Using a PowerPoint slide, Brianne Berkson of New York City describes the actions of seizure-alert dogs, who can sense when a person with epilepsy is about to have a seizure. A golden retriever named Max barks 15 minutes before his owner Kathy Benton has a seizure, giving Benton time to reach safety. This warning makes it possible for Benton to drive a car without worrying about losing control.

9

Visual Aids

Outline

Advantages of Visual Aids

Types of Visual Aids

Media for Visual Aids

A Brief Guide to Using PowerPoint

Guidelines for Using Visual Aids

Objectives

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Explain at least seven advantages of using visual aids in a speech.

2. Describe the types of visual aids.

3. Describe the media for visual aids.

4. Create and use PowerPoint presentations effectively.

5. Use visual aids effectively, with maximum comprehension and clarity.

The Tietê River in Brazil is an open sewer that causes health problems for thousands of residents in and near South America's largest city, São Paulo. At times, the river is covered with thick mounds of toxic foam, the result of a mixture of chemical detergents, sewage, and industrial pollutants.

"The foam often spills over into adjacent communities, and sometimes the wind blows it all over a village," says Kelly M. O'Donnell, a biologist who is campaigning to raise funds to clean up the river. "The foam emits a harmful acidic gas, which has caused thousands of cases of respiratory ailments." The contaminated water in the river has killed all vegetation on its banks and has caused many outbreaks of hepatitis among humans.

When O'Donnell speaks to audiences throughout the United States and Latin America, she relies heavily on visual aids (such as Figure 9.1). "Without the visuals," she says, "people would have trouble comprehending the true significance of this environmental disaster. They might even think I'm exaggerating." But with the visuals, she says, listeners see the enormity of the problem with their own eyes.[1]

Visuals are powerful tools for informing and persuading. Because most people have grown up with television and therefore are conditioned to learn via imagery, visual aids are considered a vital part of most business, technical, and professional presentations today. The attitude throughout society is: "Don't just tell me; show me."

Figure 9.1
Sanitary workers cross a bridge over the Tietê River in Brazil. The bridge has a water spray to try to reduce the size of the toxic foam that blankets the river.

Advantages of Visual Aids

While *verbal* supports (discussed in the preceding chapter) are important for explaining and illustrating your ideas, you also should look for *visual* support. Let's examine some reasons for using visual aids.

1.   Visual aids can make ideas clear and understandable.   Your listeners can quickly grasp how to jump-start a car if you display a drawing that shows where to connect battery cables.

2.   Visual aids can make a speech more interesting.   In a speech on pollution, a chemist showed color slides of gargoyles and statues in Europe that had been eaten away by acid rain. The slides added a lively, provocative element to a technical subject.

3.   Visual aids can help an audience remember facts and details.   Research shows that oral information alone is not as effective as oral information coupled with visual aids.[2] In one experiment, two groups of college students were given a speech on drunk driving. The first group was shown a large drawing of a clock face with 10 P.M. to 2 A.M. marked as a big, red pie wedge—to emphasize the hours when most alcohol-related accidents occur. Students in the second group were told the same information but were not shown the clock. Two weeks later, a test was given. Asked to specify the most dangerous hours, 80 percent of the students in the first group answered correctly, while only 15 percent of the students in the second group could recall the exact hours.[3]

4.   Visual aids can make long, complicated explanations unnecessary.   In medical schools, professors use close-up slides and videotapes to teach surgical procedures. The visuals show exactly where and how to make an incision, sparing the professor from having to give a tedious verbal explanation.

5.   Visual aids can help prove a point.   In Philadelphia, a man who claimed he had been permanently disabled when his car collided with a bus sued the city of Philadelphia, which owned the bus, for compensation. The city refused payment, claiming that he was faking his disability. At a hearing, the man entered in a wheelchair and told the court that he was no longer able to earn a living. In rebuttal, the city's attorney played a videotape (surreptitiously taken by a detective) of the man skiing vigorously down the slopes of a New England mountain a few weeks earlier. The city won the case.[4]

6.   Visual aids can add to your credibility.   When you display good visuals during a speech, the audience is impressed, for it is obvious you have spent time and energy in order to make the speech interesting and understandable. Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania found that presenters who used visual aids were rated by listeners as "better prepared, more professional, more persuasive, more credible, and more interesting" than presenters who used no visuals.[5] But other research also needs to be mentioned as a warning: If listeners think that visual aids are poor, their confidence in the speaker declines.[6] In other words, you are better off using no visual aids at all than poor ones.

7.   Visual aids enhance communication with people who speak English as a second language.   As more and more audiences include professionals and businesspeople from other countries, international students, immigrants, and others whose command of English is imperfect, visual aids have become a crucial way to overcome language limitations.

SpeechMate
CD-ROM

To see a speaker who uses visual aids effectively, view Speech 5 ("How to Hide Valuables") on Disk 1 of the CD.

Class Discussion
Visuals have become almost mandatory in important courtroom battles, according to Milwaukee trial attorney J. Ric Gass, who says he would quit trying cases if he couldn't use visual aids: "If one party in the courtroom is using visual communication and the other isn't, the likely winner is going to be the visual, not the verbal, communicator." Gass says that arguments incorporating visual aids are perceived by jurors as more believable. Lead the class in a discussion of which audio and visual aids would be most persuasive in these courtroom situations: a car wreck, a pattern of stalking, and a product injury lawsuit.

Types of Visual Aids

In this section, we will look at nine types of visual aids—graphs, charts, drawings, photographs, videotape, computer graphics, objects, models, and yourself—and then in the next section, we will discuss how to present them, using a variety of media.

Important note: Don't make the mistake of thinking that some of these types, such as charts and graphs, are suitable only for low-tech media such as posters and handouts. To the contrary, most of the types can be conveyed effectively in high-tech media such as PowerPoint presentations.

Graphs

Graphs help audiences understand and retain statistical data. The **line graph,** which is widely used in textbooks, uses a horizontal and a vertical scale to show trends and the relationship between two variables, such as "death rate" and "years" in Figure 9.2.

A **bar graph** consists of horizontal or vertical bars that contrast two or more variables, as in Figure 9.3. A bar graph can effectively display a great deal of data in a clear, easily comprehended manner.

A **pie graph** is a circle representing 100 percent and divided into segments of various sizes. A pie graph in a speech should have no more than seven or eight wedges. A common mistake occurs when students see a 20-piece pie graph in a book and copy it as a visual for a speech. Although such a graph is acceptable in a book because readers can scrutinize it as long as they wish, it could come across to listeners as cluttered, distracting, and confusing. Figure 9.4 shows a pie graph.

line graph
a visual consisting of lines (charted on a grid) that show trends

bar graph
a visual that contrasts two or more sets of data by means of parallel rectangles of varying lengths
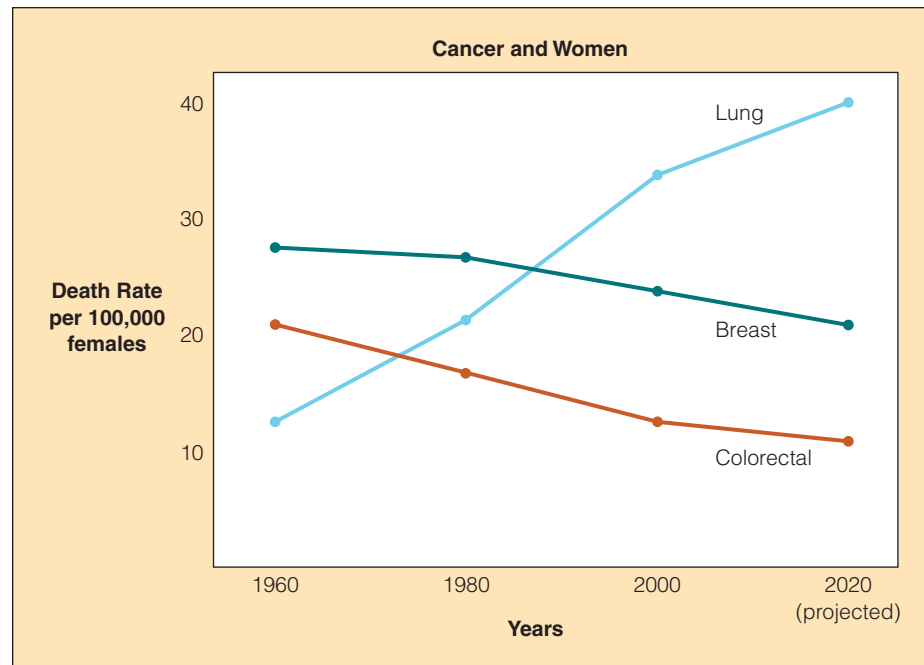
pie graph
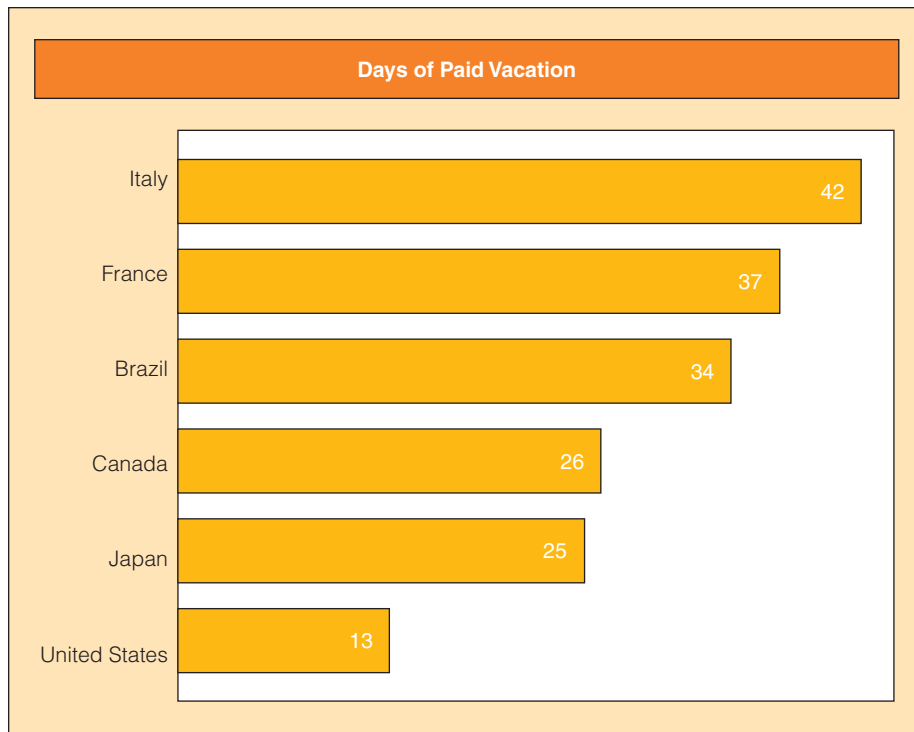a circle showing a given whole that is divided into component wedges

Figure 9.2

Sample Line Graph
This PowerPoint slide shows that for American women, the death rate has declined for all cancers except lung cancer. (The three most common cancers are shown here.) The rise in lung cancer deaths is due to the increase since the 1960s in smoking among women, and the trend is expected to increase because more than 25 percent of adolescent girls in the United States smoke.

