



Hour 5

Applying Designs and Color Schemes

At this point, we've previewed a completed slideshow and created a new, blank presentation with title and bullets, concentrating on text. Obviously, this text presentation is far from snappy—in fact, it's downright ugly.

In this hour, we dress it up so that we can take it out. To do that, we have to differentiate between three main design choices:

- Backgrounds
- Color schemes
- Design templates

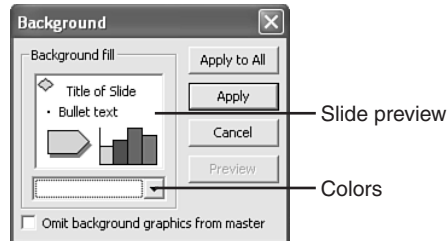
Each of these choices has its uses and attributes. What's nice about PowerPoint 2003 is that you can apply these design options to one, numerous, or all the slides in your presentation.

Using Backgrounds

Backgrounds are the easiest way to change the look of a slide and they can be applied without opening a task pane. To change the background of one or more slides in Normal view, select Format, Background. If Background isn't immediately available, click the drop-down arrow on the menu. The Background dialog box pops up as shown in Figure 5.1.

FIGURE 5.1

The Background dialog box gives you a quick preview of the current settings and enables you to access color selections.



Changing the Background Color

Now click the drop-down arrow on the dialog box to choose from among eight automatic colors or click More Colors for a greater selection, as shown in Figure 5.2.

FIGURE 5.2

Clicking the drop-down arrow enables you to choose More Colors or Apply Fill Effects.

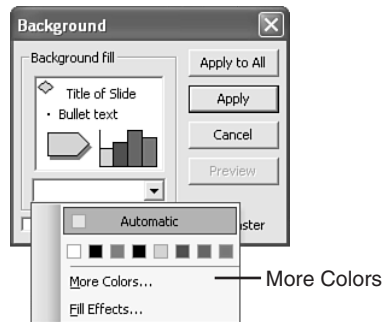


Figure 5.3 shows the Standard view under More Colors. Selecting the Custom tab enables you to select colors by their numerical RGB values.

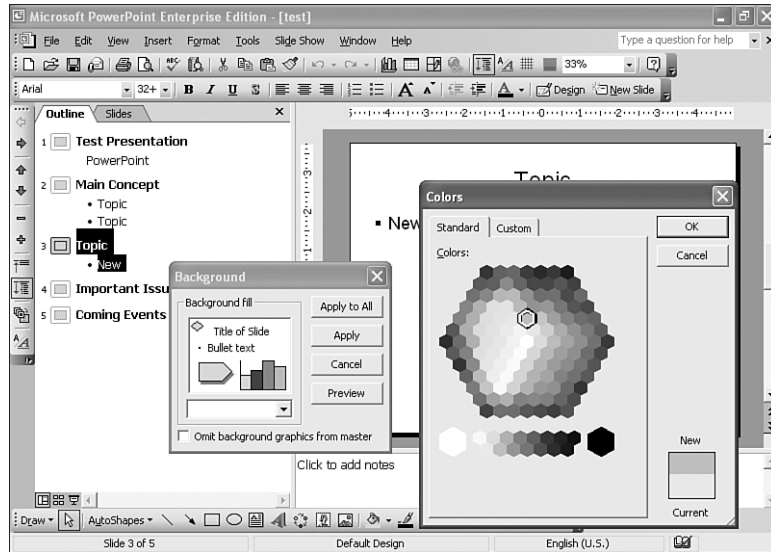
When you select a color from the More Colors color wheel and click OK, that color is reflected in the Background dialog box (see Figure 5.4).



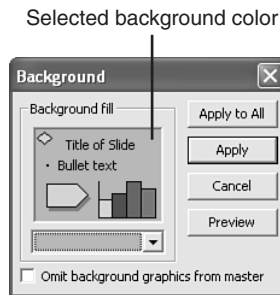
When you select a new color in More Colors, it's added to the eight automatic colors immediately available from the drop-down arrow.

