

HOW TO CREATE A POSTER 101

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WAYS TO CREATE A POSTER.

THERE IS REALLY NO RIGHT WAY AND NO WRONG WAY.

POSTER MAKING IS AS MUCH AN ART FORM AS IT IS A SCIENCE.

**THE MORE POSTERS YOU CREATE AND THE MORE YOU LOOK AT WILL
EVENTUALLY LEAD YOU TO A POSTER TEMPLATE THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU.**

A LOT OF IT COMES DOWN TO YOUR OWN PERSONAL TASTES AND ABILITIES.

Creating a poster has not really changed since the time you were in grade school, cutting pictures out of the Sears catalogue or National Geographic and pasting them to a piece of Bristol Board. You can still create posters like that but they can be messy and very limiting.

We now create posters using graphic design software. You can create a poster in any graphics design package (Adobe, Corel, etc.). These packages are expensive and printing from them can create problems.

The easiest way to create a poster, in my opinion, is to use [Microsoft Office](#) PowerPoint or [OpenOffice](#) Impress (free download). In my opinion, using any other software package is like hitting a thumb tack with a sledge hammer. Too much power for the job.

Posters are very simple to create. Most people have PowerPoint or Impress. Using one of these packages, you can cut and paste and add text just the way you did with the Bristol Board method of your youth. Once a poster has been printed, you can not tell how it was produced. A poster printed with PowerPoint or Impress will look just as good as one created with Adobe or Corel.

The first step **and the most important step** to creating a poster is to find out what space you have been allocated for your poster. This can be done simply by going and looking at your space with a measuring tape or contacting the person or organization responsible for the poster session you will be attending. I have lost count as to the number of people who have spent days creating a poster and then spending large sums of money to print that poster without first checking the space allotted to them. I have had people come back to me to have posters reprinted smaller after they have found out their poster is too big for their space. This is a very costly and totally avoidable mistake.

CHECK FIRST !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

There are two main types of posters. One large poster to cover your entire space or a series of smaller panels to cover your space.

One large poster is very impressive and gives uniformity to your work.

A series of panels are useful if your research is a “work in progress” and you will be displaying results at a number of places over an extended period of time. You need only redraw and reprint the panels where your information has changed. Cuts down on costs. You also can fine tune your display to your audience. Add or remove panels as needed.

The choice is up to you

The next step is to rough out your poster on a piece of paper.



Posters have two main sections.

The TITLE area at the top and the BODY of your research below.

The body area can be further divided into subsections such as: Introduction, Methods, Discussion, Conclusions, Acknowledgements, References.

Photos and graphs to enhance your poster are displayed in the body as well.

The **TITLE** section is where the largest text on your poster will live. The smallest text in your title should not be smaller than the largest text in the **BODY**. The title area is a banner that runs across your poster from side to side.

Title of your poster.

This is the largest font size on your poster. Make it as big as the space will allow. This is your “hook”. You want the title to be seen from space, well maybe just from across the room. One line if possible

Author and coauthors.

This information goes below the title and is the second largest. Why? Because you are an egomaniac. You want people to know how brilliant you are. The primary authors name should stand out against the others.

Affiliations.

Where you are from.

Logos and poster number.

The logo of the conference convener and your institutes logo. The number of the poster can also be helpful if the poster is intended for only one conference.

The BODY section is where you will put all of your data.

This area is divided up into your subheading. The Subtitles should be as big as the smallest text in the title area.

In a poster words are your enemy. Use just enough to get your point across. The text should be detailed enough to stand on it's own, when you are off listening to a talk or nature calls. Graphs and photos with clear captions will serve you better. A picture is worth a thousand words.

TEXT

The
size
and

type of text

are very important.

The pretty pictures are fine,
but without words that can

be read and

understood, they are

useless.

TEXT SIZE

The size of the text used in a poster has no upper limit,

The title can be as big as you like and all subsequent text gets smaller .

There is however a lower limit for text.

Poster sessions are busy places and because of your brilliance, your poster will be the focal point of the session. There will be so many people around your poster that most people will not get closer than a meter to your work.

From about a meter away 18 point text is the smallest font that can be easily read. This means that the credits and acknowledgments that you put down in the lower right hand corner should be no smaller than 18 point. Captions on your images (including the ones imbedded in your images) should be no smaller than 18 point.

TEXT TYPE

As to fonts. I recommend that you choose fonts that do not have serifs on them, such as **TIMES ROMAN**. Block letters such as **ARIAL** or **HELVETICA** will be easier to read at a distance. Look at the two lower case "y's" below. They are both the same font size. They do not look it, but they are. The left is in ARIAL and the right is in TIMES ROMAN. Sit about 1 meter from you computer screen and decide which font is clearer at a distance. The ARIAL "y" is clear. The TIMES ROMAN "y" looks like a v with a dot below it

y

y

BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds can be very appealing to the eye. You do not need a background, but if you use one, make sure it does not over power your poster.

A background can be a single colour, a blend of colours or it can be an image.

Regardless, of which you choose the background should be very subtle.

The background is meant to enhance your poster, not draw attention away from your data.

Light shades of pastels should be used for solid or blended backgrounds and washed out images or transparent images should only be used for backgrounds.

IMAGES

The best way to convey your message is by using good quality images. These are imported from other sources and drawing packages. **Always**, use the highest quality and highest resolution images you can find. They will increase the file size of your job, but newer printers have large amounts of memory.

Your final poster will only look as good as your worst image. If you do not have a high resolution image for your background, then do not use one. A pixilated background will stick out like a sore thumb.

A rule of thumb is that if your images do not look good when you zoom in then they will not print very well.

The printer only prints what it see, it does not improve bad images.

COLOURS

The colours that you select for your poster should be light pastels.

Colours on your screen will not be exactly what you end up printing. Because the bond paper absorbs ink the colours tend to be darker than those on your screen. For example. A fire engine red on your screen may appear brick red on your poster.

Rule of thumb. Lighter the better.

Many designers use [complimentary colours](#) and [contrasting colour](#) to great effect. The contrasting colour link has 10 nifty tools for choosing colour schemes.

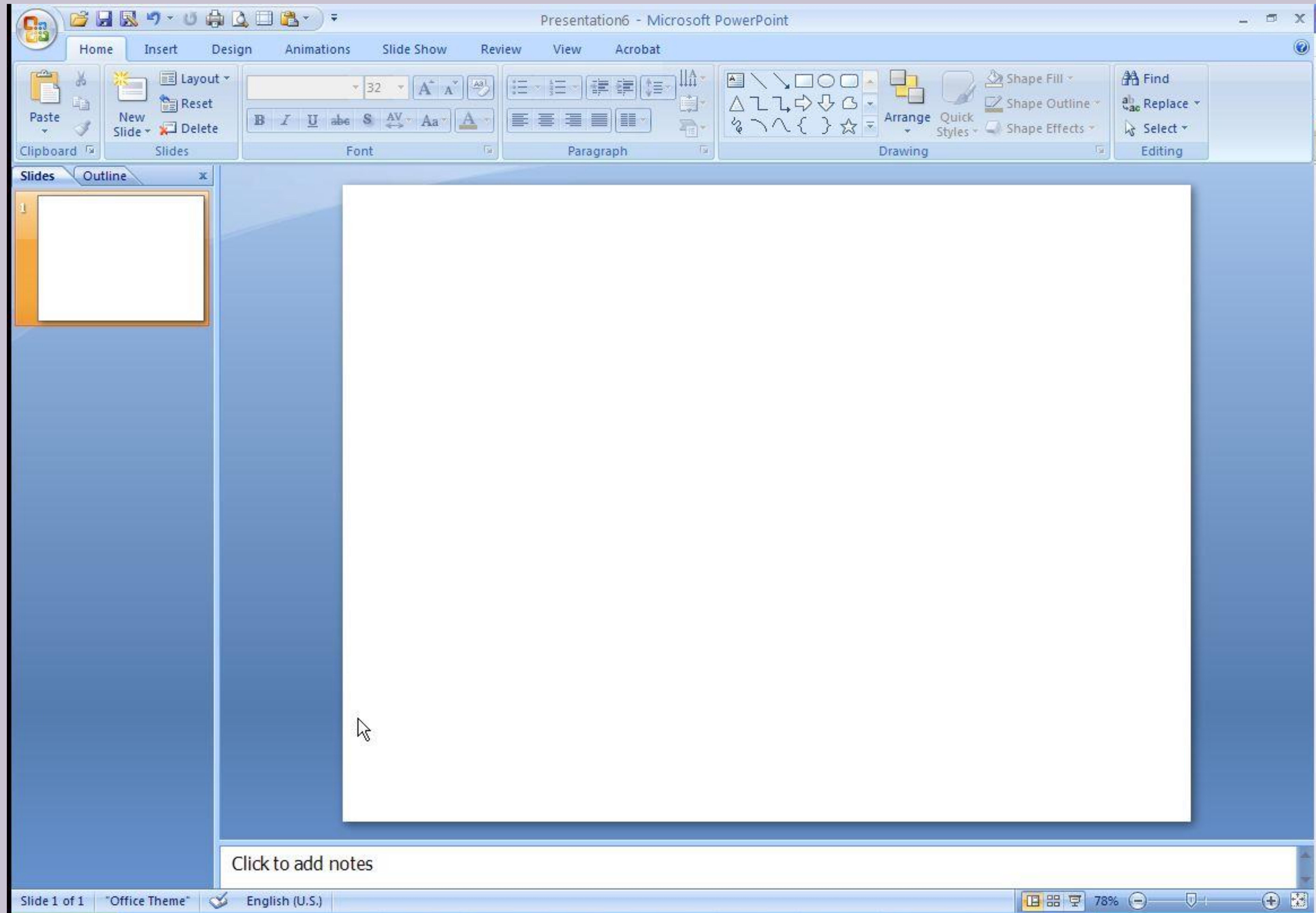
HANDOUTS

Additional text information about the topic can be provided to the viewers in form of a pamphlet or some other medium. Do not waste space on your poster with email addresses and URL links. Most people will not write them down.