(*Source:* American Cancer Society.)

Days of Paid Vacation

Country	Days
Italy	42
France	37
Brazil	34
Canada	26
Japan	25
United States	13

Figure 9.3

Sample Bar Graph

Displayed in a speech arguing for more vacation time for Americans, this bar graph shows the average number of days of paid vacation per year for the workforce in six countries. A graph like this can be placed in a PowerPoint program, mounted on a poster, or reproduced on an overhead transparency.

(*Source:* World Tourism Organization.)

Of all graphs, a **pictorial graph** is perhaps the easiest to read, because it visually translates information into a picture that can be grasped instantly. Figure 9.5 is an example of a pictorial graph.

Charts

Charts provide information in a compact, easily digested form. An **organization chart** can be used to show the hierarchy of a business or agency, with the chief executive at the top and lines of authority going downward. A **flowchart** illustrates the flow, or sequence, of related events. Figure 9.6 shows a flowchart.

An **information chart,** also called a *list of key ideas,* is a convenient way of presenting main points or steps in a process. Figure 9.7 shows a good format for presenting a list.
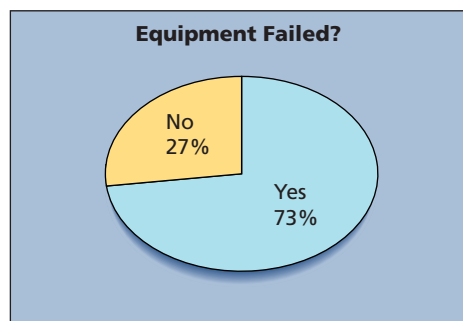
pictorial graph
a visual that dramatizes statistical data by means of pictorial forms

organization chart
a diagram showing the hierarchical structure of personnel

flowchart
a diagram that shows step-by-step progression through a procedure or system

information chart
text material arranged as a series of key points


Equipment Failed?

No 27%
Yes 73%

Figure 9.4

Sample Pie Graph

In a poll, presenters were asked, "Has your laptop computer, projector, or other electronic presentation equipment ever failed you during a presentation?" The pie graph shows why presenters should plan for emergencies.

Figure 9.5

Sample Pictorial Graph
When the speaker explains that each image represents 400 wolves, the audience can quickly visualize the comeback of the gray wolf, an endangered species that had an estimated 400 survivors in 1965. Thanks to protection mandated by federal law, the gray wolf population has climbed to 3,200.
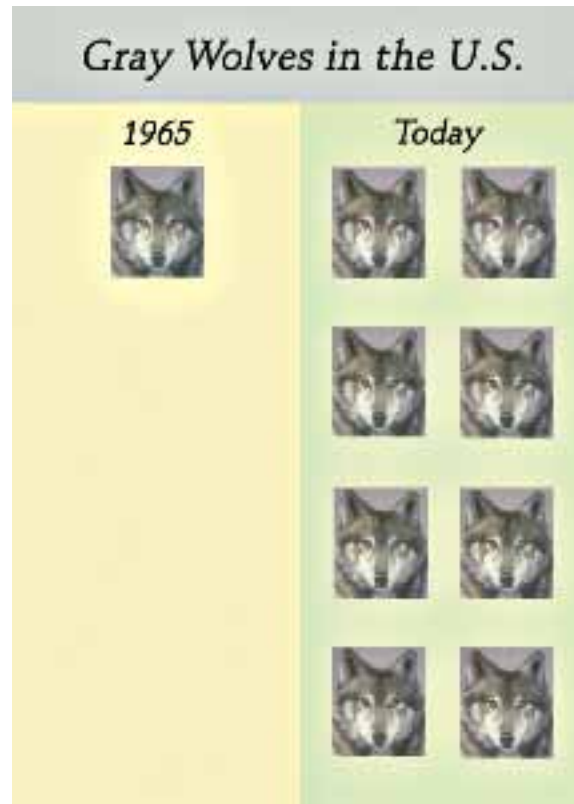
table
numbers or words arranged systematically in rows and columns

An information chart can sometimes take the form of a **table,** in which information is presented in rows and columns. Figure 9.8 shows how easy it can be to understand a table.

Note of caution: Most instructors dislike a speech that is nothing more than a recitation of a lengthy list. One student's entire speech was a list of 42 lucrative careers—a lazy way of doing a speech.

Drawings

Drawings make good visual aids because they can illustrate points that would be hard to explain in words. One kind of drawing that is highly effective is a map. By sketching a map yourself, you can include only those features that are pertinent to your speech. If you were speaking about the major rivers of America, for example, you could outline the boundaries of the United States and then draw heavy blue lines for the rivers, leaving out extraneous details, such as cities. Figure 9.9 shows a map.

Photographs

Because photographs have a high degree of realism, they are excellent for proving points. Lawyers, for example, often use photographs of the scene of an accident to argue a case. In a speech, you should not use a photograph unless it can be enlarged so that everyone can see it clearly. (Options for enlargement will be discussed later in this chapter.)
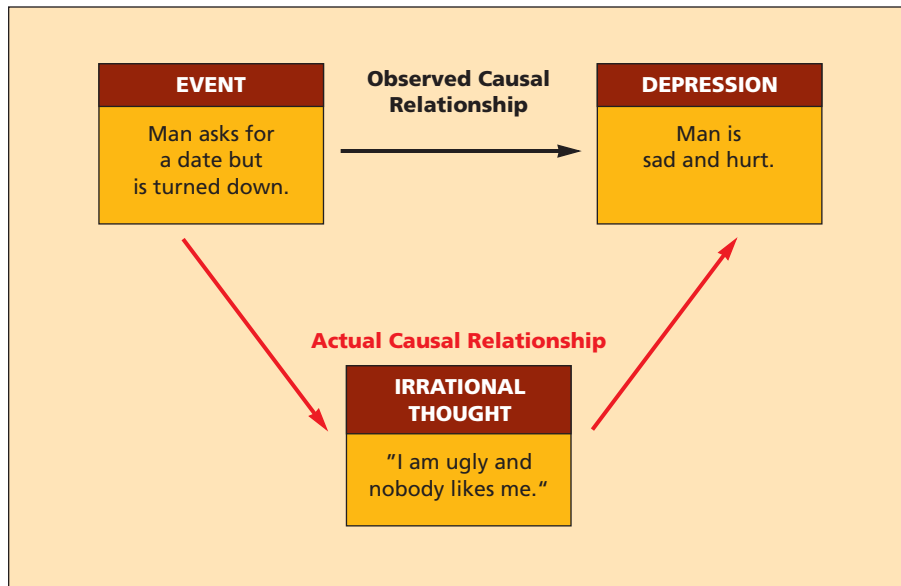
Figure 9.6
Sample Flowchart
Cognitive psychologists believe that depression is not caused by an event, such as being turned down when asking for a date, but by a person's thoughts (often irrational) about the event.

With the growing popularity of multimedia programs like PowerPoint, more and more presenters are using digitized photos. A digitized photo can be taken with a digital camera and then imported directly into a computer for use in a multimedia program, or it can be obtained by a digital scan of traditional camera film or a print. If you need help, consult your campus media department.

Videotape and DVD

With videotape or DVD, you can transport your audience to any corner of the world. To give listeners a glimpse of the rich spectacle of Mexican weddings,

Figure 9.7
Sample Information Chart
An information chart, or list of key ideas, can be written on transparencies, slides, or posters. If possible, display only one item at a time so that listeners stay with you and don't read ahead.

Figure 9.8

Sample Table

A table is an effective type of information chart. This table, which is based on a survey of 3,000 single Americans who were asked to describe themselves, would be most effective if the speaker used progressive revelation, showing only one horizontal row at a time.

(*Source: Health* magazine.)

| How Single Americans Describe Themselves		
	Men	**Women**
Extremely Handsome/Beautiful	5%	3%
Very Attractive	9%	12%
Attractive/Pretty	28%	13%
Average Good Looks	33%	47%
Interesting Looking	11%	12%
Plain	6%	4%
Don't Know/Uncertain	8%	9%

student speaker Victor Treviño showed a videotape of ritual, music, and dance at the wedding celebration of his sister in Guadalajara.

If you videotape an interview as part of your research, you may be able to use some excerpts in your speech. Student speaker Adrienne Shields interviewed a bank official on how crooks steal from ATMs (automated teller machines). In her speech, Shields played video segments of the official as he

Figure 9.9

Sample Map

This map illustrates that half of all Americans live in the nine most populous states.

Half of All Americans Live in 9 States
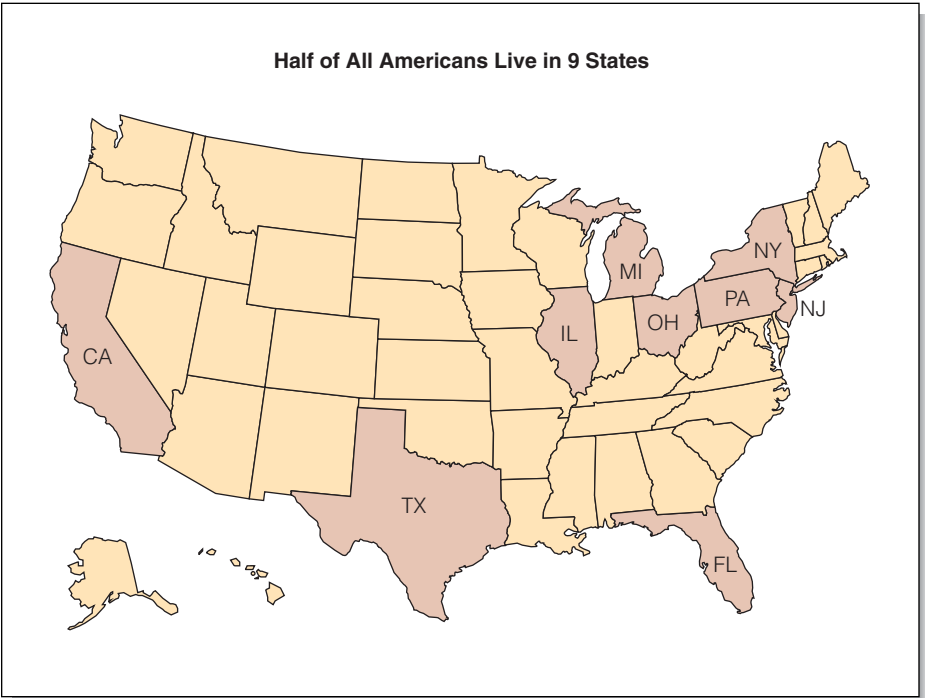
Tips **for your CAREER**

Tip 9.1 Never Let Visuals Substitute for a Speech

Because visual aids are so powerful, some speakers let them dominate a speech. The visuals become the real show, with the speaker acting as a mere technician. It is easy for this to happen, especially if you have some dazzling slides or a spectacular video. The punch and glitz of the visuals make you feel inadequate, and you think you ought to step aside and let the graphics take command. This attitude is misguided, as shown by the experience of Preston Bradley, vice president of Graystone Corporation:

> Several years ago I made a presentation in which I used a commercially produced videotape. Thinking that the audience would prefer animated, full-color images to my words, I let the videotape take up most of the time; I merely added a few comments

at the end and fielded a few questions. Later, several listeners told me that the videotape had been far less helpful than my remarks, and they recommended that in the future I talk more and use videotape less. The reason: during my informal talk I was able to explain tough concepts and interact with the audience. The videotape, on the other hand, zipped along, incapable of sensing whether the audience was absorbing the information.

