

Building Better OLLI Classes *with ChatGPT*

Practical ways to improve presentations, create engaging visuals, develop handouts, and generate new teaching ideas



John Beaumont



OLLI Instructor



June 26, 2026



Practical
Examples



Save Time
& Effort



Engage Your
Learners

**Better tools.
Better classes.
Better learning.**

Four Ways ChatGPT Can Help Instructors



Working with Slides

Transform text-heavy slides into engaging visuals.

Working with Images

Create custom images that enhance your presentations.

Working with Presentations & Handouts

Review, improve, and create supporting materials for your classes.

Research, Ideas & Brainstorming

Generate activities, discussion questions, and fresh ideas.



*Live demonstrations included **throughout.***

Image Created
With ChatGPT

Four Ways ChatGPT Can Help Instructors

Today's Agenda

1



Working with Slides

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Working with Images

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Working with Presentations & Handouts

Review, improve, and create supporting materials for your classes.

4



Research, Ideas & Brainstorming

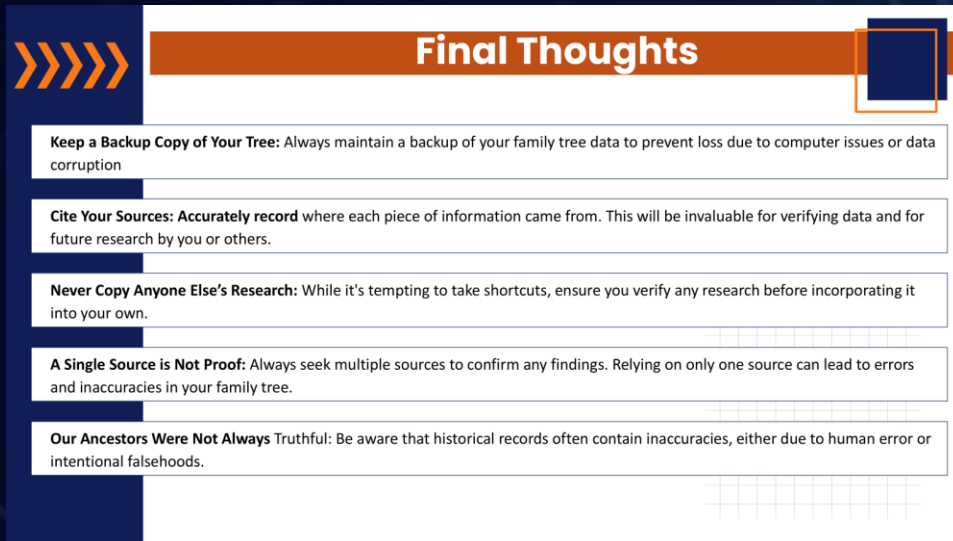
Generate activities, discussion questions, and fresh ideas.

Live demonstrations included throughout.

**PowerPoint Slide
Created With
Claude**

Working with Slides

Transform text-heavy slides into engaging visuals.



The screenshot shows a presentation slide titled "Final Thoughts" in a blue header bar. To the left of the title is a decorative graphic of five orange chevrons pointing right. Below the header, there are five white rectangular boxes, each containing a bolded title followed by a sentence. The boxes are stacked vertically. The slide has a light blue background with a subtle grid pattern.

Final Thoughts

- Keep a Backup Copy of Your Tree:** Always maintain a backup of your family tree data to prevent loss due to computer issues or data corruption
- Cite Your Sources:** **Accurately record** where each piece of information came from. This will be invaluable for verifying data and for future research by you or others.
- Never Copy Anyone Else's Research:** While it's tempting to take shortcuts, ensure you verify any research before incorporating it into your own.
- A Single Source is Not Proof:** Always seek multiple sources to confirm any findings. Relying on only one source can lead to errors and inaccuracies in your family tree.
- Our Ancestors Were Not Always Truthful:** Be aware that historical records often contain inaccuracies, either due to human error or intentional falsehoods.

I want to transform this text-heavy slide into something more appealing for my OLLI class. I would like to discuss options before you generate an image. You can ask me questions one at a time.



