Designing a Presentation

1. Keep accessibility in mind when designing presentations! View the LinkedIn Learning Video Creating Accessible Documents in Microsoft Office for helpful tips!
2. Planning for the presentation is key! Start with brainstorming, visualization, and writing, scribbling or otherwise noting what comes to mind. Generate ideas!
3. Know the intended audience. Ask questions to develop an understanding of the audience, such as who they are, what are their expectations, how much they already know, what information they need, and how can the information be conveyed in terms they comprehend.
4. Once ideas are generated, develop an outline for the presentation. Think of it as a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Simple tools such as sticky notes can even be used to begin and then make changes to the outline.
5. Consider storyboarding, which is a way of working out sequencing prior to building the presentation.
6. Moodboards can be used as well, which can establish a link with the audience. Find colors, textures, and imagery for the slides that may resonate with the audience.
7. For the slide layout, establish a balance within the space of the slide with the words and/or imagery used.
8. At Virginia Tech, check for approved slide templates for the applicable college, department, or unit. Additionally, visit Virginia Tech’s Brand Center online to learn about appropriate colors, logo guidelines, PowerPoint templates, design elements and more.
9. Use sans serif fonts such as Arial, Calibri, Verdana, etc. to ensure accessibility. The minimum font size should be 25, with titles being 36 or larger.
10. Photos and graphics can enhance a presentation, just remember to use Alt Text to ensure accessibility. Learn more in Creating Accessible Documents in Microsoft Office.
11. Only use videos (and anything for that matter), if it helps the audience to understand the presentation.
12. If using backgrounds, make sure they support the elements of the presentation.
13. When using charts or graphs, ask whether they help to understand the points of the presentation or could something simpler be used. Even with tables, ask whether they help tell the story of the data.
14. Be reserved and selective over the type and number of transitions and animations used.
15. The final slide should have your contact information. If large amounts of data where shared, a link to the data can be provided, or an electronic handout.