
Introductory Slides: An Alternate Approach

An alternate approach for writing introductory slides is to “tease ’em what you’re going to tell ’em.” I refer to this approach as the mystery style of overviews because you withhold important pieces of the plot until just the right moment. You can build tremendous interest by promising a surprise and then layering in clues as you proceed. This technique often appeals to scientists since their life’s work is essentially solving mysteries. Consider the gambit in Figure 16-7, which uses mystery style.

A New Technology for Creating Fruit Species

- Our team has a novel approach, which this presentation will uncover.
- We’ll compare our approach to hybridization and genetic modification.

FIGURE 16-7 Use mystery techniques to build suspense.

The title is clear enough to reassure audience members that they are in the right place. The first bullet announces the purpose without giving away the punch line. Humans are a naturally curious species, and intelligent humans are even more so. The audience wants to get to the next slide to learn the secret. Of course, the secret won’t be found on the next slide. The secret must be nurtured while you gradually uncover clues. Occasionally, while laying out background information, you should remind the audience of the ultimate goal, as in the final bullet of Figure 16-8.

Genetic Modification: Summary

- Pros:
 - Desired traits in a single generation
 - More predictable than hybridization
- Con:
 - Expensive
- Our new approach minimizes the expense.

FIGURE 16-8 Remind the audience that the secret will be revealed later.

In the perfect mystery presentation, you can slowly lead the audience to come to the same conclusions that you did.