

# Tips for Editing PowerPoint Documents

QUICK HELP

BASIC

EXPANDED

PROFESSIONAL

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If you've spent any time in conference rooms, you probably know that PowerPoint is a widely used application that combines text, graphics, sound, and animation to create presentation materials that can be projected, printed, or shared online.

This aid, adapted from Chapter 8 of *The McGraw-Hill Desk Reference for Editors, Writers, and Proofreaders* book and CD (McGraw-Hill, 2006, K.D. Sullivan and Merilee Eggleston), includes all the information, screenshots, and examples included in the book, plus additional information and tips that were cut from the book because of space limitations. It's like getting a DVD with special bonus features.

We won't teach you how to create PowerPoint presentations from scratch, although you'll pick up a bit about that as you learn how to edit them. Which is all to the good, because if you know something about how PowerPoint slides are created, you'll find it easier to correct them. But our real aim is to help you edit them once they're created.

## Notes

1. **Version alert:** The discussion is based on the default settings in Microsoft PowerPoint 2003. If you're working with a different version, you may need to dig a bit to locate a particular tool or feature, and if your version is old enough, certain features might be missing. For the most part, however, you should be able to find what you need with just a little hunting.
2. If you're not familiar with the full Adobe Acrobat application, this aid will be easiest to follow if you have the full Adobe Acrobat program up and running as you read.



## Powers You Have, and Powers You Don't

Editing in PowerPoint falls somewhere between editing in Microsoft Word, with godlike power to insert, delete, format, and so on, with all changes showing, and editing in Adobe Acrobat, with very limited power to make changes directly and only indirect ways to suggest them.



PowerPoint contains several of the same features you'll find in Word, and using PowerPoint you can easily make direct changes in a slide. But unlike in Word, with its Track Changes feature, you can't show a record of those changes in the slide text itself. Nor can you easily insert comments and notes with quite the same flexibility you can in Word and Acrobat.

Because of this, there are three primary ways you'll be asked to edit PowerPoint slides:

- On a hard-copy printout
- In another kind of file (such as a Word file) where the PowerPoint slides have been inserted
- Directly in the PowerPoint file, keeping no record of your changes, or recording changes and queries elsewhere (by noting changes and queries as inserted Comments, in the Notes section, or on a reporting form).

### **Marking Up Printouts**

One common way to indicate edits to a PowerPoint presentation is to print out the slides and mark on these pages using standard editing/proofreading marks, then fax the pages to the party who will actually change the slides. Here's a recap of things to think about when marking changes on hard copy.

If you're working on hard copy, with printouts of several different slides, be sure to manually number the pages if page numbers don't already appear. If you'll be returning your corrections by fax (and even if you're not), make sure the changes are very clear and dark. Place any queries directly on the page, not too close to the edge. In fax transmission, material on page edges is sometimes lost or illegible.

If there isn't room to write everything clearly on the printout, create a separate sheet for changes and queries, and simply note on the hard copy of the slide where the insertion or change belongs. On the separate changes/queries sheet, clearly indicate the slide to which they apply, and the location on the slide where each change belongs. One way to do that is to number the changes and place corresponding numbers on the slide printout.



If it's more convenient, you can also record needed changes on an electronic or printed out version of the reporting form shown later in the "Inserting Comments and Recording Changes" section.

**Tip:** If a PowerPoint slide has a dark background, you'll be hard pressed to make your changes visible on the printout. Luckily, if that background was created using a PowerPoint fill color, there's a quick fix: in the Print dialog box, under Print What, choose Pure Black and White. The background will drop out, the type will print black, and you'll have the white space you need to mark changes.

### **Editing Embeds**

Sometimes, PowerPoint slides are embedded (inserted) in a Word file. If they are, you can edit them in place by double-clicking in the slide and then clicking on the text you'd like to edit. If you do, however, there'll be no record of your changes. If you'd like to create one, you can use Word text to indicate your changes above or below the slide:

#### **The Keys to Customer Service**

Care about and believe in:

- \* Your clients
- \* Your employees and contractors
- \* You motto, "How can we help?"

