

## Guide for Preparing Visual Aids

Based on May 2019 workshop by Associate Professor Nicholas Brody,  
<https://www.pugetsound.edu/files/resources/visual-aids--brody.pdf>

1. Visual aids are not necessary, though an assignment might require them. [slides 2-3]
2. Consider why you might choose (or be required) to use visual aids: [slides 4-5]
  - a. Build and sustain audience attention
  - b. Support audience recall of your information
  - c. Add clarity to complex portions of your oral presentation
  - d. Enhance your speaker credibility
  - e. Allow yourself to feel less anxious in speaking (but, avoid reading from the visuals!)
  - f. Enhance the effectiveness of the message
  - g. It is okay to have "glitzy" visuals, but you want to **avoid going overboard**. Dr. Brody's example is the "glitter" slide]. Hint: Everything in moderation. [slide 5]
3. Think carefully about what your audience needs to understand and remember. [slides 7-8]
  - a. For example, you might find what you consider to be a very informative visual in a scholarly article, but what your audience needs to see and remember is much simpler.
  - b. Can you distill a complicated visual to highlight essential, readily understood and remembered components?
4. Dr. Brody's advice for students: [slide 9]
  - a. Preparation
  - b. Simplicity
  - c. Testing (i.e., practice with your visuals and, if at all possible, come early to the speaking location to make sure the technology is working)
  - d. Think strategically about the design of your visual aid: Do you want the audience to remember that the slides had "bells and whistles" or to remember the key content of your talk?
    - i. As an example, compare Dr. Brody's slides 8 and 9 to his slide 10.
    - ii. Note the simple white on black design (black font on white is also clear). Colors (especially red, orange, yellow) can be hard for some readers to see.
  - e. READ SLIDE 10! It offers great hints to consider in preparing visual aids (and is a very bad example of a PowerPoint slide).

Summary guidelines for visual aids that are accessible for persons with visual differences are available at: [http://archive.ifa.org/VII/s31/pub/wbu-visual-presentations-guidelines\\_summary.pdf](http://archive.ifa.org/VII/s31/pub/wbu-visual-presentations-guidelines_summary.pdf).

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