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Subject: EdTech Tuesday #38 - Nothing on the slides is text
Date: 15 September 2026 5:30:33 AM
Attachments: [fig5-detects.png](#)

EDTECH TUESDAY · ISSUE 38
15 September 2026 · CPL by Patana

Nothing on the slides is text

TL;DR: NotebookLM will re-render an existing lesson deck in any visual style you describe to it. The export comes back as flat images with no editable text, so Canva's Magic Layers has to do the repair. About fifteen minutes per lesson. Worth it for the decks students actually sit with, not for all of them.

Rather watch than read? The whole method is on video at the end of this email, or [open it on YouTube](#) and come back to it later.

Your slides work. They just look like every other set of slides in the building: template background, title, bullets, a stock image if it was a good week.



The Year 6 film unit as it was. Nothing wrong with it. Nothing in it either.

For a film unit that is a real problem, because the subject has a look and the slides carry none of it. So the question is whether you can give a deck a visual identity without rebuilding it from scratch.

You can.

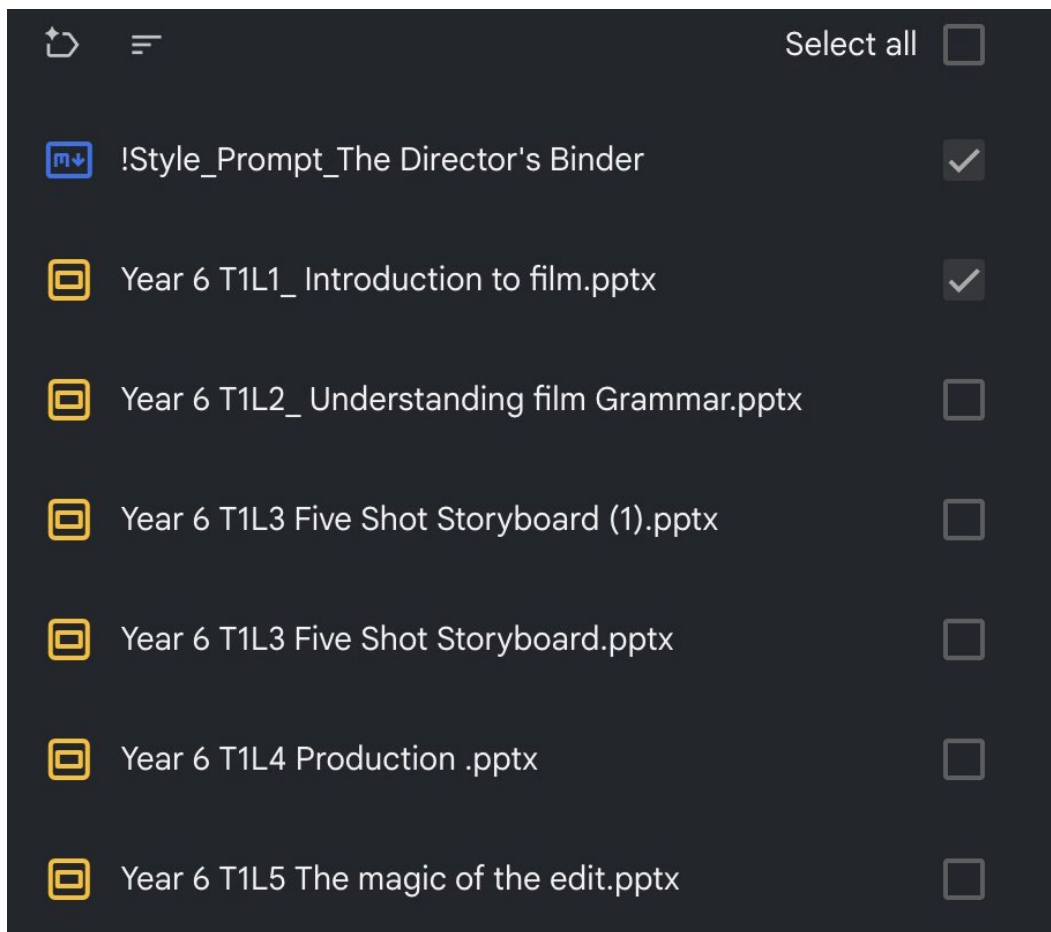


The same unit, restyled as a 1980s director's field binder. Ten minutes.

