

# Poster presentations

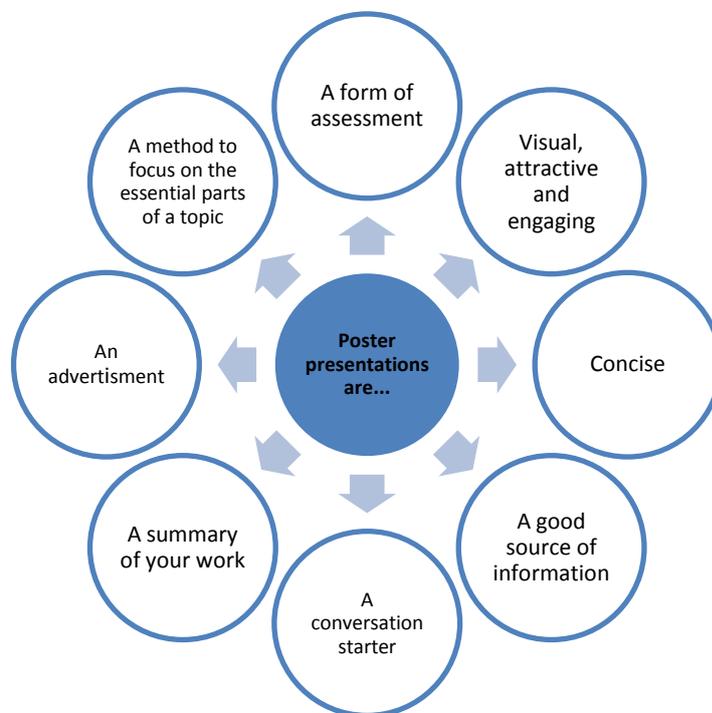
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## Aims and Objectives

This guide shows you how to produce a poster that is clear and creative, helping you make the most of your poster design

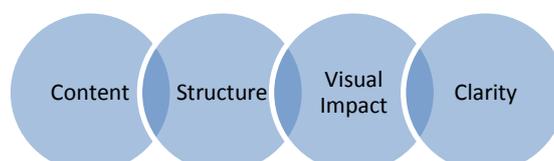
## Introduction

Why do we make posters?



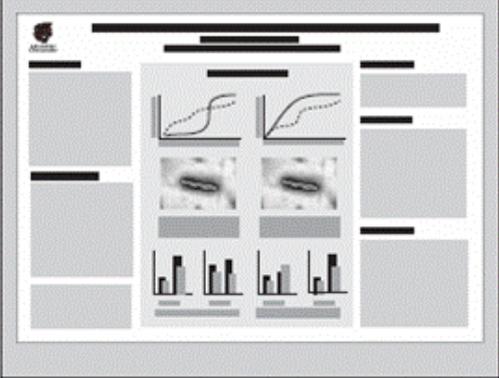
It is very likely that while at university you will be asked to design a poster. Posters are a good way to assess students and are widely used through the academic community at conferences and seminars, particularly in sciences – as they are an effective way of presenting complex ideas, report findings and other material concisely and visually, and they help to bring people with similar interests together and start discussion.

You will be asked to create a poster individually or in groups, and you will be assessed in four main areas:



## Methods of making a poster

There are two main approaches to making a poster.

Approach One	Approach Two
	
<p>Figure 1: One-piece method</p>	<p>Figure 2: Panel method</p>
<p>Designed in one large piece, often via a slide in Microsoft PowerPoint and then enlarged when printed</p>	<p>Made up of separate panels that may consist of different elements, pictures, tables and titles</p>
<p>The one-piece method can be very eye-catching and more engaging, but can require more planning and time</p>	<p>The panel method is more flexible and can be more easily adapted to changing layouts</p>

Which layout you choose depends on what is the most appropriate for your needs, abilities and resources. . .

