

Poster Presentation as Visual Rhetoric

Goals of a poster presentation

- Provides information about and a summary of your research
- Starts a conversation about your work
- Provides cues to you as you talk about your work
- Allows you to advertise your work, and to speak to its impact or significance (present or future)

How to make an effective poster

- REMEMBER: a poster is essentially an illustrated abstract!
- AMOUNT OF TEXT:
 - Don't use a lot of text—passersby won't be able to read and digest it. Distill your project into a few main themes. You will supplement the written materials with spoken explanations.
 - ABOUT 20% OF YOUR POSTER SHOULD BE EMPTY SPACE TO MAKE IT EASIER TO READ.
- FONT TYPE:
 - Use an easily legible font type. San serif, Arial, Helvetica, times new roman are great.
- FONT SIZE: 18pt or larger
 - remember: people stand a few feet away from the poster, so type must be large enough for them to comfortably read from 2-5 feet away.
 - If you are including something that is already printed (a graph or photograph), enlarge it on a copy machine to make it legible from a distance.

EXAMPLE OF POSTER HEADINGS

TITLE 100 pt

Name, Mentor's Name/Lab 60

Subheadings 48 pt

Text of the poster 24 pt

Audience

- Remember who your audience is! This is family weekend, and this event is open to the wider community. That means that you will have experts in your field as well as curious passers by.
- The language and description in your posters should assume little prior knowledge of your field!
- Avoid jargon. Avoid technical terms. If you do use terms, make a vocabulary box where you provide a definition of terms.

Organization and text

- Your text should read from left to right, from top to bottom!
 - Limit your text.
 - Tell a single story.
 - Express information in outline form
- Images

Images used should be a part of your talk, but they shouldn't drive your talk. (Extraneous images can confuse the listener.)
- data (graphs/charts/etc.)

Data should be easily readable, and should support the argument you are articulating orally

Templates

- Feeling unsure about how to get started?
- Want to work off of a model or template?
- Here (<https://colinpurrington.com/tips/poster-design/>) are a few samples to get your started! Remember: you can tweak the headings for each field and adapt them to your project (see next 2 slides for possible headings!).

Possible sections for a humanities or humanistic social science poster:

- Title (entice your reader with the title! In this sense, the title functions something like a newspaper heading);
- Introduction / Research Question (in approximately 3 sentences, persuade your reader that your topic is interesting. Whet their appetite for more!);
- Methodology (How did you conduct your research? Describe data, texts, etc. If relevant, discuss where your research took place);
- Challenges (did your project change; why and how? Did something fail? This is always interesting to discuss!);
- Conclusions and Impact/Significance (What conclusions did you draw from your research? How does your research contribute to the field? Why and how is this significant, or, put differently, why might this be interesting to someone not in your field?);
- New questions/next steps (if this is not the end of your research, discuss next steps);
- What visuals will you use? (consider what visuals can support or supplement your research).
- Literature cited (be sure to cite anyone's work who you use!)
- Acknowledgments (acknowledge the funder of your research and your faculty mentor, and maybe others!)
- Further information (if relevant, you can refer your reader to other places if they have additional questions.)

Possible sections for a STEM or data focused social science poster:

- Title (entice your reader with the title! In this sense, the title functions something like a newspaper heading);
- Introduction / Research Question (in approximately 3 sentences, persuade your reader that your topic is interesting. Whet their appetite for more!);
- Materials and Methods (describe the data, the method, the materials used in your research)
- Results (what results did your research yield?)
- Conclusions (what conclusions can be derived from these results?)
- New questions/next steps (if this is not the end of your research, discuss next steps);
- What visuals will you use? (consider what visuals can support or supplement your research).
- Literature cited (be sure to cite anyone's work who you use!)
- Acknowledgments (acknowledge the funder of your research and your faculty mentor, and maybe others!)
- Further information (if relevant, you can refer your reader to other places if they have additional questions.)