**Unit 4 Handout 1: PowerPoint Presentation**

**A. PowerPoint Tips**

1. Write a script: A little planning goes a long way. Most presentations are written in PowerPoint without any sort of rhyme or reason. The point of your slides is to illustrate and expand what you are going to say to your audience. You should know what you intend to say and then figure out how to visualize it. Unless you are an expert at improvising, make sure you write out or at least outline your presentation before trying to put together slides. And make sure your script follows good storytelling conventions: give it a beginning, middle, and end; have a clear arc that builds towards some sort of climax; make your audience appreciate each slide but be anxious to find out what’s next; and when possible, always leave ‘em wanting more.

2. One thing at a time, please: At any given moment, what should be on the screen is the thing you’re talking about. The audience will instantly read every slide as soon as it’s displayed; if you have the next four points you plan to make up there, they’ll be three steps ahead of you, waiting for you to catch up rather than listening with interest to the point you’re making. Charts can be put on the next slide to be referenced when you get to the data the chart displays.

3. No paragraphs: Where most presentations fail is that their authors, convinced they are producing some stand-alone document, put everything they want to say onto their slides, in great big chunky blocks of text.

Congratulations. You’ve just killed a roomful of people. Cause of death: terminal boredom poisoning.

Your slides are the illustrations for your presentation, not the presentation itself. They should underline and reinforce what you’re saying as you give your presentation — save the paragraphs of text for your script.

4. Pay attention to design: PowerPoint offer all sorts of ways to add visual “flash” to your slides: fades, swipes, flashing text, and other annoyances are all too easy to insert with a few mouse clicks. Avoid the temptation to dress up your pages with cheesy effects and focus instead on simple design basics.

5. Use images sparingly: There are two schools of thought about images in presentations. Some say they add visual interest and keep audiences engaged; others say images are an unnecessary distraction. Both arguments have some merit, so in this case the best option is to split the difference: use images only when they add important information or make an abstract point more concrete.

6. Think outside the screen: Remember, the slides on the screen are only *part* of the presentation – and not the main part. Give some thought to your own presentation manner – how you hold yourself, what you wear, how you move around the room. You are the focus when you’re presenting, no matter how interesting your slides are.

7. Have a hook: Like the best writing, the best presentation shook their audiences early and then reel them in. Open with something surprising or intriguing, something that will get your audience to sit up and take notice..

8. Ask questions: Questions arouse interest, pique curiosity, and engage audiences. So ask a lot of them. Build tension by posing a question and letting your audience stew a moment before moving to the next slide with the answer. Quiz their knowledge and then show them how little they know.

9. Modulate, modulate, modulate: Always speak as if you were speaking to a friend, not as if you are reading off of index cards (even if you are). If keeping up a lively and personable tone of voice is difficult for you when presenting, do a couple of practice run-throughs.

10. Break the rules: As with everything else, there are times when each of these rules – or any other rule you know – won’t apply. If you know there’s a good reason to break a rule, go ahead and do it. Rule breaking is perfectly acceptable behavior – it’s ignoring the rules or breaking them because you just don’t know any better that leads to shoddy boring presentations that lead to boredom, depression, psychopathic breaks, and eventually death. And you don’t want that, do you?

*With a partner, rank these tips in order of importance and explain why you ranked the first and the last tip in that order.*

**B. Life After Death By Power Point Video**

*What are three tips you learned from this video?*