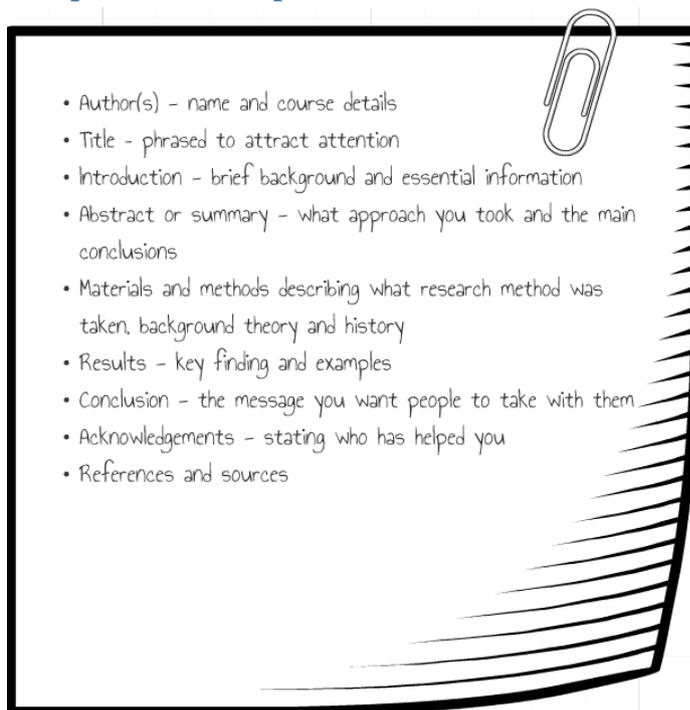
### Software

For most poster assessments using Microsoft Word or PowerPoint is a good option. However, for better results you can use software like Photoshop or InDesign. We also suggest using free software such as [GIMP](#) or [Paint.net](#). For multimedia presentations you might prefer to use webtools such as [Glogster](#) or [Prezi](#).

#### **Remember**

1. *A good poster comes from good research and effective organisation.*
2. *Posters are a visual presentation, so do not overload them with text*

## Components of a poster



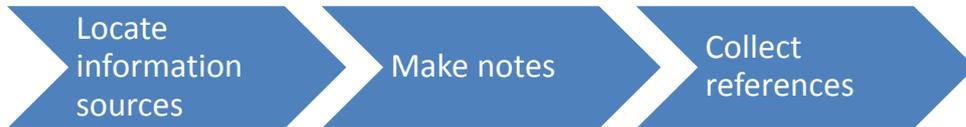
## Stages in producing a poster

### 1. Clarify the task

Ask yourself these questions...	Your answer
<b>What</b> is the <b>purpose</b> of the poster - present an argument, convince an audience or promote a product?	
<b>Who</b> is the target audience and what do they need to know?	
<b>What</b> will your audience be looking for – detailed information or a brief summary?	
<b>Where</b> will your poster be displayed – in a busy conference hall or in your department?	
What <b>guidelines</b> have you been given? These might specify the nature and structure of the material (as well as the practical features such as size and amount of text used)	

The answers to these questions influence what will be included in the poster. If you feel you're including too much information think about what could be taken out; remember that 'less' is often 'more' in visual displays.

## 2. Research the information



## 3. Making a Plan

It's easier to plan your content and layout early, so create an outline – make a rough drawing on a piece of paper of how you want your poster to look – use the grid system to get a feel for how you want to present the information.