THE METHOD

1. **Download copies** of the lesson decks. Work on the copies.
2. **Get a style guide written.** Ask any AI assistant for a visual style guide as plain text. Name the subject and the age group. The one rule that matters: make it name specific Google Fonts rather than describe a font mood. The film unit guide opens like this:

Style Direction: Field-Worn Production Archive. A utilitarian, tactile document pulled straight from a 1980s location scout folder or a working director's field binder. Primary typewriter text: Courier Prime or IBM Selectric Orator. Technical headers and labels: DIN 1451 Engschrift or Monotype Grotesque, all caps, tight tracking. Never use cursive display fonts.
3. **Open NotebookLM** and add all the lesson decks as sources.
4. **Paste the style guide into a new Note in Studio**, title it with a leading exclamation mark so it sorts to the top of the list, then convert that note into a source. This is the step that makes everything after it work, because sources have checkboxes and notes do not.
5. **Tick exactly two boxes.** The style guide, and one lesson deck. Nothing else.



Two ticks. Tick more than two and the lessons blend into each other.

Generate the slide deck from Studio, then repeat for the next lesson.

6. Paste the style guide into the Studio editor as well, on top of having it ticked as a source.

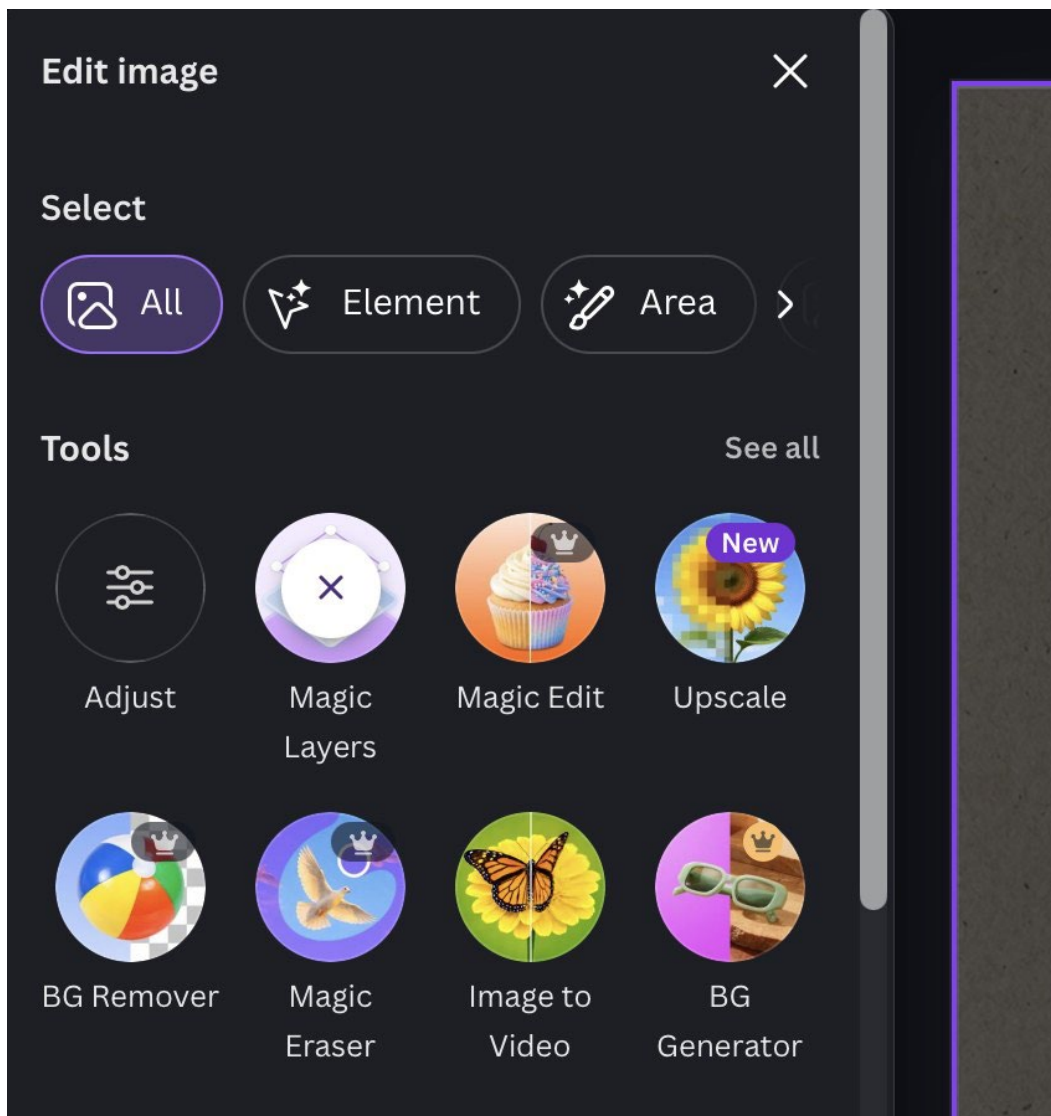
The style then arrives twice, once as material and once as an instruction, and it holds much better.

