8 Copilot in PowerPoint

Copilot can help create effective presentations with minimal effort. Whether you're delivering a pitch, teaching a lesson, or sharing a story, Copilot's creativity can generate slides, text, and graphics. It can even follow your branding guidelines so your decks look like yours, not AI's.

Intended Uses

Copilot for PowerPoint is designed to assist you with the following tasks:

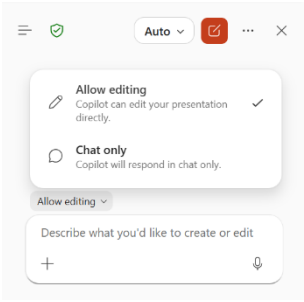
Capability	Description
Create Slides from a file[1]	Generate a presentation from an existing Word document or Excel spreadsheet, with Copilot applying layouts, creating speaker notes, and choosing a theme.
Create Slides from an outline	Give Copilot a bullet point list of the main points you want to cover in your presentation, and it'll generate slides with text and images to get you started.
Add a slide or image about a topic	Give Copilot a simple or detailed instruction to add a slide or image.
Summarize presentations	Summarize long decks, show key slides, and show action items within the presentation.
Get insights and advice	Use the LLM to turn information from the deck into advice that the reader can use for their specific role and needs.

Activating Copilot within PowerPoint

In PowerPoint, there are multiple ways to activate Copilot

1. With the "New Slide with Copilot" button in the top ribbon
2. At the bottom right of any slide where the Copilot icon is affixed.

The first option opens up a PowerPoint-specific dialog box. The second opens up the usual Copilot Chat interface. For the first few times using Copilot in PowerPoint, try some of the simple prompts that are offered to you to get familiar.



Once you have the Copilot window open, there are two ways to interact. "Allow editing" makes changes directly to your deck based on your instructions. "Chat only" lets you summarize the deck, analyze its strengths and weaknesses, and get data from outside of the deck. But it won't change anything in the slides. The default (at the time of writing) is to "Allow editing."

Using Copilot in PowerPoint to its Fullest

Here are the capabilities and constraints that you can expect, along with some prompting tips to enhance your results. These first several instructions are to be used when "Allow editing" is selected.

Create a deck about an idea

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
Create structured presentations by generating an outline based on a prompt. Before creating the first version, add/move topics and sections of a working draft.	To use organization's .ppt template, ensure it's loaded into SharePoint organization asset libraries for brand-aligned content.	Open Copilot from the bottom right select the option to create a **new presentation. Copilot will ask a few questions before it generates the draft.**

Create a deck from a Word document

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
Copilot can create a deck about the content and context in a Word doc.	Up to five total files can be referenced. You can augment the prompt with both a file and bullets or other information that you wish to add.	Describe the persona of who would be creating such a deck, the audience, the tone to take, and preferences. “Create a presentation about /Policy - Artificial Intelligence.docx. Imagine you are an HR exec with years of experience creating policies for mid-sized retail companies. You need to create a deck for senior management to understand your new AI policy. Use an optimistic tone about the company’s future with AI.”

Create a deck from an Excel Spreadsheet

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
Generate slides from a spreadsheet from your OneDrive or SharePoint.	Copilot will need significant details in the prompt. Financial analysis is better done in Excel or Analyst.	“Create a presentation about /Balance Sheet.xlsx. Create a board-ready presentation based on this balance sheet, which contains financial data for the past four fiscal years for the <company>. Focus on identifying and visualizing key financial trends such as changes in assets, liabilities, equity, and liquidity ratios. Highlight any anomalies or significant year-over-year shifts that may require explanation or signal strategic opportunities or risks. The tone should reflect a Chief Financial Officer presenting to the Board of Directors—serious, professional, and analytical, but also optimistic about the company’s future prospects. Include bar charts and pie graphs where appropriate to make the trends and anomalies visually clear. Structure the presentation with a clear narrative arc”

Add a slide with content from a spreadsheet

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
If you have an idea for a layout but don't know what to say to Copilot to depict your vision, draw a basic block diagram and then tell Copilot to fill in the spaces.	You may need to tell Copilot to "now delete the original handwritten blocks" after it fills in with content.	On a blank slide, hand-draw boxes for blocks you want to include, like "Executive Summary," "Outliers," and "Graphs of for balance sheet trends." Then prompt Copilot to "Take a look at slide #x and rebuild the slide using the data in /balance sheet report,xls, following the design of the other slides."