FIGURE 5.3

The Standard color panel (shown) gives you a color wheel.

**FIGURE 5.4**

With your color selections made, they're reflected in the preview area of the Background dialog box.



With the chosen color showing in the Background window, you can

- Click Apply to All to apply this color as a background to all slides in the presentation.
- Click Apply to apply this color as a background to the slide currently showing in Normal view. Or, if you're in Slide Sorter, you can click Apply to apply this background to the slides that you've selected.
- Click Preview to see how the color background will change the slide.
- Click Cancel to undo the preview effect and select another color.

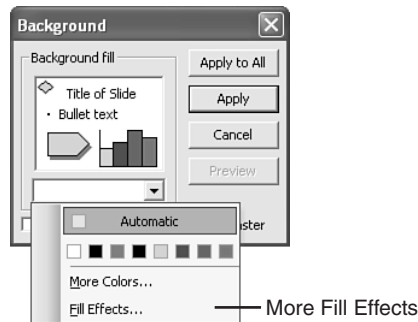
Creating a Fill Effect

Although a simple background color is nice, a mixture of colors can create an even more interesting effect. PowerPoint enables you to add a blend of two colors over their spectrum, known as a *gradient* effect, or put images on the slide background.

To select a fill effect, click the Colors drop-down arrow again, and select Fill Effects, as shown in Figure 5.5.

FIGURE 5.5

Adding a fill effect from the Background dialog box enables you to create a gradient or another more sophisticated background.



The Fill Effects dialog box provides four tabbed choices: Gradient, Texture, Pattern, and Picture.

In the Gradient (default) tab, you can select two main colors, and determine the direction in which the blend is applied (see Figure 5.6) .



If you plan to output 35mm slides or are presenting to an audience that might be used to conventional slides of this type, a gradient effect will match their visual expectations and probably make them comfortable with your design choice.

The Texture and Pattern tabs enable you to scroll through libraries of possible backgrounds, including some nice marble and stone options, as shown in Figure 5.7.

If you've scanned or acquired an image you want to apply to create your own background, you use the last tab: Picture. When you click Select Picture, shown in Figure 5.9, you must locate an image file in a folder on your hard drive and click Insert, as shown in Figure 5.8.

FIGURE 5.6
Creating a gradient is simply choosing two harmonious colors and deciding the direction in which they should blend or a shading style.

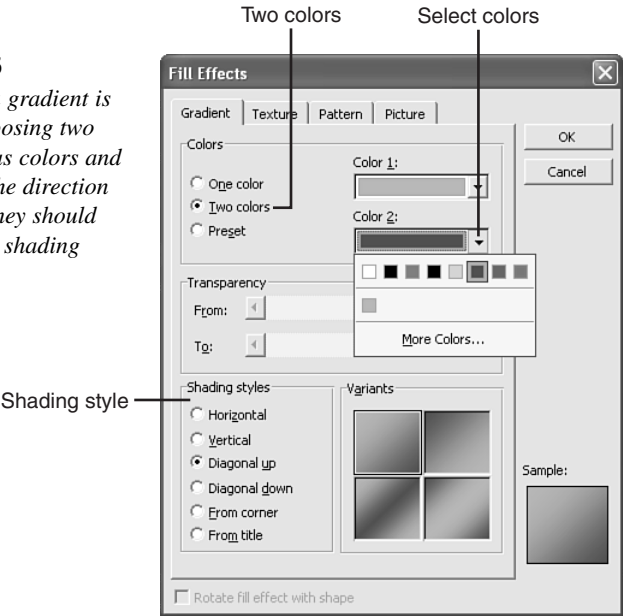


FIGURE 5.7
Marble textures are among the many textures that you can apply to a background—or you can select a pattern. Click Other Texture for more options.

