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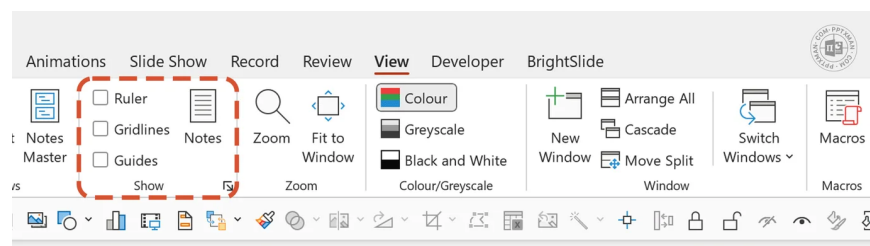
## Ruler, Gridlines, Guides, and Smart Guides in PowerPoint



There are four ways to align objects in PowerPoint. In this article, I have tried to understand how they work and how they interact with each other.

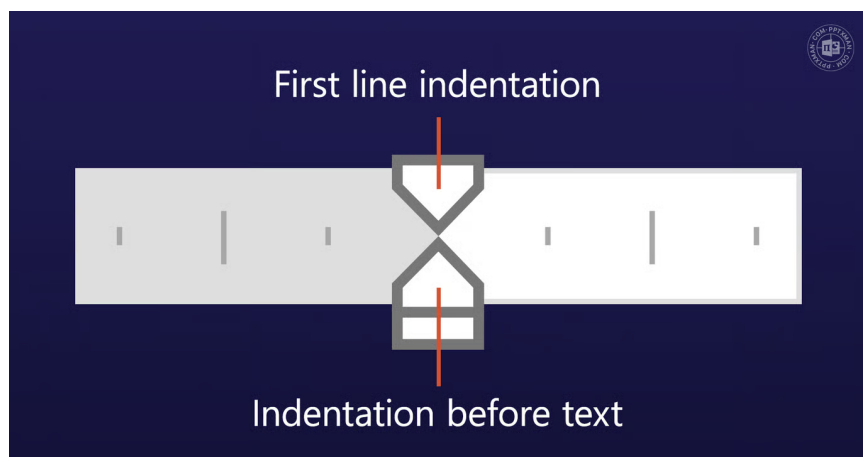
### Ruler

It is toggled in the View ◻ Ruler tab.  
Also Shift + Alt + F9 on Windows OS.



You can optionally show or hide the vertical ruler here: File ◻ Options ◻ Advanced ◻ Show vertical ruler.

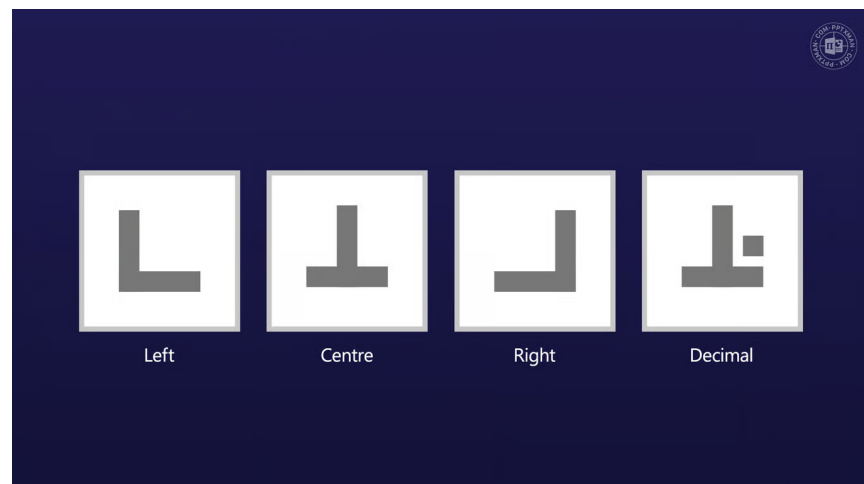
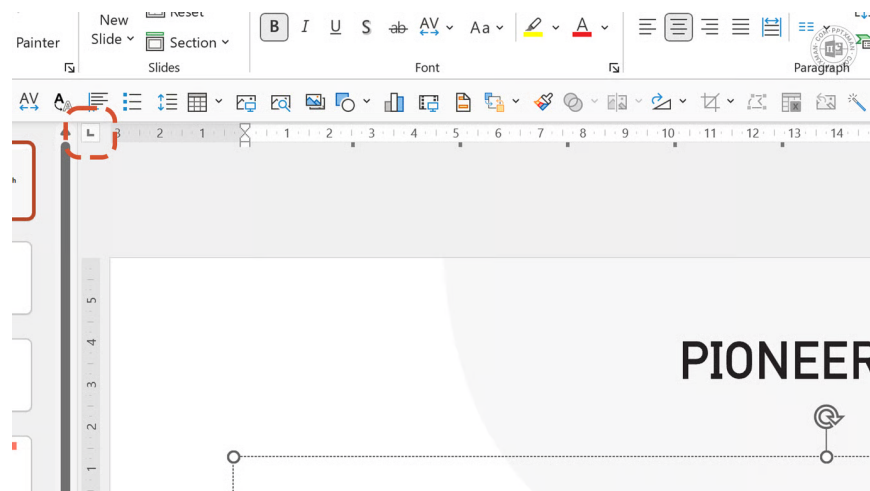
Rulers start from the centre of the screen. The default slide size in PowerPoint is 19.05×33.867 cm, so the ruler ends at 16.9 cm horizontally and 9.5 cm vertically.