People can see jazzy video productions on TV at any hour of the day, but a speech has a dimension that TV lacks—a living, breathing human engaged in the stimulating act of direct communication. Don't let visuals rob your speech of aliveness and rapport.

demonstrated the machine's vulnerabilities. The videotape was much more effective than a verbal description alone would have been.

If you have access to a video camcorder, you can make your own videotape, as Adrienne Shields did, or you can show segments from a commercially produced videotape. Because of the ease in rewinding and advancing a videotape, you can show key segments of a tape, eliminating irrelevant or redundant parts.

Don't use your entire allotted time to play a videotape or DVD. Instead, use video only at carefully selected moments—especially whenever listeners are likely to need visual help in understanding technical material. Sometimes a brief segment at the beginning can serve as an appetizer to whet the taste buds for the main course, the body of your speech. In some speeches you can use a video segment at the end if you think it will motivate the audience to take action on your proposals.

Computer and Internet Multimedia

With a computer, you can access these kinds of multimedia aids for a speech:

- *Photos* are available in such categories as news events, historical persons, wildlife, travel scenes, and space exploration.
- *Drawings* include maps, charts, cartoons, and reproductions of art masterpieces.
- *Video clips* are available for TV news reports, public events, speeches, health tips, and animated cartoons.
- *Audio clips* can be found for music, speeches, interviews, and sound effects.

The easiest way to gather these materials is to take them from the Internet— if your computer has sufficient power and space. Most computers can handle

Teaching Idea
In searching for illustrations for speeches, some students reject black-and-white photographs because they think they are inferior to color. Point out that black-and-white pictures are considered superior in the art world, where they represent the majority of photos hanging in galleries and museums. They are especially powerful in documenting reality, such as the grittiness of poverty, and in evoking moods. Top photographers such as Annie Liebovitz and Richard Avedon take black-and-white pictures as often as color.

SpeechMate
CD-ROM

To see a speaker who uses Internet graphics, view Video Clip 9.1 on Disk 1.

Table 9.1   Free Multimedia Materials on the Internet

For classroom speeches, students may download and use multimedia files from Websites without getting permission because they are engaged in a school project. But for many career and community presentations, speakers must seek and receive permission before using Web materials. (See Chapter 7 for details.)	
Website	**Options**
Google www.google.com	Click on Images and then Advanced Image Search, which permits you to specify file size (small, large, very large) and format (JPEG, etc.).
AltaVista www.altavista.com	Choose Images, Audio, or Video. While most of the material is free, AltaVista does include some photo collections that require a fee for downloading.
Ixquick www.Ixquick.com	Choose the Pictures or MP3 (audio) button before searching.
Ditto.com www.ditto.com	This service searches for photos, drawings, and cartoons.
Lycos Multimedia www.multimedia.lycos.com	Choose Pictures, Audio, or Video.
Librarians' Index to the Internet www.lii.org	In the search box, type "photos" or "graphics."
Digital Librarian www.digital-librarian.com	Click on "Images" for a comprehensive list of photos, most of them historical.

Note: Internet addresses and features sometimes change. For an update on these sites, visit this book's Website (www.mhhe.com/gregory7), click on STUDENT EDITION and then WEBLINKS, and look at notes for this page.

Teaching Idea
To avoid having students show a 4-minute video during a 5-minute speech, warn the class that any video segments should be brief. For those students who indicate on their outlines that they plan to use videos in a given speech, pin them down on exactly how much time their videos will take.

low resolution
lacking fine detail

photos, drawings, and audio clips, but a powerful system is needed to download video clips.

Is it legal to download without getting permission? For classroom speeches, yes. Copyright restrictions do not apply because you are engaged in noncommercial, educational, one-time use of materials. For many business and professional presentations, however, you need to seek permission. (See Chapter 7 for details.) To find multimedia materials on the Internet, use the search options for free materials shown in Table 9.1.

To download an image from a Website, follow these steps:

1. On most computers, position the mouse pointer over the image, click the right-hand mouse button, and choose "Save Image As" from the menu. (If these instructions don't work for your computer, find the correct steps by going to a search engine such as MetaCrawler, www.metacrawler.com, and searching by phrase, "how to download an image.")

2. As you save the image, designate a location for storage, such as your computer's hard drive, a diskette, or a CD.

Now for a complication: Most of the free, downloadable images on Websites have **low resolution,** which means they are sharp and clear only at small sizes. This may not be a problem if you are using the images for PowerPoint

or for a small illustration in a handout. But you can't use "low-res" for anything that requires enlargment, such as posters or overhead transparencies, because they would be fuzzy and indistinct. Instead you would need **high-resolution** images, which are sharp and clear at both small and large sizes.

high resolution
possessing great detail

(If you are not sure whether an image has high or low resolution, import it into a word-processing program, enlarge it to 8×10 inches, and print it. If it comes out muddy and distorted, it's low resolution; if it's crisp and clear, it's high resolution.)

Some images on Websites are **thumbnails**—tiny images with very low resolution. Often you can click on a thumbnail to display a bigger version, which is a better choice for reproduction. Although the bigger version may not have high resolution, at least it will have more resolution than the thumbnail.

thumbnail
reduced image

Though not as plentiful as low-resolution images, high-resolution images are available via the Internet; some of them can be downloaded at no cost, as described above, but most of them require a fee to download. Some sites offer them on CDs. To find high-resolution images, go to Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com) and follow this sequence: Business and Economy > Shopping and Services > Photography > Stock Photography.

When considering high-resolution images, one of the best options is to choose **royalty-free images.** Once you purchase an image, you don't have to seek permission or pay an additional fee each time you use it. Here's an example: Let's say you frequently give talks on weather patterns. You can buy a royalty-free CD of 100 maps showing the entire world and various continents and countries. You can use the maps in your presentations again and again—and, if you wish, you can modify them on your computer to create your own customized versions. To find royalty-free images, go to Yahoo! and follow the steps listed in the paragraph above, except when you get to "Stock Photography," go one step further by clicking on "Royalty-free."

royalty-free images
ready-made images that do not require one to seek permission or pay a fee

Objects

Three-dimensional objects make good visual aids, provided they are large enough for everyone in the audience to see. You could display such things as a blood-pressure gauge, a hibachi, handmade pottery, mountain-climbing equipment, and musical instruments.

Models

A model is a representation of an object. One speaker used a model of the great pyramids to discuss how the ancient Egyptians probably built them. Another speaker used a homemade "lung," the interior of which consisted of clean cotton. When cigarette smoke was sucked through a tube, the lung turned from white to a sickening yellow-brown. One advantage of a model is that you can move it around. If you had a model airplane, for example, you could show principles of aerodynamics more easily than if you had only a drawing of a plane.

Yourself and Volunteers

Using yourself as a visual aid, you can demonstrate yoga positions, judo holds, karate chops, stretching exercises, relaxation techniques, ballet steps, and tennis

strokes. You can don native attire, historical costumes, or scuba-diving equipment. One student came to class dressed and made up as a clown to give a speech on her part-time job as a clown for children's birthday parties.

Volunteers can enhance some speeches. You could use a friend, for example, to illustrate self-defense methods against an attacker. (For a classroom speech, be sure to get permission from your instructor before using a volunteer.)

Make sure you line up volunteers well in advance of speech day and, if necessary, practice with them to make sure they perform smoothly. Have substitutes lined up in case the scheduled volunteers fail to appear. Give instructions in advance so that volunteers know when to stand, when to sit, and so on. You don't want your volunteers to become a distraction by standing around when they are not needed.

Media for Visual Aids

The types of visual aids we have just discussed—charts, graphs, and so on—can be conveyed to the audience via a variety of different media.

Electronic Presentations

electronic presentation
computerized program capable of conveying text, drawings, photos, video, and audio

An **electronic presentation** involves visual aids that are powered by a computer. As a speaker talks, he or she can display text slides, photos, drawings, animation, and video clips. Voice and music also can be played.

Electronic presentations are often called PowerPoint presentations because of the popularity of one program, Microsoft PowerPoint. Later in this chapter, a section will be devoted to using PowerPoint.

The method for displaying an electronic presentation should be determined by the size of the audience. For small groups of five or six people, an average-sized computer monitor may be large enough. For larger groups, you can use a large TV or a screen; in addition to a computer, you may need a computer-linked multimedia projector.

Boards

marker board
rectangular surface, usually white, upon which dry-erase markers can be used for text and graphics

The two most widely used types of presentation boards today are chalkboards and **marker boards.** The latter type (also called dry-erase or "white" board) has a white surface on which the presenter writes with a special pen available in many different colors. The pen writes as a liquid, but the writing can be erased as if it were chalk. You must be sure to use the special pen: If you use an ordinary marking or highlighting pen, the writing may not come off.

Either type of board makes a good tool for visual aids if you have a few technical words that you need to write for your audience. If you use a big word like *transmogrification* (which means a change into a different, sometimes bizarre, form), you can step over to the board and write it down in big letters. A board is also effective if you have complex drawings that require constant insertions and erasures—for example, if you are diagramming plays for a soccer team.

Boards have some disadvantages. If you put your visual—a graph, say—on a board during your speech, you have to turn your back on the audience; while you're drawing, their attention drifts away from you, and you may find it hard

to regain it. Would it be a good idea to put your graph on the board before the speech begins? No, because the audience would be distracted by it; they would scrutinize it before you are ready to talk about it. (It would do no good to say, "Don't pay any attention to this until I get to it." Such a request would make the graph all the more interesting—and therefore distracting.) There is one possible solution: cover the part of the board on which you have written, but this can be awkward. You would have to find something large enough to do the job without being distracting. Another problem is that speakers preceding you might also be planning to use the board, and they might have to erase your visual aid.

Because of the limitations of boards, some instructors forbid their use in a classroom speech, so be sure to find out your instructor's policy.

Posters

You can put many kinds of visual aids—such as graphs, drawings, and charts—on posters. They do the same work as boards, but they are usually neater and more visually appealing.

The size of the poster should depend upon the size of the audience. Ask yourself: Will the person in the back row be able to see the words or artwork clearly? For huge audiences, posters are obviously unsuitable.

Make sure there is a reliable place to put your posters. If you prop them against a chalkboard or tape them on a wall, they may fall to the floor during the middle of the speech. Using thumbtacks might work if a corkboard or other suitable place for tacking is available. One technique is to pile your posters on a desk and hold them up one at a time, being sure to hold them steady. Another method is to put your poster on an easel (which your school's audiovisual department may be able to provide). Even with an easel, however, some posters tend to curl and resist standing up straight. To prevent this, tape a second poster or a piece of cardboard to the back of your poster. (*Tip:* An even better solution to the problem of curling is to buy poster stocks that are sturdier than the standard stock sold at drugstores. Office-supply and craft stores have *foamboards.* Though more expensive than standard poster stock, these materials will not sag or curl.)