Final Thoughts



Keep a Backup Copy of Your Tree: Always maintain a backup of your family tree data to prevent loss due to computer issues or data corruption

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Our Ancestors Were Not Always Truthful: Be aware that historical records often contain inaccuracies, either due to human error or intentional falsehoods.

Five Habits of Successful Genealogists



1. Keep a Backup Copy of Your Tree

Always maintain a backup of your family tree data to prevent loss due to computer issues or data corruption.



2. Cite Your Sources

Accurately record where each piece of information came from. This will be invaluable for verifying data and for future research by you or others.

MARRIAGE RECORD

BIRTH CERTIFICATE
STATE OF

Source: Tennessee
Marriages, 1870-1900
Smith County
Book 3, p. 142



3. Verify Research Before Using It

While it's tempting to take shortcuts, ensure you verify any research before incorporating it into your own.



4. Use Multiple Sources

Always seek multiple sources to confirm any findings. Relying on only one source can lead to errors and inaccuracies in your family tree.



5. Our Ancestors Were Not Always Truthful

Be aware that historical records often contain inaccuracies, either due to human error or intentional falsehoods.

Grandpa's
birth year:
1888? 1889?
1890? 1891?
😊

CENSUS RECORD

CHURCH RECORD

NEWSPAPER OBITUARY

Image Created By ChatGPT

Five Habits of Successful Genealogists

Good research today. Great stories tomorrow.

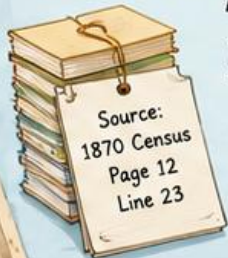
1 Keep a Backup Copy of Your Tree

Always maintain a backup of your family tree data to prevent loss due to computer issues or data corruption.



2 Cite Your Sources

Accurately record where each piece of information came from. This will be invaluable for verifying data and for future research by you or others.



3 Never Copy Anyone Else's Research

While it's tempting to take shortcuts, ensure you verify any research before incorporating it into your own.

Every record is a clue.
Every clue tells a story.

4 A Single Source is Not Proof

Always seek multiple sources to confirm any findings. Relying on only one source can lead to errors and inaccuracies in your family tree.



5 Our Ancestors Were Not Always Truthful

Be aware that historical records often contain inaccuracies, either due to human error or intentional falsehoods.



Working With Images

Create custom images that enhance your presentations.

Classic Scams – Old But Still Working

The classics still work because they target familiar worries and hopes:

Government imposter scams

"This is Social Security / IRS / Medicare..."

Bank and credit card scams

"There is suspicious activity on your account..."

Tech support scams

"Your computer is infected..."

Prize, sweepstakes, and inheritance scams

"You have won/inherited money..."

Romance and friendship scams

"I care about you... but I need help..."

Charity scams

"Please donate now..."

Check and wire scams

"Send payment quickly..."

I would like you to create an image that would enhance this slide's message.

Please discuss options with me before generating the image. You can ask me questions one at a time.

Create the image in a square format to fit the blank space

Classic Scams – Old But Still Working

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Working With Presentations

Review and improve your presentations from an attendee viewpoint.

Genealogy Basics: DNA

John Beaumont - Genealogy @ The Plaza

Topics

- Disclaimer
- What is DNA Testing?
- Autosomal DNA
- Autosomal DNA Matches
- Ethnicity Estimates

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Acting as an engaged OLLI class attendee, please review this presentation. Identify opportunities to improve engagement, clarity, and audience interest. Also identify any important topics, examples, or information that may be missing and would strengthen the presentation. **Please provide specific recommendations and, where appropriate, reference individual slides.** If you need additional information to improve your review, ask me questions one at a time.

Recommendations to Strengthen Your DNA Basics Presentation

Make it more engaging, practical, and memorable for a 90-minute OLLI class

1. START WITH A STORY



Open with a real DNA discovery story ("The Wow Factor") to capture attention and show the power of DNA for genealogy.

