

Creating a Scientific Poster

Choose the visual elements

Posters are visual. Choose graphs, data tables, mechanisms, structures, etc. that tell your story visually. Think about your poster in terms of 8 or 9 regions, where each region is a graphic or a bulleted list. A typical poster will have

1. Introduction, background, main question
2. Methods & Materials
3. Data & Results
- 4-7. More Data & Results
8. Conclusions, take home message
9. Future studies, acknowledgements, references

Obviously, you need to adapt this to your needs. It is okay to have 8 or 11 regions. The regions don't all need to be the same size.

Arrange the visual elements

Your poster will be viewed by crowds. It must be readable from 3 feet away without viewers needing to move back and forth in front of each other. For this reason, arrange your 9 (or so) regions in vertical columns, such as

	Title			Title	
	Authors			Authors	
1	4	7		1	6
			OR		
2	5	8		2	7
3	6	9		3	8

Create the poster in PowerPoint

Create your poster as a single PowerPoint slide. Set up the page to be 36" tall and 56" wide. To do this in PowerPoint 2007, choose Design, Page Setup, and then enter the height and width values. Each of your regions is inserted as a text box, table, or graphic.

Choose a **simple** font (e.g. Calibri or Arial) and keep the font size large. Titles work well in 100 point. The authors list below the title works well in 48 or 54 point. Headings also work well in these font sizes. Bulleted lists and other text work well in 36 point font. Be sure that labels on graphs and data in tables are sized to at least 24 point. Do not go smaller than these suggested sizes! Visitors will not read small text, or text sections that are too long.

Keep high contrast between your text and background. In general, light backgrounds with dark text work best. If you go with a dark background, you will need to put more effort into creating easily viewed figures.

Get a second opinion

Project your slide onto the screen in one of the classrooms. Get several people to look at the slide. Ask them to be very critical about layout, size of print, etc. Colors tend to wash out when projected, so don't worry about that. Focus on clarity, size of items, etc.

Getting it printed

Save your slide as a pdf file (Windows button, Save As, pdf). Your research advisor will arrange to have the poster printed at DTS. Note: Choice of paper is important for getting good colors. The Chemistry Department will keep your poster after you are done with it so that it can be displayed in the future.