Add a slide with content from Copilot's sources

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
This simple feature allows you to generate slides with text and images about a topic that you wish.	The sources of the content are not cited by default, so tell Copilot to add them.	"Create a professional infograph highlighting recent of statistics about global warming. Cite your sources clearly. Add links to the sources cited."

Add AI-generated images to slides[2]

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
This feature inserts AI-generated images that relate to your prompt. The time of writing, there were two "Image generation" models" to choose.	Copilot doesn't understand PowerPoint formatting well enough to "send to back" so text may get covered. Copilot can't guess how you want to layout images. If can be told though: "Add one full screen 16:9 image of Earth to the slide."	"Add three realistic images about our company's business to this slide. No words." Change the model you prefer from "Auto" using the drop down.

Create Interactive Slides

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
Make any data-centric slide more vibrant and energetic with moving data and active cards	Patience will help after running this command. So will finding the right slide. The original slide should be kept intact, but if not, Ctrl-Z to undo.	To animate data-centric slides, simply navigate to the slide and in the Copilot window, type @create-interactive-slide. Answer a couple of questions, then enter Slideshow mode and click around to watch the interaction.

Use Skills

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
When you have a repeatable task in PowerPoint, you can have Copilot automate it for you. For instance, your skill could be to insert an **executive summary slide** into a given deck.	Skills are stored in unique folders inside a new folder called “skills” the creator’s OneDrive, although every skill is called skill.md. You cannot reference websites within your skills.	To create a skill in PowerPoint: 1. Click the + button in the Copilot window 2. Then “Choose skills.” 3. Select “Manage plugins and skills.” 4. Select “Custom skills” 5. Click “Add skill.” There, you can “create manually,” vibing to get your repetitive slide skill built. **Later, you reference/activate the skill you create by typing @<skill name>.** Rather than typing the skills manually, you can “Record” one – capturing your typing and screen. Select “Record skill” after step 5 above.

Create Branded Presentations

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
Rather than accept AI's look and feel, you can force the content to appear in your organization's branded template.	When enforcing 'strict' compliance to the branding template, there may be some overlapping text boxes. If you are the marketing (or brand) leader, you need to have a privileged role assigned to you in Microsoft 365 admin center to be able to publish the kit for others to use.	To use your brand kit, click the + button in the Copilot window, then "Select Brand." Then select the brand your org has uploaded. You can create your own by Selecting "Manage kits."

These next suggested instructions are to be used in "Chat only" mode.

Get Suggested Improvements to format slides

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
This feature suggests ways that you can edit and design the slides generated by Copilot to suit your needs and preferences.	In "Chat only" mode, you can see what Copilot thinks you should change before you actually alter anything. Executing these changes would be up to the Pilot!	Ask "What PowerPoint designs might be appropriate for this presentation?" Ask "What are some fonts that would be appropriate to use in a presentation about climate change?"

Summarize content

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
Rather than scan a long deck yourself, Copilot can read it, then tell you what it thinks you should know.	When you ask for action items, it's looking for action words, not just obvious "Next steps."	In "Chat only" mode: "Summarize this deck." "What are the main themes and takeaways?" "What are the action items?" "Does the Operations department have any action items?" Once you summarize, Copilot will suggest other prompts that may be helpful.

Improve your deck with advice and insights

Description	Constraints	Prompting Tips
Using its vast knowledge of written words, the LLM can provide suggestions on how you can take action.	The more descriptive the prompt, the better the answer.	"Imagine you are a salesperson trying to convince a customer to accept your proposal in this deck. What would you predict will be some objections, and how would you plan to address them?" "Imagine you are a sales manager. Your salesperson is about to present this slide deck to a prospect. What would you advise your salesperson to focus on as they present?" "Imagine you are an operations manager. You are going to present these slides to your board of executives to ask for approval. Your board is concerned about operating capital and the company share price. What could you do to speak in their language to gain approval?" "Are you able to suggest a joke based on the presentation?"

