

# Make a PowerPoint Countdown Clock by Lorrie Jackson

## WHY A TECHTORIAL?

### What will I learn today?

You will learn how to make a countdown clock to help students stay on task during timed activities.

### What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

You will need Microsoft's [PowerPoint](#) (for Mac or PC) to complete this techtorial.

### Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard IVA in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#).

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## WHY A COUNTDOWN CLOCK?

Remember when movies reels started with a 10, 9, 8...countdown? The countdown got our attention and made us excited about the upcoming feature.

Countdown clocks also can be used to great advantage in the classroom. Often, when students are given a certain amount of time to complete a task, they have difficulty staying focused and using their time wisely. Flicking the lights or calling out reminders might not be incentive enough.

A countdown clock gets students' attention and motivates them to stay on task.

You can create your own countdown clock in just three easy steps.

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## STEP ONE: CREATING THE SLIDES

You will create the countdown clock as a series of PowerPoint slides. To make those slides:

- Open PowerPoint. A new slide will open automatically. This will be the title slide.
- Type "Countdown Clock" in the title box. Type your name and identify the class in the subtitle box.
- Click the new slide icon on the menu bar or go to Insert>New Slide to create another slide. Do not type anything in the title box of this slide. In the text box, type the words *You have* and hit Enter. (Make sure the text font size you use is at least 32.) .
- Type *10* and hit Enter.
- Type *minutes left*.
- Center the text.
- Highlight the numeral 10 and increase the font size to 72. Your slide should look like this:



You have  
**10**  
minutes left.

- Save your work.
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## DUPLICATING SLIDES

You now have two slides; a title slide and a slide that reads, *You have 10 minutes left*. But that's not enough. You need a total of ten slides that read *You have 10 minutes left*. To create those slides:

- Click the slide that reads, *You have 10 minutes left*.
  - Click **Insert** in the menu bar and select Duplicate Slide.
  - Repeat the previous step eight times. You now have 11 slides; a title slide and ten slides that read, *You have 10 minutes left*.
  - Click Slide 3 and change the numeral 10 to 9.
  - Click Slide 4 and change the numeral 10 to 8.
  - Continue changing the numerals on the remaining slides, each time decreasing the number of minutes left by one. (On the final slide, be sure to delete the "s," so the text reads, *You have 1 minute left*.)
  - Click Insert>New Slide to create a new slide.
  - Type *Time's Up!* You also can add a task you want them to do, such as *Pencils down!* or *Look at Mr. Smith*.
  - Save your work.
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## STEP TWO: ADDING SLIDE TRANSITIONS

You have created the 12 slides you need for the countdown clock. Now, you need to set the timing, so the slides change every minute.

- Click Slide 2.
- Click Slide Show>Slide Transition. Select any effect you'd like, but be sure to set the speed at Fast.
- Under **Advance slide**, choose **Automatically after \_\_\_ seconds**, type *60* into the blank, and hit Apply. (Note: Even though you probably will let the slide show automatically move from slide to slide every 60 seconds, check **On mouse click** as well. That will allow you to forward a slide early if students seem way off-task and you want to give them a bit of a jolt!



- Repeat the previous steps for slides 3-11. (Hint: You can assign the 60 second transition to all the slides at once by choosing **Apply to All** at slide 2. If you choose that method, be sure to go back to the title slide and remove the transition, so the clock doesn't move from the title slide to Slide 2 before you're ready.)
- Save your work.

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### STEP THREE: ADDING SOUND

You also will want to add a sound file to the final slide, so students are alerted that time is up. To add sound:

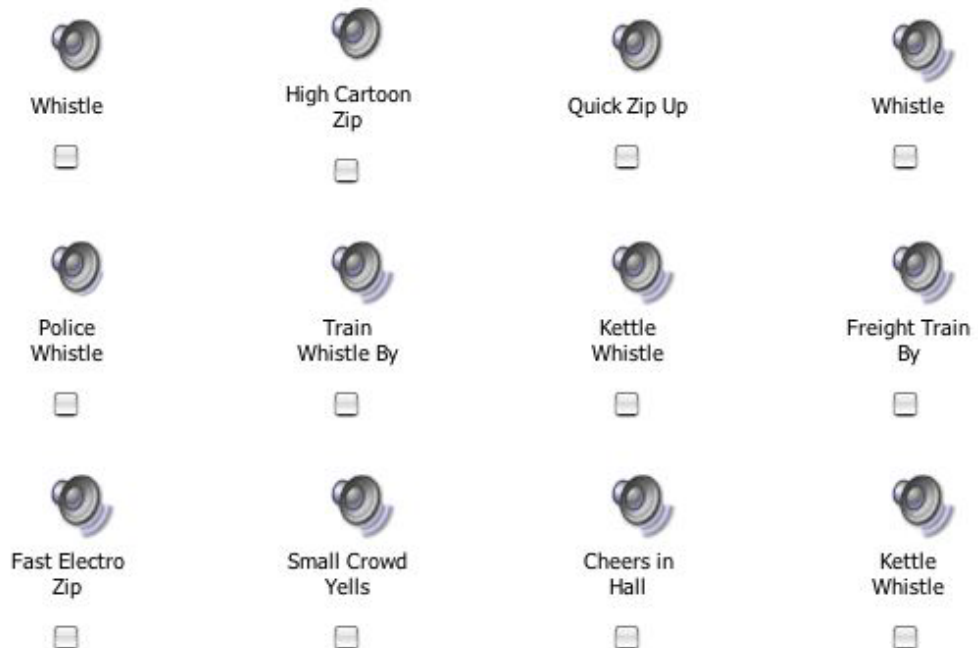
- Click Slide 12.
- Click Insert>Movies and Sound>Sound from Gallery. Choose a sound that will alert students that time is up. (Be sure to check YES when asked if you want the sound to automatically play at the end of the slide show.)

If you don't have many -- or any -- sounds to choose from in the Clip Gallery, go to Microsoft's online Clip Art Gallery. (Select Clips Online or just Online -- depending on your version of PowerPoint -- under Insert>Movies and Sounds>Sound from Gallery.) Below is an example of what you might find available for a whistle sound at Microsoft's Online Gallery:

### Searched sounds for: "whistle"

[Options](#) | [Help](#)

Select page Page: 1 of 2 [Next](#)



Page: 1 of 2 [Next](#)

- Save your work.

You can jazz up your countdown clock in other ways as well:

- Record your own sound (under Insert). To do that, you'll need either an external microphone or one built into your computer.
- Insert a sound in all the slides to let students know that time is ticking away. Keep the sound short so it doesn't distract students from their work.
- If sound is not enabled on your classroom computer, grab students' attention by changing the background color of each slide. (Click Format>Background), or by changing slide design or font color and size.

When you're finished, click Slide Show>View Show to test the countdown clock. Click from slide to slide to see if the clock works!

Use your countdown clock for timed group or individual work in the classroom - and out of it. The clock will help keep adults at committee and in-service meetings motivated and on task too.

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### **TELL ME MORE!**

#### **Where can I find more information about using PowerPoint in my classroom?**

Find PowerPoint lesson plans, how-to articles, and much more at the [Instructional Resources](#) provided at Microsoft Education.