

# Handout

## Low-Cost and Low-Effort Ways to Create Infographics and Visually Appealing Slides

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*Trends and Opportunities for Medical Communicators*

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CELEBRATING 80 YEARS OF EDUCATING MEDICAL COMMUNICATORS

## Elements of an Infographic

Elements that really stand out when you see an infographic:

Color

Shapes

Sizes

Fonts

Icons

### Color

Infographics rely heavily on color to make them stand out and to help tell a story. Many of them use alternating color blocks to separate sections of an infographic.

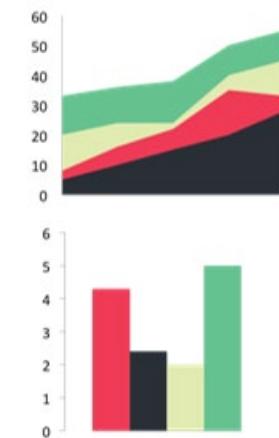


Color is often used to differentiate items when counting or to differentiate important data.



It's estimated that up to **1 in every 3** Baltimore City residents will need food supplements by June

And of course, color is used in charts and graphs.



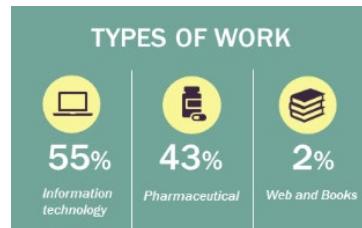
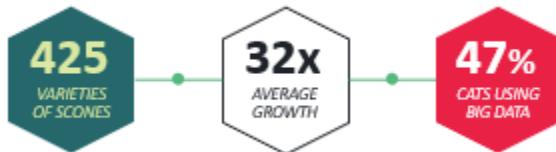
### Shapes

Infographics tend to put paragraphs or bulleted lists into shapes to make them stand out.



## Sizes

The sizes of items—whether numbers, words, or graphic elements—are often used to show their importance or make comparison easier.



## Fonts

Use of cool fonts is usually reserved for headings, but it can provide a level of sophistication in certain kinds of infographics. In this example, the sleek font and different sizes make it look professional but interesting. With a lot of space around it, it really stands out.

CLINICAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE  
OF PRODUCT™ (generic)

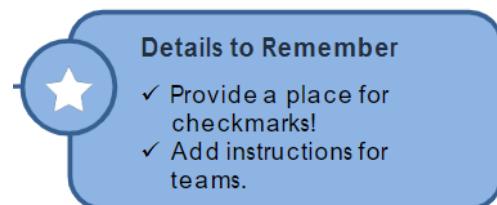
## Icons

Icons are used to represent an idea quickly.

They can be used to show what's in the text.



Sometimes symbols or icons are used as bullets.



Sometimes icons are used to help count and to show the differences between items.

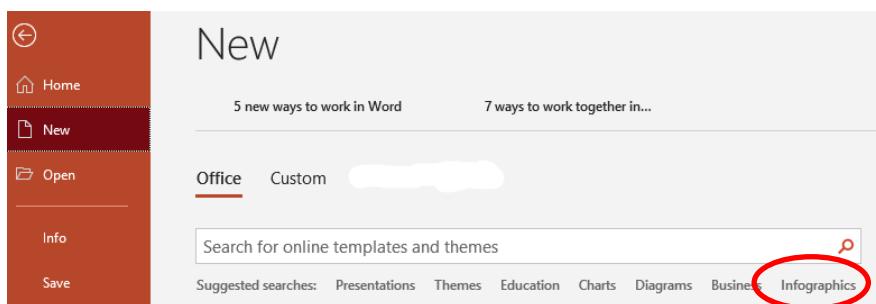


## Tips for Creating Infographics

While there are many apps on the web to help you create infographics, it's sometimes best to use a tool you know and that is readily available to you and your co-workers: PowerPoint. **Note:** Screenshots in these instructions are from PowerPoint O365 on a PC; your options may differ if you are using an older version, on a Mac, or your enterprise version of PowerPoint is not up to date.

To create an infographic from a template in PowerPoint, do the following:

1. Open PowerPoint.
2. Click **File**, then **New**.



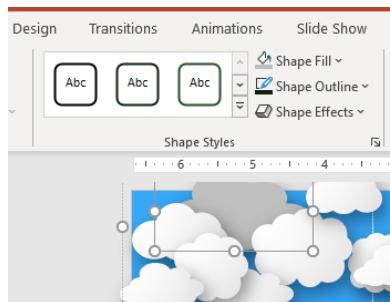
3. Select **Infographics**.
4. Choose a template that either seems to fit your needs or that has an appealing color scheme or layout.

