



Most of us are familiar with the technology used to create PowerPoint and Prezi electronic presentations, but does that mean we know how to effectively create these presentations ourselves using this technology? The **SCRAP** method focuses on basic design principles and applies them to the creation of visual aids. The **SCRAP** method is easy to use and understand and will help you create more professional and engaging visual aids.

S – SIMPLICITY

This letter of the SCRAP acronym tells us to keep things **simple**. Slides that are overloaded with text, clipart, colors, sounds, and/or movement are a distraction to the audience and can decrease the overall effectiveness of the presentation. Here are some basic principles to guide you in simplifying your PowerPoint/Prezi slides:

- Limit the amount of text you include on a single slide. The more words a speaker puts on a slide, the more the audience's attention is directed to reading the text instead of listening to the speaker. If the speaker must include bullet points, they should use keywords instead of full sentences.
- A picture is worth a thousand words. Where possible, use images instead of text. Photos and graphs may be a better way of communicating specific information than bullet points. Images provide concrete references for your audience and keep them engaged in the presentation.
- Avoid using animations, colors, and sound unless they serve a specific purpose during the presentation. Again, these distract the audience from the presentation.
- Less is more. Whether it's images, graphs, or text, less is better. Too much of anything can be overwhelming to an audience.

C – CONTRAST

Contrast refers to “the differences that affect what viewers notice and what gives a design more energy”. Contrast can refer to any design element, such as color or text font. Incorporating contrast into your slides can help an audience more quickly identify what information is most important and where they should be directing their attention. Some basic principles for contrast are:

- When selecting background colors and designs for slides, follow this simple rule: for a light background, use dark text color. For a dark background, use lighter text color.
- Avoid monochromatic colors (colors that are similar to each other) in images and text when designing your slides, as these tend to blend in with one another.

R – REPETITION

Repetition refers to reusing certain design elements throughout the entire PowerPoint or Prezi slides. Font type, size, and orientation, color schemes, and spacing all help to create a cohesive look to an electronic visual aid. Once you decide on a specific element, stick with it for the entire presentation.



A – ALIGNMENT

This technique involves the process of **aligning** text and images on the screen. Alignment is a small detail that makes a big difference in the overall professionalism of your slides. Placement of text and objects should look intentional, not as if they were just cut and pasted into a slide. Some basic guidelines for using this technique are:

- If you use more than one photo on a slide, enlarge or shrink each photo so that they are the same size on the screen.
- Align all text on a screen with itself; meaning, if there are multiple lines of text on a slide, make sure they are indented the same amount of space.
- Balance the amount of white or empty space when placing text and images on the slide.

P – PROXIMITY

The term **proximity** refers to how close or far apart items are from one another. Proximity helps viewers determine what goes with what. When designing your slides, grouping information together or separating certain pieces of information from others, can help an audience determine what to pay attention to or the relationship between pieces of information.

Resources:

Sherwyn P. Morreale & Janice G. Thorpe, (2013). *Public speaking 3.0*.
Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.