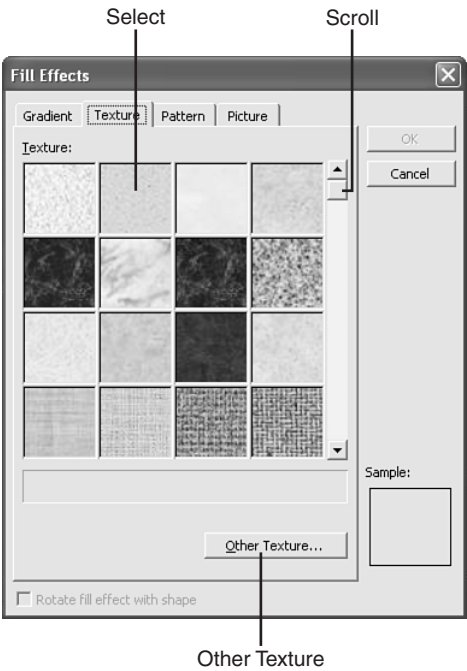
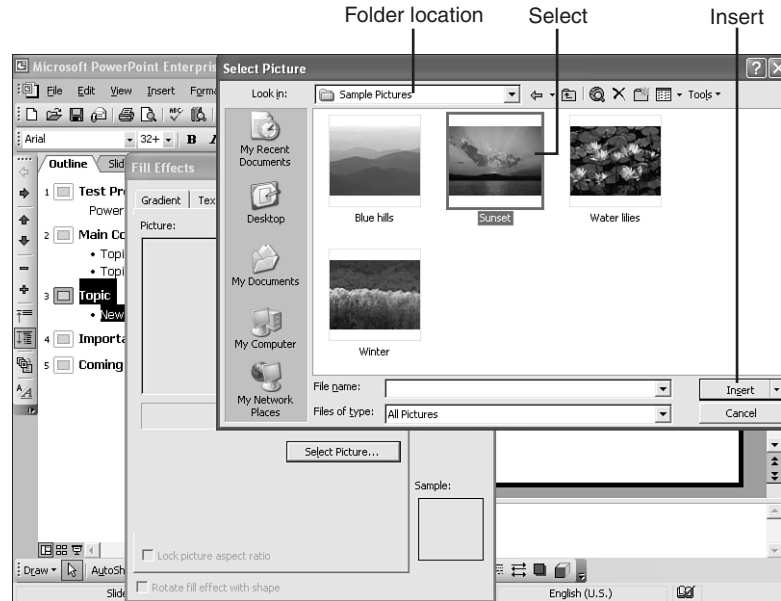


FIGURE 5.8

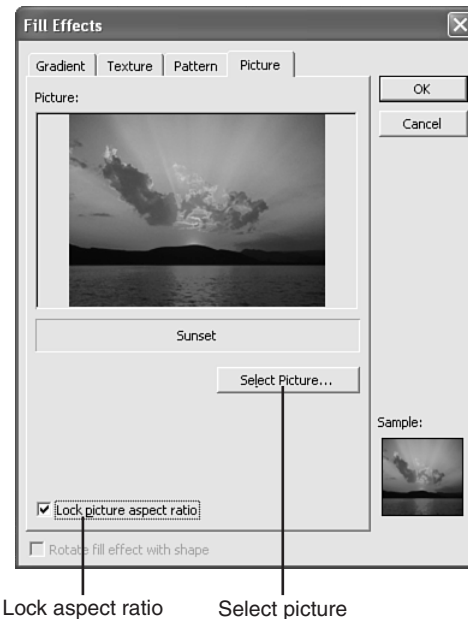
Clicking Select Picture in the Picture tab of Fill Effects enables you to insert any image that you can locate on your hard drive into the background of your slide.



Now the picture enters the Insert Picture area. Clicking to lock the aspect ratio makes sure that the image won't be distorted when viewed at full-screen size (see Figure 5.9).