{{In third bulleted item, change "You" to "Your" — Edit}}

If you insert your PowerPoint edits this way, be sure to set them off in some way from the surrounding text. Highlighting is a great way to do that, as is adding characters (such as the double braces shown here) that are easy to search for because they don't appear elsewhere in the document. To make the note perfectly clear, we've enclosed in quotation marks the specific words being discussed (*You* and *Your*), and ended it with a little signature (*-Edit*).

You can also insert your notes using Word's Comment feature. Just click on the slide, insert a comment, and type away. Because you can't place the comment in the slide itself, it's still a good idea to be very specific in your note about the item(s) that need correction.

However you choose to indicate changes to these embeds, be sure whoever will make those changes understands and is comfortable with your system.



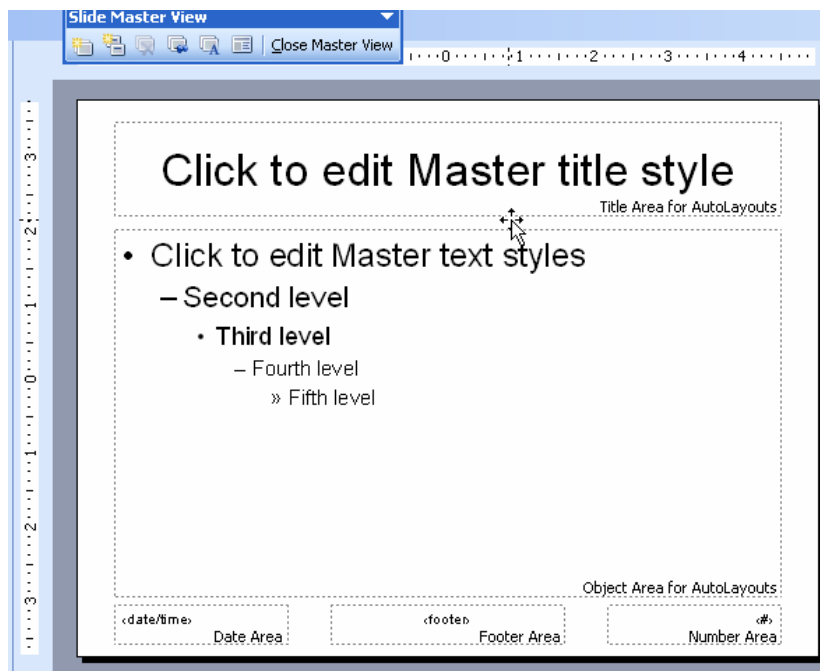
### The Direct Approach

Many times, no one really cares to track the journey from the original version of a slide to the new, editorially accurate one. They just want clean slides. If that's the case, you can make your changes directly to the text in PowerPoint. There are two ways to do that—the global way, and the local way.

**The Slide Master.** Talk about trickle down; we want one of these for our *life*. The slide master lets you define all kinds of details, then applies them automatically to every slide in a presentation. Using the slide master, you can specify things like type styles for header and body text, bullets, graphical elements, and so on just once, and all the other slides use them—no whining, no arguments. You never have to repeat yourself.

