

How to Design Activity-Games in PowerPoint

By Prof. Joe Bisz (Version 1.0)

www.joebisz.com

Basic Instructions

- 1) The first step is to explore the game templates provided so you can get an idea of the different mechanic possibilities available to you in PowerPoint.
- 2) Next, we recommend studying the 9 Complex Mechanics (currently available only in [flashcards](#), since our book is not released yet), and following the design brainstorm included in the flashcard instructions (at least the “pre-game”), so that you can determine the best 1-2 Complex Mechanics for the activity-game you wish to build in PowerPoint.
 - If you prefer to skip Step 2, you’ll have to rely on your own design intuition during Step 1 only. Or you can pick one of the two complex mechanics discussed in our video (Challenge and Switch, or Cut-ups).
 - *The Allure of Play (book)*: For the future, you should know that Joe and Tori came up with a full, rigorous method for designing learning activities and games called the ALLURE method. It is described in great detail within their forthcoming book, with many pages devoted to understanding each Simple and Complex Mechanic.
- 3) Start designing! You shouldn’t need more than a basic understanding of how to insert text boxes, group objects, and add images and backgrounds. But be patient: any kind of design is a process of discovery and revision.

If you’re designing for Google Slides, be sure to read our other tips in the doc “How Students Can Play Your Activity-Games Online Using Google Slides.pdf”

Advanced Instructions

- 1) *Adding Randomness*: If your PowerPoint game needs other random elements, you can direct players to use other websites for rolling dice, flipping coins, or even drawing a random playing card (i.e. the Queen-of-hearts). Try the site “Random Generator” (<https://www.random.org>).
- 2) *A Note About Making Custom Cards*: If your activity contains a deck of custom cards you designed, it will be difficult to simulate this in a simple PowerPoint game. There are advanced PowerPoint templates for designing such card decks whose directions are almost like learning a programming language. A simpler way to achieve your goal would be to put one of your cards on each slide of a PowerPoint, then tell the student to roll a random number generator (such as the one at random.org—set the “max” to your maximum number of cards), then jump to the slide page matching the number rolled. Of course, if the slide was already rolled previously, the student would have to roll again. There are also more complex card picking software on the internet.
- 3) *More PowerPoint Templates, Macros, and Fancy Things*: PowerPoint can do much more than described here, including having sounds, video snippets, fancy transitions, etc. If you’re interested in taking the deep dive, search online for the finer points of this software. Note that not all of these items may work in Google Slides.