THE BIT THAT CATCHES PEOPLE OUT

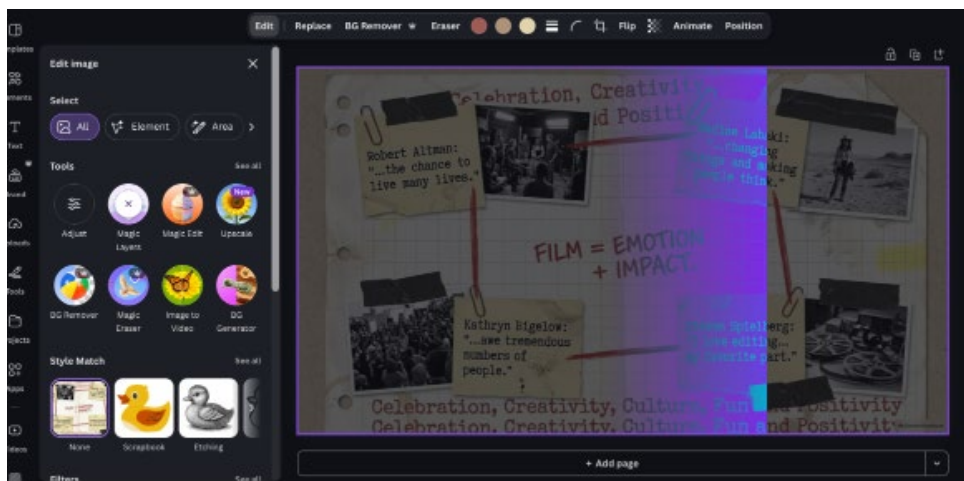
The export is not a slide deck in any useful sense. I unpacked the file to check: ten slides, ten PNG images, zero text boxes. Every slide is one flat picture stretched across the canvas. There is nothing to click on and nothing to correct.

That is what Canva is for, but Canva needs pictures, not a deck. Download the slide deck from NotebookLM as a PPTX, open it in PowerPoint, and go to **File, Export, PNG** to save every slide as its own image.

Upload those PNGs to Canva, select a slide, and run **Magic Layers** under Edit image.