Once in the template, you'll want to start adding your text, playing with the shapes, changing colors, and moving things around.

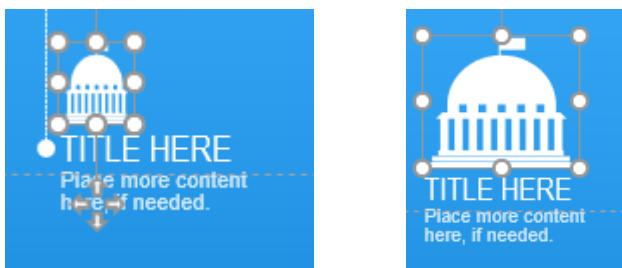
5. Click a text box to select the text, then type your text.



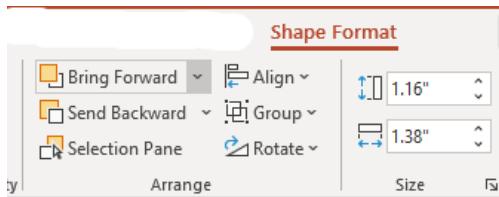
6. Click a graphic element to change its color.



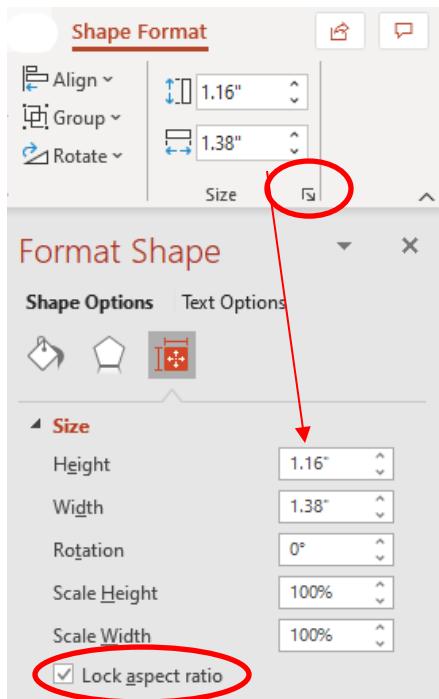
7. Click on the circles at the corners of the bounding box to change the size.



8. If you want to take more control of the size, go to the **Shape Format** tab, within the **Size** group to choose the dimensions of your object.



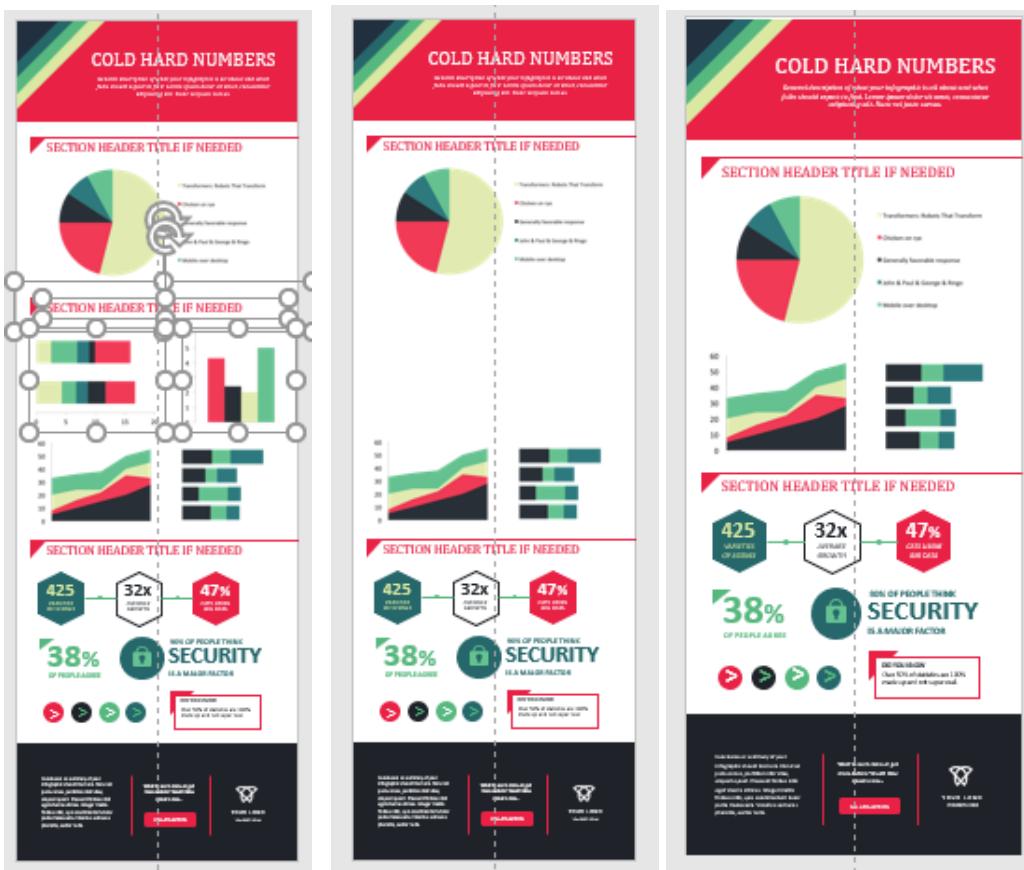
To keep the item from looking distorted as you change its size, click the dialog box launcher to open the **Format Shape** menu, which allows you to lock the aspect ratio as you make the item larger or smaller.



