

Review of Powtoon

The following is my review of Powtoon as an instructional tool.

Below is an example of a short Powtoon that I created as an intro for summer course.

<https://www.powtoon.com/c/b8ilSoFl0tp/1/m>

The Good:

With the paid educational version:

- you can upload your own images up to 5MG
- you can now add a voiceover or use text to speech
- you can now add short recordings of yourself

The Bad:

- This platform has a steep learning curve. It looks intuitive on the surface, but few things work the way you would expect them to.
- It now offers converting PowerPoint presentations into Powtoons. This sounds like a good idea because then you would be able to use your PPT presentation as a template and then just add the video animation elements/music/video you want or need after it has been converted. Unfortunately, I found that the converted PowerPoints are often missing words or sections.
- It is a very time-consuming tool. As they have added more bells and whistles to the platform, the number of steps required to create or edit a single Powtoon has gone up exponentially. Creating a 3-5 minute video can easily take an entire day. The amount of time needed can be shortened by using one of their templates, but we will discuss this in the next section.

The Ugly:

I had chosen Powtoon as an instructional technology tool based on my limited experience with free version the previous year. Between the time that I had used Powtoon and I received the funds to buy the educational license, Powtoon had changed its business model and pricing structure. It had also decided to no longer target educational users. Everything that was previously offered in the educational license like educational support and specialized templates was no longer available.

Their current pricing structure is the following:

LITE	PROFESSIONAL	BUSINESS
		
\$ 15 /mo	\$ 40 /mo \$ 70 /mo	\$ 125 /mo
\$180 / Billed annually	\$ 480 \$480 / Billed annually	\$1500 / Billed annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove Powtoon branding (5 premium exports /mo)• Download as mp4• 2GB Storage• Length up to 10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Everything in Lite plan•  script writer•  video assistant• Unlimited premium exports• Unlimited access to all content• Unlimited access to all templates• 10GB Storage• Length up to 20 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Everything in Professional•  text to speech• Full character customization• Character lip-sync• Full brand control• Camera movement• 3rd-party reseller rights• 100GB Storage• Length up to 30 mins

If you search around, you can still find the educational package, which is billed at \$96 annually.

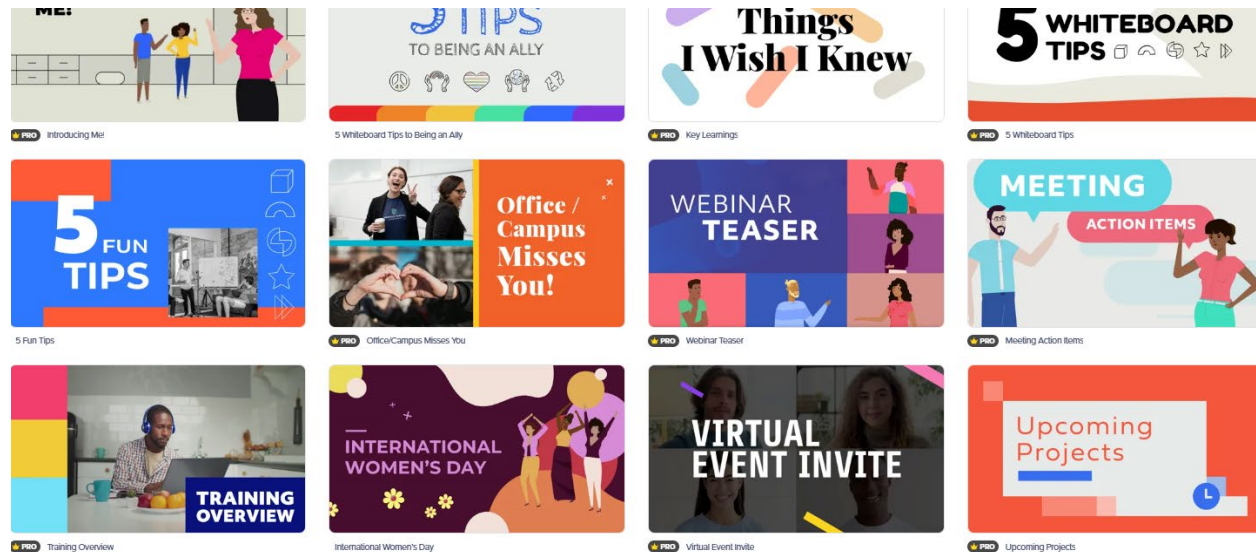
FEATURES	Free	LITE	Education
STORAGE	100 MB	2 GB	10 GB
POWTOON BRANDING	Powtoon Branding	No Watermark	EDU Branding
PRIVACY CONTROL		✓	✓
24/7 PRIORITY SUPPORT		✓	✓
ASSETS			
ROYALTY-FREE OBJECTS	Free content package	Free content package	EDU content package

Unfortunately, the educational content package is essentially no different than the free content package.