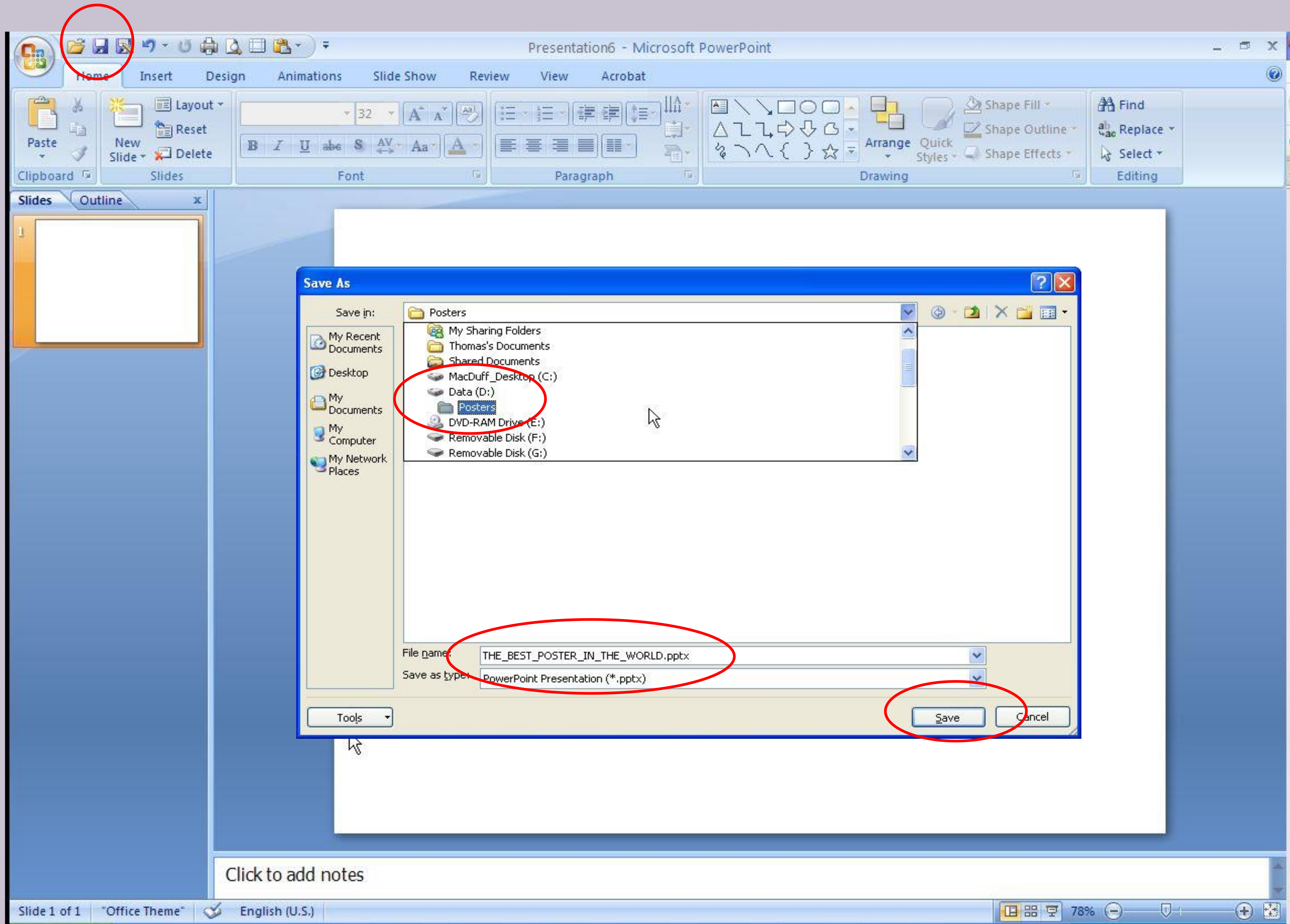
A good idea is to provide the viewer with a small print out of your poster (on 8.5 x11 or 8.5 x 14 paper) so that readers can take the poster with them.

You can print a small version of your poster on one side and additional text information on the other.

“Launch your graphics software package. For this tutorial, I am using “Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007”. Use which ever package you are comfortable with. They all will perform the same tasks. You might need to hunt around for the commands.



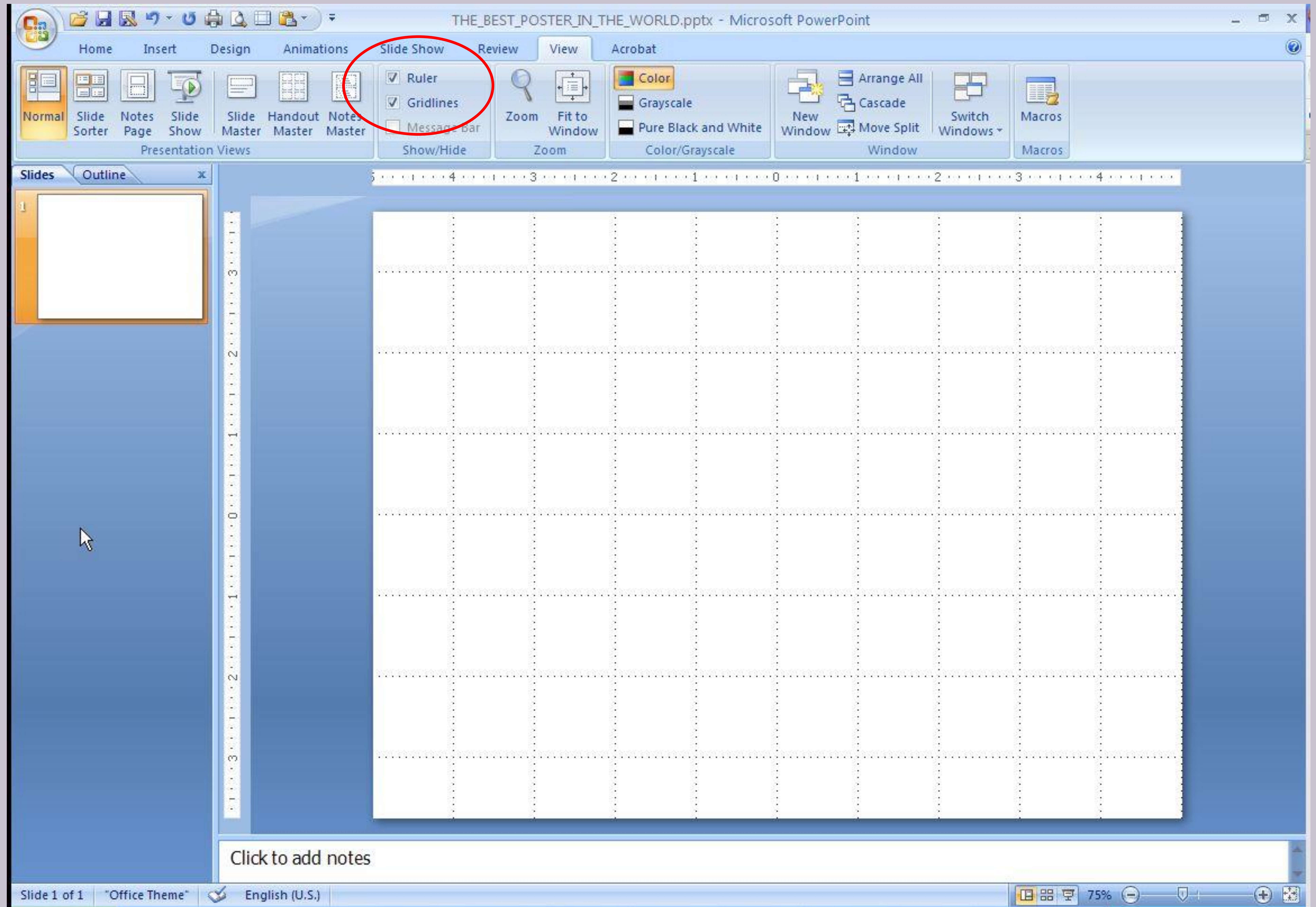
The first thing you should do is “SAVE” the poster, giving it a name (avoid_space_in_the_name.ppt) and store it on your hard drive. Spaces in file names can lead to trouble on the web.