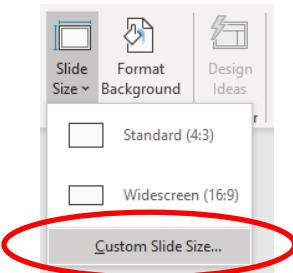
If you get deeper into PowerPoint and infographics, you'll want to become more familiar with the **Shape Format** tab; lots of cool stuff in here.

9. Click and delete any extraneous elements.

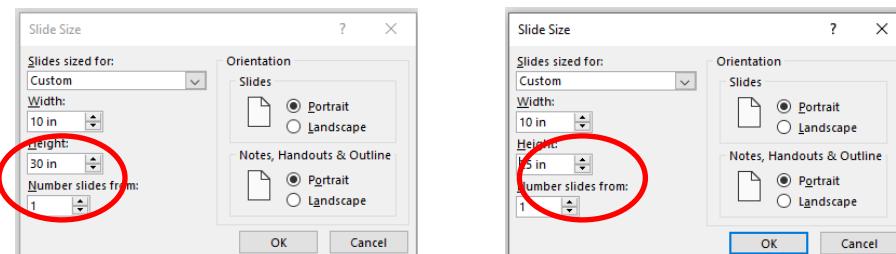
10. Reassemble the remaining elements on a different size slide if needed.



- From the **Design** tab, click **Slide Size**.
- Select **Custom Slide Size**.

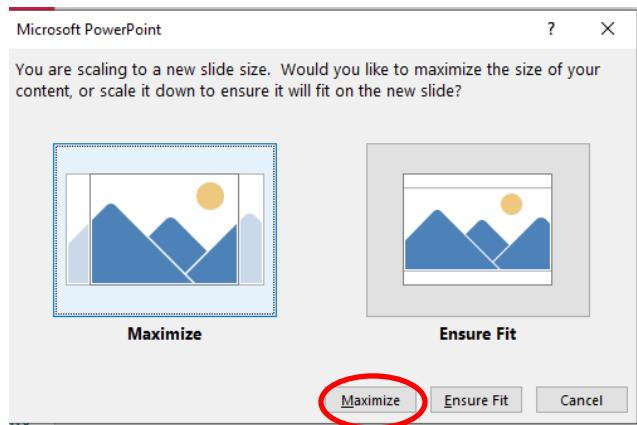


- Type in a smaller height, then click **OK**.