### *Structure*

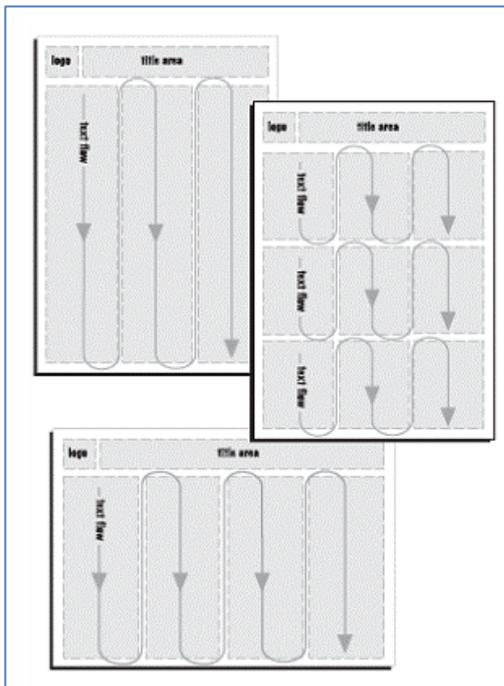


Figure 3: Grid systems

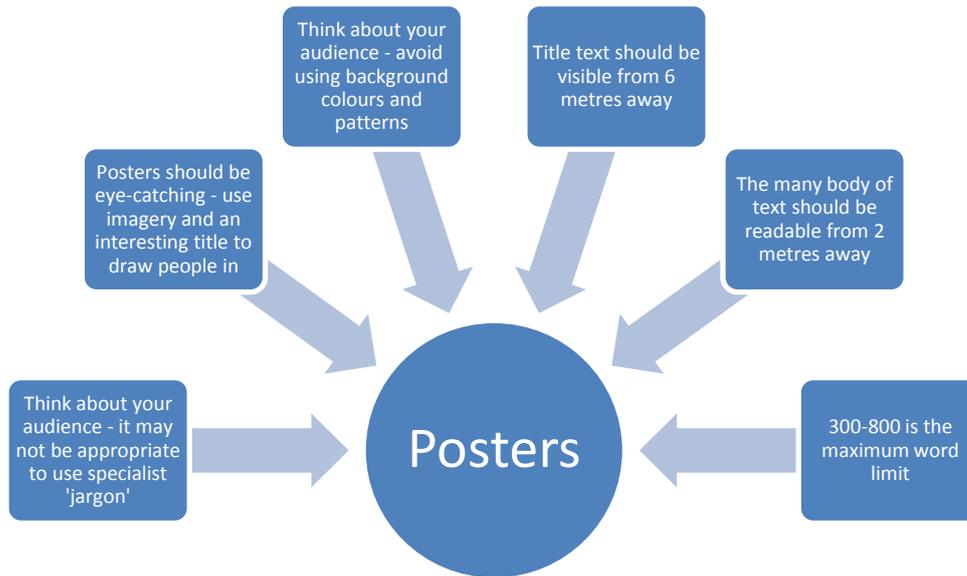
The picture opposite shows a grid system which helps with the flow of information (see Figure 3).

Grids are logical with rows travelling across the page or columns travelling down the page. This helps the viewer's eye naturally follow the flow of information.

### *Developing your design*

Once you've established a basic layout, create a mock-up of your poster. **Print** out a rough version of the text, then with the aid of scissors and glue, **cut out** each bit and **experiment** with different sequences and spacing to help decide if you have enough information that works effectively **with your design**.

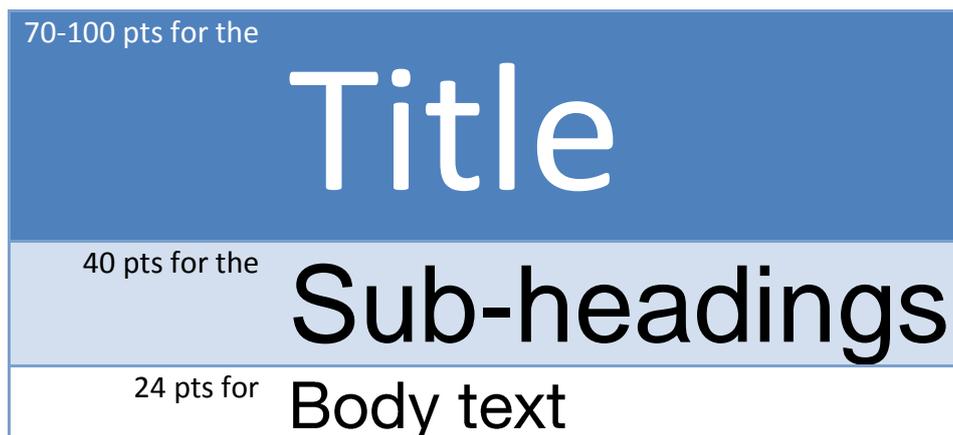
#### 4. Preparing your final poster



#### *Using text*

Once you have written your text you need to choose how to present it. There are five main things to consider.

1. **Font** – use sans serif fonts like Arial, Helvetica, Verdana or Calibri. Avoid mixing too many fonts as it looks messy.
2. **Type size** – Use large sizes.



