

How to make a Great Poster

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Purpose of a Poster

To communicate/publicize to others your

- research/experiment results
- study reports
- project outcomes
- organization features
- business plans

in a way that is

- clear
- effective

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April 15, 2005

Effective and Clear Visual Communication

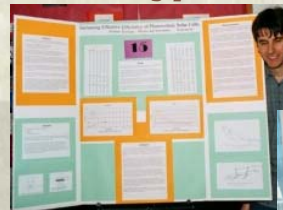
- Is able to catch as many viewers' attention as possible
- Is pleasing to the eye
- Is able to capture viewers' interest in less than 15 s
- Is readable, succinct, and well organized
- Is informative
- Is legible from 3-6 feet
- Is a conversation starter

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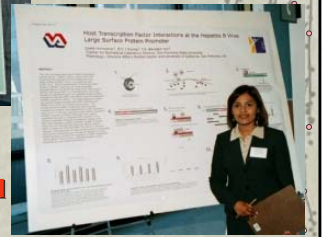
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Types of Posters

Multiple panels



Single panel



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Before starting

- Know the intended audience
- Decide what the main message is
- List text, diagrams, tables, photos, etc. to be included
- Budget the space needs for various elements
- Sketch a layout

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Who is the audience?

- **People in your specialty**
(may use jargons and other professional shortcuts)
- **People in related fields**
(minimize jargons but may assume basic knowledge)
- **People in unrelated fields**
(assume no prior knowledge; use the most basic terms)

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April 15, 2005

What is the message?

- **State the main point(s) and conclusion(s) succinctly (a catchy but descriptive title, an effective abstract or introduction)**
- **Focus everything else on those points and conclusions (do not try to include everything in a poster)**



Whether text, diagrams, tables or photos?

- **Utilize text, diagram, table, etc.**
- **Follow the maxim "A picture is worth ten thousand words"**
- **Tables are more effective than texts, figures are better than tables.**
- **Use short sentences**
- **Check spelling and grammar**
- **Do not forget titles and legends**

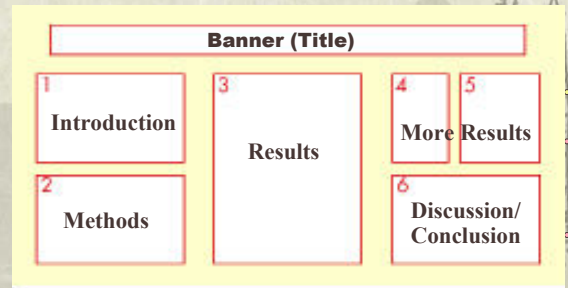


What type of poster?

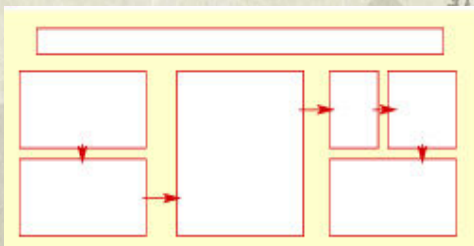
- **Find out available space**
- **Find out poster requirements**
- **Find out resources available**
- **Find out time requirements**



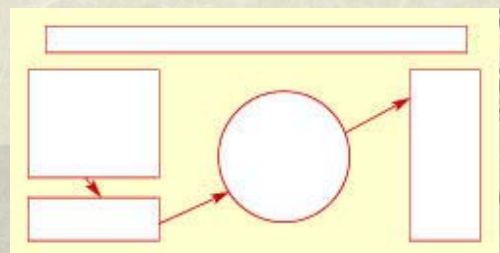
Poster Layout



Numbering the panels to guide readers with the flow



Or use arrows



Use elements of different sizes, shapes, and proportions.



Banner (Title box)

- A banner shows the title, author(s), and affiliation. The banners should be 10–12 inches tall and 4 feet wide with 1-inch margins on all sides.
- The title should be concise and depict the project truly and completely. It is your punch line. It should be legible at 20 feet.



Abstract

The abstract section is optional depending on the desire of the author or the requirements of the organization. It must accurately summarize the hypothesis or research question, the methods, the data, and the conclusions described in the other sections of the poster.



Introduction

The introduction should address the question, “Why did you start this project?” It defines the topic and explains what was studied and why—the rationale and importance of your study. It includes your research question(s) and/or the hypotheses you tested. Make sure that the significance and originality of the work are very clear.



Methods, materials, equipment

This section should explain what you did. Ideally, this section gives enough information to allow another researcher to replicate the study. It should have enough detail to allow another researcher to judge if the study design was adequate and thus to judge the validity of your study. Flow diagrams can sometimes work well instead of written text. List major materials and equipment used.



Results

This section presents what you found in your research or the outcome of your project. It may include statistical analyses, tables and/or figures showing your data. In most cases, this would be the largest portion of the poster. Arrange your results in a logical order according to the point(s) you want to get across. Arrange your results to follow your conclusions. Present only enough data to support your conclusions.



Discussion/Conclusion

The discussion section, if included, tells what you think your results mean. This section may also present supporting evidence from published reports. Any contradictory findings should be addressed, and the limitations of your study should be described.

The conclusion section should directly relate to the research question and hypotheses and supported by the results. Use the same key phrases and make use of bullets to emphasize the major points. Emphasize the significance of your work.



General suggestions

Layout

- Use headings to help readers find key sections.
- Balance the placement of text and graphics.
- Use white space creatively to grab viewers' attention.
- Follow the normal flow of reading: top to bottom and left to right.
- Use column format to make poster easier to read in a crowd.

General suggestions

Text and Font

- Write simple, easily readable texts.
- Omit extraneous text by using key words and phrases.
- Highlight important words or phrases by switching styles: bold, underline, italic, shadow, etc.
- Do not use all capitals except in headings.
- Do not use too many different font types.
- Use large fonts: 18-point for the smallest text, 24-point for normal text, 28-point for heading, 48-point for title.

General suggestions

Photos, figures and tables

- Should be clear, self explanatory, uncomplicated, and of sufficient size.
- Tables and figures must have titles.
- Figures must include legends.
- Use good color contrast in figures.
- Borders can enhance presentation but can also make diagrams look busy.

General suggestions

Color and contrast

- Do not use color everywhere or it will distract readers from your work
- Use color to draw attention to particularly important parts of your poster
- Use pleasing contrast to reduce eye strain and make the poster more legible and interesting
- Note that printed color may be different from what appear on the computer monitor
- Mount posters on color matte boards making posters more attractive

Additional information

Web Sites

<http://www.aapg.org/meetings/instructions/guide.html>
<http://www.aspb.org/education/poster.cfm>

http://www.drizzle.com/~afox/writings/Posters_HOWTO.htm
<http://www.tesag.jcu.edu.au/cartography/PPposters.pdf#search=%20software%20making%20posters>
<http://ibscore.dbs.umd.edu/makeposter.pdf>

Software

MS Word, MS PowerPoint, LaTeX
InDesign, Adobe Illustrator

On Showcase Day

- Prepare a 2-minute presentation (when making a presentation, don't read the poster. Instead, give the big picture, explain why the problem is important, and use the graphics to illustrate and support your key points.)
- Arrive early at the display site. Set up display before 1 pm.
- Bring the poster and all accessories.
- Set your poster square and neat.
- Bring copies of a handout (optional)
- Be there between 3 and 6:30 pm.