

Tips on Making Your PowerPoints More Engaging and Fun

1. Take your camera phone with you whenever you are in a school. You never know what you will see on a wall that would enhance your PowerPoint. Teachers love seeing examples of what other teachers have done.

Examples I have found:

- A teacher who printed the Transition Words in a huge font on pieces of colored paper and posted them around the room. Each Sequence (size, space, time, important, chain-link) was a different color.
- A teacher who had the students put up pieces of the UO on large strips of paper on a bulletin board as the unit progressed.
- An elementary teacher who made the Paragraph Express into an ice-cream train.
- A poster emphasizing the importance of semi-colons in good writing.
- A poster a teacher had created on which Hermione of Harry Potter fame was asking, "Will this be on the test?" The answer: "Check your Unit Organizer."

Take a picture, save it to the phone, and email it to yourself. To do this, just enter your email address in where you would normally put a phone number. You will receive an email, and the picture you took will be a jpeg attachment that you can save in your documents and use in the PowerPoint. Be careful if you take pictures of people, since that would require getting their written permission.

2. A color photograph makes a good first slide. Stretch it to completely cover the slide. Superimpose the title right on top of it.

3. Use Arial as your standard font. For slides that signal an activity, use Comic Sans and a related clip art. Match the color of the font to the clip art. The slides become bright and eye-catching and signal, "Time to do an activity!" You can find clip art at <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/clipart/default.aspx>. You can also google "ELA clip art" or "Semi-colon clip art" or "teacher clip art" or any other specific topic you want.

4. Add cartoons. Every once in a while I google "Teacher Cartoon" and see what comes up. You never know what you might find! You can always paste them into a "Cartoon PowerPoint" to save as your own library of cartoons that you can draw on for future presentations.

5. To have teachers practice any of the writing strategies, divide them into five groups and assign each a vacation spot using a slide with a photo of each of the five spots. Create an assignment for them to do based on their "vacation." Each group can later share what they wrote.