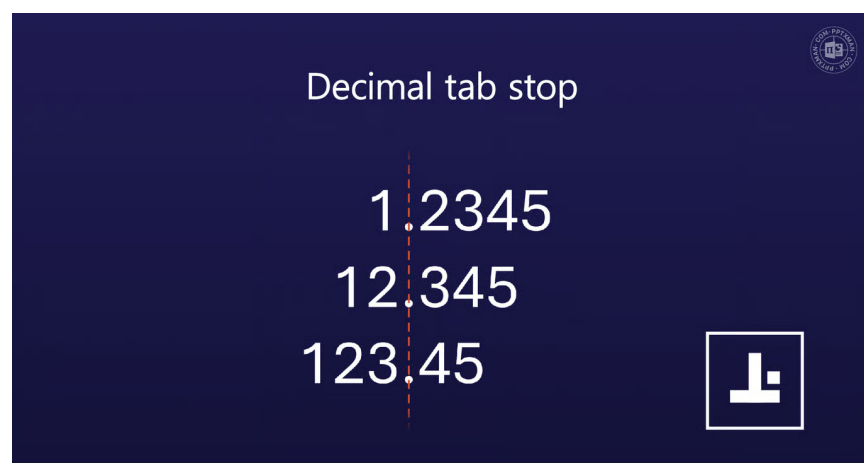
The Ruler is mainly used for indenting and tabbing text, and for moving table borders. When you select text, the inactive parts of the ruler are greyed out. A sort of caret will also appear, with the upper caret indenting the first line and the lower caret indenting the entire text.

By default, tab positions are set in 2.54 cm increments. You can change them by clicking directly on the ruler. To remove a tab stop, drag it outside the white part of the ruler.

In Windows OS there is a small icon in the top left corner where the horizontal and vertical rulers meet, click on it to toggle the alignment: Left, Centre, Right, Decimal.

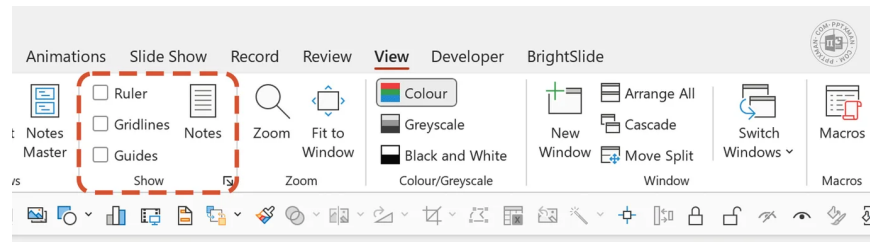


Separately, I would like to mention the Decimal tab stop, it allows you to align digits relative to the decimal separator.