Flip Charts

A **flip chart** is a giant writing pad whose pages are glued or wired together at the top. It can be mounted on an easel. When you are through with each page, you can tear it off or flip it over the back of the easel.

flip chart
a large book consisting of blank sheets (hinged at the top) that can be flipped over to present information sequentially

You can prepare the visuals on each page in advance, or you can "halfway" prepare them—that is, lightly pencil in your sheets at home; then during the speech, with a heavy marker, trace over the lines. With some flip charts, the paper may be so thin that ink will seep to the next page, so you may need to leave a blank page between each drawn-on sheet.

Be aware that some instructors disapprove of student speakers writing on a flip chart during a speech.

Handouts

Despite the availability of high-tech tools, one of the most popular formats used in business and professional presentations is the paper **handout.** It is easy to explain the enduring popularity of handouts: they are easy to prepare, can be

handout
material distributed to an audience as part of a speaker's presentation

updated quickly at the last moment, and provide a permanent document that listeners can take with them when they leave a presentation.

Though handouts are popular, they are often misused. I have witnessed the following fiasco dozens of times: A presenter distributes stacks of handouts at the beginning of a talk. While he or she discusses each handout, the room is filled with the sound of rustling papers, as the listeners race ahead, reading material the presenter has not yet reached, ignoring or only half-listening to what he or she is saying. (Some speakers try to solve this problem by imploring the audience to stay with them and not read ahead, but this is futile; humans are naturally curious, and their eyes cannot resist reading.)

Because listeners study the pages instead of paying attention to the speaker, handouts are banned in some public speaking classes. Even if your instructor permits them, they are usually unsuitable during a classroom speech because distributing them eats up time and creates a distraction.

The best use of handouts—especially lengthy, complex documents—is to give them *after* the question-and-answer period so that listeners can take them to office or home for further study and review. (For classroom speeches, check with your instructor; he or she may prefer that you wait until the end of the class period; if you give out material at the end of your speech, students might read it instead of listening to the next speaker.)

One exception to the above advice: for informal presentations in career and community settings, it is permissible to distribute a handout during a presentation if it is short and simple—a one-page document with an easy-to-understand graphic or a *small* amount of text. In such situations, follow these guidelines: (1) Never distribute a handout until you are ready to talk about it—a premature handout grows stale. (2) Avoid talking about a handout while you are distributing copies. Wait until every listener has a copy before you start your explanation.

Visual Presenters

visual presenter
a device capable of producing images of both two- and three-dimensional objects

A **visual presenter,** also known as a document camera or ELMO (the name of a leading manufacturer), is a camera mounted on a stand and pointed at a platform below (see Figure 9.10). What the camera sees is shown on a TV or video monitor, or projected onto a screen via a digital projector. Visual presenters can show two-dimensional items such as photos and diagrams, and they also can show three-dimensional objects such as jewelry. A zoom feature permits very small items, such as a coin, to be enlarged for easy viewing.

Visual presenters are popular because they are easy to use, and a speaker can make last-minute changes. Unfortunately, they are often used in a clumsy fashion that makes the speaker look like a fumbler who has lost eye contact with the audience. Here is what can happen:

> Some speakers bring a book or magazine that contains an illustration, but when they try to use the visual presenter, they have trouble holding the material in place, they spend a lot of time positioning the illustration correctly, and they waste time zooming in and out. When they finally get the illustration in position, two more problems may emerge: (1) the illustration may be bordered by extraneous material that is distracting, and (2) if it is printed on glossy paper, it may be obscured by glare.

To use a visual presenter skillfully, follow these guidelines:

1. Discard an illustration if it not crisp and clear. If you have a dark, blurry snapshot, using a visual presenter will not improve its appearance. It will show up on the screen as a dark, blurry picture, and the audience will be displeased. Find a replacement or do without.

2. If possible, use an assistant to handle the presentation of material. This frees you to look at your audience and not waste time in positioning items.

3. Several days beforehand, rehearse the speech in the actual room where the speech will be given. If you are using an assistant, have him or her practice using the equipment and displaying the visuals at the appropriate times.

4. When using books and magazines, frame your illustrations by using stick-on slips to mask all extraneous material.

5. Minimize glare by making sure that a page lies flat. If necessary, you or your assistant can press down on the area surrounding the illustration to ensure flatness.

6. Immediately before your speech, adjust the camera's zoom feature so that you have the correct setting. Remember that a preceding speaker might have used a setting that is wrong for your needs.

Overhead Transparencies

Overhead projectors are illuminated boxes that project images from **transparencies** (clear sheets of acetate) onto a screen. Once the most popular of all presentation tools, overhead projectors have declined in popularity in recent years, but they are still widely used.

Advantages.   There are five advantages in using overhead transparencies: (1) The transparencies are simple to produce. (2) You can easily make last-minute

transparency
clear sheets on which visuals are drawn or printed, and then viewed by light shining from an overhead projector

changes in artwork or statistics. (3) You don't need another person to operate the machine for you. (4) The room usually doesn't need to be darkened, so you and the audience can see each other at all times (and have enough light for you to read your notes and for listeners to take notes). (5) When you want to point to an item on your visual, you don't have to turn your back to the audience by going to the screen; you can simply point to the proper place on the transparency with a pencil or pen.

Creating overheads.   To create a transparency, you can write directly on the acetate sheet with a variety of color pens, or you can make a master copy on plain white paper and use an office copier to make the transparency. (Most copiers today can print on transparencies, but you need a special kind of acetate that won't melt inside the copier.) Your college's audiovisual department may be able to help you produce transparencies for a small fee, or a quick-print shop in your community can make the transparencies from your master copy.

During a speech, you can use your pen to circle key words, draw arrows, or insert updated statistics. But don't try to create an entire visual aid from scratch during the speech because you might lose your audience's attention while you write or draw.

When you create transparencies in advance, use a marking pen especially designed for overheads. If you use an ordinary marker to prepare a transparency the night before your speech, the graphics may look fine at the time, but by the next day, ink may evaporate, leaving you with only thin traces. Avoid storing transparencies directly against one another because the ink might transfer. Put them in file folders or store them with a sheet of paper between each one.

While it is true that you don't have to darken a room for overhead transparencies, you may want to do so for transparencies that are copies of color photographs. A dark room will make the photo more vivid.

35mm Slides

When people speak of slides today, they often refer to electronic, or Power-Point, slides. However, for most of the 20th century, slides referred to 35mm transparency film, which was unsurpassed for its sharpness and vivid colors.

In recent years, film has lost ground to new digital cameras. Nevertheless, the **35mm slide** continues to be used widely in education, science, and publishing.

The 35mm slide allows a great deal of flexibility: you can insert and delete slides quickly and easily, thus adapting a slide show to meet the needs of different kinds of audiences.

Although a 35mm slide can be digitized and shown by a multimedia projector, the old-fashioned slide projector still gives the most vivid results. Projectors are easy to operate. You can set your own pace, lingering over a slide that requires long explanation, while hurrying through slides that need little or no commentary. If you have a remote-control device on a long cord, you can stand next to the screen and point out items without having to walk back to the projector to change slides.

Teaching Idea
Emphasize that over-head transparencies can be printed on a student's printer, but only if he or she uses the kind of acetate that is suitable for the particular printer. At most office-supply stores, a student can find a package of acetates that will match his or her printer.

35mm slide
transparent film used in a camera

To be seen clearly, slides must be shown in a completely darkened room. This situation is both good and bad: Good, because your listeners' eyes cannot wander and become distracted—they are concentrated on the screen; bad, because you and your listeners lose eye communication with each other, and you have to rely solely on your voice to make contact. To solve this problem, some speakers show slides in a semidark room, but even dim light makes the slides appear washed out and hard to see.

Once you have finished discussing a slide, don't leave it on the screen to distract your audience. If you are not yet ready to go to the next slide, project a light-colored blank slide on the screen while you talk, or turn off the projector and turn on the lights until you are ready for the next slide.

Television and Video Projectors

For a small audience (under 35 people), a standard television set is usually suitable for showing a televised program, videotape, or DVD. For larger audiences, you need either a mammoth-screen TV or several monitors positioned throughout the room.

In the case of videotapes and DVD, a third option is available for large audiences: a **video projector,** which is connected to a VCR, DVD player, or camcorder; it can project images onto a large, theater-style screen with only a small loss of video quality.

A common problem with video is setting the correct volume. Here's the solution: Before listeners arrive, play the video and find a sound level that seems right for the people in the back row. Then increase the level slightly. (The absorption of sound waves by the audience's clothing makes this necessary.)

■ A Brief Guide to Using PowerPoint

A speech can be enhanced by using PowerPoint for slides, animations, sound, and video clips. In this section, we will offer a brief guide to creating PowerPoint slides and using them effectively in a speech. For more detailed technical information on how to create slides using PowerPoint, you have two options: the Help menu in the PowerPoint program or the PowerPoint Tutor on the SpeechMate CD-ROM that accompanies this textbook.

If new versions of PowerPoint are released, you can get updated information by visiting this book's Website (www.mhhe.com/gregory7). Click on STU-DENT EDITION and then WEBLINKS, and look at notes for this page.

Prepare Your Speech First

When one student speaker prepared a speech on immigration to the United States, he began by finding photos on the Internet, including a beautiful picture of the Statue of Liberty. When he gave his speech, he devoted a lot of time to the Statue and its history, and this forced him (because of his time limit) to eliminate some of his important points about immigration. While the Statue by itself would have made a good speech topic, it had only marginal value in a speech on immigration. He had let the dazzling photo skew his priorities.

To avoid the mistake of letting PowerPoint graphics overly influence your planning, use this approach:

FYI
No medium can show the full richness of an original slide. Even the most expensive printing presses and slide projectors lose 10 to 20 percent of the original's quality. The only way to see a slide in its full glory is to view it on a photographer's lightbox with a loupe (a type of magnifying glass).

video projector
machine that projects videotaped images onto a large screen

SpeechMate
CD-ROM
For guidance in creating and displaying PowerPoint presentations, see the PowerPoint Tutor on Disk 1 of the CD.

1. Finish the outline of your speech before you even think about creating PowerPoint slides.
2. Ask yourself: "How can I use visuals to highlight or clarify key ideas in my speech?" You may be able to come up with ideas for photos, drawings, graphs, charts, and lists of key points.
3. Choose slides that are aids or helpers—not a replacement—for a speech. Ask yourself this crucial question: "If I stand up to speak and the equipment fails to work, will I be able to present my ideas?" You should be able to say yes. If you say no, you are relying too much on the slides to carry the burden of communication.

Create Slides

To create slides, follow the steps in Table 9.2. Note that the table shows the "Blank Presentation" approach, which is recommended for beginners because of its simplicity. Another choice is "From Design Template," but you are advised to use it with extreme caution. It contains some ready-made templates that are tempting to use because a lot of design work has been done for you. But many of the templates have glitzy artwork that is gaudy and distracting. Worst of all, text printed on top of such artwork is hard to read.