FIGURE 5.9

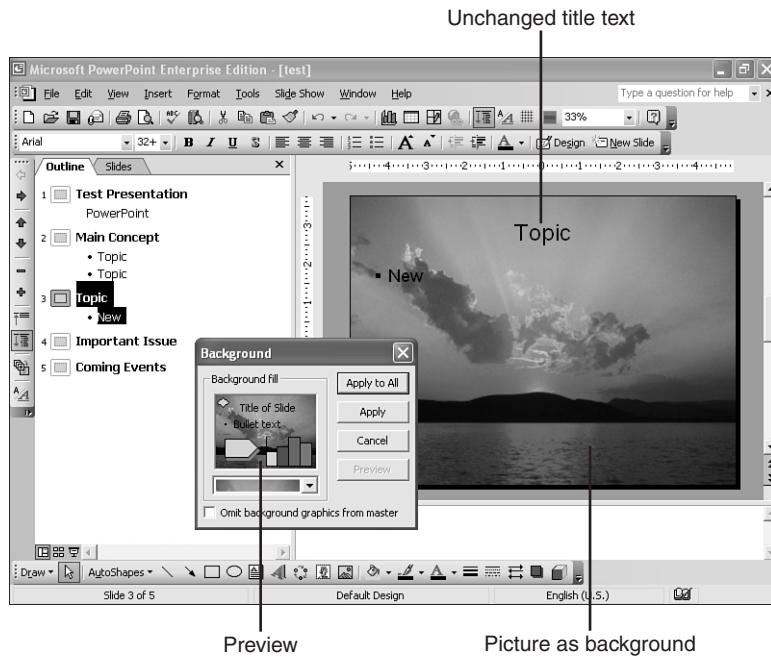
You can see a preview of the image in the Fill Effects Picture tab to decide whether it will work as a background.



When you click OK, the picture is set in the background area, where it can be applied to the current or all slides, as shown in Figure 5.10.

FIGURE 5.10

After you apply the picture to become your background, it might not work with the color of your text. You can preview this in the Background dialog box.



After you apply a color or fill effect to the background of your slides, notice that any text in the title or bullets is unaffected by your choice. It's now up to you to change its font color to work with the new background.



For best results, choose or create an image with the same resolution in which you expect to display your PowerPoint show: 800×600 or 1024×768. Shrinking your images to a smaller size should be no problem—just lock your aspect ratio—but stretching could be disappointing.

Working with Color Schemes

Color schemes take backgrounds a step further by integrating the color and/or fill effects with preset colors that you can choose for other elements in your slide.

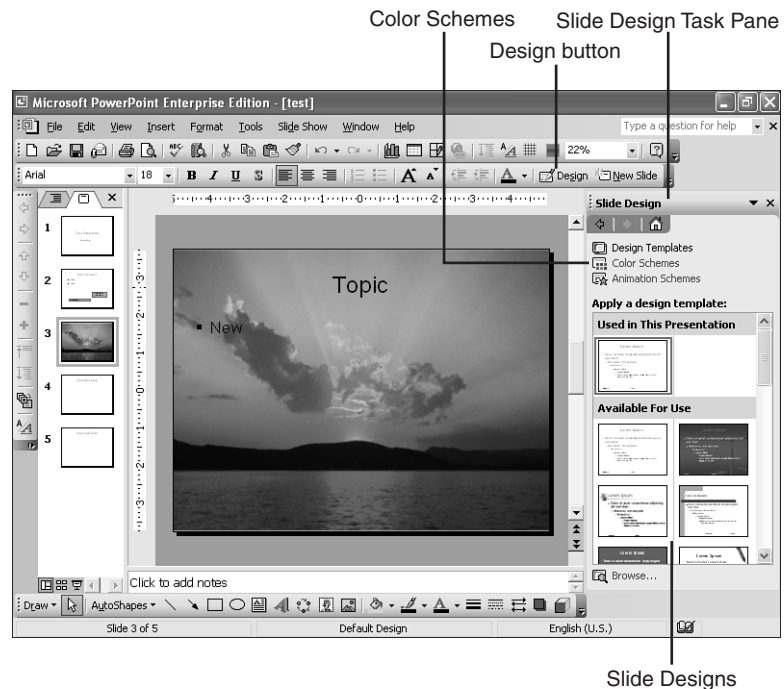
To work with color schemes, you must open the Slide Design task pane. You can do this by selecting Format, Slide Design or clicking the Design button on the Formatting toolbar (see Figure 5.11).

