PowerPoint Pointers

- Content counts big time! Make sure your presentation shows evidence of solid research and your own high level thought.

- Know your topic. What is your purpose? Your audience does not need to know "everything you know about X."

- Give the oral part of your presentation punch. Personal anecdotes and clever examples are far more compelling than bullets, no matter how they fly in.

- Grab your audience by starting with a clincher—a powerful quote, story, anecdote, statistic, or a surprising fact.

- Use the visual aspects of PowerPoint for maximum effect. Think of the oral and visual parts of your presentation as members of a tag team, each contributing something unique.

- Do not read from your slides, your audience can read.

- End with the exact point you want your audience to remember.

- All graphic elements are messages. Choose a consistent look that enhances rather than detracts from your theme.

- Use sounds and animations cautiously. They can distract from your message. Reserve multimedia for emphasizing important points.

- All bullets should be readable from the back of the room. Combinations of upper- and lower-case letters are the most readable. Do not size text lower than 28.

- Create and use original art. Your own drawings and digital photographs pack far more punch than tired clipart. Why spend hours searching for the perfect image of a flower when you could far more effectively draw one or shoot one with a digital camera? If you must use clip art, consider combining it with other elements - for instance, incorporating clever thought bubbles.

- Spelling errors look even worse when projected! Proofread like crazy.

- Respect copyright by citing every piece of borrowed text, as well as every piece of media you use, other than copyright-free clip art. The last slide should list your Works Consulted.

- Practice! Rehearse even if it feels silly. Use family, friends, pets, as well as your mirror.