Avoid Overwhelming Your Audience

Some presenters think that using PowerPoint means—almost by definition— that they must have slides for every part of their speech. So they create a large number of slides, with a lot of information on each slide. When they speak, they spend their entire time plowing through one slide after another. The result is a numb and weary audience.

The best approach is to have as few slides as possible. Create a slide only when it will help the audience understand and remember a point or when it will make a part of your speech more interesting.

Make Your Slides Simple and Attractive

Create slides that are inviting and uncluttered. When you use text, display just a few words. If you look at the slides in Figure 9.11, you will see that the first slide is a snoozer, especially if there are 30 more just like it. The second slide is superior because it crisply emphasizes the key points without fatiguing the audience. The speaker can elaborate on each point in a conversational way.

If possible, use short, to-the-point phrases instead of complete sentences. Sometimes it is effective to separate the phrases by using a bullet in front of each phrase.

Make text large enough for comfortable reading. How large is large enough? One guideline is to use 44-point size (or larger) for titles, and 28-point size (or larger) for text. Some self-styled PowerPoint experts stipulate that text should have the same point size on every slide in a presentation, but this rule is too rigid. Sometimes you have to make the font size smaller to accommodate a graphic; at other times, you may need to enlarge text size to emphasize the importance of your material. As we discuss elsewhere in this chapter, the best way to assess the readability of a visual aid is to go beforehand to the room where the speech will be given, display the visual, sit in the back row, and determine whether a listener sitting in that spot could easily and clearly see all parts of the visual.
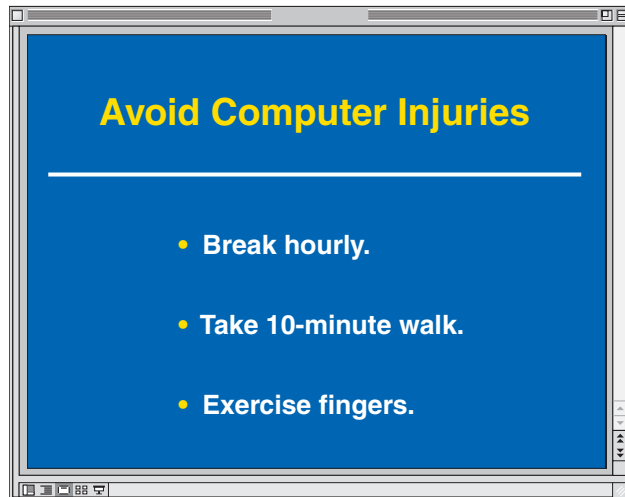
Figure 9.11

Wrong Way
This PowerPoint slide has too many words. If listeners have to read slide after slide of text material, they become weary and dissatisfied.

Right Way
This slide has just a few words to help the audience follow and remember key points. Not many words are needed on the slide because the speaker elaborates on each item. The bullet points should be displayed as a "build"—one at a time.
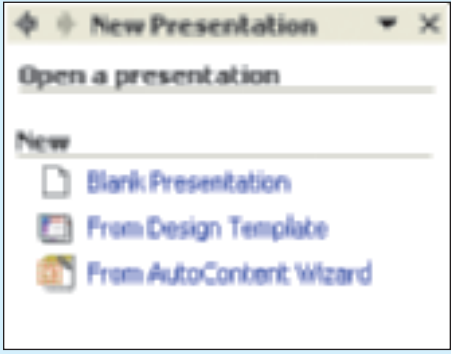
Use Graphics Judiciously

Graphics such as photos and drawings are more interesting and appealing than text, so try to use good artwork whenever you can. In some cases, the artwork can stand by itself without needing any text. If you are describing a tornado, for example, a drawing of a twister might be all that you need as you explain details to your audience.

In other cases, a graphic accompanied by a few words is an effective approach. To see a good example, look at Figure B in this chapter's Special Techniques feature entitled "How to Avoid Eight Design Mistakes." (Also look at the bad example in Figure A.)

But a warning: Don't use artwork just because using artwork is a recommended practice. Irrelevant or inappropriate artwork is worse than none at all. For instance, using a photo of a camel when you are discussing Middle Eastern oil is a "stretch." Drop the camel and insert an oil well. If you can't find a picture of an oil well, use no artwork.

208   **Part 3**   Preparing Content

Table 9.2   Creating Slides in PowerPoint

Step 1.	Open PowerPoint on your computer screen. On the File menu, click New. The New Presentation pane (shown on the right) will appear. Choose the first option, "Blank Presentation."	
Step 2.	Choose a slide layout from over 25 samples. Choose a layout that matches your material—text only, graphics only, and so forth. For this tutorial, we are choosing the third layout shown because we want bullet points. (To get rid of the Text Layout box, you may need to click the "X" in the upper right corner.)	
Step 3.	Enter text by clicking inside a box and typing the words you want.	

Table 9.2 Creating Slides in PowerPoint (*Continued*)

Step 4.	For the bulleted text items, you can add a new item by pressing the Enter button at the end of a line. (Not shown here: You can change the size and appearance of text by swiping across it with your mouse and then choosing Format, followed by Font.)	
Step 5.	To add a color background, go to the Format menu, click on Background (shown here) and use the pulldown menu (indicated by the "down" button). Choose the "More Colors" option and select a color. Press OK. Finally, click on "Apply to All" so that all of your slides will have the same background color.	
Step 6.	When you are using a background color, choose a light color (such as yellow or light blue) if your text is black. Use a dark color (such as blue or brown) if your text is white.	

Table 9.2   Creating Slides in PowerPoint   (*Continued*)

Step 7.	To place graphics, click at the point where you want an image. Pull down the Insert menu and choose Picture and then From File. Specify the file name of your image. To change the size of an image, click on it, place the mouse pointer over any of the corner "handles," hold down the mouse button while pressing on the Shift key, and move the mouse inward or outward. When you have the desired size, release the mouse button and Shift key. To re-position the image, place the mouse pointer in the center, hold down on the mouse button, and drag the image to the desired place.	Body Armor • Used in Middle Ages • Used today by police • Used today by soldiers

Additional Options
• To add a new slide, choose the Insert menu and then New Slide.

• To move from slide to slide, choose View and select Slide Sorter. Double-click a slide to enlarge it to full screen.

• To view the entire slide show, choose View and select Slide Show. To go to a new slide, press Enter. To exit the show, press Escape.

• Save your show onto a CD-R or diskette for use on a computer linked to a digital projector or a TV.

Be careful with cute cartoons and amateurish clip art. While silliness designed to inject a light note may be appropriate in some situations, many PowerPoint presenters include drawings simply because they are available. Unfortunately, the drawings look foolish, and they distract from the message.

For PowerPoint, a rule of thumb is to use only one graphic per slide. One large graphic is easier for the audience to see and understand than several small ones. If you have four photos, for example, create four slides with one photo per slide instead of one slide with four photos. (This is one case where it is a good idea to ignore the rule that one should minimize the number of slides in a presentation.)

Use Crisp Illustrations

Choose images that are sharp, clear, and well-exposed. When enlarged on a big screen or a TV, a photo does not improve. In fact, any defects such as blur and darkness will be magnified.

Many of the images you find on the Internet have resolution sizes that are too small for projection as a PowerPoint slide. They might look fine on your computer, but when enlarged on a screen, they are blurry.

How can you know whether an Internet image has high enough resolution for PowerPoint? Follow these steps:

1. When you are considering an image, find out its resolution by placing your cursor over the image and right-clicking. Select "Properties" and you should see how many pixels are in the image (for example, 240 × 320).

2. Reject images that have a resolution below 200 × 200. This is a rough "rule," but it usually works. For example, a 65 × 110 image and a 145 × 165 image are unacceptable, while 250 × 375 and 200 × 240 are fine.

Rescue Dark Images

Let's say you have a photo on your computer. Maybe you got it from the Internet or maybe somebody e-mailed it to you. Or maybe it's a print that has been scanned and turned into a digital file. What do you do if the photo is too dark? How can you lighten it?

Many word-processing programs, such as Microsoft Word, have rudimentary photo-editing tools (see the Help menu on your program) that will enable you to improve a dark photo. Otherwise, use PowerPoint's tools:

1. Import an image (using Insert > Picture > From File).

2. Click on the image, choose Format, and click on Picture.

3. Under Image Control, slide the Brightness and/or Contrast sliders to the left or right. To see your results, click on Preview. Adjust the sliders until you get a satisfactory result.

Animate Text and Objects

PowerPoint permits animation of objects, meaning that you can show movement over time (for example, an animation of a car accident would show cars entering an intersection, followed by a collision) or you can make portions of a slide appear independently in a prearranged sequence.

One type of animation is called a **build,** in which a visual is displayed in stages from a small piece to the finished graphic. See Figure 9.12 for an illustration. To create a build, follow these steps:

1. Click on the Slide Show menu.

2. Choose Animation Schemes. (An animation scheme applies a predefined special effect to slide objects. The best one is called Appear. There are fancier ones, but the wise presenter will avoid them in most cases because they are too gimmicky and distracting.)

3. In the Slide Design task pane, under Apply to Selected Slides, click on Appear.

4. If you want to apply the scheme to all slides, click the Apply to All Slides button.

A build is a good technique to use when you have several bullet items in a list. Let's say you have five bullet phrases. Display just bullet 1 and talk about it; then add bullet 2 and discuss it, and so on, until all five bullets appear.
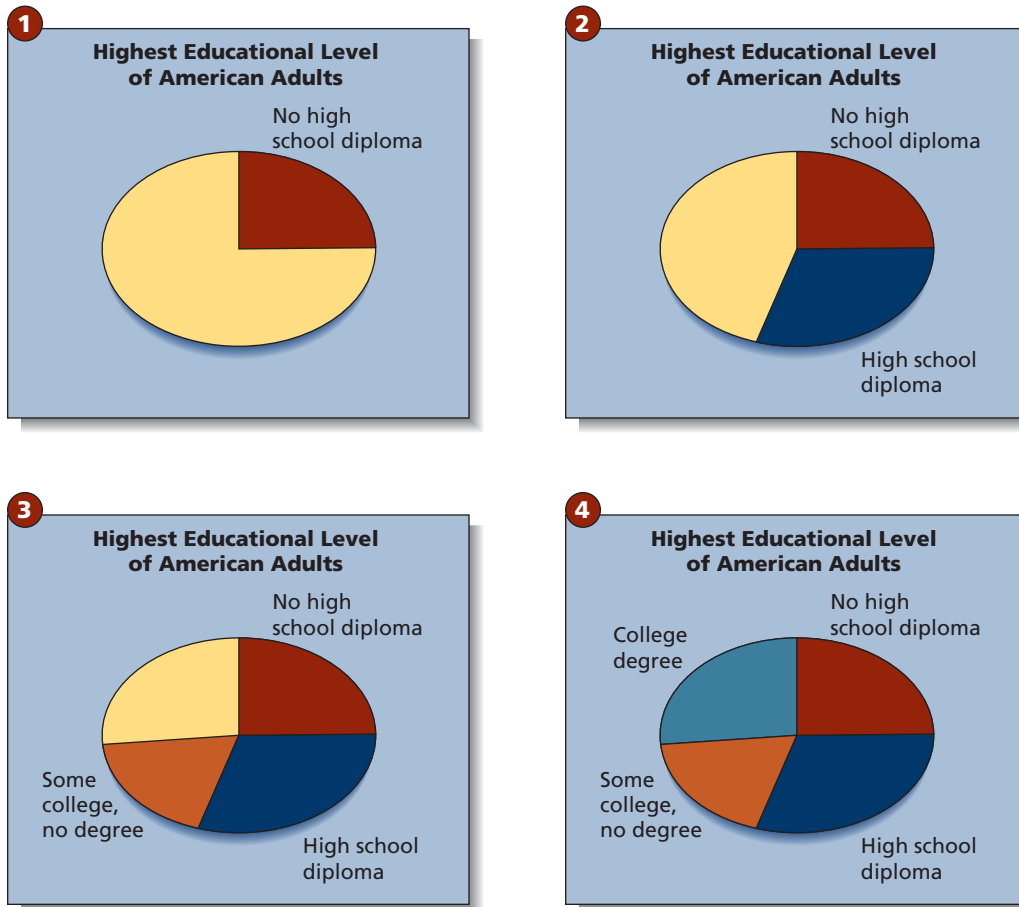
build
a dramatic process in which words or graphics are added one part at a time

SpeechMate
CD-ROM

To see a PowerPoint "build" in action, view Video Clip 9.2 on Disk 1 of the CD.