In the Slide Design task pane, the first set of options will preview complete slide design templates, which we'll cover shortly.

To work with color schemes, click that option in the Slide Design task pane, shown in Figure 5.11.

FIGURE 5.11

In order to work with color schemes, the Slide Design task pane must be opened.



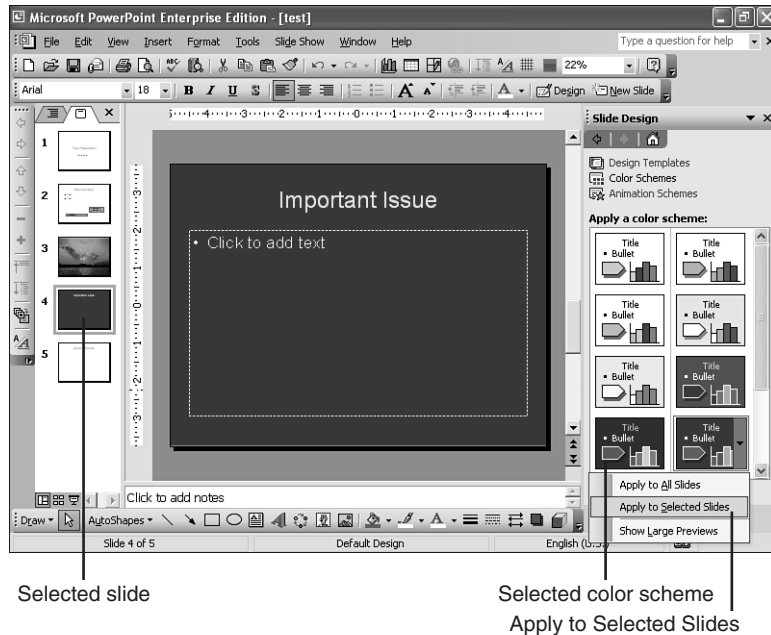
When you click to select the color schemes, an option panel opens that enables you to apply a set of colors for the background and other text elements to another selected slide or group of slides in the Slides thumbnail or Outline panel (see Figure 5.12).



Color schemes generally override backgrounds by applying them over slides for which backgrounds have been selected. But fill effects, including pictures, may not be removed until you return to the Backgrounds panel to get rid of them.

FIGURE 5.12

You can select one or more slide thumbnails to which to apply a new color scheme from the Slide Design task pane.



Whenever you're able to select one or more objects to which to apply an effect or formatting option—such as the slides in the Slides thumbnail panel or in Slide Sorter view—you can select multiple objects in the following way:

For a series of objects, press the Shift key as you click the first and last item in the series.

For individual objects, press the Ctrl key as you select each object.

This applies throughout Windows and is valuable when selecting to move files, images, or just about any set of objects.