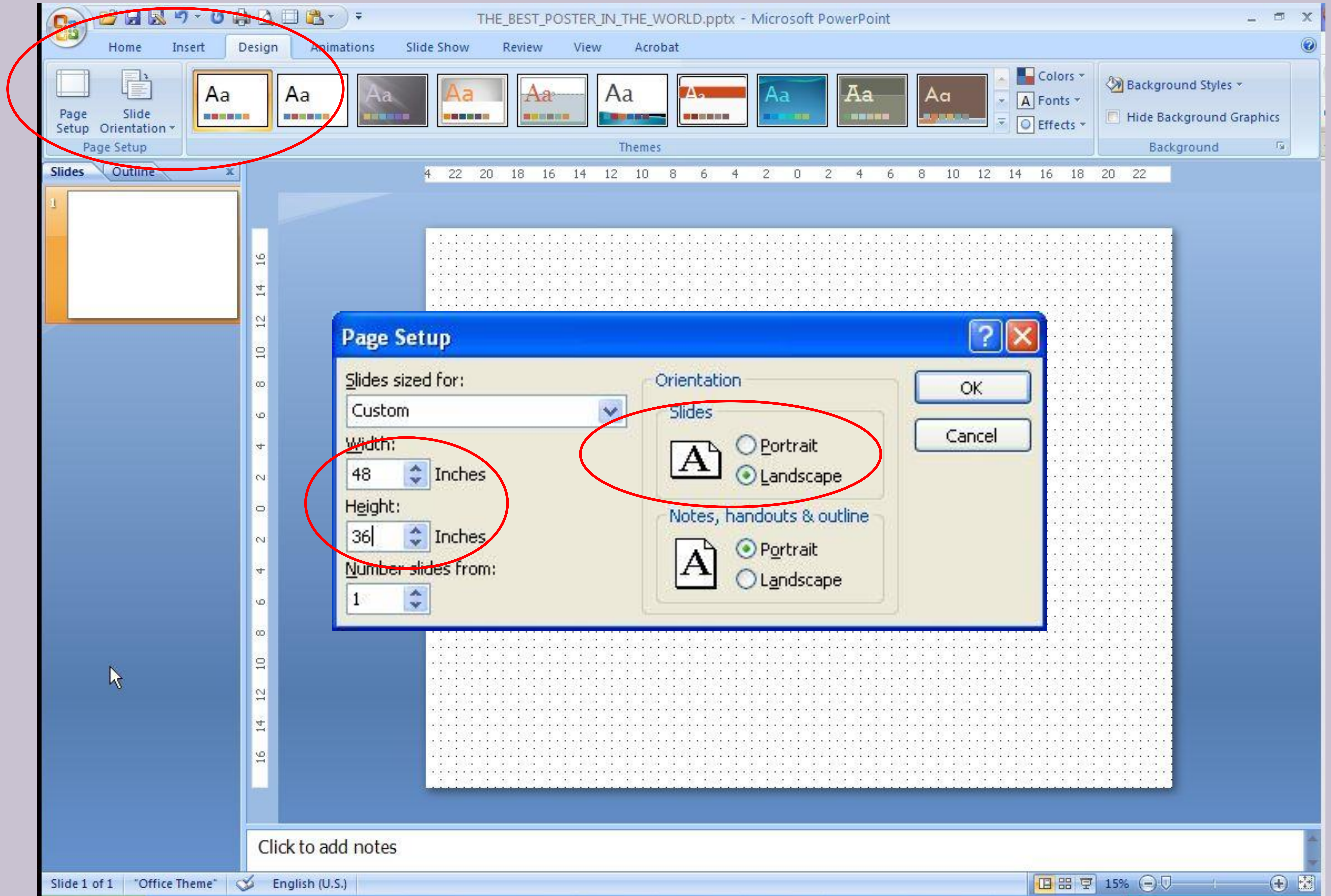
If you skip the previous step and put a few hours into your poster and your system crashes, you loose everything. I have not had much luck with “auto backup” or “file recovery” features in graphics packages..

The other thing you **MUST** get into the habit of doing, is to hit the save button after every change you make to your poster. It only takes a second, but can save you hours.

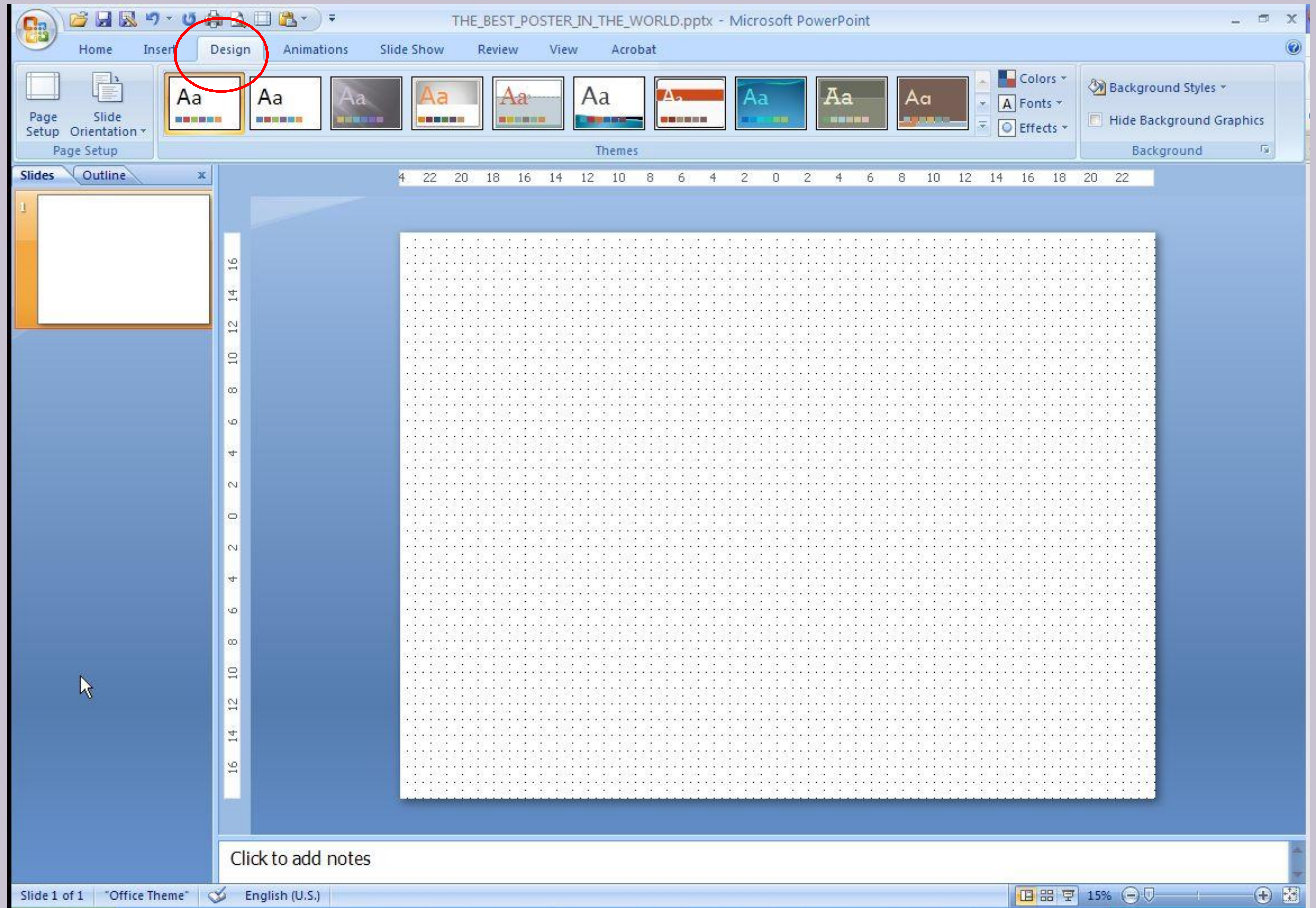
Once your poster is safety named and saved , the next thing I do is to turn on the rulers and the gridlines. These are very important for the appearance and alignment of your poster.