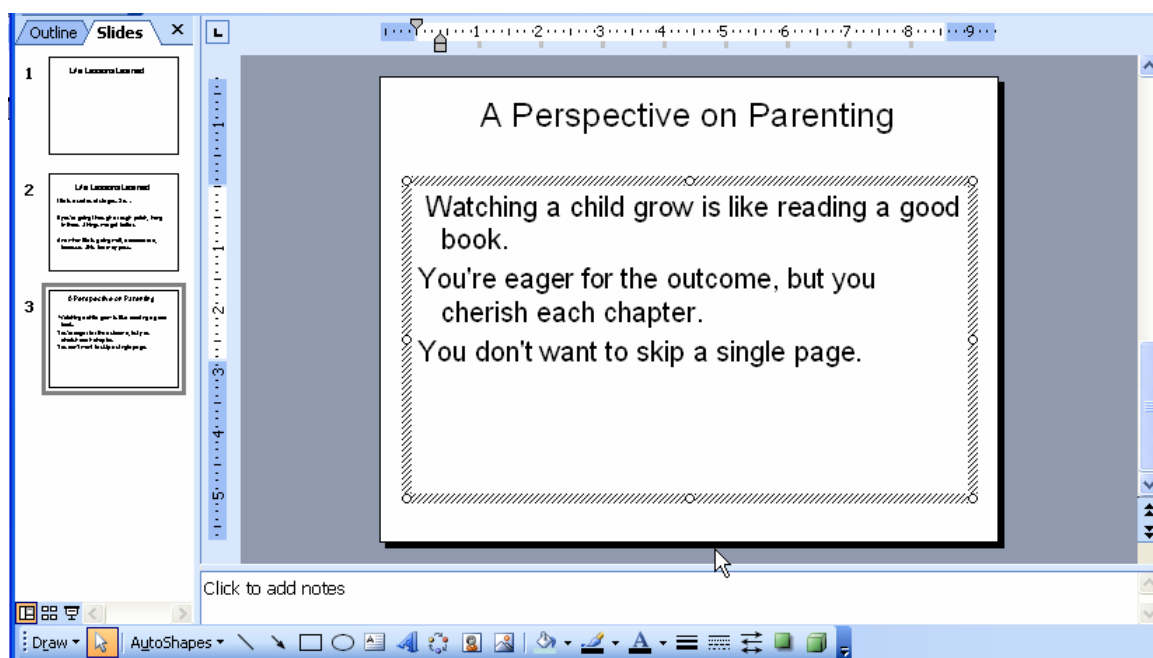
If there's a slide master element that you want to change, go to View > Master > Slide Master. Change it there, and you've changed it everywhere.

When you create a new slide for a presentation, text boxes tied to the slide master appear on the page. Always enter your text in these boxes if you can. As long as text is in a slide master text box, you can change its style by changing the style of the slide master.



**Slide by Slide Editing.** If global edits aren't an option, you'll have to tackle the slides one by one. PowerPoint offers lots of ways to view and alter them (go to View on the menu bar to see the options). Here are the two we use the most:

**Normal View.** This view is where you'll do the lion's share of your editing. Here's where you can add and modify text and graphical elements. With a slide in Normal view, click on the header or in the body text, and the elements will be surrounded by a bounding box. When that happens, you have the go-ahead to make changes. In the illustration below, the bounding box shows up as a thickish gray line, strategically dotted with white circles, around the text:



There's more onscreen in Normal view than just the slide you're working on. Those tiny shrunken pages along the left side of the screen are thumbnails of all the slides in the presentation, in the order they appear. Click on them to see the full-size slides and edit them. If you want to change their order, you can just click on a thumbnail, right here in Normal view, and drag it to a different position in the lineup.

There's also a text box, below the slide you're viewing, for notes for the presenter, a built-in speaker's crib sheet. As an editor, you won't often be asked to *add* speaker notes, but you might be asked to review and edit them.

**Tip:** Keep in mind that if the presentation will be printed, the speaker notes do not print unless you choose Notes Pages under “Print what:” on the Print dialog.

**Slide Show.** This view is the PowerPoint equivalent of Word’s Print Preview. It lets you step through the entire presentation, slide by slide, to see how it will function and flow. To move from one slide to the next, just click your mouse or tap the down arrow key. To move *back* to a previous slide, use the up arrow key.

In Slide Show view, you see the slides at *full* screen size—no menu bars, no navigation tools, no little icons; nothing but the slide, edge to edge. Editors are rarely asked to verify how well a slide presentation works, but Slide Show does offer you a wide-screen way to do a final review of your work.

**For All Types of Communications**

- Advertising & Promotion
  - Sales brochures
  - Catalogs
- Corporate Communications
  - Annual reports
  - White papers
- Training & E-Learning
  - Manuals
  - Online courses
- Web-Based Delivery
  - Web sites
  - Email blasts

**Tip:** So if no tools are visible in Slide Show, not even the little X in the upper-right corner, how do you get *out* of Slide Show view? That one stymies most first-time users. Easy answer: press the Esc key.