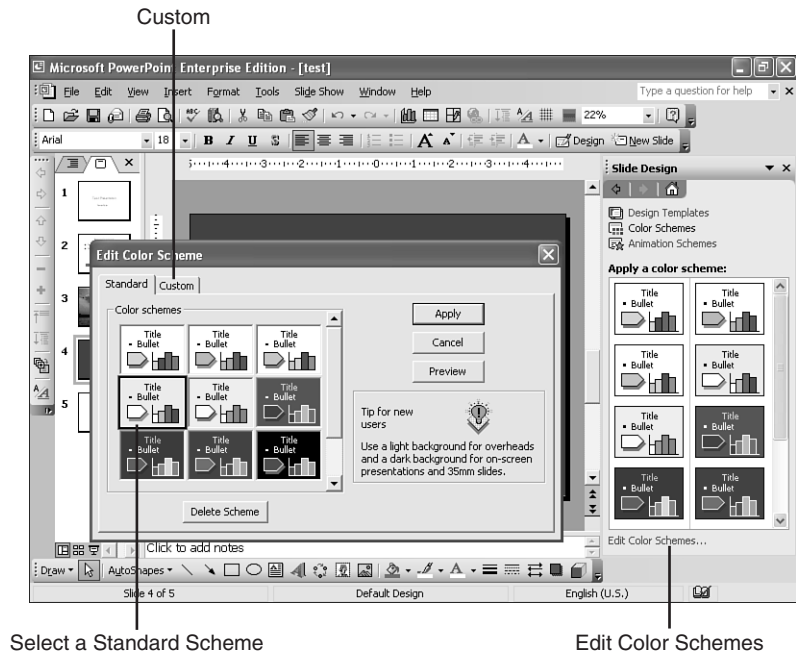
Creating Your Own Color Scheme

The easiest way to edit or create a color scheme is to click the Edit Color Scheme option at the bottom of the task pane shown in Figure 5.13. Then click the Standard tab to select a generic scheme you want to edit.

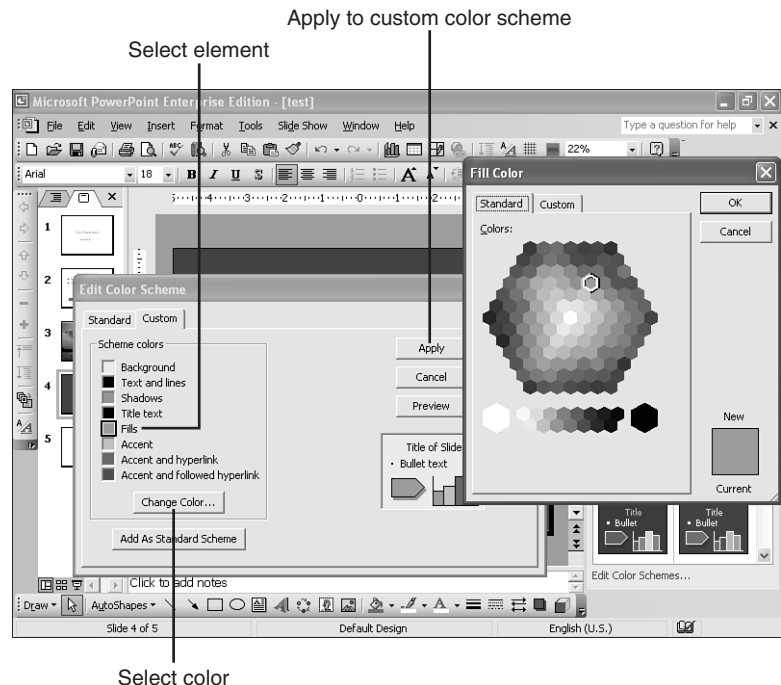
Now click the Custom tab and begin to select your own choices for various slide elements. As you select each one, you can apply it to this custom color scheme, as shown in Figure 5.14.

FIGURE 5.13

Use the Edit Color Schemes feature of the Slide Design task pane to create your own background and text color combinations to apply to selected slides.

**FIGURE 5.14**

Color schemes enable you to select specific colors of different slide elements, such as titles, bullets, and graphics (in charts).