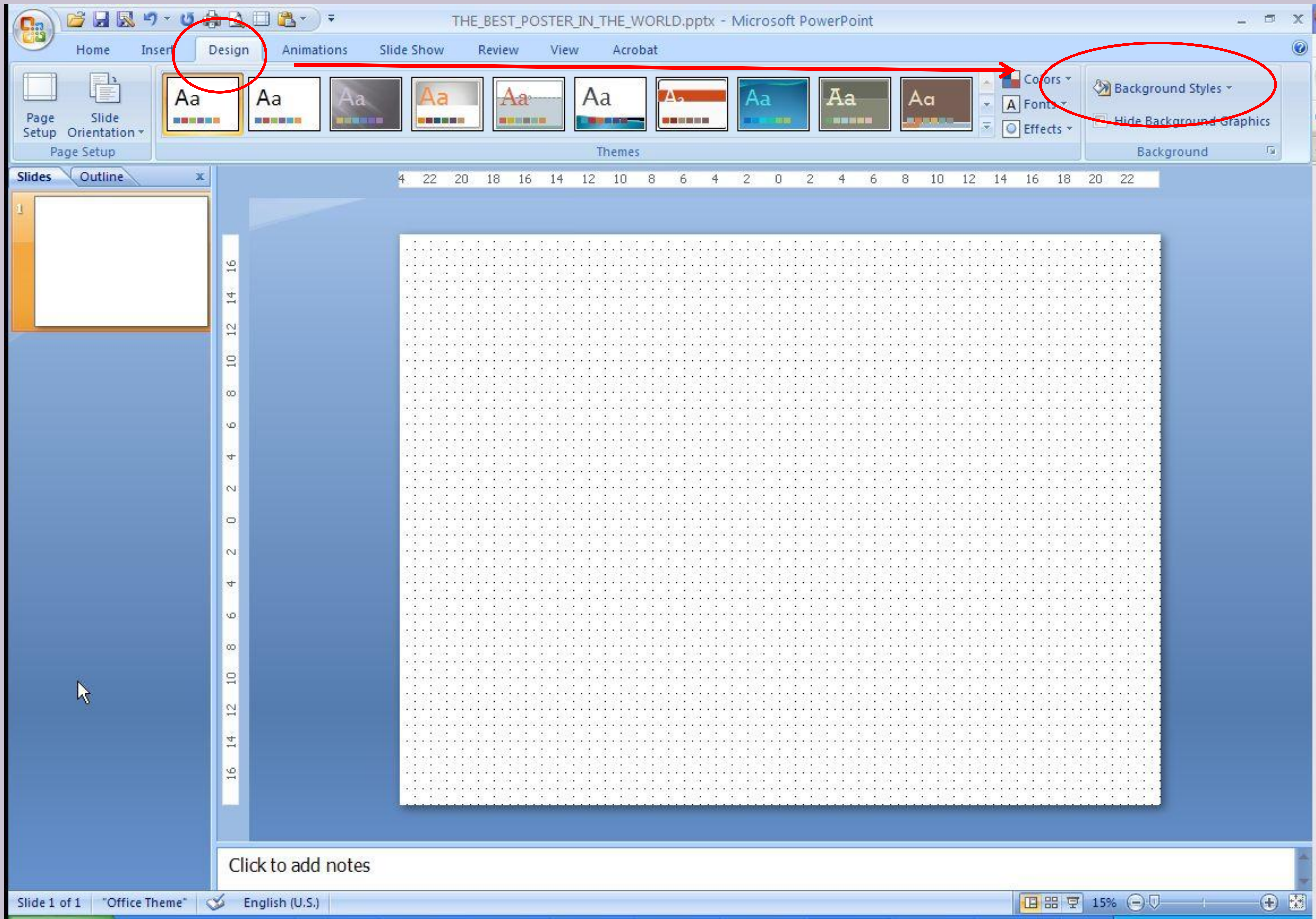


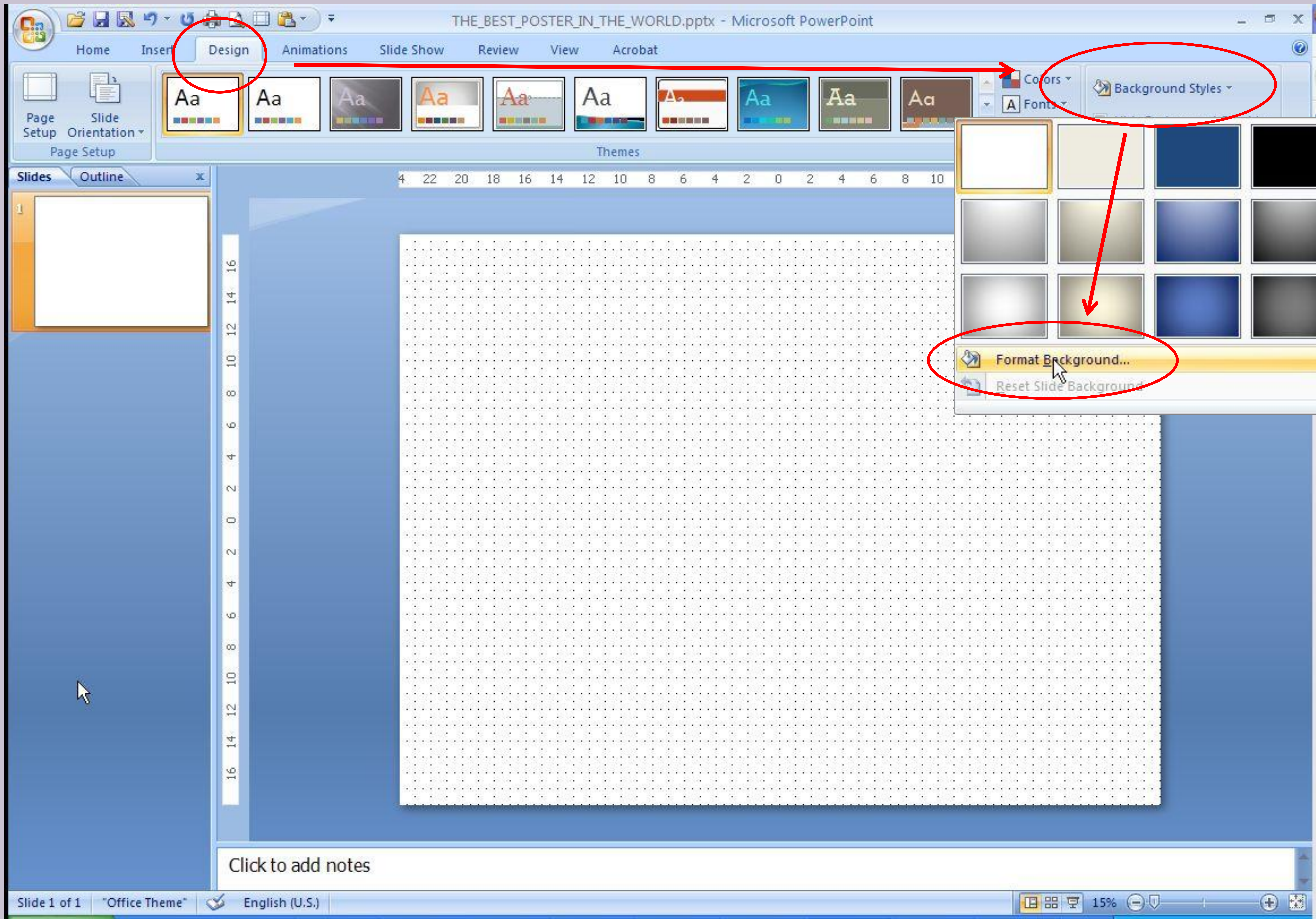
The next thing to be done is to set the size of your slide to the finished size of your poster. If you create your poster on an 8.5 x 11 inch slide, it stands a very good chance of not printing correctly when it is stretched to your poster dimensions.

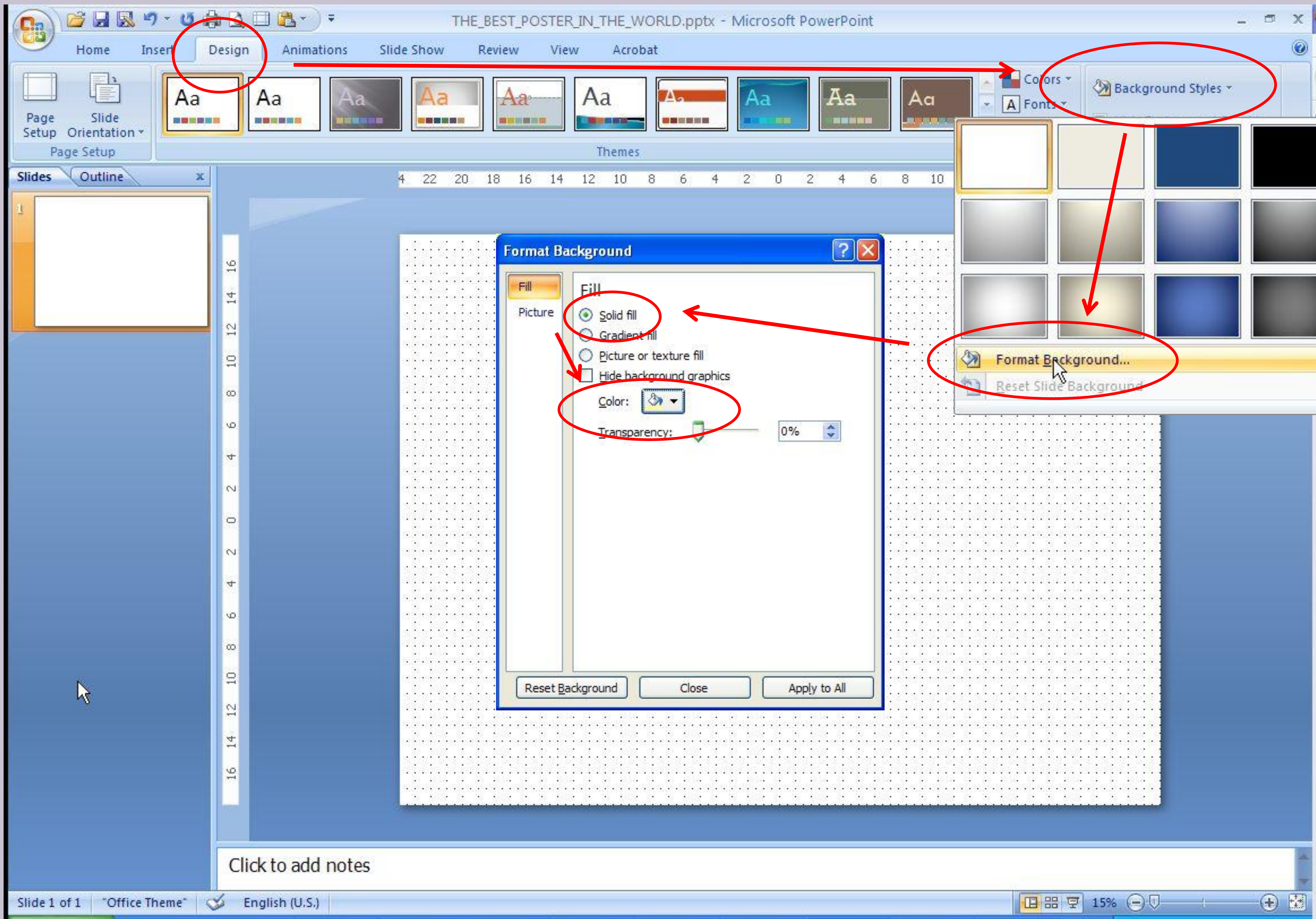


Now that the administrative tasks have been taken care of, you can now start building your poster. I usually set a pastel background, because I find white hard on my eyes. This can be changed easily once the poster is taking shape.