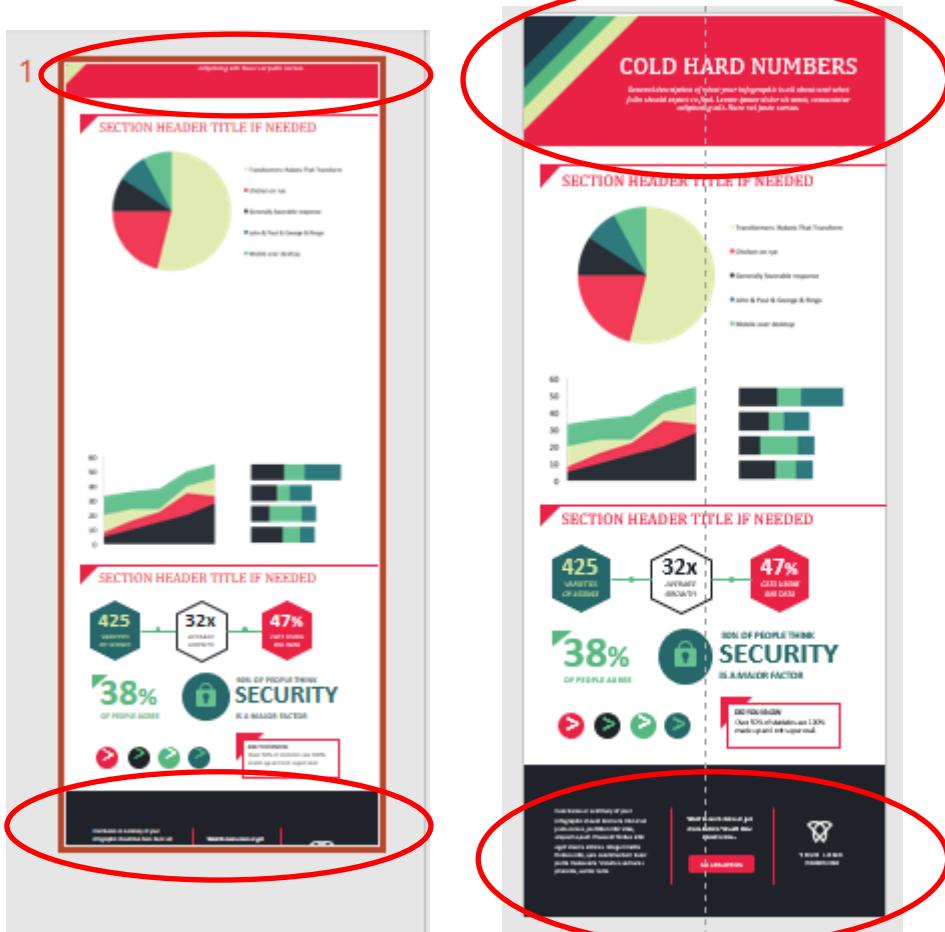
**Note:** This is largely a guessing game as far as I can tell. Try something that seems reasonable, then Undo if you don't get the desired consequences.

d. Click **Maximize**.



**Note:** You can choose **Ensure Fit**, but I have found there is less cleanup work to do when I select Maximize.

- e. Fit all of the content back onto the slide background. See below where the top and bottom are now off the slide background. Select the content that moved off the slide background and use the arrow key to move it back up or down to fit onto the slide background.



## Elements of Visually Appealing Slide

Elements that make a slide visually appealing:

- Matching colors
- White space
- Shapes
- Different sizes
- Interesting fonts
- Pared down words
- Icons
- Images

## Tips for Creating Visually Appealing Slides

1

The first tip is to use templates for style and consistency. Whether you get them from your company or client, a site like Canva, or a built-in template in PowerPoint, this will help you choose coordinating colors and fonts.

2

The second tip is to stop thinking in full sentences and paragraphs. No one wants to read those in a PowerPoint slide. Put phrases, data, and bulleted lists into boxes, circles, shapes, charts, graphics, and SmartArt to make the data stand out.

3

Lastly, use the ideas and instructions below to make your slides more interesting and visually appealing.

[Convert Bulleted Lists to SmartArt](#)

[Add Stock Images](#)

[Convert SmartArt to Shapes](#)

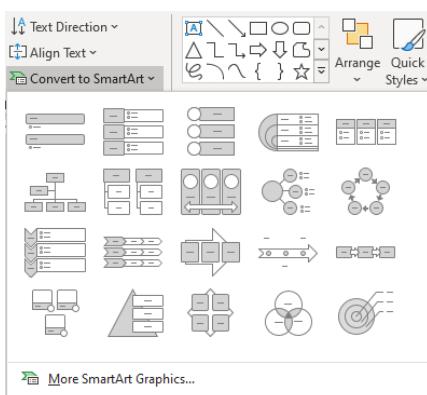
[Steal Ideas from Design Ideas](#)

[Insert and Adjust Icons](#)