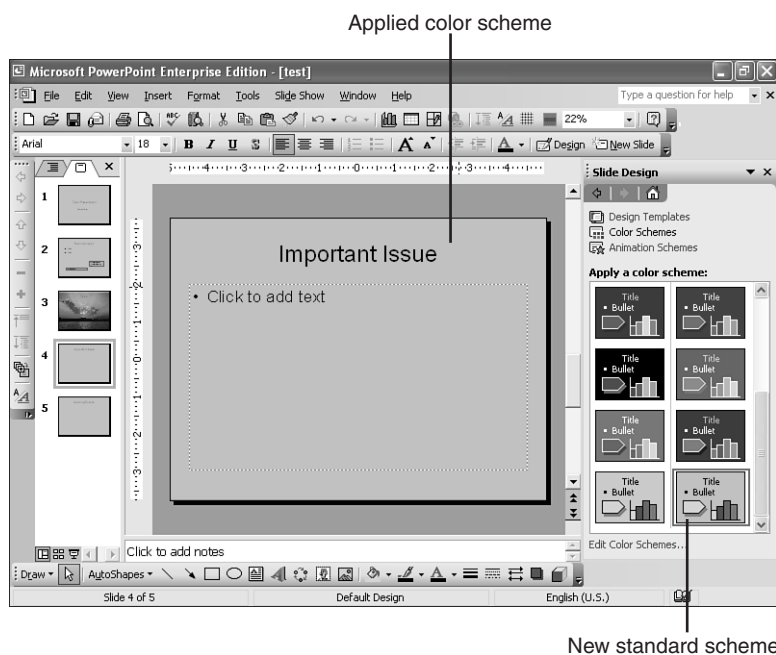
Notice the various elements you can affect with your new color scheme:

- Background of slide
- Text and line colors
- Shadow color
- Title text
- Fills (drawing objects and graphs)
- Accents
- Accents and hyperlinks
- Accents and followed hyperlinks

After you've built your new edited color scheme, click Apply, and then click Add As Standard Scheme to make this set of choices show up as a reusable color scheme, shown in Figure 5.15.

FIGURE 5.15

Your edited color scheme becomes available in the task pane to apply whenever you like.



Accents are secondary elements that offset the fills, like the bars in a bar graph. To see the results, change the colors after you introduce such an element.



There are pros and cons to both backgrounds and color schemes. You might have noticed that no gradients, patterns, textures, or pictures are available as color schemes. When you click Apply to an edited scheme, it affects *all* your slides.

Using Slide Design Templates

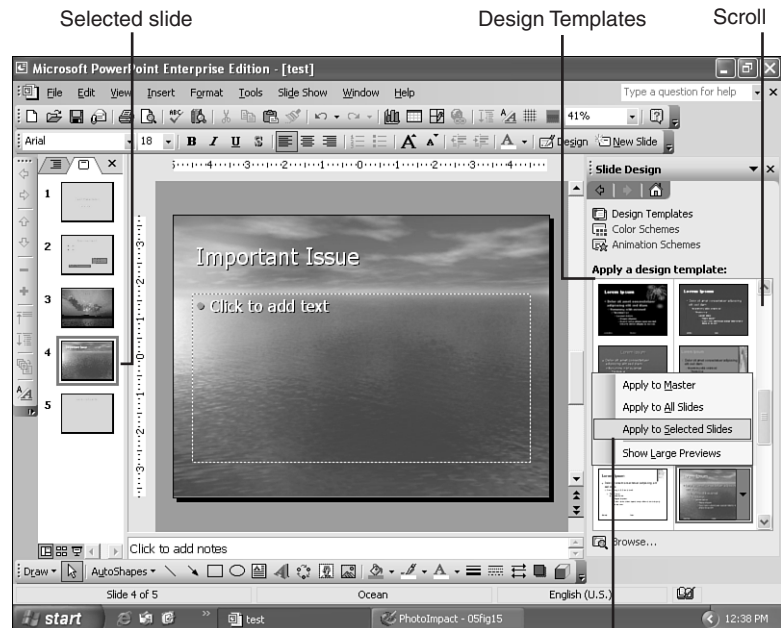
One of the things that made PowerPoint so popular is its gallery of preset slide design templates. These are incredibly easy to apply, and make it a no-brainer to coordinate the background, title, and bullet text.

