How to design & present a research poster
# Anatomy of a research poster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title - clear, descriptive, attention-grabbing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction (Why?)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your thesis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods (How?)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where did you get your information? How did you analyze it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results: (What?)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you learn based on the information you collected?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusions (So what? What next?)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do your conclusions advance your thesis &amp; knowledge of the topic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can your audience do with this new information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The fine print</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References Acknowledgements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other possible structures for a poster:

**Telling a story:**
- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- How?

**Reflecting on an experience:**
- What?
- So what?
- Now what?
Main finding goes here, translated into plain english. Emphasize the important words.

Video & Templates: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RwJbhkCA58&feature=youtu.be
“Can you just give me a winning template?”
Example posters

**Note:** these have been selected to show you a variety of approaches, not necessarily as examples of “best” posters.

#BetterPoster examples  (Mike Morrison template)

[https://twitter.com/jdwasmuth/status/1113099595670679552](https://twitter.com/jdwasmuth/status/1113099595670679552)
[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-NUZ3nqY5Zvw/XM4BsZrwOTI/AAAAAAAao8/___Kb3qmwir-Uam2SbgnsQQJD0biYWLCWPwCLcBGAs/s1600/INSAR_2019_Morrison.jpg](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-NUZ3nqY5Zvw/XM4BsZrwOTI/AAAAAAAao8/___Kb3qmwir-Uam2SbgnsQQJD0biYWLCWPwCLcBGAs/s1600/INSAR_2019_Morrison.jpg)
[http://www.twipu.com/NatanyaRussek/tweet/1124727729067216897](http://www.twipu.com/NatanyaRussek/tweet/1124727729067216897)

Traditional poster examples (multi-column format)

[https://com-shcc.sites.medinfo.ufl.edu/files/2015/03/2016_DiffBetweenVaristyNonvarsityAthletesAcutePostconcussion.jpg](https://com-shcc.sites.medinfo.ufl.edu/files/2015/03/2016_DiffBetweenVaristyNonvarsityAthletesAcutePostconcussion.jpg)
[https://yourreview.journals.yorku.ca/public/journals/167/cover_article_40344_en_US.jpg](https://yourreview.journals.yorku.ca/public/journals/167/cover_article_40344_en_US.jpg)
[https://dpt.duhs.duke.edu/research/student-posters](https://dpt.duhs.duke.edu/research/student-posters)

Other designs


**Try it yourself:** Google image search some posters in your discipline. What works? What doesn’t?

**Databases:**

[https://f100research.com/browse/posters?&selectedDomain=posters](https://f100research.com/browse/posters?&selectedDomain=posters)
[https://www.eposters.net/posters/](https://www.eposters.net/posters/)
3-5 Minutes

Key messages
Layout & Composition

1. Proximity
2. White space
3. Alignment
4. Contrast
5. Repetition

Video (5min: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5KYIHNKQB8&t=3s&frags=pl%2Cwn)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images (or other visuals)</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attract &amp; hold audience attention</td>
<td>Provides additional information, explanation, context for the images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate your key messages at a glance</td>
<td>Contributes to overall flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave a memorable impression</td>
<td>Complements (but does not duplicate) the visual story</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Choosing a font

• Sans serif (e.g. Arial, Helvetica, Calibri) is good for headings and short blocks of text (e.g. bullets)

• Serif (e.g. Times New Roman, Georgia) is good for longer paragraphs

• Avoid script fonts (e.g. Blackadder ITC, BrushScript)

• Keep it professional (no Comic Sans!)
Choosing visuals

1. What does it communicate?

2. Is the image high-quality?

3. Do I have permission?

- **Copyright** – Ualberta Copyright Office
  - [https://www.ualberta.ca/copyright](https://www.ualberta.ca/copyright)

- **Quality** – Use highest quality images possible (resolution: 150dpi or higher)
Choosing colours

More is not better

• Avoid stacking primary colours

Avoid gradients

Avoid transparencies

Be consistent

Think about what works with your other visuals.
Templates/Software

• **Use the software you’re most comfortable with:**
  • PowerPoint (most common)
  • Keynote (Apple users; most PowerPoint templates will work)
  • Google Slides (double check page size settings)
  • Adobe Illustrator (more advanced)

• Template is a single slide in the size & orientation required
• 36” x 48” is a common size
Download a template

• [print.ualberta.ca/](http://print.ualberta.ca/) (Free templates, CCID required)
Get feedback!

• Supervisor
• Colleagues/classmates within your discipline
• Colleagues/classmates outside your discipline (if you are communicating with an multi-disciplinary audience)
• URI
Before you print

• Preview at full size
• Proofread
• Save as a PDF
• Double check the page size (36”x48”)
• Proofread
• Send for printing
Poster presentation tips: Attracting an audience

• Stand to one side of your poster – don’t block the audience’s view

• Make eye contact

• Open, approachable body posture

• Put your devices away (unless they are part of your presentation!)
Poster presentation tips: presenting

• Project your voice!

• Questions are good icebreakers – find out what your audience knows about the topic, gauge their understanding

• Keep your presentation to ~3-4 minutes

• Use your poster as a visual aid:
  – do not read directly from your poster
  – do not expect the audience to read your poster – guide them through it
Poster presentation tips: answering questions

• Be sure to invite your audience to ask questions

• Listen carefully – be sure you are answering their question; ask for clarification if necessary

• If you’re unsure, don’t be afraid to say so – sometimes this can open up more interesting conversations (and new research ideas!)
Poster presentation tips – what if?

• Someone joins halfway through your presentation?

• Someone wants to have a longer conversation and it is preventing you from engaging others?

• People are crowding your physical space?
Poster presentation tips: comfort & convenience

- Prepare well in advance
- Bring water
- Wear comfortable clothing/shoes
- Bring tacks (if not provided by the organizer), elastic or poster tube to roll/store your poster afterward
- Make a handout of your poster to distribute (if desired)
- Post your contact information & presentation time on your poster board (if desired)
Where to get more help

- Handout
- URI
- U of A Library (Undergraduate Research LibGuide)
- Academic Success Centre