Figure 9.12

A build is an effective technique in electronic presentations. This pie chart in a PowerPoint presentation shows the educational attainment of adult Americans: less than a high school diploma, 24.8 percent; high school diploma, 30 percent; some college but no degree, 18.7 percent; and college degree, 26.5 percent. (Source: *Chronicle of Higher Education.*)

Present Your Slides

SpeechMate
CD-ROM

To see a speaker who uses Power-Point ineffectively, view Speech 3 (Persuasive Speech That Needs Improvement) on Disk 1 of the CD.

Before speech day, rehearse with all necessary equipment so that you don't fumble during the actual speech. Practice operating the computer or remote control until you become proficient.

During the speech, make yourself—not the screen or TV—the center stage of your speech. You can achieve this by (1) keeping the room partially lit so that you are not totally in shadows, (2) using slides only occasionally, and (3) focusing your eyes and your energy on the audience. Avoid the common mistake of turning away from the audience to read your slides.

Be prepared to use extra slides. For most speeches, there are marginal issues that you don't have time to cover in your speech, but if you are asked about them in the question-and-answer period, it is helpful to have relevant slides that you can display. Simply place such slides at the end of your main slide show and use them if and when you need them.

Tips for your CAREER

Tip 9.2 Beware the Perils of PowerPoint

While PowerPoint has been praised and illustrated in this book, it is true that PowerPoint presentations are widely hated for being boring and tedious. "PowerPoint," says *Sales & Marketing Management* magazine, "has become synonymous with a bad presentation." And *Industry Week* says, "PowerPoint presentations have drugged more people than all the sleeping pills in history."

Some corporations have discouraged their employees from using PowerPoint. One such corporation is Willowbrook Enterprises, whose CEO, Carl Zucker, recalls one bad experience: "There was a well-meaning guy from the legal department who was briefing top management, and he had his entire speech printed out on about 50 slides. He read one slide after another. By the time he got to slide 7 or 8, I looked around the room and realized that everyone was either asleep or had a glazed, stupefied look. I decided then and there that PowerPoint was counterproductive."

The problem is not the software itself, but the widespread abuse of the program. Here are the major mistakes made by PowerPoint presenters:

Wordy Text Slides

If you want to make listeners sleepy and unhappy, display sentence after sentence on the screen and read them to your audience. Do this from the beginning of your speech to the bitter end.

The ideal approach is to use images instead of words, but this is not always possible, so when you must use text, use it sparingly. See Figure 9.11.

Overuse of Special Effects

Audio and video gimmicks are incorporated into PowerPoint and can sometimes be used effectively, but Bill Howard, senior executive editor of *PC Magazine,* advises: "Go easy on the fly-in, swivel, wipe, zoom, laser text, and similar PowerPoint special effects. They get old in a hurry." For example, one presenter used the audio "gunshot" effect as each word was flashed in sequence on the screen. One irritated listener said later, "I felt like I was on a firing range."

The best use of special effects is to help clarify points. For example, a lawyer using animated drawings to recreate an automobile accident can help the jury understand what happened.

Letting PowerPoint Distort Priorities

In preparing a PowerPoint presentation, some people pour most of their energy into creating their visuals (choosing colors, filling in templates, finding artwork), and they lose sight of their true task: to get a message across to the audience. This misguided concentration on mechanics often causes them to fill the presentation with junk (such as unnecessary text slides and irrelevant artwork), and they succumb to the temptation to show more visuals than the audience can absorb. When they actually give the presentation, they let PowerPoint become the main event, as they stand off to one side in the shadows—meek servants of a powerful master.

When you start preparing a multimedia speech, don't focus on PowerPoint. Instead, concentrate on creating a message that will meet the needs and interests of your audience. Then, after your message is nailed down, look for ways to use multimedia here and there—only if truly needed to explain complicated points or make information more interesting and memorable. If a multimedia item fails to enhance your message, don't use it.

When it's time to stand and deliver your speech, make sure that you—not the electronics—are the "star of the show," the center of everyone's attention. Talk directly and enthusiastically to the audience, giving the key points and elaborations yourself, using PowerPoint only for reinforcement or clarification.

Using PowerPoint When It Is Not Needed

Some business and professional speakers fear that if they don't use PowerPoint slides, they will be perceived as lazy or old-fashioned. Nonsense. As you can surmise from the negative comments quoted above, many listeners would be grateful for visuals other than PowerPoint. In some situations, PowerPoint slides are far less effective than a few simple props or posters. For example, some courtroom lawyers have access to PowerPoint, but they prefer to use posters on easels because the posters can be kept on display for long periods, enabling jury members to glance at them whenever they need to refresh their memories. (Normally you shouldn't keep posters on display after you've discussed them, but this situation is an exception to the rule.)

◼ Guidelines for Using Visual Aids

Here are some guidelines for using visual aids effectively in your speeches.

Choose Visuals That Truly Support Your Speech

Before using a visual, ask yourself: Will it help clarify or illustrate an important idea in my speech? If the honest answer is no, discard it. Your job is not to dazzle people with pretty colors on a screen or to impress them with your creative artwork. A beautiful drawing of an airplane in flight, for example, would not contribute much to a speech on touring the castles of Europe.

Appeal to as Many Senses as Possible

While the visual channel is powerful, don't overlook the other senses.

Sense of hearing.   To accompany a slide presentation on dolphins, marine biologist Jennifer Novak played an audiotape of the clicks, whistles, and other sounds that dolphins use to communicate with each other.

Sense of taste. In a speech on Korean cuisine, chef Chong Man Park cooked and served rice and vegetable dishes while explaining Korean culinary techniques to listeners.

Sense of smell.   Floral designer Charlene Worley gave a speech on how flowers provide not only messages of love and consolation but also medicine and food. At the end of her talk, she invited the audience to sniff a bouquet she had created. She also appealed to the sense of taste by serving crackers on which she had spread jam made from violets.

Sense of touch.   Wishing to disprove the notion that snakes have slimy skin, herpetologist Jeanne Goldberg invited listeners to come forward and stroke the nonpoisonous king snake she was holding. Many listeners were surprised to find the skin dry and firm, with a texture like glass beads tightly strung together.

One speaker who appeals to all five senses is Miyuki Sugimori of Tokyo, the only woman among Japan's 15 rice-candy sculptors, who carry on a 250-year tradition (Figure 9.13). When she demonstrates her art in Japan, Europe, and the United States, Sugimori asks listeners to name their favorite animal, and then she creates and paints candy sculptures of dragons, horses, monkeys, and other creatures. The listeners use all five senses: watching the process, listening to her explanation of the history of the art, and then touching, smelling, and tasting the finished product.[7]

Prepare and Practice Far in Advance

Don't create your visuals while you are actually giving your speech: Few people can write or draw effectively while speaking to an audience. Make them far in advance so that they are not sloppy and unpolished.

Practice using your visuals as you rehearse your speech. If you will be using unfamiliar equipment, such as overhead projectors or videotape players, rehearsals will help prevent fumbling or faltering during your speech.

Example
The olfactory sense can be an effective persuasive tool. For many people, the smell of coffee evokes childhood memories of a pleasant home where breakfast is being prepared. A common technique for real estate agents is to arrange to have a pot of coffee brewing as they enter a house with a client to help make the house seem like a home.

Figure 9.13
Five senses are involved in a demonstration by Tokyo artist Miyuki Sugimori of the Japanese art of making candy sculpture. After hearing and watching, listeners can touch, smell, and taste the finished product.

Don't Use Too Many Visuals

Some speakers believe that the more graphics they display while talking, the better the speech. This notion is untrue: If there are too many visuals, the listeners could suffer "sensory overload" and become blinded to the speaker's true message.

Speakers who use too many visuals usually do so because they are attempting to cover too many points. Audiences cannot absorb a huge quantity of new information. Limit a speech to only a few key points, and limit visuals to those that are necessary to clarify or illustrate those points.

Make Visual Aids Simple and Clear

If you want to see good examples of visual aids, look at outdoor advertisements, such as the one in Figure 9.14. To be successful, these ads must grab attention and convey a message quickly and simply. A motorist traveling past a billboard has only two or three seconds to look. A typical student strolling past an outdoor campus bulletin board casts only a quick glance.

A speech is different, of course. A visual aid in a speech can be displayed for more than just a few seconds, so it can contain a greater amount of information than an outdoor ad can provide. Even so, a speaker should try to imitate the simplicity and clarity of outdoor ads. For example, if you were giving a speech, you could use the outdoor ad in Figure 9.14 without making any changes. But, you might say, what about all the details that the ad leaves out?

Class Discussion
To emphasize the need for only a few words on a visual aid, discuss a motto used by some public speakers: "Never put more words on a visual than you would put on a T-shirt." Have students contribute slogans they have seen on T-shirts. (You may want to expand the scope to bumper stickers as well.) Write the slogans on the board and then ask students to discuss whether they are effective in communicating a message. Is brevity a plus or minus?

Special **Techniques**

How to Avoid Eight Design Mistakes

In designing visuals, there are eight common mistakes you should avoid. All eight blunders are shown in Figure A, while a corrected version is shown in Figure B.

Mistake 1: Too Much Text.

Some speakers put several sentences on a visual, and then read the material to the audience. In effect, the visual is a giant cue card—good for the speaker, bad for the audience. Too much text is ugly and boring. Place only a few words on each visual, and if any elaboration is needed, provide it orally.

Mistake 2: Too Many Words per Line.

