is helpful text that briefly describes any image that isn't just decorative, including images displaying words or other text. For example, *"An MRI shows magnified cross sections of a normal bone matrix and osteoporosis."* Or *"Cover of the 'Journal of Adult and Continuing Education', November 2023 edition."* The alt text can also be used to summarize information presented in a complex table or chart. The alternative text can be accessed for images, tables, and charts through the Accessibility menu. Alt text for images is also available when you choose "Alt Text" from the Picture Format tools menu.

In addition, when you are using images that aren't your own, including unique data displays, provide citations. Include the DOI (digital object identifier) when it's available. It is also helpful to include copyright permissions.

4. **BE THOUGHTFUL WITH FORMATTING CHOICES and AVOID ANIMATIONS:** Placeholders can be resized, moved, formatted, or even deleted. It's OK to resize text; however, font sizes should be at least 11 point. You can use color to accentuate text and annotate graphics if it is used in combination with something else (bold, italics, etc.). This includes lines on graphs; consider different line types and data point markers to distinguish data. There should also be sufficient color contrast between adjacent or overlapping objects, including text inside of table cells. **And all animations, including animated text, must be avoided.** (CTL can help with "mimicking" an animation if it's important to the presentation.)

5. **MAKE YOUR READING ORDER CORRECT:** "Reading order" is the sequence that a screen reader reads the objects (text boxes, image alt text, etc.) on a slide. The slide title should always be first and will set up the logical structure of the slide's information. The CTL template has an appropriate reading order, but it should be verified since it is easily changed when editing a slide's content. The PC and the more recent Mac versions of Office display reading order in both the "Reading Order" and "Selection" panes.