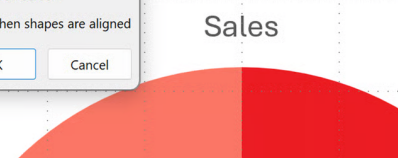
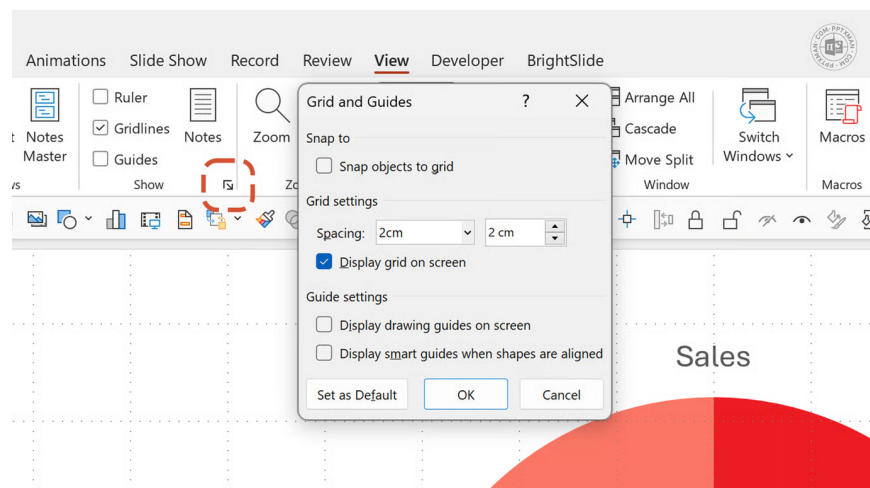


## Gridlines

It is activated in the View ▢ Gridlines tab or by clicking the arrow to the right of the Show label.

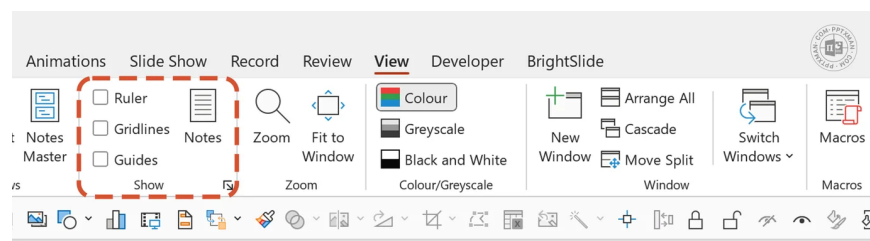


In the following dialog window you can set the minimum (0.2cm) and maximum (5cm) spacing, and also enable snap objects to the grid. Note that they are called *Gridlines* on the ribbon, but *Grid* in the dialogue box.



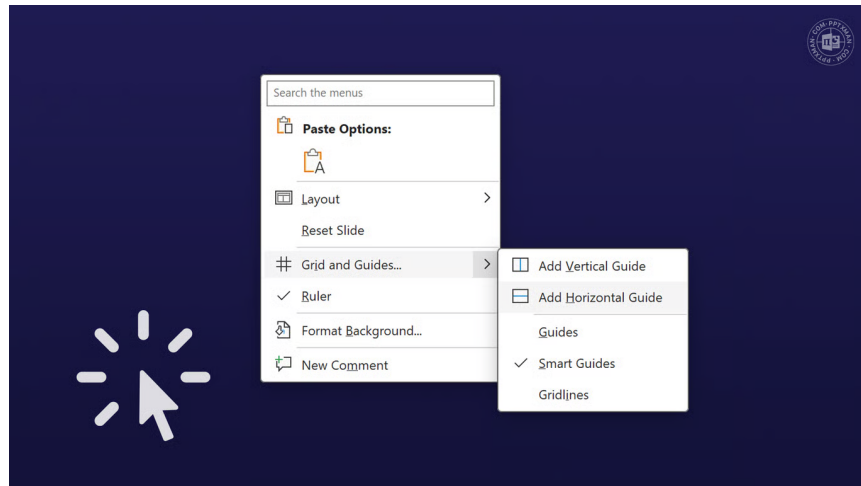
## Guides

The display of guides is turned on in the View ▢ Guides tab.



