Poster Design Tips — Quick Reference

Know your audience

Ask yourself:

- Who is my audience?

- What do they already know?

- What should they know after they've visited my poster?

- How will I convey the "take-home" messages of my poster?

Poster = icebreaker

- Keep text to a minimum — let your visuals tell the story.

- Think of your poster as a way to start a conversation about your research, or as an outline for your oral explanation — don't make the poster do all the work!

Design considerations

Design around your message

- Allocate space according to what's most important

Think visually

- If you can, use graphics instead of text

- When using text, make it easy to read:

Long paragraphs of text are hard to read, especially at a distance. Your audience will quickly lose interest in your poster and move on. Remember, a poster is not a "mini-paper." It's up to you to decide what essential information needs to be included, and to present it in a way that your audience will understand.

- Bullets are more concise & easy to read

- Break up your text with plenty of white space

- Ensure your text is large enough to read at a distance

- Use simple fonts

Use high-quality images

- Avoid stretching or distorting images

- Images should not be pixilated or fuzzy when printed at full size (use a minimum resolution of 150dpi at full size)

Colour

More isn't always better

- Stick to a few colours that complement one another

- For printed media, light backgrounds and dark text work best

- Avoid using primary colours together—they can be hard to read

- Use contrasting colours to enhance readability

- Colours on screen may not translate exactly in print

- Be careful with gradients & transparencies: not all large-format printers support them.

Need more help?

Poster Design — additional resources

Design Ideas and Examples

Flickr poster sessions: http://www.flickr.com/groups/postersessions/pool/

Better Posters blog: http://betterposters.blogspot.ca/

Eposters.net: https://www.eposters.net/

F1000 Poster database: https://f1000research.com/browse/posters

Poster Templates

Colin Purrington's Poster templates (also has great poster design tips!) : http://colinpurrington.com/tips/poster-design

Mike Morrison's #BetterPoster template (and video): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RwJbhkCA58&feature=youtu.be

U of A Visual Identity Toolkit: https://www.ualberta.ca/toolkit/downloads/templates/posterpresentations (also has U of A logos, etc.)

Creative Commons (or Similarly Licensed) Images

U of A Copyright Office Tip Sheets on Image Use: https://www.ualberta.ca/copyright/student-staff-guide/using-images

Creative Commons: http://search.creativecommons.org/

Morguefile: http://www.morguefile.com/

Flickr Commons: http://www.flickr.com/search/?w=commons&q=&m=text

Open Clip Art Library: http://openclipart.org/

Other resources:

URI Poster Resolution Tip Sheet: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ySx_ReZQLccmZEMG5CY1lET3BqY1ZrSmFZWnVwcEFfbndZ/view

Image Size Calculator: https://www.pixelcalculator.com/index.php?lang=en

GFCLearnFree (Fundamentals of Graphic Design video series): https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpQQipWcxwt9U7qgyYkvNH3Mp8XHXCMmQ

Large-Format Printing

SUBPrint: http://www.su.ualberta.ca/businesses/subprint/printing/

Campus Print & Design Solutions: https://print.ualberta.ca/ (also has free templates available for download)

Links updated: June 2019

Recommended minimum font sizes for large-format posters:

- **Title** — at least 60pt bold

- **Headings** — at least 36pt bold

- **Main text** — at least 32pt

- **References/Captions** — at least 28pt

*Note, these are guidelines only. A good rule of thumb is that the text should be legible at a distance of 3ft (1 meter) from the poster.