

Supporting educators in STEM integration

**Digital Maestro**  
m a g a z i n e

# Google Slides

## Interactive Stories

Create interactive buttons  
Create animated Gifs  
Use custom backgrounds

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## Introduction

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There are many similarities between Google Slides, PowerPoint, and Keynote. There are several advanced features in PowerPoint and Keynote that are not yet available in Google Slides. One feature that is available in Google Slides, which is also available in PowerPoint and Keynote, makes it a good application for creating interactive slides and stories. This feature allows us to create links to slides. We will use this feature to develop parts of our interactive story.

I will be taking a different spin on the tale of the "Three Little Pigs". The focus is not on the story but on the skills. What you learn here can be applied to other interactive presentations. Interactive slides can be used with research topics in content areas like science, math, history, and social studies.

I've found that fewer tools and options are often better for students and teachers. Students often spend a great deal of time testing different transitions and animations when they use PowerPoint and Keynote. This often interferes with them creating and finishing their product on time.

## Why Google Slides?

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There are several reasons why I like Google Slides for interactive stories. We can add images and video from the

Internet and YouTube with ease. Slides tap into the power of Google search to find the right image. It also taps into YouTube and the billions of videos in its library. Google Slides and Google Chrome work together to provide a variety of tools that can be installed through the Chrome Web Store. Many of these applications and extensions can be used to create and add media content to slides.

Slides are saved in the Google Cloud and can be accessed anywhere on most devices. Google Slides, like most Google applications, can be shared with others and used in collaborative environments. This provides opportunities for students to work on one slideshow at the same time using separate computers or devices. Google Slides is available as an app for a variety of devices like smartphones and tablets. The app can be installed from the Chrome web store, Google Play, and iTunes App Store. The Windows Store does not have Google apps but we can use the Chrome browser.

## Story Telling with Slides

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Storyboarding with images and illustrations makes it easy for students to develop stories with rich media before, during, and after the writing process. Storyboarding with Google Slides is easy because we can access and insert a variety of images from the Internet.

During the first part of this lesson, we will learn how to layout a storyboard with images. This part can be done with students in an “I do, we do, you do” format. Teachers can also set the initial story starter and distribute it to students through a learning management system or Google Classroom.

The interactive part of the story will take place when we get to a point where I feel students need to take over and finish the story with their own perspective on what happens in the rest of the story. The point where students take over depends on the concepts we want the students to learn and apply.

The images inserted through Google Slides do not violate copyright law because the search through Google Slides filters for images in the public domain or Creative Commons.

## Changing slide dimensions

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Google slides are created using one standard size format. New slides are created using an aspect ratio that is used by most devices like computer displays and projectors. This ratio is a 16:9 aspect ratio. Slides can also be created in other aspect ratios like 4:3 and 16:10.

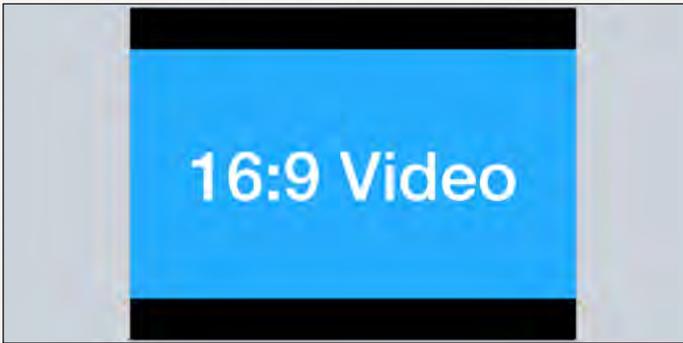
If you are confused about aspect ratio think of it this way. A 16:9 aspect ratio is 16 units wide and 9 units tall. Units can be inches, feet, centimeters, or pixels.

There really isn't any reason to choose one aspect ratio over another. It largely depends on aesthetics and your personal needs for the presentation. The 16:9 aspect ratio will work just fine for most displays. But, there might be some things you don't like about the current aspect ratio. Let's see what those might be and what changing the aspect ratio can do to solve what doesn't look right.

If a slide show in the 4:3 format is going to be shown to an audience on a display or projector that uses the 16:9 or 16:10 format then you will see black borders on the left and right that are used to fill in the space left blank due to the difference in size ratio. The image below is an example of what this would look like.



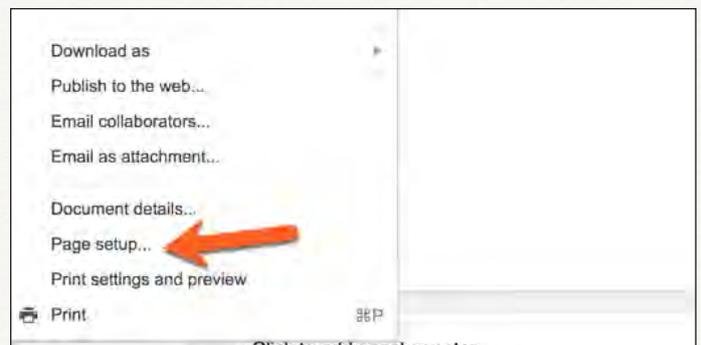
The same holds true if you are going to display a presentation in the 16:9 or 16:10 format on displays or projectors using the 4:3 aspect ratio. In this case, the display or projector will fill in the empty space above and below the presentation with black. The image below is an example of what this would look like.