2. ANSWER THE BIG QUESTION SHOULD I TAKE A DNA TEST?



PROS

- ✓ Find relatives
- ✓ Break brick walls
- ✓ Learn ethnicity
- ✓ Confirm research
- ✓ Connect with family

CONS

- Privacy concerns
- Family surprises
- Cost
- Not everyone wants to know

3. ADD HIGH-VALUE CONTENT



LIVE DEMONSTRATION (10–15 MIN)

Walk through a real DNA match step-by-step: match list → profile → tree → shared matches → find common ancestor.



CASE STUDY (10–15 MIN)

Show a complete story: Problem → Clue → Investigation → Solution → Result.



COMMON DNA MYTHS

Myth-busting builds understanding and keeps the audience engaged.



WHAT HAPPENS AFTER RESULTS?

Provide a simple step-by-step roadmap for what to do once results arrive.



CAN I UPLOAD MY DNA ELSEWHERE?

Explain where you can upload your raw DNA and why it matters.

4. REFINEMENTS TO CURRENT SLIDES



SIMPLIFY & FOCUS

Reduce text on science slides. Focus on key points the audience needs to remember.



COMBINE RELATIONSHIP CHARTS

Keep one clear relationship chart with percentages. Remove the repetitive ones.



CENTIMORGAN EXPLAINED SIMPLY

Introduce cM as a "relatedness score" and show typical ranges (Parent ~3500 cM, 1st cousin ~850 cM, 2nd cousin ~200 cM, etc.).



ETHNICITY ESTIMATES: SET EXPECTATIONS

Add a slide on limitations: estimates, not exact; vary by company; change over time.



DISCUSS UNEXPECTED RESULTS

Address possibilities: adoption discoveries, unknown siblings, NPEs, family secrets.

5. WHICH DNA TEST SHOULD I TAKE?

COMPANY	BEST FOR	COST RANGE*	NOTES
 ancestryDNA	Genealogy (best matches & largest database)	\$\$	Great for beginners. Best for family tree integration.
 23andMe	Health insights & ancestry	\$\$	Deeper health information. Not a genealogy site.
 MyHeritage	European research & genealogy matches	\$\$	Good for European ancestry & tree tools.
 FamilyTreeDNA	Advanced DNA analysis (Y-DNA, projects)	\$\$	Best for deep DNA analysis & surname projects.

*Prices vary. Check current prices on company websites.

6. ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE



POLL 1

Who has already taken a DNA test?



POLL 2

Which company did you use?



POLL 3

Did your results surprise you?



POLL 4

Has anyone found a new relative through DNA?

Encourage discussion and audience stories!

7. END WITH KEY TAKEAWAYS

FIVE THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 Start with Autosomal DNA.
- 2 Build your family tree first.
- 3 Focus on close matches.
- 4 Shared matches are your friend.
- 5 DNA supports genealogy—it doesn't replace it.



SUGGESTED 90-MINUTE CLASS FLOW



1. WHY DNA MATTERS

Stories, benefits, risks

10 min



2. DNA BASICS

What DNA is, types of tests, companies

15 min



3. AUTOSOMAL DNA

Inheritance, relationships, centimorgans

15 min



4. FINDING MATCHES

Real examples, shared matches, case study

20 min



5. ETHNICITY & OTHER FEATURES

Estimates, limitations

10 min



6. PRACTICAL ADVICE

Which test to buy, what to do after results arrive

10 min



7. QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

Your questions & group discussion

10 min

Working With Presentations

Create a handout directly from a PowerPoint presentation.