### Convert Bulleted Lists to SmartArt

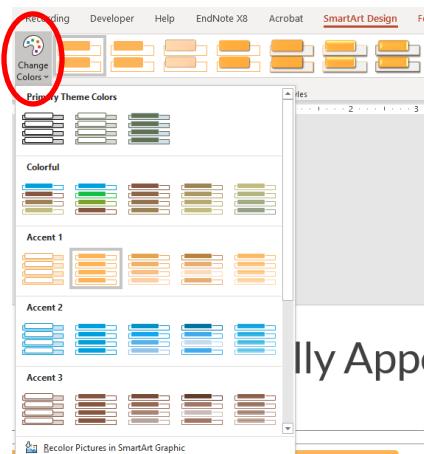
To convert a bulleted list to SmartArt in PowerPoint:

1. Select the bulleted list.
2. On **Home** tab, click **Convert to SmartArt**.



3. Choose a type of SmartArt that fits your text. If you don't see anything that appeals, click **More SmartArt Graphics**.

4. Click **Change Colors** if you don't like the default color.

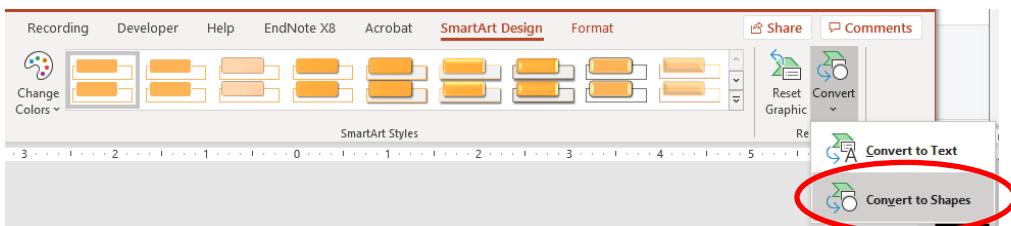


## Convert SmartArt to Shapes

While SmartArt is convenient, it can slow down your progress if its default boxes are too small for your text, or it might take up more space than is really needed. While it can be a great tool, do NOT make your text fit the SmartArt. Convert the SmartArt to shapes, so you can better control how it displays your data.

To convert a SmartArt to shapes:

1. Select the SmartArt by clicking on the outermost box.
2. From SmartArt Design tab, click **Convert to Shapes**.



3. Adjust the whole shape or the individual items within it as needed.

This allows you great control of text size, shape size, and how the shapes move within the larger shapes.

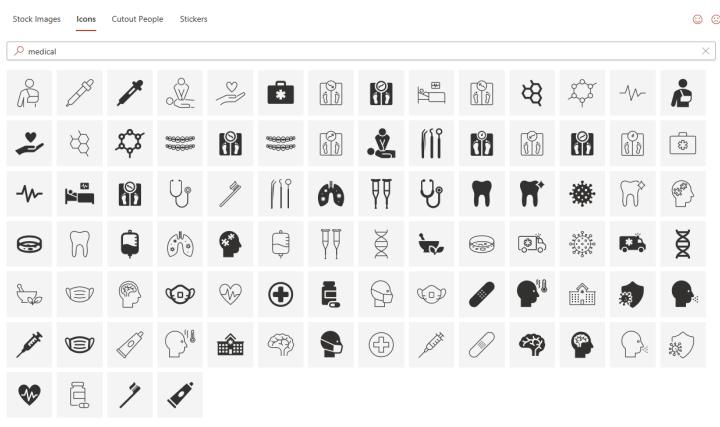
## Insert and Adjust Icons

If you are in a recent version of PowerPoint with icons, you can insert and change them as needed to provide visual appeal to your slides:

1. From **Insert** tab, in **Illustrations** group, click **Icons**.



2. Search for a topic, like *Medical*, or a specific item.



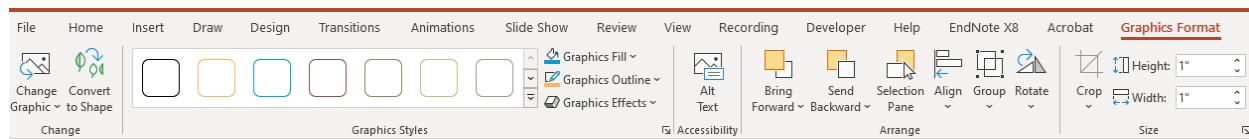
3. Click the box of as many items as you think you might use. They will all appear in your slide.

4. Select one or more icons.



Above, there are two versions of the same icon, which could give a different feel depending on the color and size you ultimately use; there are usually two versions of each icon, though they are not normally together in the icons list.