**Objects from Elsewhere.** As we noted above, PowerPoint slides can be embedded in files of different applications. The opposite is also true; sometimes elements from Microsoft Word and Excel (text, tables, graphs, etc.) are inserted into a PowerPoint file. You can’t edit these visitors directly in PowerPoint, but you can *open* them directly from PowerPoint into the program in which they were originally created (e.g., Word or Excel). Then you can edit them just as you would if they’d never left home.

To return one of these objects to its birthplace, right-click on it, and from the drop-down menu that appears, select Document Object > Open. That opens the



object fully inside Word or Excel. When you have completed your edits in the original application, close the file and you and your changed object will be returned to PowerPoint. Pretty slick.

Save your changes to the PowerPoint file the same as you do in other Microsoft applications, and don't forget to save often.

**PowerPoint Graphs.** You don't have to use Word or Excel to create graphs for a PowerPoint presentation; you can do it right in PowerPoint. To make edits to a PowerPoint graph, double-click on the graph. This will launch the Microsoft Graph application from within PowerPoint. Along with the editable graph object, a spreadsheet will also appear (where you can make data edits).

**Tip:** Here's something that drives us crazy: Using a drawing tool, you make a nice, neat connector line between two related items, then change one little thing somewhere else on the slide (or the page). Suddenly, your line goes to nowhere, or to somewhere it shouldn't. Aargh. Here's how to prevent that from happening.

To keep certain objects grouped together, no matter what else moves around, hold down the Shift key while you click on the various objects you want to group. Then click the Draw button on the Drawing toolbar at the bottom of the slide. From the pop-up menu that appears, select Group. It's a great stress reducer.



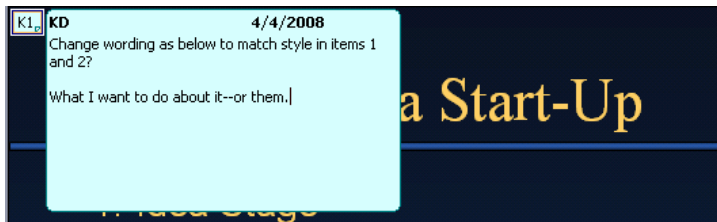
### **Inserting Comments and Recording Changes**

Sometimes, time-consuming and often cumbersome as it is, you'll be asked to create a record of the changes you made directly to the PowerPoint slides. When that's the case, you have a few options:

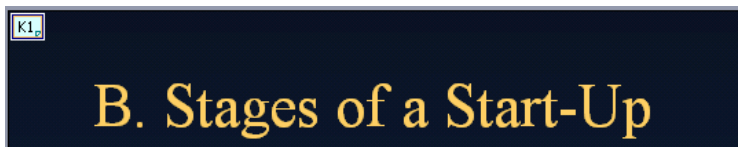
**You can use the Insert Comment feature to record your changes.** Similar to the reviewing feature in Word, you can search for, add to, edit, or delete your comments when you display the Reviewing toolbar. Other helpful hints: you can view all comments by displaying the Revisions toolbar, and you can print your comments (see PowerPoint Printing below).

It's worthwhile to point out a few aspects (and limitations) you'll find in using the Comment feature in PowerPoint. Similar to inserting a comment in a PDF file,