Home Insert **Design** Animations Slide Show Review View Acrobat

THE_BEST_POSTER_IN_THE_WORLD.pptx - Microsoft PowerPoint



Background Styles

Format Background

Fill

Picture

- Solid fill
- Gradient fill
- Picture or texture fill
- Hide background graphics

Color: [Color Picker]

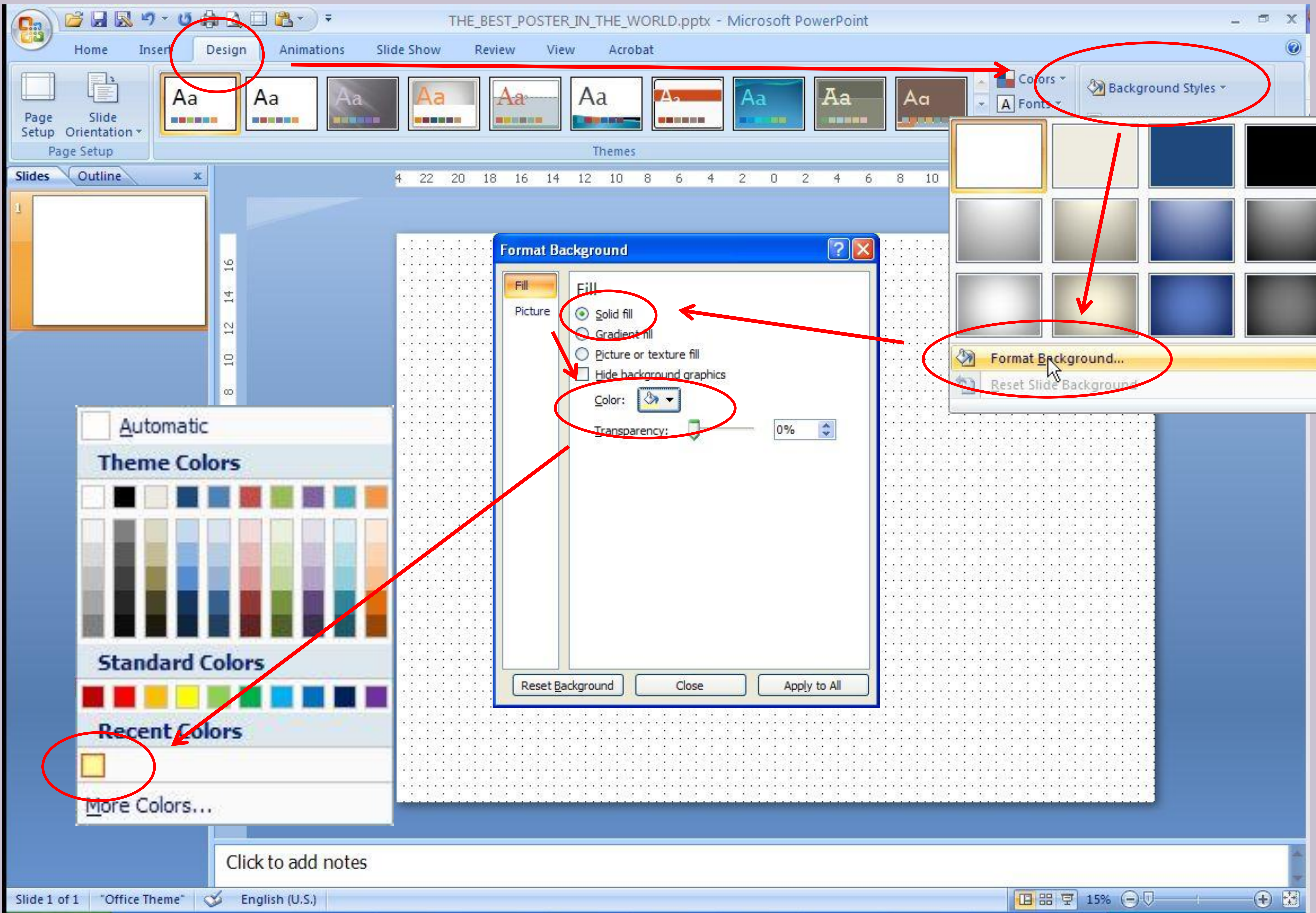
Transparency: [Slider] 0%

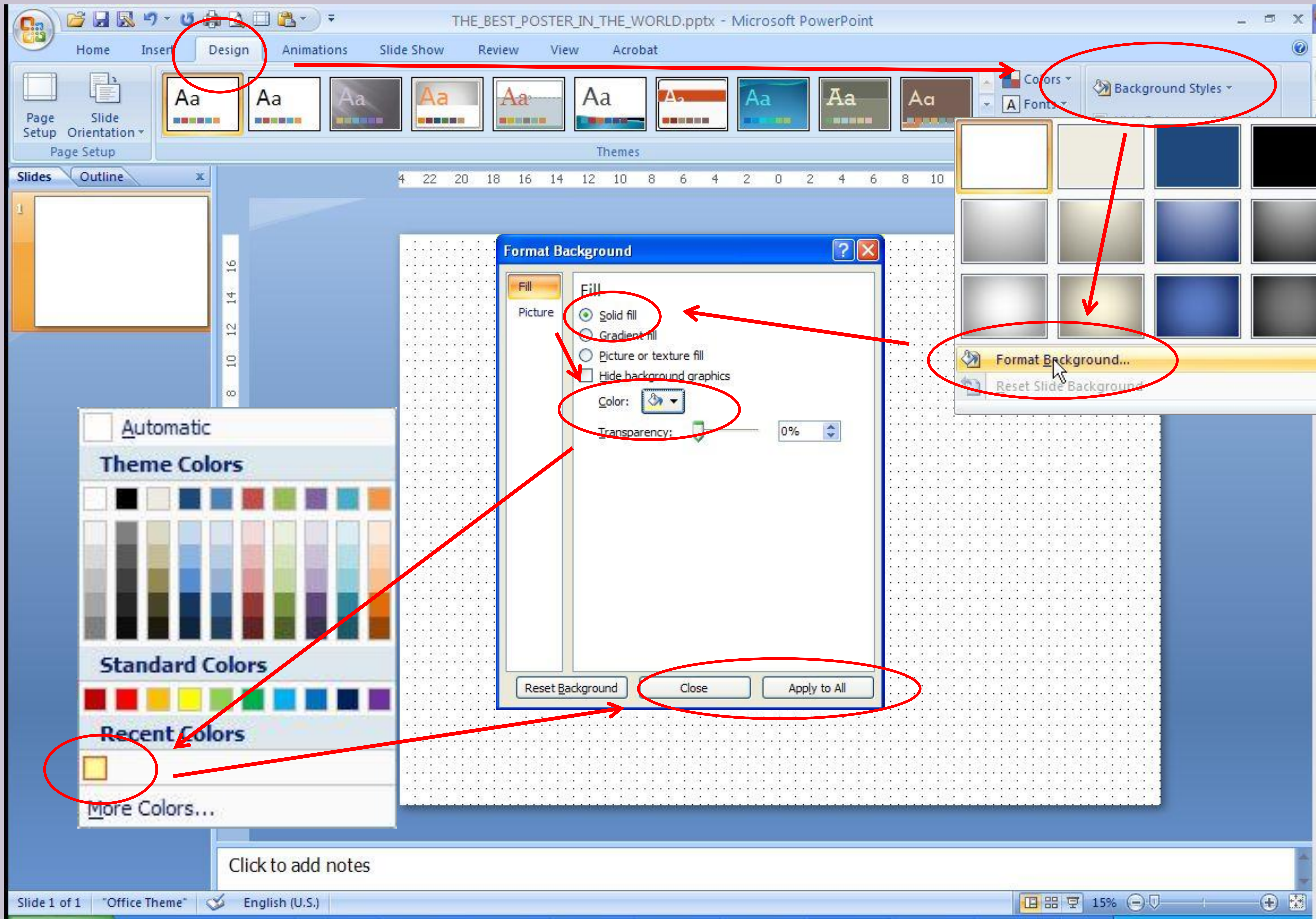
Reset Background Close Apply to All

Format Background...