BUILDING BETTER OLLI CLASSES with ChatGPT

Practical Ways to Create More Engaging, Professional, and Memorable Learning Experiences

FOUR WAYS CHATGPT CAN HELP INSTRUCTORS

- 1 IMPROVE YOUR SLIDES**
Before: Text-heavy bullet lists
After: Visual, memorable teaching aids
Example from the presentation:
 - Turn a dense genealogy slide into an attractive visual
 - Convert key takeaways into an engaging graphic
 - Improve readability and audience attentionAsk ChatGPT:
"Transform this text-heavy slide into a more engaging visual for an OLLI audience."
- 2 CREATE CUSTOM IMAGES**
No graphic design experience required.
Example:
 - Historical scenes
 - Teaching illustrations
 - Concept diagrams
 - Discussion starters
 - Social media graphicsAsk ChatGPT:
"Create an image that helps explain this concept to adult learners."
Benefit: Images can be tailored specifically to your class rather than relying on generic stock photos.
- 3 IMPROVE PRESENTATIONS & HANDOUTS**
Upload your materials and receive feedback.
ChatGPT can:
 - Review presentations from an attendee's perspective
 - Identify confusing sections
 - Suggest audience engagement opportunities
 - Create summary handouts and infographics
 - Generate discussion questionsAsk ChatGPT:
"Act as an engaged OLLI attendee and suggest improvements to this presentation."
- 4 RESEARCH, IDEAS & BRAINSTORMING**
Use ChatGPT as a teaching partner.
Generate:
 - Course outlines
 - Discussion questions
 - Audience activities
 - Historical context
 - Class handouts
 - New course ideasExample:
A simple prompt about Charles Dickens and debtors' prisons produced:
 - A complete 90-minute course outline
 - Activities and discussion questions
 - Supporting visuals
 - Take-away materials

BEST PRACTICES FOR INSTRUCTORS

- Be Specific**
The more detail you provide, the better the results.
- Treat It Like a Conversation**
Ask follow-up questions and refine the output.
- Upload Your Materials**
PowerPoint files, handouts, articles, and notes provide context.
- Ask for Alternatives**
Request different versions, styles, or approaches.
- Verify Important Facts**
Always review historical, medical, legal, and factual information before using it in class.

A SIMPLE FORMULA

IDEA → PROMPT → REFINE → RESULT

You already have the expertise. ChatGPT helps you:

- ✓ Save preparation time
- ✓ Create professional visuals
- ✓ Generate fresh ideas
- ✓ Develop better handouts
- ✓ Increase learner engagement

ONE THING TO TRY THIS WEEK

Take one existing slide from a class you already teach and ask:
"How can I make this slide more visual, engaging, and memorable for adult learners?"
You may be surprised by the result.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

You do not need AI to replace your expertise. You can use AI to amplify it.

Based on "Building Better OLLI Classes with ChatGPT" by John Beaumont • June 2026

Review this presentation and create a professional one-page infographic handout highlighting the most important ideas, examples, and takeaways.

Generate activities, discussion questions, and fresh ideas.

I am considering creating a **new 90-minute OLLI class** about Charles Dickens and 19th-century debtors' prisons. Help me develop the class. Suggest a course outline, key topics, visuals, discussion questions, audience activities, and take-away materials that would make the class engaging and memorable. You can ask me questions one at a time.



YOU GO TO PRISON FOR OWING MONEY?

Debtors' Prisons, Charles Dickens, and One Family's Story

Presentation Plan – 90 Minutes



COURSE PURPOSE

Explore the little-known world of 19th-century debtors' prisons through history, real-life stories, and one ancestor's experience. We'll discover how ordinary people were imprisoned for debt, how the system worked, how Charles Dickens was shaped by it, and what the legacy looks like today.

A FAMILY CONNECTION: LUKE DIXON

In 1813, my ancestor Luke Dixon, a mariner from Hull, was imprisoned in York Castle as one of 353

