

Creating effective poster presentations



Lindsay Akrong, MSc
Research Services Specialist
Department of Pediatrics, McMaster University

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Objective

To share best practices of research poster creation and presentation that you can apply to your own work.

Overview

- Poster vs. oral presentations
- Planning: considerations & context
- Best practices for poster creation
- Tips for effective presentation

Why a poster?

- Easier to get accepted! But that's not the only benefit...
- Can be a great way to get your feet wet
- Less restrictive time limit
- More interactive
 - Networking
 - More in depth discussion
 - Feedback
- Excellent mode of delivery for visual presentations

Planning: Things to consider



The setting

- A myriad of posters and many people on the move
- You want people to stop at your poster and remember something about your research

The goal

Quickly and effectively communicate
your research to someone walking
by your poster

Know your audience

Can be quite diverse depending on the conference/meeting you are attending

- ◎ People inside your circle
- People at arm's length from your circle
- People outside of your circle

Know your message

- What are key points are you trying to communicate about your research?
- Focus on a few main messages and make sure they are clear
- Your main messages should be easily identifiable on your poster

Creating your poster



Before you start

- Read the instructions carefully!!!
- Most conferences and academic events offer some guidelines for poster size, format, or content
- Think carefully about your timelines (data crunching, figure preparation, poster assembly, printing)

Remember...

To catch people's attention, the contents of your poster should:

- ✓ be visible from 2 meters away
- ✓ highlight your main points clearly

Less is more

- You don't want a crowded poster!
- Organized and uncluttered
 - White space
- Sections should have a logical flow

Layout

Header

- Title
- Authors
- Affiliation (department/University)
- Logos (faculty, University, project)



Title



Author, A., Author, B., Author, C.
Department of Pediatrics, McMaster University

Layout

Discreet sections, organized in columns, typically in this order

- ➔ Introduction
- ➔ Objectives
- ➔ Materials & Methods
- ➔ Results
- ➔ Summary/Conclusion(s)
- ➔ References
- ➔ Acknowledgements

Title

Author, A., Author, B., Author, C., etc.
Department of Pediatrics, McMaster University