A rule of thumb is to have no more than seven words per line.

Mistake 3: Overuse of All-Capital Letters.

Researchers have found that a large number of words printed in all-capital letters can cause readers to become fatigued and even give up reading. Words that use both upper- and lowercase are easier on the eye. This doesn't mean you should never use all-caps; just limit them to titles or headlines.

Mistake 4: Too-Tight Spacing.

Avoid jamming words and lines too close together. A handy guideline: leave the space of the letter "n" between words and two "n's" (one on top of the other) between lines:

Leave**n**plenty
n
n
of space

Mistake 5: Excessive Artwork.

As shown in Figure A, too many graphics create unpleasant visual "noise," which distracts listeners from paying attention to the speaker. Notice that the speaker prints text on top of a photo. This is a technique that is often seen in magazines, but many graphics experts frown on it because they say it mars the legibility of the words and creates clutter.

Some presenters create excessive artwork because they think white space should be filled up, but this is a mis-

taken notion. Empty space around text and pictures is desirable—it spotlights the key material. Figure B gains much of its power from the wise use of just one picture. (If the speaker wants to show photos of swimmers and runners, additional slides can be created, each one utilizing the elegant simplicity of Figure B.)

Mistake 6: Too Many Colors.

Color adds pizzazz, but don't be like an exuberant artist in kindergarten who uses every crayon in a 64-crayon box. Color works best when it is used to draw attention to an important feature: If you wanted to put a spotlight on just 3 of the 50 states in the United States, you could display a black-and-white map of the United States with the three states—say, New Jersey, Kansas, and Washington—colored in bright red. If you wanted to pinpoint three states that are contiguous—for example, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont—you could use three different colors to help listeners distinguish them.

How many different colors are acceptable? For text, select one main color (black is fine) and use a second, contrasting color only if you want to emphasize a word or number. For graphics, use a wide variety of colors only when the situation warrants: In pie charts, for example, a different color for each slice helps the audience separate one piece from another.

Avoid neon colors. They are distracting and hard to see.

Mistake 7: Too Many Different Typefaces.

Stick with one or two styles of lettering. If you are using a computer, your word-processing software probably lets you use a wide variety of typefaces; resist the temptation to print a gaudy mélange.

Choose readable typefaces. The simple, dignified typeface in Figure B is easier to read than the fancy, jazzy typefaces included in Figure A.

Mistake 8: Use of Italics and Underlining for Emphasis.

To stress certain words or phrases, *italics* are used in printed material and underlining is used in handwritten documents, but neither style is effective in large visuals. Instead, use **bold** print or a **contrasting color**.

Figure A

Eight Design Mistakes
This visual commits the eight design mistakes discussed in this feature. Can you identify all eight?

Figure B

Corrected Version
Avoiding all eight mistakes, this visual does not distract the audience from listening to the speaker. It omits many details, but these can be supplied orally or covered in a series of concise visuals.

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Figure 9.14
This outdoor ad grabs attention and gives key information quickly. A well-designed outdoor ad is a good model for a visual aid in a speech—simple, concise, easily grasped.
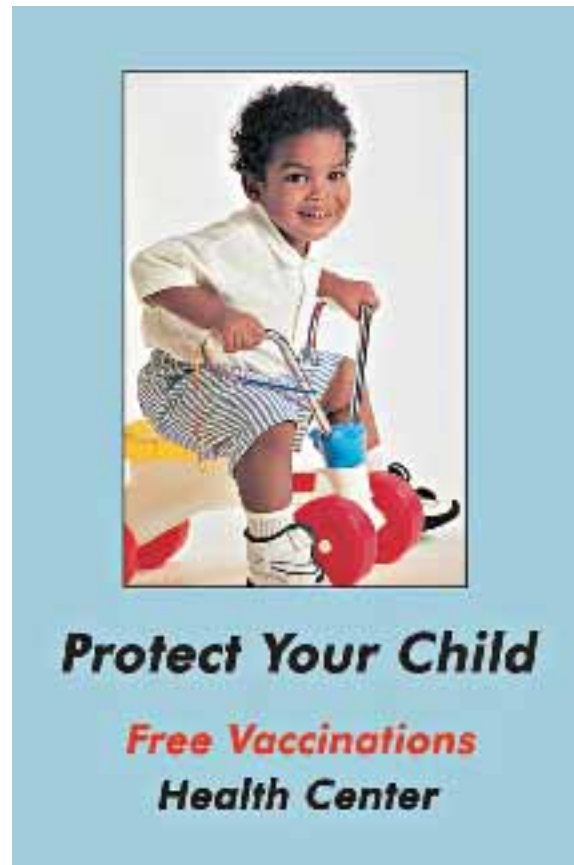
No problem. You can give background information while the audience enjoys the sight of a crisp, appealing, and uncluttered graphic.

Two rules of billboard design are worth heeding: (1) Use graphics instead of words whenever possible. (2) If you must use words, use only a few.

Make each visual aid so simple that your listeners can quickly grasp its meaning—either at a glance or after minimal explanation by you. Avoid complexity. Too much information can confuse or overwhelm the listeners.

Does a wonderful graphic in a book translate into a wonderful graphic in a speech? Not necessarily. Some visual aids in books are jampacked with fascinating details; they are suitable in a book because the reader has ample time to analyze them, but they're too complex for a speech.

In visuals such as graphs, make all labels horizontal. (In a textbook, many labels are vertical because readers of a book can turn the visual sideways, but listeners should not be forced to twist their necks to read vertical lettering.) You need not label every part of your visual, as you are there to explain the aid.

If you are displaying a multidimensional object, be sure to turn it during your talk so that everyone can see all sides of it.

Aim for Back-Row Comprehension

I once saw the head of a large corporation show an overhead transparency to an audience of over 1,000 people, but only 300 or 400 of them were

close enough to be able to read the words and decipher the charts on the screen.

Ridiculous? Yes, but this mistake is made in countless meeting rooms throughout the world every day. Business and professional people I have interviewed are unanimous in saying that the most frequent audiovisual mistake made by presenters is using graphics that are difficult or impossible for everyone in the audience to see.

The best way to achieve comprehension by everyone is to design every visual aid for the back row. *If all lettering and details cannot be seen easily and comfortably by a person in the rear of the room, don't use the visual.*

To help you meet the needs of the people in the back row, here are some guidelines.

If you prepare a visual from scratch, make letters, numbers, and graphics much larger than you think necessary. I've never heard anyone complain about visuals being too large. For guidelines on scaling the size of letters and numbers to the size of your audience, see Table 9.3, but remember that these are minimum sizes. To be safe, you can make letters and numbers even larger.

Use thick, bold strokes. Whether you are creating by hand or using a computer, you need big, bold, thick strokes for lettering and graphics. Thin strokes tend to be weak and hard to see:

Thin strokes   **Thick strokes**

Make enlargements. You can magnify a too-small visual by using videotape, visual presenters, overhead transparencies, electronic presentations, slides, or posters. Here are three of the easiest options:

- A camcorder with a zoom lens can be used to make a close-up videotape of a snapshot, a drawing, or a small object such as jewelry. A blank videotape costs less than $5 and can be erased and used later for other purposes.

- To turn a photo or drawing into a PowerPoint slide, you can have the item scanned and converted into a digital file. Try the media center on your campus or visit a photo store in your community.

- If you have access to a visual presenter (discussed earlier in this chapter), you can easily enlarge both two- and three-dimensional items. For example, a speaker can demonstrate the chemical changes taking place in a small test tube, while the enlargement on a TV or

Table 9.3 Minimum Size of Letters & Numbers

	Posters, Boards, Flip Charts	Overhead Transparencies
Conference room (10–15 listeners)	At least $1\frac{1}{2}''$ high	At least $\frac{1}{3}''$ high (33-point type)
College classroom (15–35 listeners)	At least $2\frac{1}{2}''$ high	At least $\frac{1}{2}''$ high (48-point type)
Lecture hall (35–100 listeners)	At least $4''$ high	At least $\frac{3}{4}''$ high (72-point type)
Auditorium	Use slides or multimedia projected onto a giant screen.	

a wall screen ensures that everyone in the audience can see the results clearly.

Test the visibility of your visuals.   Before the day of your speech, go to the room where you will be speaking, display your visual aid in the front of the room, and sit in the back row to determine whether you can see it clearly. (Even better, have a friend sit in the back row to pass judgment.) If your visual cannot be seen with crystal clearness from the back row, discard it and create another (or simply don't use one).

Never Circulate Visual Aids among the Audience

Some people try to solve the problem of a too-small visual aid (such as a piece of jewelry) by passing it around the room, but this is a mistake. People will look at the visual instead of listening to the speaker. And there's likely to be distraction, perhaps even whispered comments, as it is being passed from one person to another. Some speakers walk from listener to listener to give each person a close-up view of the visual aid. This is also a poor technique; the listeners who are not seeing the visual may get bored or distracted, and they may start whispering comments to their friends. Moreover, the listeners who are looking at the aid may ask questions that mean nothing to the rest of the audience. In a case like this, the speaker can easily lose the audience's attention and interest.

One way to solve the problem of a too-small object is to leave it in the front of the room and invite the audience to see it *after* the speech. This strategy is acceptable unless listeners need to see the aid during your speech in order to understand what you are talking about. In this case, the best solution is to create an enlarged image of the object (discussed above), which you display during the speech, and then permit listeners to take a look at the real object after the speech.

When they need to show steps in a process, some speakers invite the audience to come to the front of the room and gather around a table. One speaker did this so that everyone could see him making garnishes out of vegetables (a tomato was transformed into a "rose"). If you are considering this approach, here are three guidelines: (1) Use the technique only with small audiences. (2) Make sure no disabled listeners are excluded from participating. (3) Get your instructor's permission before trying this in a classroom speech.

Remove Physical Barriers

Right before a speech, move any objects or furniture that might block the view of some listeners. If you're using equipment such as an overhead projector, make sure it doesn't obstruct anyone's vision. If, despite your best efforts, some listeners will be blocked from seeing your visuals, ask them (before you start your introduction) to shift their chairs or move to a different part of the room.

Explain Your Visual Aids

No matter how simple your visual aid is, you should explain it to your audience. Some speakers slap a transparency of a graph onto an overhead projector, talk about it for a moment, and then whisk it off. To such speakers, the graph is simple and obvious; they don't stop to think that the listeners have

Tips **for** **your** CAREER

Tip 9.3   With International Audiences, Avoid Informality

During a presentation to American audiences, you can write on boards, posters, flip charts, and overhead transparencies because spontaneity is considered appropriate. In some cultures, however, such informality is interpreted as a sign of unpreparedness and disrespect. Listeners may feel that the speaker did not value them highly enough to prepare proper visuals.

For an international audience, therefore, always use visuals that are created in advance.

never seen it before and need time to analyze and absorb the information it presents.

As you discuss a part of your visual aid, don't wave your hand in the general direction of the aid and assume that the audience will know which feature you are pointing out. Be precise. Point to the specific part that you are discussing. For pointing, use a finger, ruler, pen, or extendable pointer. To avoid twisting your body, use the hand nearer the aid.