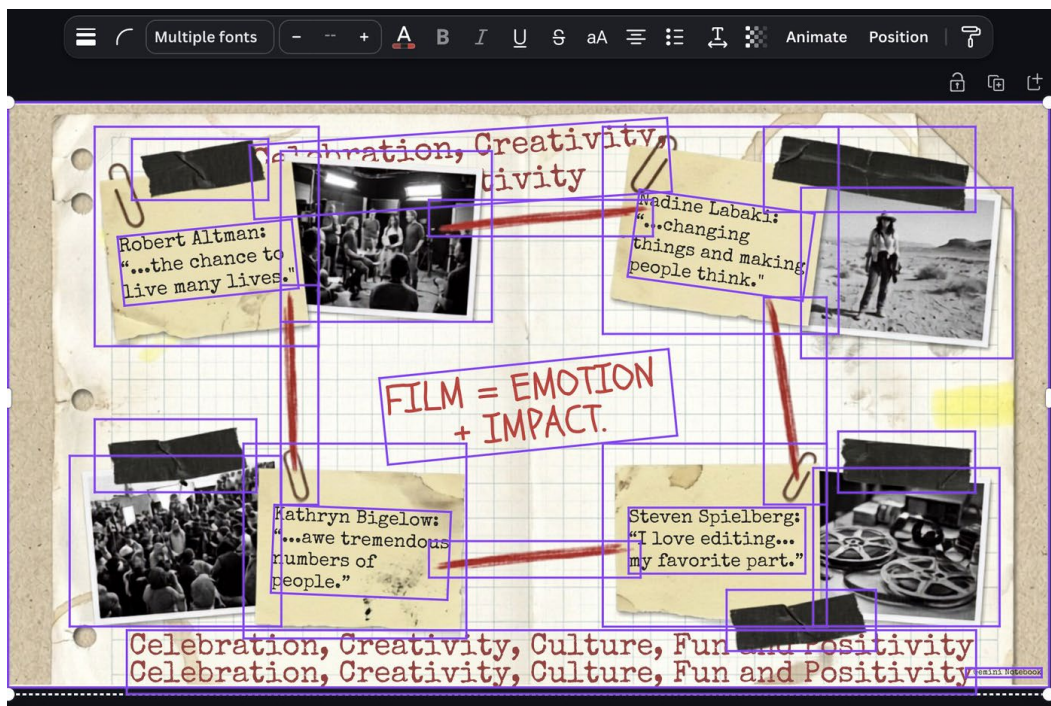


Edit image, then Tools, then Magic Layers.



A purple band sweeps across the slide while Canva scans it. Leave it alone until the band has gone; it takes about half a minute.

Canva pulls the flat picture back apart into separate editable layers: each block of text, each photograph, each piece of tape.



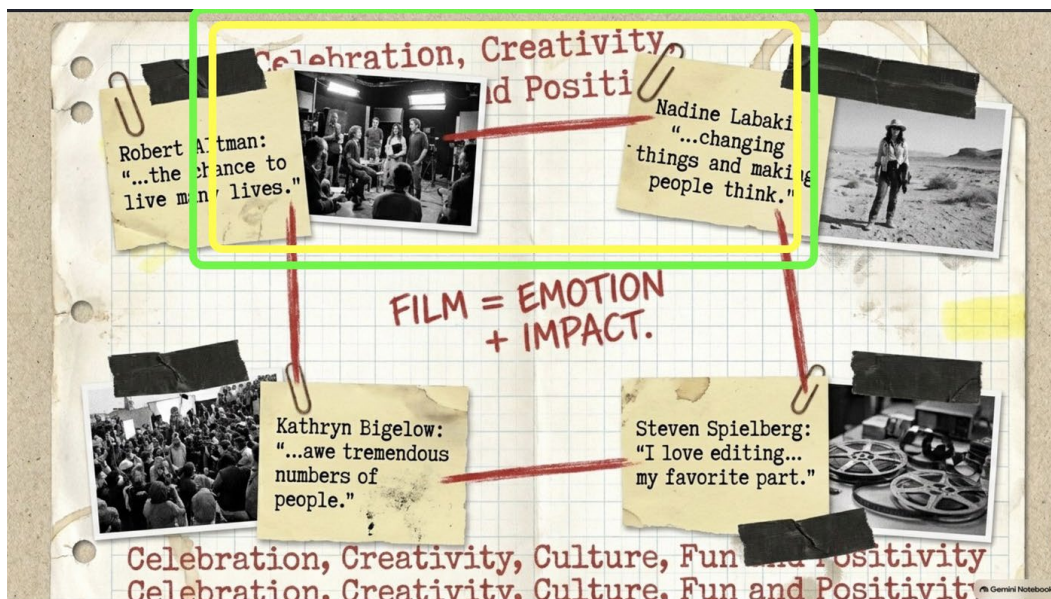
"Multiple fonts" in the toolbar is the signal it has worked. Every element now has its own handle.