Introduction

Objectives

Methods

Results

Conclusions

References

Acknowledgements

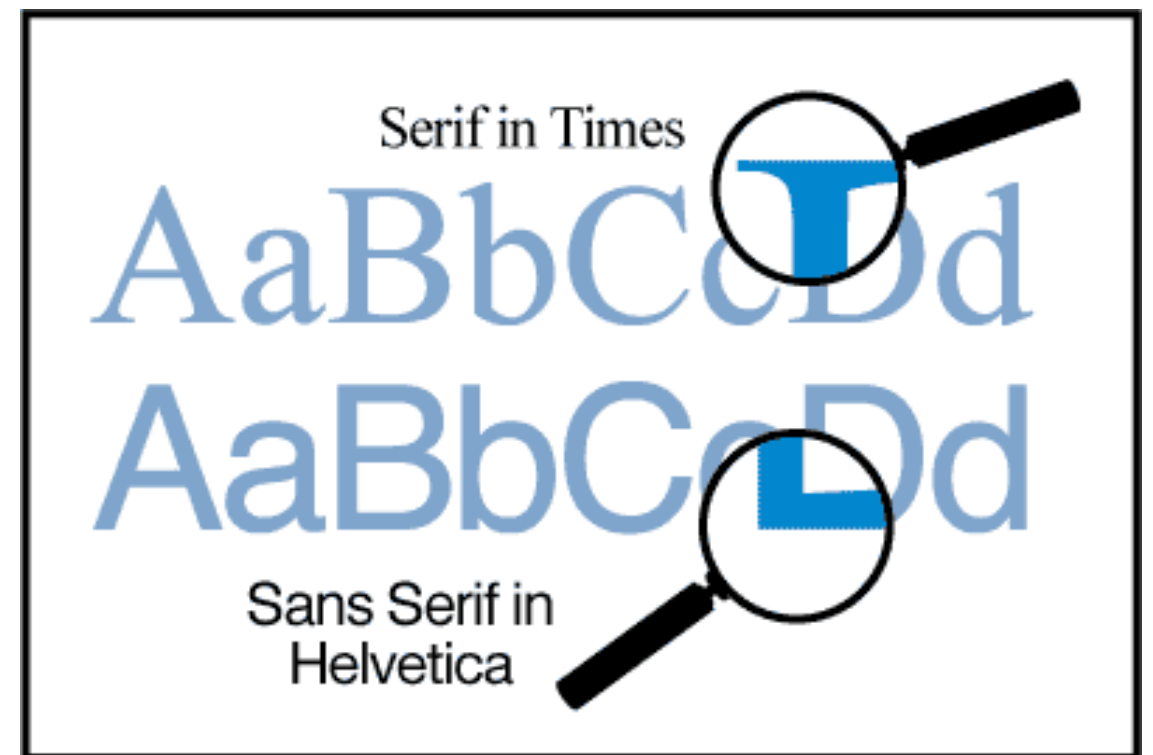
Title and section headings

- Choose a descriptive title; keep it brief - no more than 2 lines
- Use sentence case e.g.,
Your title looks like this instead of
Your Title Looks Like This or
YOUR TITLE LOOKS LIKE THIS
- The title should be the largest font on the poster (~70 pt)
- Include author names and affiliations below the title in font that is smaller (~50-60 pt) than the title, but larger than the main text (no smaller than 28 pt)

Text

- Stick to one or two fonts

- Choose easy to read fonts (sans serif)



- Left justify text in each column
- Posters don't require that all text be in paragraph form; make use of bullets

Graphics

- Self-explanatory graphics should dominate the poster – it is primarily a *visual* presentation supported by text
- Use tables, graphs, or figures with explanatory captions instead of lengthy paragraphs to present experimental design and results
- Use 2-D graphics, not 3-D

Use of colour

- Be careful - the overuse of colour is distracting
- Stick to one or two colours that are complimentary and not too similar
- A white background reduces the impact of figures that also have white backgrounds



Assembling your poster

- If you have a good outline, most of the work is done!
- Powerpoint or Keynote are most popular
- Common size is 36" high x 48" wide
- Templates available

Edit, edit, edit

- In most cases, posters have too much text
- Keep sections brief, you don't need excessive detail
- you can discuss this with folks who are interested
- Use active voice e.g., “The results demonstrate...”
vs. “It can be demonstrated that...”
- Look critically at the layout - 20% text, 40%
graphics, 40% white space
- Get feedback on your poster from lab mates,
colleagues, and mentors prior to printing

Ask yourself...

1. What do I want the viewer to remember?
2. Is my message clear?
3. Do my important points stand out?
4. Is there a balance between text and figures?
5. Is the pathway through the poster clear?
6. Is the poster understandable without verbal explanation?

Printing

On Campus	Off Campus
<p>Department of Biology Life Sciences Building, Electron Microscopy Facility B126 2 options: glossy (\$80) or matte (\$40) Payment via research account Request form required</p>	<p>The UPS Store 103 King St. West \$6/sq foot Same day service http://www.theupsstorelocal.ca/20-Hamilton/index.html 905-528-6474</p>
<p>Media Production Services \$8.75/sq foot Guaranteed turnaround time of 48 hours http://media.mcmaster.ca/largeformat.html 905-525-9140 ext. 24447/24446 mps@mcmaster.ca</p>	<p>Allegra Printing York Blvd, Hughson St. S \$6/sq foot 3-4 days, faster if needed www.allegrahamilton.com</p>

Presenting your poster



Practice makes perfect

- Practice your presentation with others before the big day - this will also give you an idea of the types of questions you can expect
- Refrain from referring to notes when explaining your poster
- Be confident in your work - no one knows it better than you!

The Big Day

- Consider your appearance – look professional!
- Show up early to determine your location and set up
- Bring extra velcro/tacks to secure your poster
- You may choose to bring hard copies (8.5" x 11") of your poster to handout
- Don't wander too far from your poster during the session

Your Delivery

- Be concrete in your explanations. Avoid vagueness such as “this figure shows our main result...”
- If someone asks a question, make sure you understand it
- It’s ok to say “I don’t know”
- Have fun!

Questions?