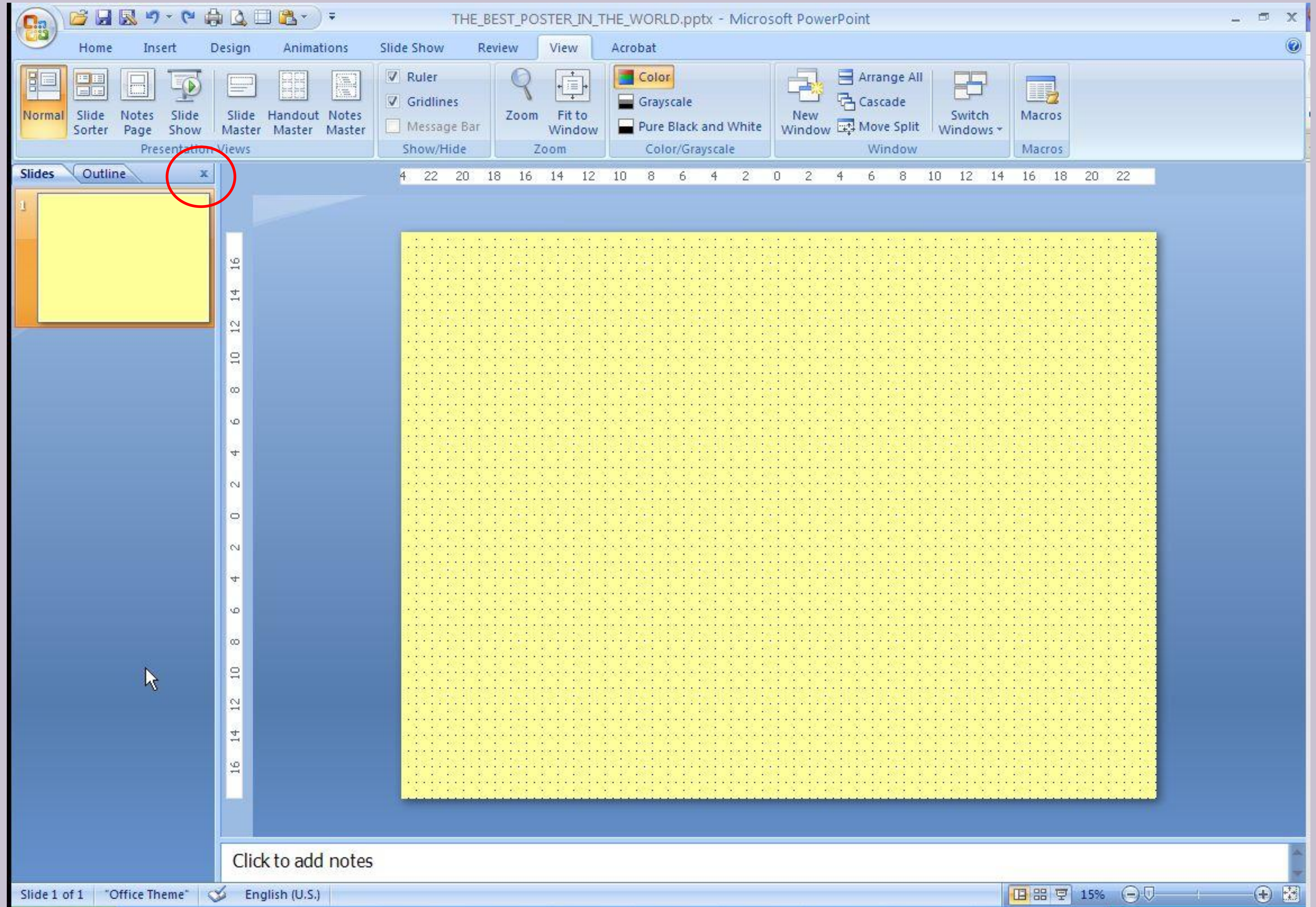
Reset Slide Background

Click to add notes

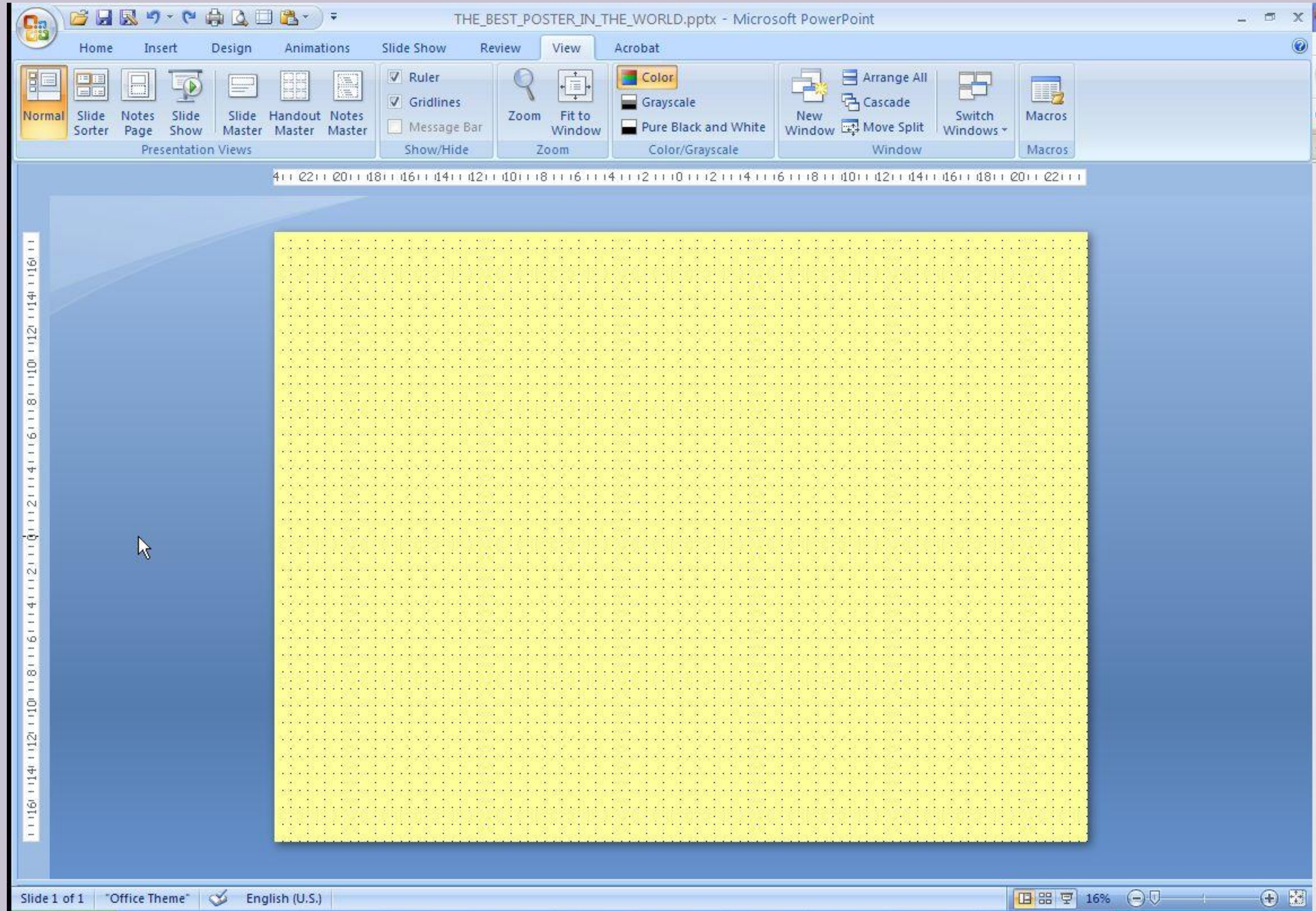




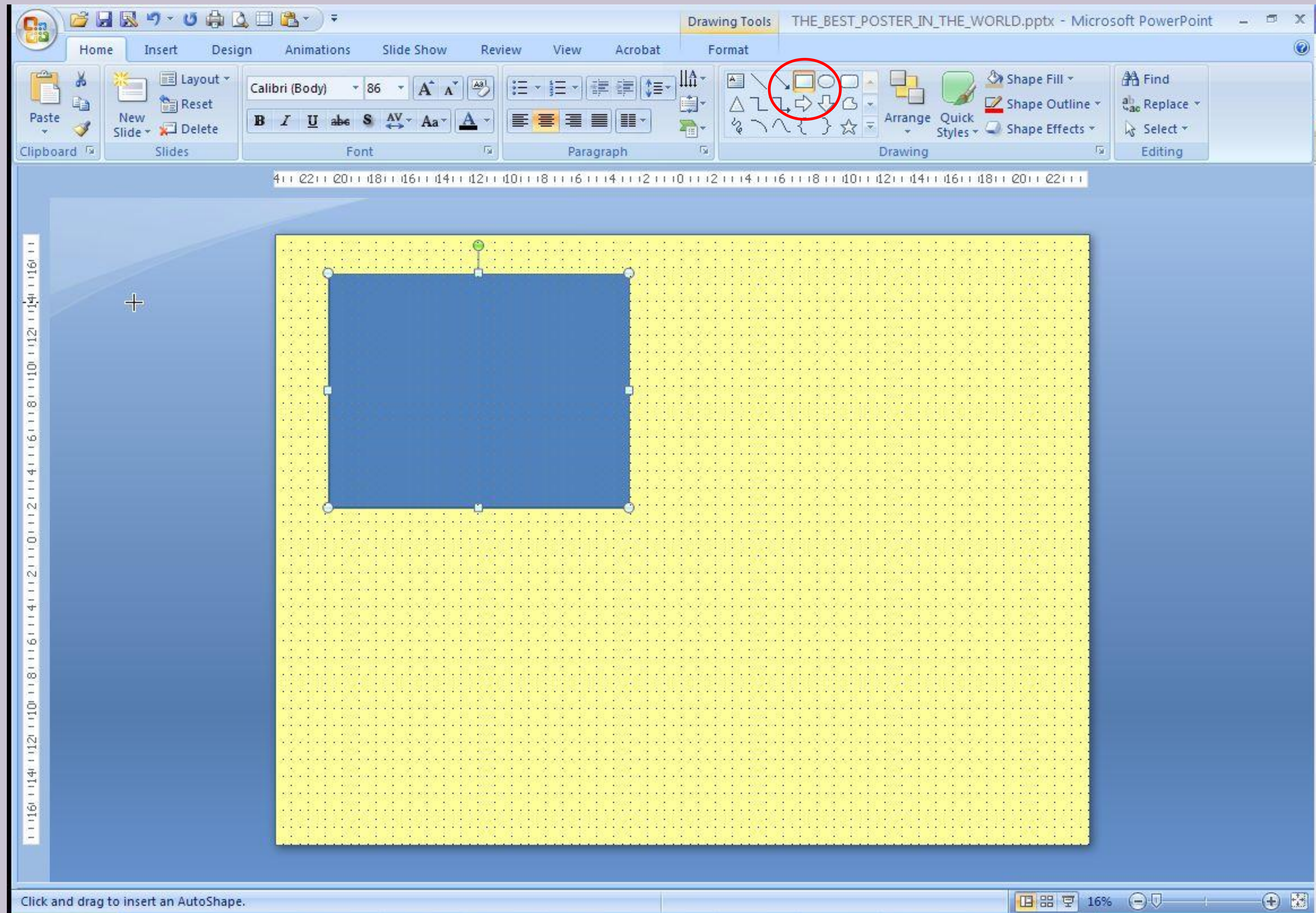
One last thing. You are only working on one slide, so you can get rid of the slides window on the side. It gives you more working space on your main screen.