It works because Canva and Google both draw on the same open Google Fonts library, which is why step 2 insists on named fonts. The faces you asked for exist on both sides, so the text Canva rebuilds can be set properly rather than approximated.

WHAT IT GETS WRONG

Consistently. Expect all three:

- **Headings clipped or buried.** On one slide the unit strapline sat behind a photograph and ran off the edge of the page.
- **Text rendered twice.** The same line, stacked on itself at the bottom of the slide.
- **Elements pointing at nothing.** Stray arrows, tape and paperclips with no job to do.



Both faults on one slide. The heading disappears behind the photograph, and the strapline prints twice.

All three are two minute fixes once Magic Layers has separated the layers. None of them are fixable before that.

WHERE THIS IS WORTH TEN MINUTES

Not everywhere. A deck you talk over for four minutes does not need a visual identity. The ones that repay the effort are the decks students sit with: a unit launch, a knowledge organiser, a task card that stays on the desk, anything going up on a display. Younger year groups get more from it than older ones, and subjects with a genuine visual culture, design and film and history and science, get more than subjects without one. Give it a go.

SOMETHING TO TRY THIS WEEK

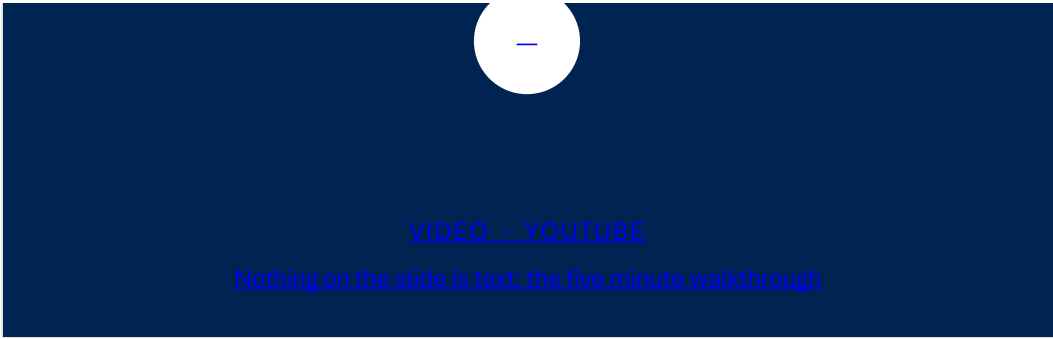
Take one deck. Not a unit, one deck. Run steps 1 to 6 and finish with the Canva repair. Ten minutes will tell you whether the output is worth the bother for your subject, and that answer will be better than mine.

TELL ME WHAT IS WRONG WITH IT

I would like to know where this falls over. Three things in particular. Does it survive a subject that leans on diagrams and labelled figures? Does the style hold across eight lessons or drift by lesson four? And is there a point at which restyling a deck is just decorating around a lesson that needed rewriting instead? Reply and tell me.

WATCH IT GET DONE IN FIVE MINUTES





[VIDEO : YOUTUBE](#)

[Nothing on the slide is text: the five minute walkthrough](#)

Steps 1 to 6 in NotebookLM, then the Canva repair, on one real lesson deck. If the video does not open, [this link](#) is the same thing.

Edtech Tuesday is written by Glenn Malcolm for Bangkok Patana teaching staff under the CPL by Patana banner. Back issues are archived at heutalab.com.