Troubleshooting Copilot in PowerPoint

Copilot for PowerPoint has become much more reliable. However, sometimes you may encounter some issues or problems while using Copilot. Here are some of the common issues and their solutions:

1. Patience is helpful when using Copilot in PowerPoint. It takes some time to render and adjust slides. You can enter in a second prompt into the queue, so that you can go and multitask in other apps.
2. To make the language in the slides sound more like you, point to your "personal tone of voice" file as described in chapter 3.
3. If you ask Copilot something and it makes a mistake, you can report it to Microsoft with the Thumbs down button. You can also **ask Copilot to explain itself**. "It seems you overlooked part of my prompt, where I asked for 3 slides. Can you please explain why my prompt didn't work?" It may give you a bit more insight into how it operates.
4. When basing a presentation from a document, by default, Copilot prefers to make a deck of a length of its choosing, based on the length and topics in the document. You **can** tell Copilot to specifically build the presentation based on a certain section(s) of the Word document. Specify the section header(s) and Copilot should ignore the rest.
5. If the interaction with Copilot's chat box is puzzling or not behaving correctly:
    a. Try a different prompt
    b. Or try the prompt in the browser version at **https://www.office.com/launch/PowerPoint/**
6. If you don't care for the slide or deck that Copilot creates, just **hit Ctrl-Z (undo)** in the body of the deck to remove it.

Pro Tips in PowerPoint

1. To work on multiple decks at once, open PowerPoint in your browser. You can open several tabs and edit several decks at a time.
2. When using "Allow editing," you will make changes directly in the deck. If you're editing an existing deck, "Save As" before Copilot makes the changes, so you can always return to the start. You can also use Ctrl-Z to undo its changes, or not accept them when they're initially made.
3. Copilot can **create new slides in your company's branded PowerPoint template**.[3] Your IT team will need to upload the branded template (.potx

format) to the "Organization Assets/Templates" folder in SharePoint. The template slides need to be formatted in a way that is compatible with Copilot, as described by Microsoft. [4]

4. When creating a presentation from a file, typing "/" in the chat box will bring up the last several files opened on the PC. If the file you want to reference isn't in the recent list, **start typing the name of your file after the "/."** Files in your OneDrive should appear as you type.
    a. You can also find files and create a deck from "/the name of files that were shared with you." You'll have to know the file name and start typing at least a part of its name.
    b. **To create decks from files on SharePoint** to which you have access, copy the URL of the file, then paste after typing "/", OR click the Attach Cloud Files button, and navigate to the SharePoint or OneDrive folder where your file is.
5. If you're hitting a wall, where Copilot isn't doing what you wish, ask, **"Are you able to do <X>?"** Once it confirms it can do something, ask it **"What should I provide you as a prompt to do <X>?"**
6. When drafting your presentation outline, using other tools (i.e., Copilot Chat or Copilot "Web") will allow you to "think deeper" or use Analyst or Researcher agents, for a more thoughtful outline. Then, **paste the outline into the "Create a new presentation" box to generate the slides.**

References and Resources

[1] **https://prod.support.services.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-a-new-presentation-with-copilot-in-powerpoint-3222ee03-f5a4-4d27-8642-9c387ab4854d#:~:text=Create%20a%20presentation%20with%20a%20template%201%20Open,presentation%20using%20your%20theme%20or%20template.%20More%20items**

[2] Copilot uses a licensed stock library to insert royalty-free images, icons, and illustrations. **https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/topic/powerpoint-copilot-image-suggestions-faq-20037a67-17f4-4f73-a720-d4277e74a33c**

[3] **https://prod.support.services.microsoft.com/en-us/office/use-your-organization-s-branding-with-copilot-in-powerpoint-c8bc6df5-37ed-4398-8b90-f78a8fdcf9bb**

[4] **https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint/copilot/keep-your-presentation-on-brand-with-copilot**