Choose the Best Time to Show Visuals

Many speakers undermine their speech's effectiveness by showing visual aids at inappropriate times. Here are several guidelines.

Don't display a visual before your speech begins.   If visual aids are in plain sight before you start, you deprive your speech of an element of drama and freshness. There are exceptions, of course, as when you must set up items for a demonstration on a table in front of the room.

Show a visual in the introduction if it will spark interest.   One speaker gave a talk on how to restore old, broken porcelain dolls but didn't show any samples until the end, when she displayed three beautiful restored dolls. Her listeners probably would have had greater interest in the talk if she had shown the dolls at the beginning. They would have realized why restoration was a worthwhile goal.

Don't withhold a visual if it would help listeners understand the body of the speech.   One speaker gave a talk on underground rock formations in caves but waited until the end to show slides illustrating his points. During the body of the speech, listeners were mystified and frustrated: What do these rock formations look like? Though he ultimately showed slides, his listeners would have experienced a much greater understanding and appreciation of the subject matter if he had displayed the pictures as he went along.

If listener comprehension is unharmed, it is acceptable to delay.   In some cases you may want to withhold a visual or a demonstration in order to build suspense. As long as you are not depriving listeners of material needed for understanding the body of the speech, you may wait until the end. In a speech on how to use Tae kwon do karate techniques to break objects, Lee Wentz stood in front

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of a cement block as he spoke, waiting until the end to demonstrate the actual breaking of the block with one hand. This built suspense—the audience wondered whether he would succeed. (He did, and the listeners applauded.)

Don't Let Visuals Distract from Your Message

The cardinal rule for visual aids, says business writer Kristen Schabacker, "is that they should complement your presentation, not distract the audience from what you're saying."[8] The following are tips on how to avoid distracting your audience.

Show one visual at a time.   If you display five posters, neatly lined up on a chalk tray, your listeners will scrutinize the fourth poster while you are talking about the first. To keep the eyes and minds of your listeners focused on your remarks, show a visual, discuss it fully, put it away, and then display your next visual.

There is one exception to this rule: If you have a visual aid that can provide a simple, undistracting backdrop or evoke a mood, you may leave it on display during the entire speech. One speaker kept a bouquet of flowers on the front table throughout her speech on gardening; the flowers provided a pleasing complement to her remarks.

Beware of using animals or children as visuals.   Exotic pets and cute kids can easily draw the attention of your listeners away from your ideas, so use them carefully, if at all. One speaker brought in a ferret to demonstrate what great pets they make. The only trouble was that the ferret acted up during the speech, causing the audience to laugh at its antics rather than listen to the speech. Some instructors disapprove of using animals in speeches, so be sure to get permission before bringing an animal into the classroom.

Watch for misspelled words.   On an overhead transparency, one speaker wrote *Frist* for *First.* Another speaker showed a poster listing types of emotional abuse, including *Treats,* instead of *Threats.* Double-check the spelling of all words in time to correct any mistakes.

Don't Talk to Your Visual Aid

Many speakers are so intent on explaining a visual aid that they spend most of their time talking to it instead of to the audience. You should stand next to your aid and face the audience during most of your discussion. Look at the aid only in two situations: (1) When you introduce it, look at it for several seconds—this is long enough to draw the listeners' attention toward it. (2) Whenever you want to direct the audience's attention to a particular segment, look at the aid for one or two seconds as you point out the special feature.

Use Progressive Revelation

Whenever possible, use **progressive revelation**—that is, reveal only one part or item at a time. If, for example, you are presenting a bar graph on an overhead transparency, use opaque strips (heavy paper or letter-size envelopes) to mask everything except the top bar; discuss it; then reveal the

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Teaching Idea
It is extremely important to find out in advance what visuals and demonstrations a student is planning. Otherwise, an instructor may discover—too late—that a student's demonstration of how to put out a fire with a fire extinguisher involves setting an actual fire—a fire that gets out of control and burns the classroom. (This incident occurred at an American college several decades ago. No one was hurt, but the instructor was fired.)

progressive revelation
piece-by-piece unveiling of a visual

Tips for your CAREER

Tip 9.4 Ask a Friend to Assist You

For speeches that you give on the job or in the community, you may want to ask a friend to assist you. Here are some of the ways in which an assistant can be useful:

1. An assistant can help you set up and operate audio-visual equipment, turn lights off and on, or search for a missing extension cord. Such assistance will free you to concentrate on getting your message across to the audience.

2. If you are speaking to strangers, the presence of your friend can give you a psychological boost—you have an "ally" in the room.

3. An assistant might be able to handle any distractions or emergencies that arise. If, for example, a group of people start a loud conversation right outside the room in which you are speaking, the assistant can open the door and whisper a request for silence.

4. Your assistant can stand or sit in the back of the room while you are speaking and give you advice via hand signals on which the two of you have agreed in advance. For example:
   - "Slow down—you're talking too fast."
   - "Speak louder—I can barely hear you."
   - "You're looking at your notes too much."
   - "You've reached the time limit—wrap things up and sit down."

5. An assistant can give you a critique of your speech afterward, so that you can learn from any mistakes you have made. Sometimes the assistant can mingle with the audience in the hall after your speech and find out how listeners responded to the presentation, so that you can learn about your strengths and weaknesses.

second bar, and so on. Likewise, if you have five steps in a process, reveal one step at a time.

A variation of this technique was shown earlier in this chapter (Figure 9.12) when we discussed "builds."

Progressive revelation creates suspense, making the listeners curious about what comes next, and it prevents them from reading or studying ahead of you. Another bonus: When you walk over and reveal a new item, you create movement and action, thus keeping listeners alert and breaking up the monotony of a speech.

Plan How You Will Handle Emergencies

With visual aids, there is always a chance of a foul-up, so you should plan carefully how you will handle any problems that might arise. Before you use any electronic media, talk with your instructor or the program chairperson to make arrangements (for darkening the room, getting an extension cord, and so on). Always check out the location of your speech in advance. Is there an electrical outlet nearby? If not, can you get an extension cord? Can the room be darkened for slides? Is there a place to put your posters? Is there a chalkboard or white board?

Be prepared for the unexpected—the multimedia projector malfunctioning, the bulb in the overhead projector burning out, videotape breaking in the middle of the program. Some of these disasters can be mitigated by advance planning. For example, carry a spare bulb for the overhead projector; if the videotape breaks, be ready to fill in the missing information. If equipment breaks down and cannot be fixed quickly, continue with your speech as best you can. Try to keep your poise and sense of humor.

Quotation
"It's a good idea to have backups in case of equipment failures, but you should be able to do your presentation on a blank stage, with no props, and have it work on its own. The equipment is only there to support you; if the computer crashes, it shouldn't stop your presentation."—Audiovisual technician David Elliott

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Resources for Review and Skill Building

■ Summary

Visual aids can enrich and enliven your speech in many ways: They can make your ideas clear and understandable; make your speech more interesting and memorable; help an audience remember facts and details; make long, complicated explanations unnecessary; help prove a point; add to your credibility; and enhance communication with people who speak English as a second language.

The major types of visual aids include graphs, charts, drawings, photographs, videotape and DVD, computer and Internet multimedia, objects, models, yourself, and volunteers. They can be conveyed to the audience via various media: electronic presentations, boards, posters, flip charts, handouts, visual presenters, overhead transparencies, slides, television, and video projectors.

Presenters using PowerPoint should make their visuals crisp and appealing, and they should avoid overwhelming their audience with a torrent of slides. Using advanced features such as text animation can be effective.

Guidelines for using visual aids: (1) Choose visual aids that truly support your speech. (2) Appeal to as many senses as possible. (3) Prepare and practice far in advance. (4) Don't use too many visuals. (5) Make your aids as simple and clear as possible. (6) Aim for comprehension by everyone, including the people in the back row. (7) Never circulate a visual aid among the audience. (8) Remove physical barriers so that everyone has an unimpeded view. (9) Explain each aid, regardless of how simple it is. (10) Decide on the best time to show visuals. (11) Make sure the aids don't distract from your message: Show just one visual at a time, beware of using animals or children, and watch for misspelled words. (12) Don't talk to your aids. (13) Use progressive revelation. (14) Plan how you would handle equipment failure and other emergencies.

■ Key Terms

bar graph, *192*
build, *211*
electronic presentation, *200*
flip chart, *201*
flowchart, *193*
handout, *201*
high resolution, *199*
information chart, *193*

line graph, *192*
low resolution, *198*
marker board, *200*
organization chart, *193*
pictorial graph, *193*
pie graph, *192*
progressive revelation, *222*
royalty-free images, *199*

35mm slide, *204*
table, *194*
thumbnail, *199*
transparency, *203*
video projector, *205*
visual presenter, *202*

■ Review Questions

1. List at least six types of visual aids.
2. List at least five media for presenting visual aids.
3. What is progressive revelation?
4. A *list of key ideas* is another name for which kind of chart?
5. Is it legal to use graphics from the Internet in a student speech in the classroom? Explain your answer.
6. The text recommends that you "aim for back-row comprehension." What does this mean and why is the advice necessary?

7. How can speakers test the visibility of their visuals?

8. Is it always a mistake for a speaker to wait until the conclusion of a presentation to show a visual or perform a demonstration? Explain your answer.

9. Why would it be a mistake to circulate a small photograph during your speech?

10. Explain three options that a speaker can take to magnify a too-small visual.

■ Building Critical-Thinking Skills

1. "Some pictures may be worth a thousand words, but a picture of a thousand words isn't worth much," says corporate executive Don Keough. Explain what this means in terms of oral presentations.

2. At one Website devoted to communication, public speakers are advised to distribute thought-provoking handouts at the beginning of a speech so that "if members of the audience get bored during the speech, they will have something interesting to read." Do you agree with this advice? Defend your position.

■ Building Teamwork Skills

1. Working in a group, review the guideline "Appeal to as Many Senses as Possible." Create a scenario in which a sales representative gives a presentation that appeals to all five senses.

2. In a group, review the Special Techniques feature, "How to Avoid Eight Design Mistakes," in this chapter. Create an ugly graphic that makes at least five of the eight mistakes. Then create a new graphic that corrects all the mistakes of the ugly one.

■ Building Internet Skills

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1. Find and print a Web page that includes a photo of earth taken by astronauts.

Possible Strategy: Go to Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com) and follow this sequence: Science > Astronomy > Solar System > Planets > Earth > Pictures. Explore various options until you find a photo of earth.

2. Find and list the names of the "Paris paintings" of French impressionistic painter Claude Monet.

Possible Strategy: Visit WebMuseum, Paris (http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/) and click on "Famous Artworks." Choose "Impressionism" and then "Monet, Claude." Click on "Paris" to view Monet's works about Paris. (To see an enlargement of each painting, click on the miniature version.)

■ Using PowerWeb

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In an article by Mark McMaster entitled "Performance Anxiety," speaker Joe Carino tries and fails to get Internet access for an important presentation to Loews Hotels. How does he handle the potential disaster? To find this article, visit www.mhhe.com/gregory7, click on STUDENT EDITION and then POWERWEB: CONTENTS.