To add a guide, right-click on an empty area and select Grids and Guides... ▢ Add

Vertical Guide or Add Horizontal Guide. To change the colour of a guide or remove it, right-click on it.

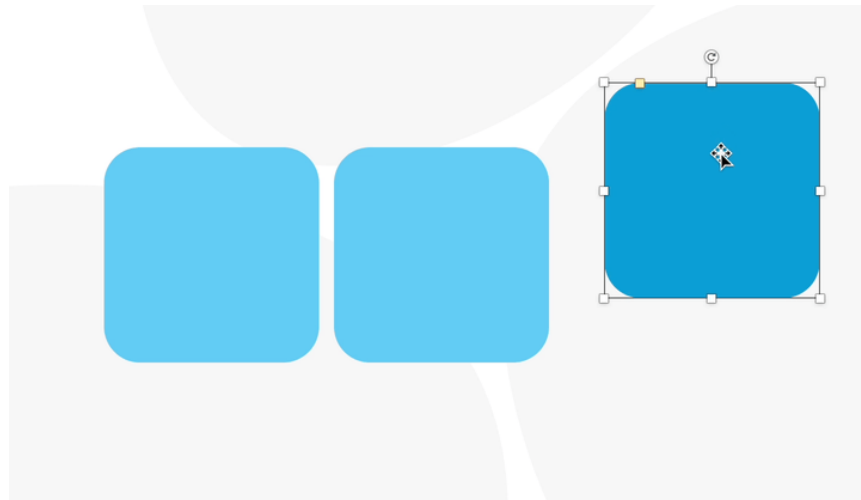


The guides either move in 1mm increments or are anchored to a grid if specified in the preferences. To move the guides freely, press Alt (⌘ in MacOS). Note that image cropping is only sticking to Guides, not Gridlines or Rulers.

I recommend the [BrightSlide add-in](#) from the BrightCarbon presentation agency for a more convenient and efficient way of working with Guides.

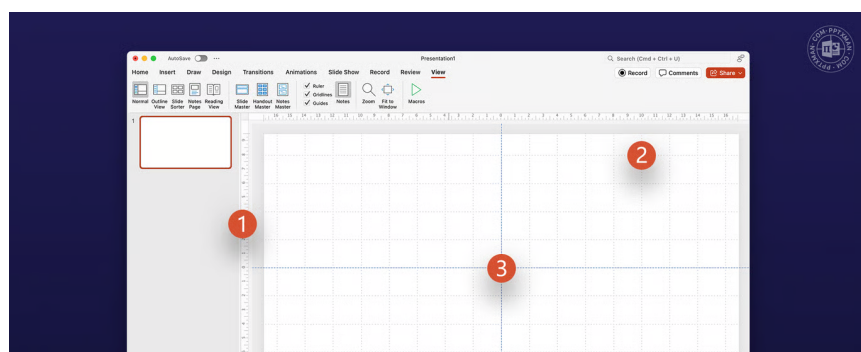
## Smart Guides

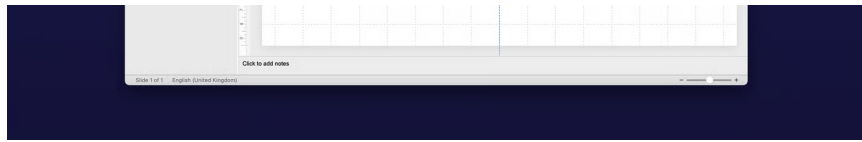
The display of Smart Guides is switched on in the familiar Grids and Guides... Smart Guides menu.



Unlike traditional guides, smart guides are calculated dynamically based on the position of objects on the slide. For example, if you have three shapes, Smart Guides will help you set equal distances between them.

## Summary





1. Ruler; 2. Gridlines (grey); 3. Guides (blue).

## Some Thoughts

PowerPoint uses real-world measurements (centimetres, inches, etc.) because it was originally conceived as an editor for creating printed slides to be presented on an overhead projector. However, presentations are not always printed these days, so it would be more convenient to be able to measure in pixels.

I never use the Ruler in my work, preferring to set indentations using the **Paragraph** menu. I also never use Gridlines. There is some redundancy in Gridlines and Guides, in my opinion a single entity is enough.

□

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