3. **Line spacing or 'leading'** – use 1.5 or double spacing between lines
4. **Alignment** – Avoid mixing alignments. If you are not sure left-aligned is easiest to read.
5. **Case** – text in UPPER CASE can be very difficult to read, so use it sparingly or not at all.

## Colour palette

Colour can add an extra dimension to your poster design, making it more attractive and giving you another method of highlighting information. Choose colours that work well together. Use a small range of colours so your poster doesn't look chaotic or silly.

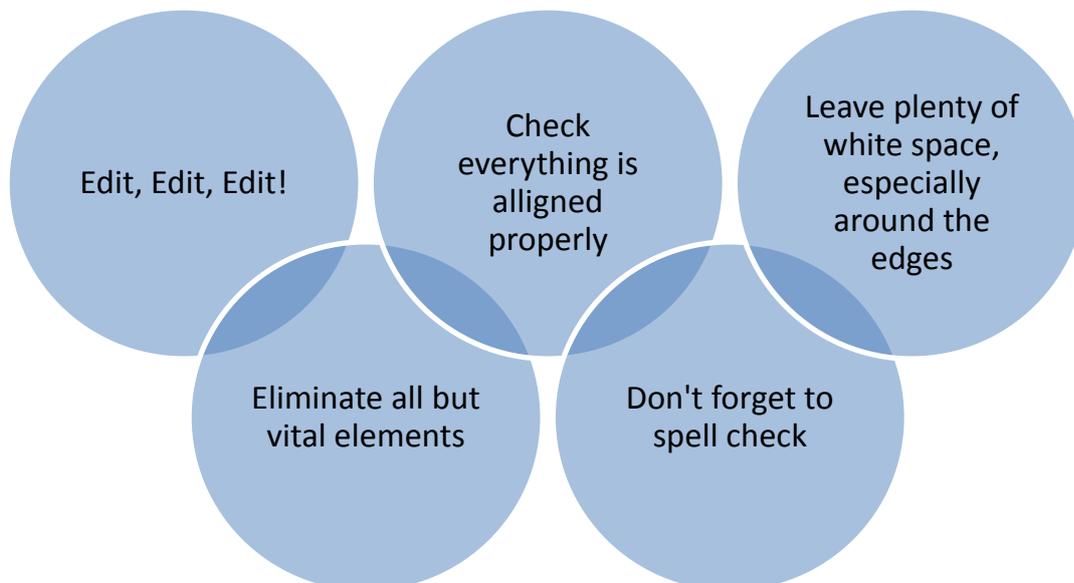
## Diagrams

Displaying information on a poster offers an opportunity to show data in interesting and eye-catching ways. Information can be enhanced through the use of illustrations, tables, charts and images. One carefully chosen image can make all the difference and attract more attention.

Here are some tips:

- Keep it simple
- Present numerical data in graphs, rather than tables
- Make sure the visual can stand alone (i.e. properly labelled graphs, maps with north arrows and scales, symbols are explained)
- Use colour to enhance but not to decorate the poster.
- Make sure text and visuals are integrated. Figures should be numbered consecutively according to order mentioned in text
- Each visual should have a title (e.g. Figure 1: One-piece method)

## Finishing touches



## 5. Showing your poster

Poster presentations can take different forms. The most common standing next to your poster and talking to people as they browse, answering any question about your work. Sometimes, the poster will need to 'standalone' as part of a display. In both circumstances you can help the audience by preparing handouts or by printing off smaller version of the poster for them to take away.

### *Preparing your answers*

Be prepared to defend your poster by anticipating commonly asked questions. These will include:

Why did you select the topic?
Who did which part of the research?
Who thought of the design?
Who made up the components?
Can you give me further information on...?
How does this finding relate to...?
What does this graph or image mean?
Where next for this topic or research area?
How might you improve your poster?

## Summary

Posters are a highly visual medium that can be a very effective way of communicating information to a wide audience. The challenge is to produce a poster design that is both pleasing to the eye and logical to the mind. Time taken to produce a coherent and creative display can produce stunning results.

## Practical tips



## References

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