To access the Design Gallery:

1. Click Design Templates at the top of the Slide Design task pane.
2. Scroll through the Design Gallery to find a design you like.
3. Move your mouse over it to get the drop-down arrow.
4. Click the arrow for apply menu options.
5. Apply the Design Template to all slides or the selected slide (see Figure 5.16).

FIGURE 5.16

Applying a design template enables you to instantly apply a color-coordinated background to one or more selected slides.



Apply menu

Notice that when a design template is applied, it changes the font colors of the title and bullet text along with it in a coordinated way (perfect for bachelors). To alter some of the ways that elements are colored for the design template you've chosen, you can go back and alter its color scheme.



If you've put a pattern, texture, or image on the slide in backgrounds, the design template might not be applied visibly until those fill effects have been removed.



Some designs contain simple animations. Make sure that you practice your presentation before you go in front of an audience. Also, changing designs can occasionally change the layout of fonts and the look of content items that we'll be adding shortly. Go through your presentation carefully to gauge the overall effect of design changes you've made.



One of the surest ways to elicit a silent groan from your audience is to use one of the stale, old PowerPoint design templates right out of the chute (with no embellishment).

We'll learn to create our own templates in Hour 11, "Working Smarter Not Harder," but you can get a head start if you have a Web connection.

The first stop is the Microsoft Office Web site at Microsoft.com, which always features templates that you can preview in Internet Explorer and save directly into your Templates folder. Remember: location, location, location! Make sure that you select the folder named Templates.

You should also check out the Web sites for the major projector manufacturers, such as Proxima and even presentationsuniversity.com.

Finally, a search for PowerPoint templates in Google or Yahoo! can lead you to some backgrounds that no one has seen or that you can customize.

Some templates are just images on the background with no settings for coordinated fonts. But true design templates should have settings for default fonts within the text placeholders with font colors that complement the template design.

If the templates don't have these settings, you now have the tools to reformat the text manually to match the design. Or you can experiment with the background or color scheme settings to tweak any downloaded template to your own purposes.



Note that Backgrounds, Color Schemes, and Slide Designs can be applied to multiple slides by selecting them in either the slide thumbnails or within Slide Sorter view.

Summary

In this hour, we introduced some simple ways to dress up the bland (or blank) slides we created with text earlier. Using backgrounds, color schemes, and slide designs, we can quickly add some flash to one or more slides in our presentation.

We'll cover other aspects of working with designs in the coming hours. Design templates, for example, can be saved and reused along with other template files, which we will cover in Hour 11. Putting pictures on portions of a background and further refining the blueprints behind our slides will be covered in Hour 12, "Customizing Your Presentation."

In the next hour, we'll continue our tour of layouts, and concentrate on the first of many content layouts: the table. The concept of content was introduced in PowerPoint XP and is a big help in enhancing the communication power of a slideshow.

Q&A

Q How can I add a gradient to a color scheme?

A Apply the color scheme to the slides first, and then go in and add your gradient using the Format, Background menu selection.

Q I really like the gradient but the Format, Background menu selection lets me apply the gradient to only the current slide or to all slides. Any ideas?

A You can apply a Background to more than one selected slide by using SlideSorter view, and you can create your new slides using the Insert, Duplicate Slide menu choice from a gradient slide. We'll learn how to create our own templates in Hour 11, along with other techniques that will make this even easier.

Q I downloaded a template from the Web and my text just blends into the background. What do I do?

A The template you downloaded is a simple image on a background, and maybe it's very nice. You'll have to manually change the title and bullets' font colors to make them stand out. We'll learn how to create our own templates in Hour 11, and work with the masters that make formatting the fonts a breeze in Hour 12.