

Use Microsoft PowerPoint to Develop an Interactive Story

Curriculum Area: Language Arts/Math/Social Studies/Science

Grade Level: 4th Grade and up

Application: Microsoft PowerPoint

Tip: Use the outline view and hyperlinks to design an interactive story.

Description: Students design an interactive story using the outline view and hyperlinking features in PowerPoint. The goal is to let the reader decide which path to take when reading the story in a slide show.

Students can work in small groups (or by themselves if they are older) to create their interactive stories. Students should first design the story using a “storyboard” which contains sketches of all the scenes in a story, including all the scenes that readers might possibly jump to while viewing the slide show.

Students add hyperlinks in the form of action buttons to each slide so that readers can jump to whichever part of the story they choose.

See the sample slide below, which contains two hyperlinked buttons:



How To:

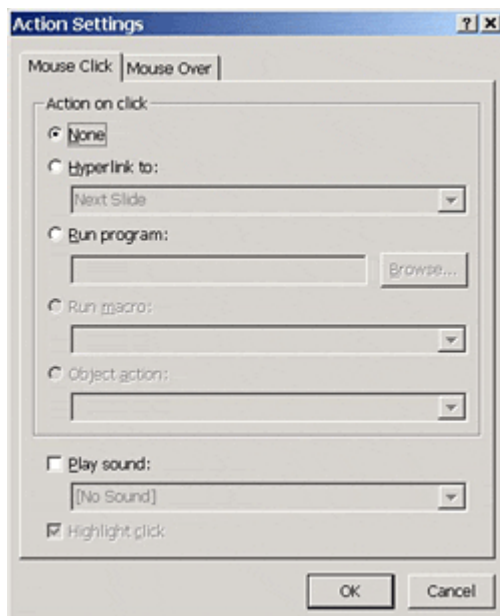
1. First, plan your interactive stories on paper. A storyboard (that is, sketches of each page or slide) will help you keep track of the many possible scenes in your story. Make sure you write down titles for each page because you'll use those titles when creating the presentation in PowerPoint. On your storyboard, draw lines between slides—almost like a path—to show the choices the reader can make in following the story.
2. Start Microsoft PowerPoint, and select Design Template or start from scratch. In the New Presentation box, choose the design template that will work best as a backdrop for your story.
3. In the New Slide box, choose Title Slide to design the layout of the first slide. Type the title of your story and any subtitle (such as the names of the students writing the story) on the title slide.

4. Add a new "page" to the story by clicking the New Slide button on the toolbar. A Bulleted List layout will most likely work best.
5. Before typing any text on Slide 2, click in the left side of the window, in the outline area. Here you will type all the titles for each page in your interactive story.
 - Type the title for Slide 2 in the outline area, and then press ENTER. Slide 3 will automatically appear, waiting for the next title to be typed. Continue typing each slide's title, remembering to press ENTER after each one.
6. Next, add the rest of the words to each slide. In the outline area, just click the title of the slide you want to work on, and then type the sentences on the slide that appears on the right.

Tip: If you'd like to type sentences rather than bullet points, click the Bullets button on the toolbar. Then select Ruler on the View menu to display the ruler. Drag the Hanging Indent marker (the bottom triangle) back to the left so that the words don't indent when they wrap to the next line.

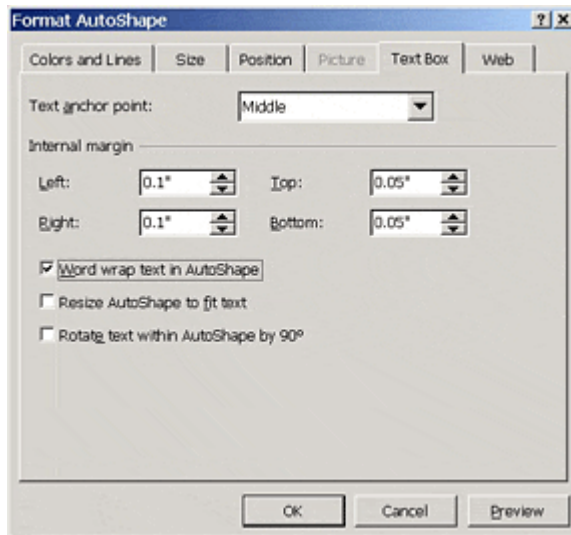
Tip: Be careful not to fill up the entire space on a slide; you need to save some room for the action buttons. Keep in mind that you can always select a smaller font size if you need to fit a few more words on the page, but try not to make the font too small. You want to make sure the words are easy to read during the slide show.

7. Add some pictures to your slides to make the story more enjoyable to look at and read. But remember to leave room for your action buttons.
8. Add the action buttons (hyperlinks) to each slide so the reader can select his or her own path when reading the story. To add the hyperlinks:
 - View the slide on which you want to add some hyperlinks, and then select **Action Buttons** from the **Slide Show** menu. Click the blue bar above the action buttons, and drag the box off to the side of the screen so you can get to the buttons when adding hyperlinks to other slides. (This is a floating toolbox.)
 - Click the **Custom** action button (the first blank button), and then click and drag a small box on your slide in a good location for the button. When you release the mouse, a dialog box appears (see below) that lets you select where you want the button to hyperlink to. Select **Hyperlink to**. In the drop-down list, select **Slide**, and then choose the specific slide you want the button to link to. Click **OK** twice.



- Now add words to the action button. Right-click inside the button, and click Add Text. Type the words that you want the button to display, using whatever font and size works best.

Tip: You can wrap words inside the button. First, double-click the button, and then on the Text Box tab, select Word wrap text in AutoShape. Click OK. Resize the button to fit your slide by clicking a corner box and dragging to the appropriate size.



- To change the color of the button, double-click it. On the **Colors and Lines** tab, choose the colors you want.
9. Try out the new links by viewing the slide show. To do this, on the **Slide Show** menu, click **View Show**. *Note that the hyperlinks don't work unless you are viewing a slide show.*
 10. Add slide transitions to spice up your slide show. To do this, choose **Slide Transition** from the **Slide Show** menu.
 11. Save your story, and then have some friends in your class try it out. The paths should work each time someone reads your story. Who knows which path each reader will take next time!

Additional Tips:

- You might want to try printing your story so that other students can see all of the possible scenes. This is a good way to proofread the stories and to check whether there are any dead ends. Try printing the story as handouts. To do this, on the **File** menu, click **Print**. In the **Print dialog box**, in the drop-down list under **Print what**, click **Handouts**. Try printing two, three, four, six, or nine slides per page.
- Remember to include action buttons on all slides so that the reader can always choose which direction to go in the story. Never leave a dead end on any slide. You might even want to add a button on the last slide of each path that takes the reader back to the beginning, so that he or she can read through the story again, this time making different choices.