5. From **Graphics Format** tab, in **Graphics Styles** group, change the color as needed:



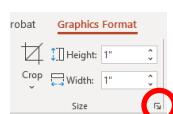
a. Select arrow next to Graphics Fill to change the fill of the icon. In the first pair, the fill is blue.



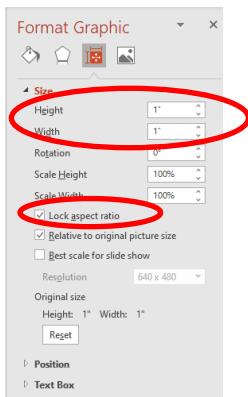
b. Select arrow next to Graphics Outline to change the outline of the icon. In the second pair, the outline is yellow.

6. If you need to adjust the size, do the following:

a. From **Graphics Format** tab, in **Size** group, click the dialog box launcher.



- b. The **Format Graphic** menu will open. Click **Lock aspect ratio**, then change the size by adjusting the numbers in the Height or Weight boxes.

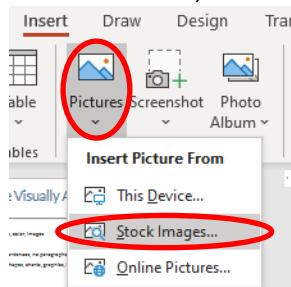


## Add Stock Photos

More so than infographics, slides can often benefit from stock images to break up text, illustrate ideas, or provide visual interest. Newer versions of PowerPoint contain stock images, or they can be acquired from sites like Pixabay, Unsplash, and Canva.

To insert stock images from PowerPoint, do the following:

1. From **Insert tab**, click **Pictures**, then click **Stock Images**.



2. Type a topic or item in the Search box to see what they have available.

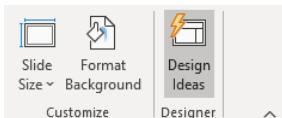
The image shows the search results for 'medical' in the Stock Images search bar. The results are displayed in a grid format, showing various medical scenes such as laboratory equipment, medical professionals, and patients. The search bar at the top has 'medical' typed into it, and there are tabs for 'Stock Images', 'Icons', 'Cutout People', and 'Stickers'.

3. Select some options, and they will appear in your slide.
4. Adjust their location on your slide as needed.
5. Adjust their size as discussed earlier with icons or crop them as needed to work for your topic and space available.

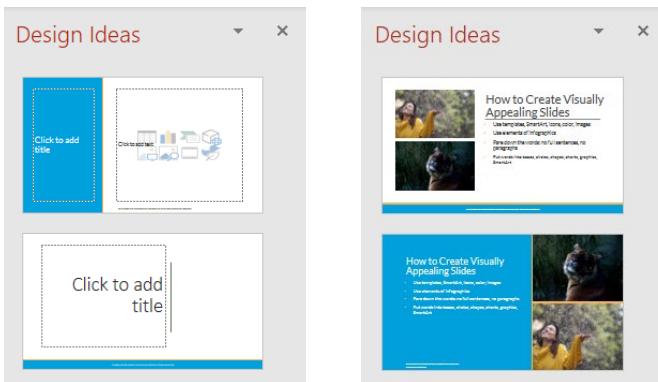
## Steal Ideas from Design Ideas

If you have a newer version of PowerPoint, you might have access to Design Ideas. If it doesn't come up automatically on the right of your screen when you open up a blank slide, do the following:

1. Under **Design** tab, in **Designer** group, click **Design Ideas**.



2. On the right of your screen a new window will open with options, based on the colors in your template, for the slide you are working on.



If your slide is totally empty, the sample slide will be similarly empty.

If you have a heading and some bullets, or an image or even two and some bullets. it gets a little more interesting.

BUT if you add too much to your slides, like a SmartArt or a bunch of icons, it will stop showing options.

3. Click on an option to change your slide to that idea.

## Keep in Touch

There is more you can do and more to learn (the videos in the presentation go a little further), but this is already a pretty long handout! For more tips on PowerPoint, Word, and checklists, follow me or my company LinkedIn page: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kellyschrank/> OR <https://www.linkedin.com/company/bookworm-editing-services-llc>

## References/Resources

Screenshots were taken from two free HubSpot templates available at <https://www.hubspot.com/resources/template>, two infographics freely available from <https://coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov/>, PowerPoint O365 on PC, and my own creations.