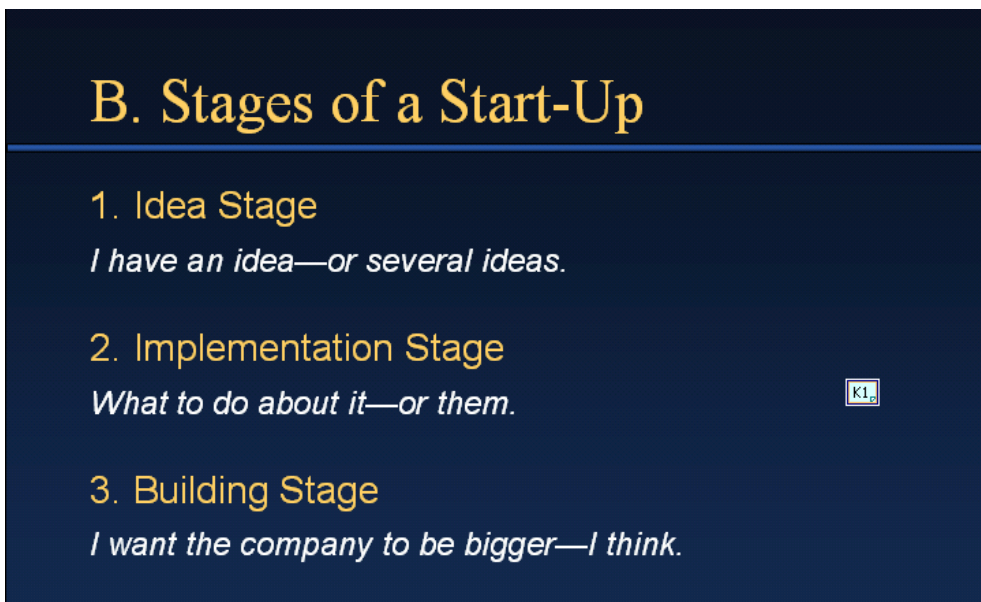
when you go to Insert > Comment in PPT, a box appears in which you can type any changes or queries. Your name and the date appear at the top of this box.



Once you click anywhere outside the Comment box, the box closes and is replaced with a change marker—a small box with your name (or initial) and the number of the Comment placed in the top-left corner of the slide. You can drag this change marker anywhere in the slide.

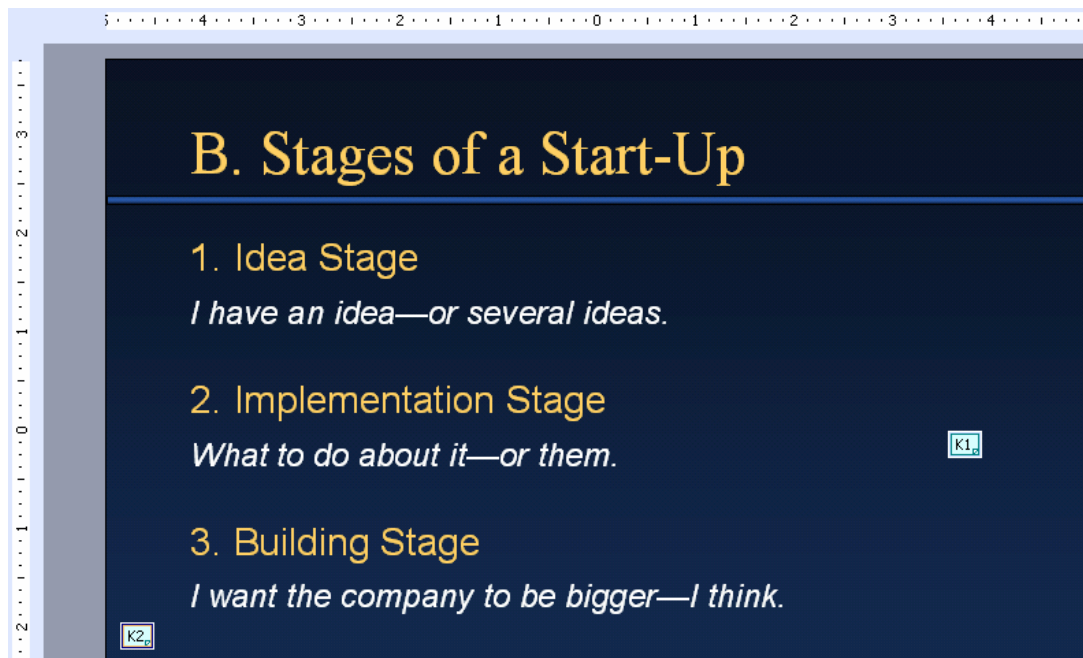


Some people prefer to place the change markers near the text that the note or query refers to. We recommend instead that you place all of them in the right margin of the slide. That makes it easy for the person reviewing your work to see all the Comments.