It's important to choose the proper aspect ratio from the beginning because changing from one aspect ratio to another might require that we resize and move our content around to accommodate the new format.

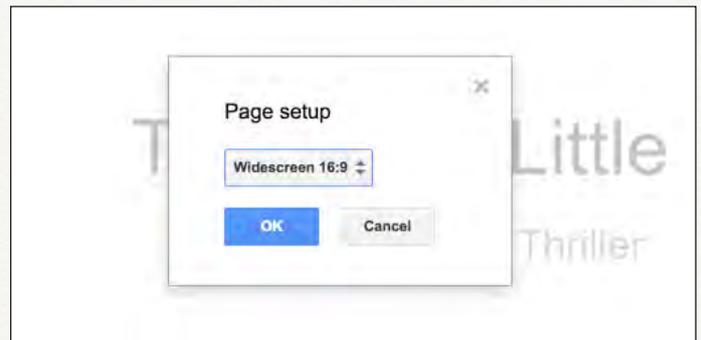
Click File in the menu and select "Page setup".

Before changing the aspect ratio to a working slide it is a good idea to use a duplicate. Changing the slide size could move your content around and changing the slide back to the original dimensions may not place everything back to where it was. That means a lot of work to put everything back.



The setup for this slide is set to the 16:9 aspect ratio.

Click File in the menu and select "Make a copy".



Click the selector to see the other ratio options. The other ratio options include 4:3 and 16:10. There is also a custom option.

Provide a new name for the slide or leave it as is so you can find it later. Select a location on the Drive to save the duplicate slide and click OK to save.

I will select the 4:3 ratio and click OK. The size of all the slides will change to this ratio and Google Slides will try to accommodate all the elements on

each slide. We might need to move some things around. For the most part, everything should look about the same. Elements tend to get pushed closer together or farther apart from one another when we change the size.

We can compare the original slideshow with the duplicate and this can help us decide which slide works best. If things don't change much between each copy of the slide then we can use one slide for one display and another for a different display.

## Creating the story starter

The story starter can be used to introduce students to various Google Slide skills that will be needed to develop their stories. This refers back to the “I do, we do, you do” format.

## Creating a new slideshow

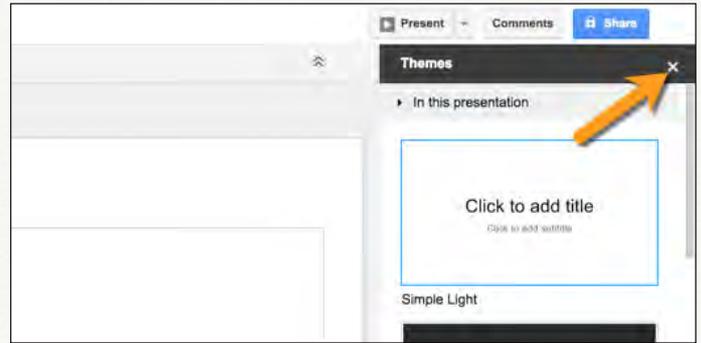
Log into your Google account and create a new Google Slideshow. There are several ways to do this. One way is to click the “New” button in Google Drive and select Google Sheets.

Another way is to click the Google Apps launcher from any Google application like Gmail.

Google apps can be accessed from the Chrome browser or Chromebook apps launcher too.

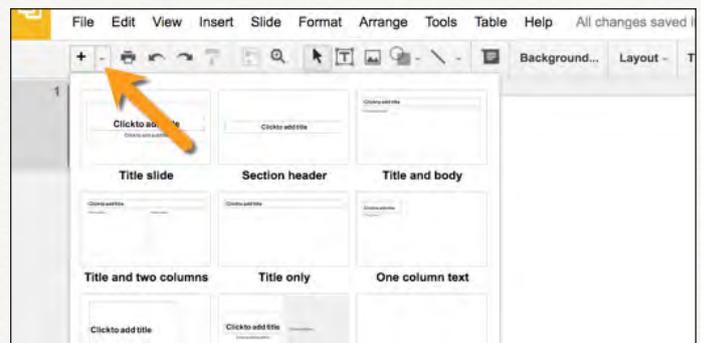
Create a new slide by clicking the new slide icon in the Google Slides portal. The Google Slides portal is available by clicking the Slides application in the Google Apps launcher or by going directly to (<https://slides.google.com>).

Use the basic white template and the white theme for the lesson. Close the themes panel by clicking the close button.