What it currently offers:

Templates:

It currently offers 32 templates that they suggest for educational use by teachers and faculty. There is no way to sort or filter content by what is included in the educational license, only by “Pro” or not. Below are examples of the templates included in those 32 suggestions:



As you can see, most are not useful to teachers or faculty. Not only that, to access most of these, you would have to have a “Pro” license, and not an “Edu” license.

When I spoke to customer support, they were unable to tell me where I could find educational package content and pointed me to the following four free templates:



PRO School Syllabus



Teacher Intro



Mission Impossible

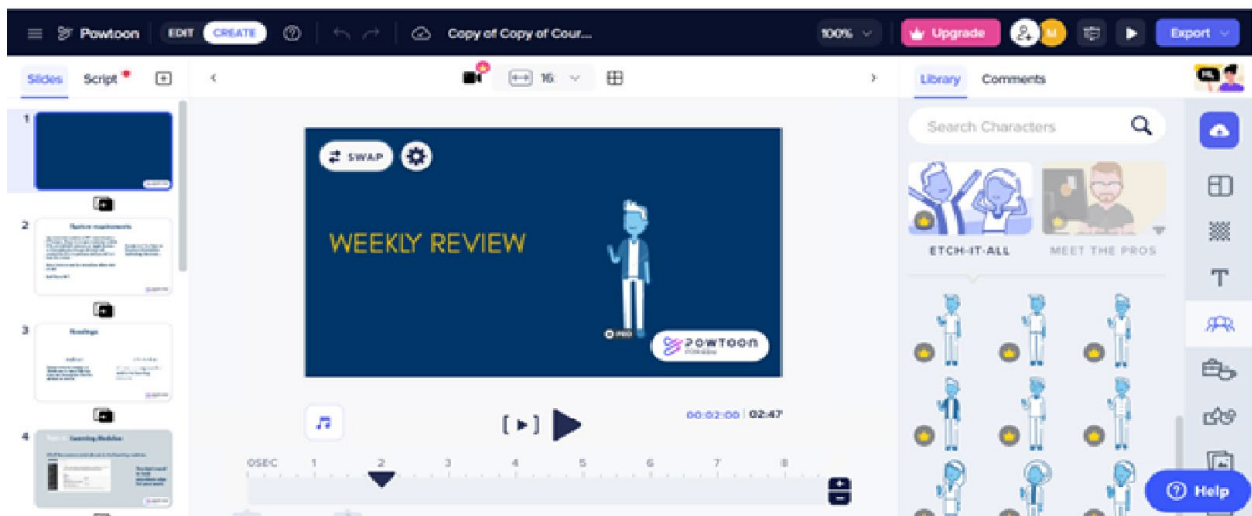


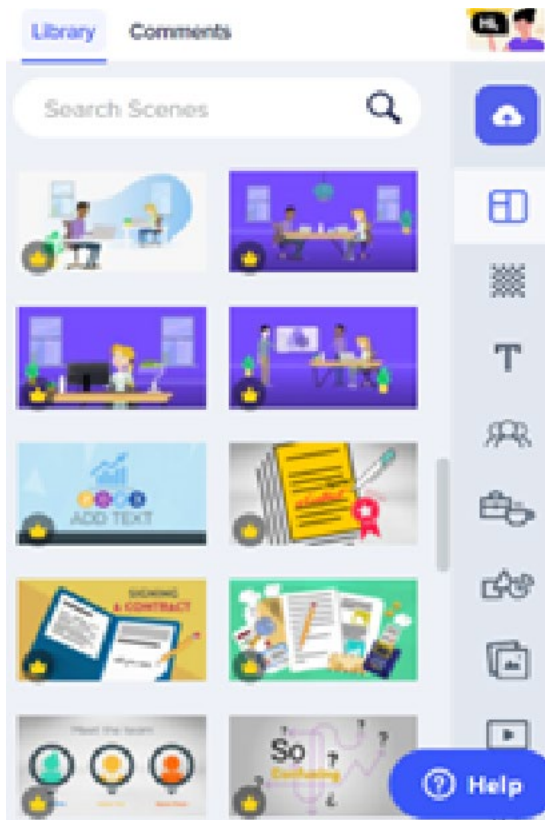
Graduation



Blue Sky Board

As demonstrated below, most characters and scenes are also “Pro” and require an upgraded account.





Free props are now what you used to get in PPT in Windows 95.



Everything else requires you to upgrade. To top it all off, if you accidentally go over the number of allotted slides/time for your type of license, it does not alert you until after you have completed the entire Powtoon video and then tells you that you have to upgrade your account to “Pro” to publish the Powtoon as is or delete the slides that you created.

For all of the aforementioned reasons, I would not suggest that anyone pay for the educational license for Powtoon as it is currently offered. Any benefit that you can get from using the tool can be found in the free version.