

Our Tips for Designing Great Posters

Make it Flow

Organize your poster into columns and sections, using section headings to make the flow of your story obvious. Limit the amount of text to the essential information people need to know in order to appreciate what you've discovered.

Keep in mind that your poster isn't your research paper – it is a distillation of what will go into your

paper. Therefore, avoid overloading the poster with small text that few, if any, people will read. Be sure to include white space between columns, sections and blocks of text.

Read closely for typographical errors – PowerPoint does not spell check.

Poster Layout

Your poster should include each of the following sections. Note that some organizations will require that you include an abstract on the poster. This should go at the beginning, typically in the upper left corner of the first column.

Title

Use a brief, 1-2 line title to catch viewers' attention

Introduction

Provide a brief background of the problem, why it is important, your hypothesis and the approach used to test the hypothesis ~200 words

Materials and Methods

Briefly describe what was done to test your hypothesis, preferably with an illustration or flow chart; avoid detail about commonly used techniques ~200 words

Results

Briefly summarize your most important findings, then incorporate data analysis results that addressed testing of your hypothesis; depict findings using charts or figures rather than large tables; include legends for charts and figures ~200 words

Conclusions

Briefly reiterate your most important findings, whether or not your hypothesis was supported or refuted, and why these findings are relevant to previous knowledge in this area and the real world. Indicate future directions in this section ~200 words

Literature Cited

Include only a few of the most relevant citations

Acknowledgements & Links

Acknowledge funding for the project, assistance and advice received that were critical to this study. Include your laboratory's website.

Where Things Can Go Wrong

Fonts and text size

Limit the number of fonts you use to a maximum of 3. The easiest to read fonts are Times New Roman, Arial, and Garamond. To make your poster easy to read, don't overload it with small sized text. You should be able to read all words from 4 feet away. Therefore, recommended sizes are:

Title: 64 - 72 pt

Headings: 30-60 pt

Text: 20-24 pt

Colors

Be careful in your choice of colors. Typically, dark print on light background works best. Also, remember that some people may have trouble distinguishing red and green, so avoid using those colors when you want the viewer to distinguish between two groups.

Photos and Figures

It is important to have a balance of text and images (photos/figures) on your poster. Be sure to examine all photos/figures at the size they will be printed on the poster (i.e., 100% magnification) to make sure that you are not including any that will pixelate and become fuzzy when printed.

Keep in mind that images print darker than they appear on your computer screen. So, avoid using dark photos, if possible. We will be happy to print a small section of your poster containing any images that might appear dark so you can see how they would look when printed. If they are too dark, we'll do our best to help you rectify the situation.