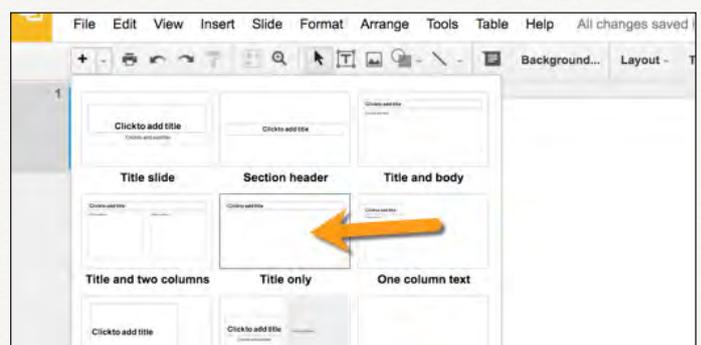


Click on the title box to add a title. Click the subtitle text box and add a subtitle. The title slide is like a book cover for the story. It can be decorated with images or illustrations by students.

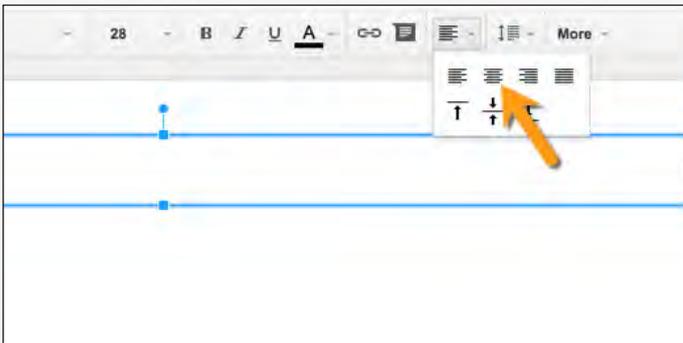
We will add a few more slides that represent the storyboard in our story. Click the slide-master selector, the arrow next to the “Add” button.



Click the “title only” master slide.



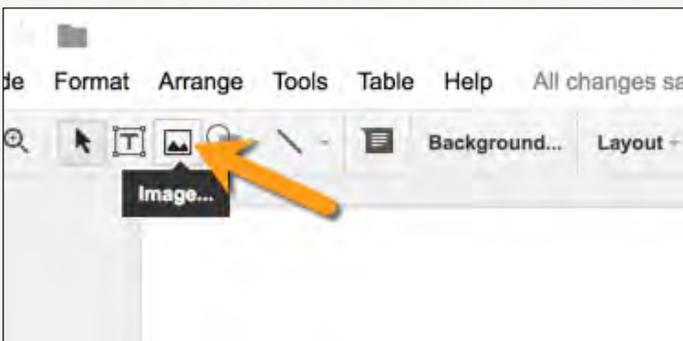
Click on the title box and type “The Three Pigs”. You don’t need to include the quotation marks. The title is aligned to the left. Use the center justification button in the button bar to center the title.



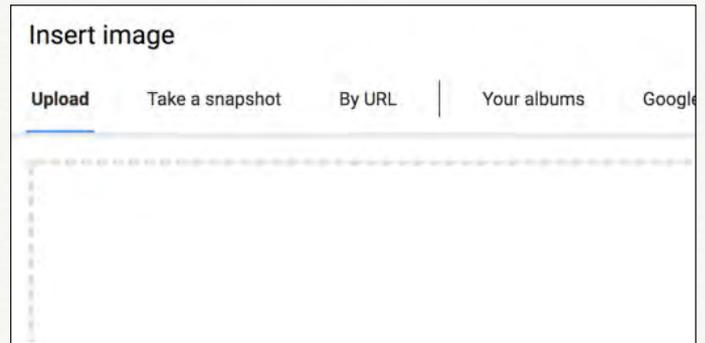
In typography text that is aligned to the left is called flush left and text aligned to the right is called flush right. Centered text is just called centered.

## Inserting an image

Let’s insert an image of our primary characters, the three pigs. Click the “Insert” image button in the button bar.



There are a variety of ways we can add images to our slide. The easiest way is to search the Internet for an image of three pigs. Unless you happen to have images of three pigs on your computer or device.

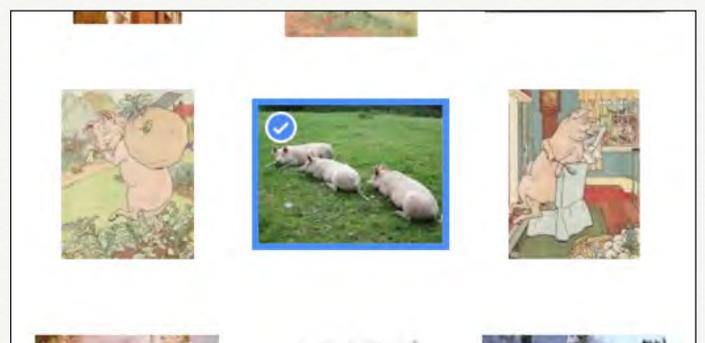


Click the “Search” option.

Click once inside the Google search box and type “three little pigs”. Press Return on your keyboard to search for images. You can also click the magnifying glass icon to the right of the search box.

The images returned in the search fall under the Fair Use policy. These are images that can be used without the need to obtain permission for their use from the copyright holder. We can use the images in our slideshow and we will not be violating copyright. The information below the search box informs us that the images are labeled for commercial reuse with modifications.

Select an image by clicking it once.



# Digital Maestro Magazine

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You are always a student, never a master. You have to keep moving forward.

Conrad Hall