Source: census, 1841; 1851; 1861; 1871; 1881; 1891; 1901; 1911; 1921; 1931; 1941; 1951; 1961; 1971; 1981; 1991; 2001; 2011; 2021; 2031; 2041; 2051; 2061; 2071; 2081; 2091; 2101; 2111; 2121; 2131; 2141; 2151; 2161; 2171; 2181; 2191; 2201; 2211; 2221; 2231; 2241; 2251; 2261; 2271; 2281; 2291; 2301; 2311; 2321; 2331; 2341; 2351; 2361; 2371; 2381; 2391; 2401; 2411; 2421; 2431; 2441; 2451; 2461; 2471; 2481; 2491; 2501; 2511; 2521; 2531; 2541; 2551; 2561; 2571; 2581; 2591; 2601; 2611; 2621; 2631; 2641; 2651; 2661; 2671; 2681; 2691; 2701; 2711; 2721; 2731; 2741; 2751; 2761; 2771; 2781; 2791; 2801; 2811; 2821; 2831; 2841; 2851; 2861; 2871; 2881; 2891; 2901; 2911; 2921; 2931; 2941; 2951; 2961; 2971; 2981; 2991; 3001; 3011; 3021; 3031; 3041; 3051; 3061; 3071; 3081; 3091; 3101; 3111; 3121; 3131; 3141; 3151; 3161; 3171; 3181; 3191; 3201; 3211; 3221; 3231; 3241; 3251; 3261; 3271; 3281; 3291; 3301; 3311; 3321; 3331; 3341; 3351; 3361; 3371; 3381; 3391; 3401; 3411; 3421; 3431; 3441; 3451; 3461; 3471; 3481; 3491; 3501; 3511; 3521; 3531; 3541; 3551; 3561; 3571; 3581; 3591; 3601; 3611; 3621; 3631; 3641; 3651; 3661; 3671; 3681; 3691; 3701; 3711; 3721; 3731; 3741; 3751; 3761; 3771; 3781; 3791; 3801; 3811; 3821; 3831; 3841; 3851; 3861; 3871; 3881; 3891; 3901; 3911; 3921; 3931; 3941; 3951; 3961; 3971; 3981; 3991; 4001; 4011; 4021; 4031; 4041; 4051; 4061; 4071; 4081; 4091; 4101; 4111; 4121; 4131; 4141; 4151; 4161; 4171; 4181; 4191; 4201; 4211; 4221; 4231; 4241; 4251; 4261; 4271; 4281; 4291; 4301; 4311; 4321; 4331; 4341; 4351; 4361; 4371; 4381; 4391; 4401; 4411; 4421; 4431; 4441; 4451; 4461; 4471; 4481; 4491; 4501; 4511; 4521; 4531; 4541; 4551; 4561; 4571; 4581; 4591; 4601; 4611; 4621; 4631; 4641; 4651; 4661; 4671; 4681; 4691; 4701; 4711; 4721; 4731; 4741; 4751; 4761; 4771; 4781; 4791; 4801; 4811; 4821; 4831; 4841; 4851; 4861; 4871; 4881; 4891; 4901; 4911; 4921; 4931; 4941; 4951; 4961; 4971; 4981; 4991; 5001; 5011; 5021; 5031; 5041; 5051; 5061; 5071; 5081; 5091; 5101; 5111; 5121; 5131; 5141; 5151; 5161; 5171; 5181; 5191; 5201; 5211; 5221; 5231; 5241; 5251; 5261; 5271; 5281; 5291; 5301; 5311; 5321; 5331; 5341; 5351; 5361; 5371; 5381; 5391; 5401; 5411; 5421; 5431; 5441; 5451; 5461; 5471; 5481; 5491; 5501; 5511; 5521; 5531; 5541; 5551; 5561; 5571; 5581; 5591; 5601; 5611; 5621; 5631; 5641; 5651; 5661; 5671; 5681; 5691; 5701; 5711; 5721; 5731; 5741; 5751; 5761; 5771; 5781; 5791; 5801; 5811; 5821; 5831; 5841; 5851; 5861; 5871; 5881; 5891; 5901; 5911; 5921; 5931; 5941; 5951; 5961; 5971; 5981; 5991; 6001; 6011; 6021; 6031; 6041; 6051; 6061; 6071; 6081; 6091; 6101; 6111; 6121; 6131; 6141; 6151; 6161; 6171; 6181; 6191; 6201; 6211; 6221; 6231; 6241; 6251; 6261; 6271; 6281; 6291; 6301; 6311; 6321; 6331; 6341; 6351; 6361; 6371; 6381; 6391; 6401; 6411; 6421; 6431; 6441; 6451; 6461; 6471; 6481; 6491; 6501; 6511; 6521; 6531; 6541; 6551; 6561; 6571; 6581; 6591; 6601; 6611; 6621; 6631; 6641; 6651; 6661; 6671; 6681; 6691; 6701; 6711; 6721; 6731; 6741; 6751; 6761; 6771; 6781; 6791; 6801; 6811; 6821; 6831; 6841; 6851; 6861; 6871; 6881; 6891; 6901; 6911; 6921; 6931; 6941; 6951; 6961; 6971; 6981; 6991; 7001; 7011; 7021; 7031; 7041; 7051; 7061; 7071; 7081; 7091; 7101; 7111; 7121; 7131; 7141; 7151; 7161; 7171; 7181; 7191; 7201; 7211; 7221; 7231; 7241; 7251; 7261; 7271; 7281; 7291; 7301; 7311; 7321; 7331; 7341; 7351; 7361; 7371; 7381; 7391; 7401; 7411; 7421; 7431; 7441; 7451; 7461; 7471; 7481; 7491; 7501; 7511; 7521; 7531; 7541; 7551; 7561; 7571; 7581; 7591; 7601; 7611; 7621; 7631; 7641; 7651; 7661; 7671; 7681; 7691; 7701; 7711; 7721; 7731; 7741; 7751; 7761; 7771; 7781; 7791; 7801; 7811; 7821; 7831; 7841; 7851; 7861; 7871; 7881; 7891; 7901; 7911; 7921; 7931; 7941; 7951; 7961; 7971; 7981; 7991; 8001; 8

