

Preparing a Scientific Poster

A poster is a form of *visual communication*, a combination of

- simplicity,
- conciseness,
- clear text and graphics, and
- an “attractive” layout.

It is basically a large sign displaying a very important message ...
your research!

And remember, YOU are the presentation ... just as much, if not more than, your poster.



General Guidelines

1. Don't overload the poster with illustrations or text.

- You must accept that *a poster cannot present as much detail as a thesis or an oral presentation.*

2. Keep the text short and explicit.

- It's not necessary to include your Abstract. (There's probably not enough space for it anyway.) Note that some conferences require you to put the Abstract on the poster or to use a different layout (e.g., horizontal versus vertical). You should always follow the guidelines for the particular conference you are attending.
- For the Conclusion section, use active voice (i.e., not passive voice) whenever possible. For example; "It can be demonstrated..." should be "The data demonstrates..."
- Use short sentences, simple words, lists, and bullet points.

3. Maximize legibility. Is it easy to read?

- Be careful of the color combinations of the text and background. Softer colors work best for the background. *Make sure that it is easy for people to read.*

4. Choose typstyles (fonts) carefully.

- Use a font, such as **Arial**, that is thick enough to read easily. (Times New Roman, which is a *serif* font, is usually less easy to read on a poster, so it's not a good choice.)
- **Boldface** the title and headings. **Shadowing** might improve their readability.
- Never use text smaller than 18 points. Your poster should be easy to read from 2 meters away.
- Don't use blocks of all capital (uppercase) letters (for example, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION). They're very difficult to read.

5. Clearly separate the text.

- Use a lot of white space (empty space between text blocks). This improves readability.
- Keep lists to two, three, or four items.
- Keep text blocks to just a few lines (i.e., no more than 5).

- Use vertical lists instead of long paragraphs, and, if possible...
- Use graphical presentations instead of lists or paragraphs.
- Remember that all elements on the poster (headings, text, figures, drawings, etc.) should be easy to see from 2 meters away. (An exception to this is the References text box, which can be smaller.)

6. Arrange the poster components for continuous, smooth flow.

- Arrange your sections so that the reader knows how to read the poster; that is, how to go to the next section. Some people even use arrows (→) to show the reader what section to look at next. You should never make the reader jump back and forth from one side of the poster to the other.
- *Always think of your poster from the reader's point of view!*

7. Follow the PPC Poster Format for our Symposium.

- Use A0 size (841 mm x 1189 mm; 33.11 inches x 46.81 inches) in a *vertical* rather than a horizontal layout when designing your poster.
- The title box at the top of the page should not be larger than 20 cm high.
- You should use a two-column layout for your research description starting at the top of the column on the left side and moving to the right-hand column. (*The reason we do this is to allow two people to comfortably read the poster at the same time.*)
- For the PPC Symposium, do not put your Abstract on the poster. It will be published in a separate abstract book.

