

Scientific Research Poster Basics

Making a poster in MS PowerPoint

- Open a new PowerPoint file.
- Establish size of the poster by selecting the Design tab then Page Setup. Change the width to 48" and the height to 36". Click OK.
- Under the Design tab you can change the background color and/or style of the poster. Be cautious with background color, making sure text is easily visible from several feet away.
- Insert text boxes using the Insert tab. Change text size to appropriate height at the Home tab.
- Be cautious when copying and pasting a figure from another program (such as a graph from Excel). It may be best to paste it as a picture to maintain formatting. From the Home tab, click on the arrow below Paste and select Paste special. Then scroll down to paste as a Picture (Windows Metafile).

Composition suggestions

The tri-fold posters are already broken down into three separate sections; use the different sections to your advantage. Under the View tab you can select Ruler and Gridlines which can help position the sections. Think about where your eye goes first and how it travels in a circular motion to see all information on a poster. You will need to achieve unity while at the same time be able to identify separate parts. Your headings should be coordinated in terms of color, font, and size.

Information to include

- **Title.** Put the poster title at the top of the poster. The font size should be at least 1" high (100 point font) and no longer than two lines.
- **Authors.** Your name and the name of collaborators should appear underneath the title (56-80 point font).
- **Abstract.** Some disciplines or conferences require the abstract, some don't. See additional document about writing a quality abstract.
- **Introduction.** In ~200 words or less get the viewer interested in your research question. Briefly put your research in the context of previously published work, state your research question, and briefly describe the project.
- **Materials and Methods.** Again, keep to ~200 words. Briefly describe the methods and equipment used to conduct your research. Use figures, tables, charts, and photographs to illustrate your experimental design whenever possible.
- **Results.** Most, if not all, of the results should be reported in figures and tables. Make sure to include titles and legends. Keep text outside of figures and tables to a minimum.
- **Discussion.** List two to four main points from your results, possibly using bullet points. Mention future directions for the research.
- **References.** Keep references to a minimum (≤ 5). List names, dates, and journal information.
- **Acknowledgments.** Thank individuals or groups for contributions and funding.

Print a Proof

In PowerPoint go to Print. Under Settings, select Full Page Slides with the option Scale to Fit Paper. This will help you see the basic layout of your poster.

Final Draft

Make sure to send your final draft to your research advisor before printing. He or she will likely have suggested edits.

Presenting

Prepare a 5-minute presentation, highlighting the key points of your work to complement your poster. Make sure to be present at your poster during the designated presentation time. Introduce yourself to the viewer before starting your presentation. Refer to the figures and tables when discussing your data. Ask the viewer if they have any questions.