MAKING MONEY?

Family's Story



COURSE PURPOSE

A FAMILY CONNECTION: LUKE DIXON

George Goodall, late of Tadcaster, inn-keeper
George Goodall, late of
George Hoir, late of that, Incomprehensible to Young
George Abraham, late of that, Incomprehensible to Young
Theophilus, late of that, Incomprehensible to Young
Luke Dixon, formerly of Winteringham, late of
in the county of Lincoln, and last of
Hull, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, late of
mariner.
James Mottram, late of Doncaster, inn-keeper



VISUALS & MATERIALS

-
- A vintage kerosene lantern with a glass globe and metal frame. The lantern has a dark, possibly brass or iron, finish. It features a central glass globe protected by a metal cage with diagonal bars. The top has a handle and a cap, and the base is a sturdy metal stand. The overall design is functional and classic for its era.

90-MINUTE CLASS OUTLINE



1 OPENING: A SHOCKING QUESTION

10 min

- 

2 THE WORLD OF DEBT IN 19TH-CENTURY ENGLAND

15 min

-
- A decorative key with a heart-shaped bow, positioned diagonally. The key is dark and ornate, with a heart-shaped bow at the top and a notched bit at the bottom.

3 LIFE INSIDE DEBTORS' PRISONS

20 min

-

4 LUKE DIXON: ONE FAMILY'S STORY

15 min

- 

5 CHARLES DICKENS AND THE MARSHALSEA

10 min

- 

6 DID DEBTORS' PRISONS REALLY DISAPPEAR?

15 min

- 

7 BRINGING IT HOME

5 min

- What surprised you most?
- Lessons from history – and from Luke Dixon's story

1813
Luke Dixon
imprisoned in
York Castle



1813
Insolvent Debtors
(England) Act
passed



1814
Luke Dixon
released after
petition



1824
John Dickens
(Little's father)
imprisoned



1830s–1850s
Charles Dickens writes about social injustice and the prison system



1869
Debtors' Prisons
Abolition Act
passed



TODAY
Different world –
but debt remains a
major challenge



One Idea. One Prompt. One Better Class.

*You Already Have the Expertise.
ChatGPT Can Help With the Rest.*



Improve
one slide



Create
one handout



Generate
one new activity



Research
one new class idea

Questions & Discussion

*What is one thing
you might try in
your next class?*



Idea



Prompt



Result



Stay in Touch!



John Beaumont

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No instructors were replaced by AI during the creation of this presentation. 😊

Thank you! ❤️