Selecting Objects in PowerPoint

One at a time, in groups, or selectively
What’s an object?

Definition: An object is any “thing” that you place on a slide. A textbox, rectangle, circle, list of bullets, movie, clipart — all are objects in PowerPoint’s vocabulary.

An object is selected when a “bounding” box or a set of “handles” surround it, such as these:
Selecting most objects

Select objects when you want to apply new settings to them such as:

- Colors, fills, size
- Borders, bullets, style
- Alignment, grouping, ordering
- Custom animation settings

Most objects can be selected by simply clicking on them.

Double clicking on charts and organization charts will open them in their associated sub-application so that you can edit the content. A single click will simply select them for moving, scaling, etc.
You can select text or you can select a text box. What’s the difference?

**Action:**

Place the cursor at the beginning of the text and drag to the end until all text is highlighted.

Place the cursor where you want to begin and drag until you have highlighted your selection.

Place the cursor in the text and then press Escape. The textbox is selected. Or place the cursor in the text and position the mouse over the bounding box and click. Note the difference in the bounding box. It has changed from diagonal slashes to dots.
Text box Tip

If you select the text box and apply a hyperlink to it, you will avoid the underline of the text.

1. **This text is hyperlinked by selecting the text and inserting a hyperlink.**

2. This text is hyperlinked by selecting the text box and inserting a hyperlink.

3. Only one word of this text is hyperlinked.

How?

Only one word of this text is **highlighted**.

(Create a rectangle over the word, apply the hyperlink to the rectangle, then give the rectangle “no fill” and “no line”.)
Selecting multiple objects

You have multiple objects, none overlapping, and you want all of them:

**Action:** Click, hold, and drag diagonally to corral the objects you want

**Results:** Release and they are all selected
Selectively selecting objects

Sometimes you want to select two or more objects that are not adjacent to one another.

**Action:**
- Click on the first object
- Press the CTRL key
- Click on the next object
- Continue until you have all of the objects you want

**Results:**

![Diagram of selected objects]
Introducing Layers

PowerPoint places objects on layers. The slide background is the bottom layer, i.e. the canvas. All objects are on individual layers, placed on top of the background in the order they are added.

1. Slide background is the first layer
2. Text Object on second layer, was added first.
3. Rectangle on third layer, was added after the text object
4. Oval on fourth layer, was added last

Objects on upper levels obscure objects on lower levels, making it difficult to select them individually.
In this instance, you have multiple stacked objects:

**Method 1:** You can press the Tab key repeatedly until the first object in the stack is selected.

**Result:** The blue rectangle is selected here because it is on the bottom. It is on the bottom layer because it was the first object of the set added to the slide.
**Method 2:** Customize your Drawing toolbar:
- Go to View | Toolbars and click on Customize
- Click on the Commands tab and select Drawing on the left side
- Locate “Select Multiple Objects” and drag the icon to your Drawing toolbar

(Applies to PowerPoint 2000, 2002, and 2003.)
Method 2: (continued)

- To activate the tool, select any object on the slide and click on the “Select Multiple Objects” icon on your Drawing toolbar.
- Select only the objects that you want and click OK.

Action:

Results:

Here they are after nudging them down and to the right.
Method 2: Here’s a useful tip

The names that PowerPoint assigns are not very helpful. You can name most objects as you create them, making it easier to identify them later. For example:

• Create a rectangle and select it
• Go to Format | Autoshape, select the Web tab and type Blue Rectangle in the Alternative Text box
• Now when you use the “Select Multiple Objects” tool, you will see Blue Rectangle listed

Action: ![Diagram of a rectangle]

Results:

 ![Screenshot of Format AutoShape dialog]

 ![Screenshot of Select Multiple Objects dialog]
A cluster of objects can be “grouped” with the Group command on the Drawing tool. Grouping helps to keep objects together and allows you to manage them as a single object.

Once grouped, however, you can select single objects within a group without actually ungrouping them. Select the group and then press the Tab key until you see dark handles outlining the single object you want.

(Applies to PowerPoint 2002 and 2003 only.)
The End