And now for a limitation: Comments cannot be inserted into the Notes section of the slide. We suggest that for these Comments that once you've finished typing

in the Comment box and close it, drag the small comment marker(s) to the bottom of the slide. And don't forget to let whoever is reviewing the file know that's what you've done—that all of these comment markers placed at the bottom of the slide refer to text in the Notes section, as opposed to text in the body of the slide.



Stories of editorial agency start-up and handbag importing start-up as examples of different amounts of businesses.

**You can type your changes and queries into the Notes section of each slide.** Again, see the sample electronic reporting form for ideas on how to word your changes. The key is to describe very clearly the change you made and indicate exactly where you made it. Once caution: using this method, you must be sure to distinguish your remarks from those that are actually a part of the presentation (perhaps by highlighting your notes).



Stories of editorial agency start-up and handbag importing start-up as examples of different amounts of businesses. {{I know this won't be printed for attendees, but wanted to point out that I believe you mean "sizes of businesses" instead of "amounts of businesses." EDIT}}

**You can record them on a ready-made electronic reporting form.** If you're asked to edit directly in the PowerPoint file *and* to record your changes in and queries elsewhere, a ready-made electronic reporting form like the one below can be an

efficient way to itemize corrections. Using a form like this, you can note editorial changes made to the slides and then email the list of changes to whoever has asked for your comments. Use this form if it suits, or customize it for your own project. We've filled in some sample information here. If you like, you can also print the form and use it as a separate changes/queries sheet while editing a hard-copy version of the slides.

### Sample Electronic Reporting Form

Proofreader:	Karen Mead
QA Reviewer:	K.D. Sullivan
Date:	3-14-08
Web Site	www.cs-edit.com

NOTE: First-round review queries are highlighted in **aqua**; second-round review queries are in **green**.

Slide Number	Change/Query Location	OK	Change/Query Details
1	para 1, line 2		Add a hyphen to <i>self-discovery</i>
2		X	
3	Top-right pop-up, line 3		Change <i>everyday</i> to <i>every day</i> (two words)
5	Photo caption	X	<b>P1, 12: Change <i>an end</i> to <i>this end</i>?</b>
6	Second bullet		1. Delete <i>The</i> and capitalize the <i>s</i> on <i>sentences</i> 2. Add a period at the end
6			Should inserted graph be reduced in size for consistency with graphic elements on other slides?
7		X	

### PowerPoint Printing

Printing in PowerPoint is no different from printing in most other Microsoft applications—you've got options aplenty and choices to make. Most will look familiar to you if you've printed in Word, but there are a couple of PowerPoint-peculiar printing options it's helpful to understand.

In the lower-left corner of the Print dialog box, you'll see a drop-down menu under "Print what:". From that menu, you can choose, for example, Slides to print each page individually, or Handouts to print thumbnails of multiple slides on one page.



In the menu just below that you have the option to print Color, Grayscale, or Pure Black and White. Sometimes the page will print more clearly in one mode than in another—you may need to experiment.

And to print any comments you've inserted in the slides, check the "Print comments and ink markup" option.

## **PowerPoint Editing—A Quick Reference**

For easy review, here are the highlights of PowerPoint editing:

- If you edit on printouts, keep changes clear, dark, and away from page edges (for faxing). When printing slides with dark backgrounds, choose Pure Black and White to get an easy-to-mark-on white background instead.
- If you edit a PowerPoint slide embedded in a Word file, you can create a record of your work by indicating any changes or comments above or below the slide.
- If you edit in PowerPoint, there'll be no record of your changes, unless you keep one elsewhere (by noting changes and queries in inserted Comments, in the Notes section, or on a reporting form). When making changes in PowerPoint:
  - Use the slide master for editing certain global elements, such as type styles and bullets.
  - Edit specific text in individual slides.
  - Normal view is the best choice for most editing tasks and for rearranging the slide order. Slide Show view can be helpful, too.
  - To edit objects included from applications like Word and Excel, open them from PowerPoint into their original application, make changes, then close them to return the edited version to PowerPoint.

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*For even more help in the world of words, see our entire set of easy-to-use [Job Aids for Effective Communication](#) that give you quick, clear guidance as you prepare anything from a memo to a manual to a web page.*

