

Poster Basics

Effective posters:

- Provide a visual explanation of your work
- Focus on a single message
- Highlight key points
- Act as a conversation starter

Tips for Developing Your Poster

- Use a **title** that is attention grabbing—short, sharp, and compelling
- **Keep text minimal** and use phrases rather than full sentences when possible
- Use a **column format** to increase readability
- Use **visuals** to help explain relationships, steps in a process, or anything that is difficult to explain in a narrative
- Make sure graphics and images **support the theme** of your poster
- Use **charts** for tabulated data
- Create **balance** between your text, images, and charts, as well as white or “blank” space
- **Guide the reader** through your “story” using headings for main points
- Ensure the poster is **readable from 4 to 6 feet away**; make text size at least 24 points and 36 points for headings
- Ensure **poster size**, including borders, meets your sponsor’s specifications
- Use **fonts** that are easy to read—a serif font is recommended for text and a sans serif for headings
- **Contrast the background and text colors**—a light background with dark letters is a safe choice
- **Provide sources** for text and images that are not yours
- **Include your results**, conclusions, insights, future directions, or next steps

Your Poster Presentation

Presenting your poster gives you an opportunity to

- Share your exciting findings
- Make connections with people in your field
- Obtain feedback on and reactions to your work

Tips for Presenting Your Poster

- **Promote your poster in advance**—tell people who work in your field about your research or innovation project
- Prepare and practice a concise, focused, **2–3 minute “elevator pitch”** summing up your work’s key points and why they’re important
- Prepare and practice a **5–10 minute version** of your talk for people most knowledgeable about and interested in your field. Include
 - The “big question” you examined
 - Data you needed and used
 - Your conclusions and what they mean
- Anticipate **potential follow-up questions**
- Don’t be shy in showing your **passion** for your work
- Ask **questions that will encourage feedback**, positive and negative. For example,
 - *Do you think this is the best way to measure this?*
 - *How would you have done it?*
- Consider creating a **handout** summarizing your key points for people who express interest in your work
- When speaking, **don’t look at the poster** or your notes—look at the viewer(s)
- Pass out your **business cards**



Sources: Purrington C. Designing conference posters. <http://colinpurrington.com/tips/poster-design>.

Northern Arizona University. Making an academic poster presentation. <https://nau.edu/undergraduate-research/poster-presentation-tips/>.