Poster Creation & Design

Thinking Matters

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Spring 2020
Setting Poster Dimensions

In Powerpoint 2016:
1) Go to “Design” tab:

2) In the upper right, select “slide size” and then “custom slide size”:

3) Keeping the layout in landscape, set width to 48 inches and height to 36 inches:
Basic components checklist

- Reads left to right, generally.
- Your name and co-authors names with department affiliation
- List faculty mentors with dept affiliation
- Figures (photos, graphs, maps, drawings) with captions
  - USM Logo (and/or other funders or institutions) - see Thinking Matters resources
- Abstract (optional)
- Introduction/Background
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion/Conclusion/Next steps
- References
- Acknowledgements
- Tables (use sparingly)
Banner: A Descriptive Title

Abstract
(can be updated from what you submitted)

Introduction or Background
Tell the reader what they need to know to put your study in context.

Hypothesis/Question/Objective
Highlight using bullets, bolded font, etc.

Methods
• This is a good section to use bullets rather than paragraphs.

Results
Make sure you refer to figures in your text (Figure 1). Give only general patterns, highlighting what your figures show.

Discussion/Conclusions/Next Steps
• How does your work compare with published literature?
• What is the significance of your findings?
• Make sure you have answered the Hypothesis/Questions/Objective you outlined earlier.

Fig. 1. Descriptive Caption
Fig. 2. Descriptive Caption
Fig. 3. Descriptive Caption
Fig. 4. Descriptive Caption
Fig. 5. Descriptive Caption

References
These can be in smaller font, for those who are interested.

Acknowledgements
Remember to thank your classmates, mentors other professors who contributed or supported your work. Mention any grants or fellowship that supported your work. This can also be in a smaller font.
Layout tips & tricks

✓ Don’t overcrowd! Leave enough white space

✓ Feature figures! (photos, graphs, maps, drawings)

✓ Put most important sections in the center or up high where they will draw the viewer’s eye

✓ Either block out text sections, or use text boxes to line up your text, then remove the lines.

✓ Keep materials at least 0.5 inches from edge of poster
 ✓ Don’t use flashlight-style or photos as background

 ✓ Risk of pixilation when printed

 ✓ Photo backgrounds distract the reader and make text difficult to read
✓ Poster should be legible from 8 feet away

✓ Use “sans serif” fonts for readability
✓ Arial, Calibri, trebuchet, tahoma

✓ Sizes- start with: Text 30 point
✓ Title Banner 90 point
Should be featured for visual appeal!

Write axes labels, numbers, etc in large fonts (20+)

Caption should contain enough information to interpret the figure without referring to the text.

Each figure (or table) should be numbered and referred to in the text

Text (in the results section) might read: “Webworms were most abundant in cherry trees (Figure 3).”

And the caption would read: “Figure 3. Webworm abundance. Bars are the mean number of webworms found in each tree type.”
If your poster is very large you may want to compress the photos to print.

To avoid ghosting images, use image formats such as:

- *.tif
- *.jpg
- *.png

Especially true if graphs or linework from other software are exported as images vs. some vector format like .ps, .eps, or .svg.

ALWAYS check your final product (a pdf of your poster) to make sure your figures look good at 100%.
Proofing & Printing

✓ Save As a pdf file.
  ✓ Save like normal but select PDF in the file type dropdown in the save box.
  ✓ You can also use a free program like PDF Creator (www.pdfforge.org/pdfcreator)

✓ Open the pdf file and look at it at 100% to make sure it looks like you want. If it does not, go back, change, and print to pdf again.

✓ Check formatting of photos & figures

✓ Check dimensions of pdf (under File > Document Properties) 48" x 36" in landscape mode. Sometimes, depending on computer type & software versions, pdf creation reduces file dimensions to 11" x 8.5"
Resources

https://usm-maine.libguides.com/presentations

https://usm-maine.libguides.com/thinking_matters

Example posters from previous years:
http://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/thinking_matters/