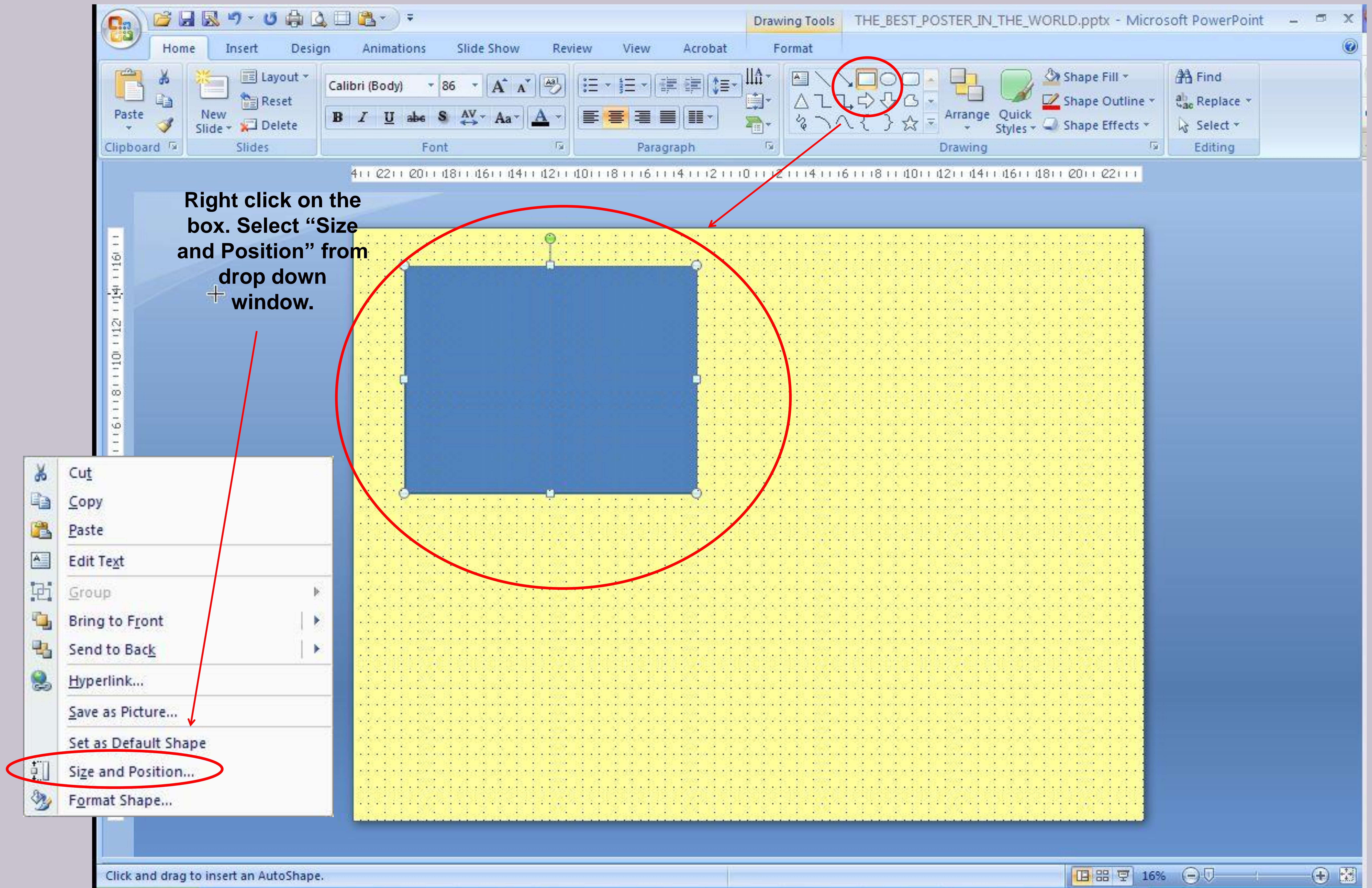
This is your blank piece of digital Bristol Board. Time to start building the poster. I like a border around my poster.



I create a work box that will be the boundary of my data. Select the box tool from the menu and click and drag to make a box. The size does not matter. We will use magic to make it the right size.



I create a work box that will be the boundary of my data. Select the box tool from the menu and click and drag to make a box. The size does not matter. We will use magic to make it the right size.



I create a work box that will be the boundary of my data. Select the box tool from the menu and click and drag to make a box. The size does not matter. We will use magic to make it the right size.

Right click on the box. Select "Size and Position" from drop down window.

My poster is 36 x 48, so my work box will be 34 x 46. Select the "position" tab and fill 1 inch for vert and hor..

Click close and the box will appear the correct size and in the correct position.

Size and Position

Size Position Alt Text

Size and rotate

Height: 5" Width: 17.67"

Rotation: 0°

Scale

Height: 100% Width: 100%

Lock aspect ratio

Relative to original picture size

Best scale for slide show

Resolution: 640 x 480

Crop from

Left: Top:

Right: Bottom:

Original size

Height: Width:

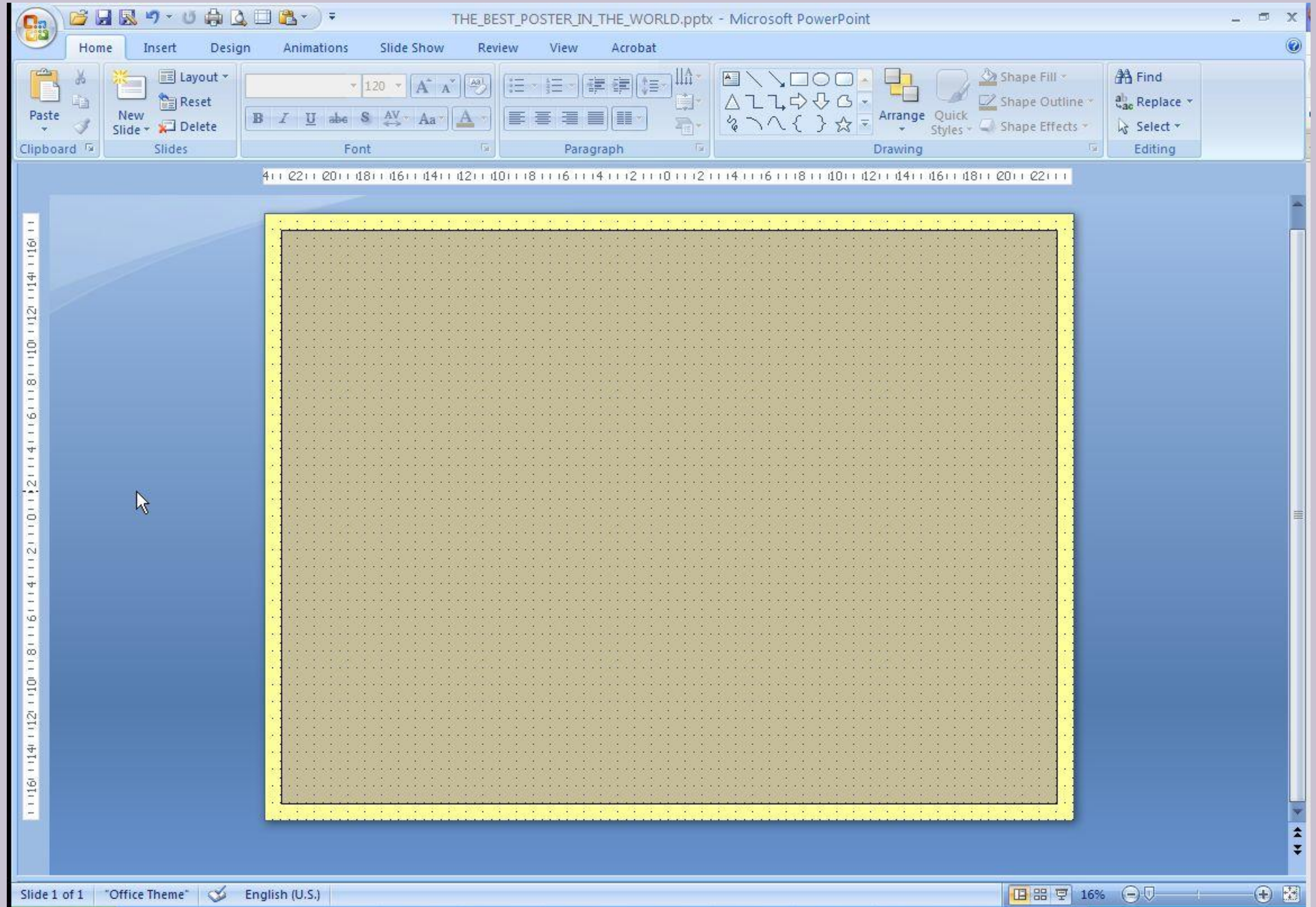
Reset

Close

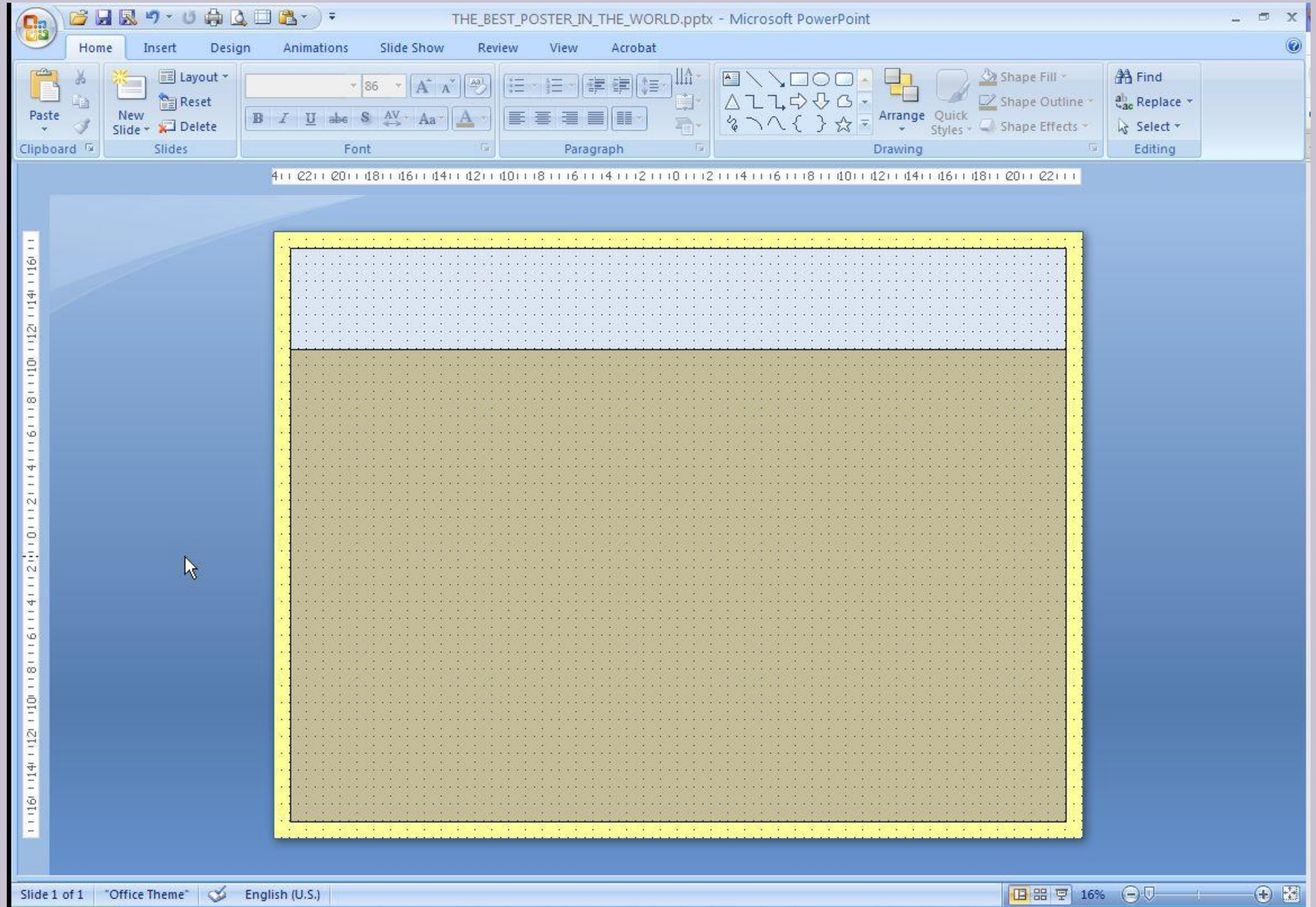
Click and drag to insert an AutoShape.

16%

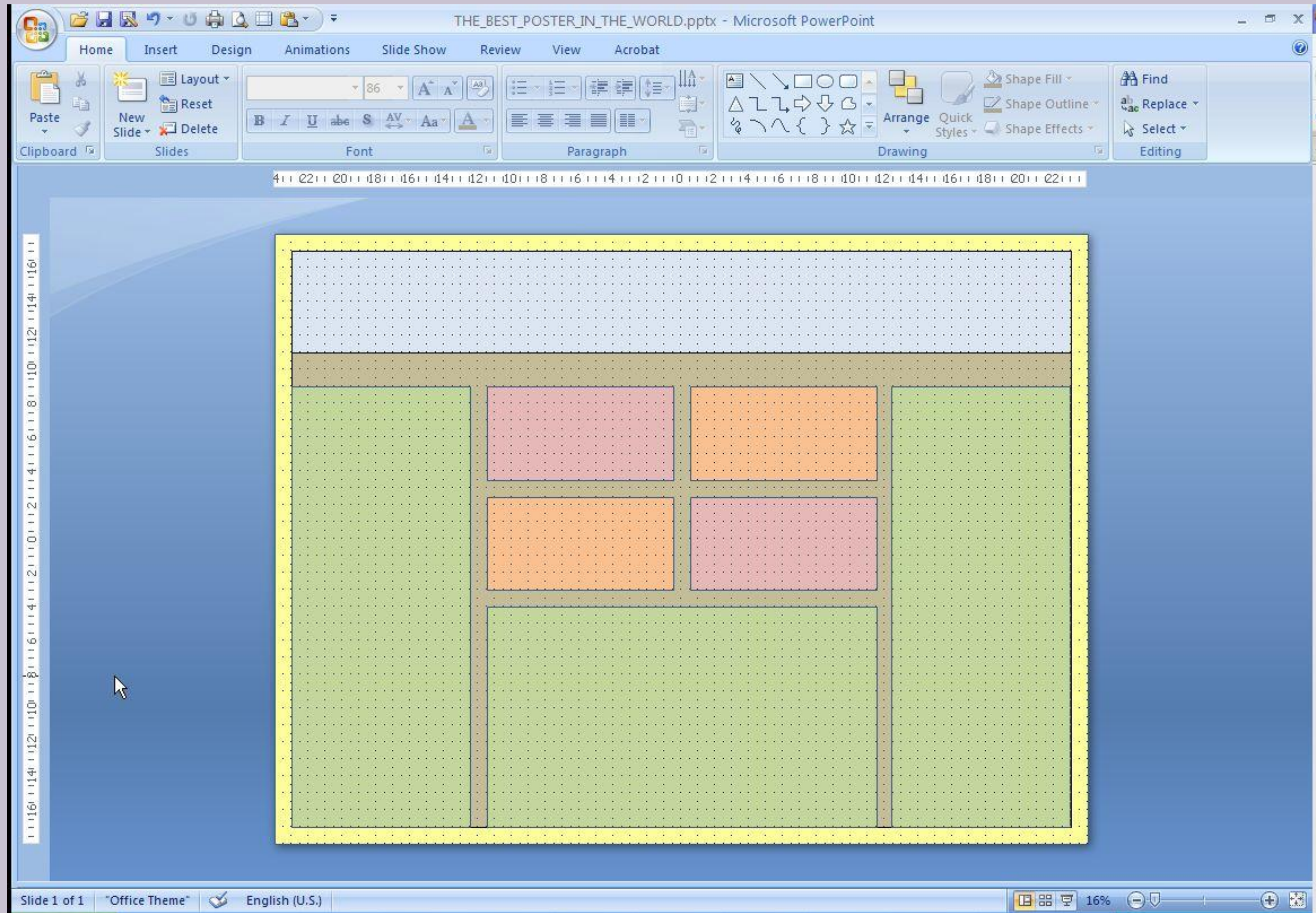
A good and visually appealing poster will should be proportional and have good lines. The title box will be the width of my work box and 6 inches high. Repeat the previous steps to add the title box



Add in the rest of the element boxes. You might want to spend a little bit of time calculating on your rough copy, the size of each box (with a 1 inch space around each box) and the position relative to the upper left corner.



A simple basic layout. The rest is up to you and your creative skills. Each box doubles as a text box. You can also make your own text boxes to fit inside the layout boxes. Have fun and remember to save often.



Tah Dah.

Save it and send it to the printer. The sooner it is printed and in the travel tube, the sooner you can crack open a cool one and put your feet up.

