

Title of Module: Creating and Presenting a Poster

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Overview of Module

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Video 1: Why use posters?

Posters as visual tools

Posters are powerful visual tools to demonstrate your topic or your research. Posters can be used to support a text used in class, to make an argument about a topic, to demonstrate understanding of a concept, to summarize or present ideas, or to provide a snapshot of the results, key points, and conclusions reached after conducting research.

If your instructor assigns you a poster project, remember to think about visual ways in which you can display your key points or your arguments.

Things to keep in mind before creating your poster

Before you set out to design your poster, ask yourself a few questions :

Audience – Who is going to view your poster? Your classmates, your instructor, or attendees at a conference? Is your audience academic or non-academic? Choose the words and images on the poster with a specific audience in mind.

Purpose –Is the poster making an argument or does it seek to inform? Your poster design will depend on the purpose of your poster. For example, the poster might be one part of a larger assignment. Sometimes an instructor can ask you to do a poster

presentation on a topic as one of the ways in which to prepare for writing a longer essay.

Tools – What kinds of tools or software do you have available to create the poster?

Video 2: Writing for your Poster

While both mediums make and support arguments, writing for a poster is different from writing an essay or a research paper. You should never directly copy and paste text from essays or research papers onto a poster. The poster is a visual medium, while a paper is a textual medium, so based on your research or your academic paper, you need to compose new ways of communicating your findings or your thoughts through a poster.

Written Elements on the Poster

These are some of the main written elements you would need on your poster:

Thesis/Main Point: A title and other prominent features should quickly and clearly convey your subject or main argument.

Supporting Points: Headings, subheadings, and other features should indicate specific aspects of your topic, argument, or findings.

Evidence: You could use statements from readings, or other writings to support and clarify your argument. Cite all writing and images that you take from outside sources.

Analysis: Brief text accompanying images should explain how the images illustrate your supporting points.

Identifying Information: The poster should mention your name and/or the names of your team members and their affiliations. If relevant, for example for a poster presentation at a conference or at a public forum outside the classroom, the poster should also identify the course for which the poster is being made and the name of the institution that hosted the course.

Other aspects:

Here are some other aspects to keep in mind while writing for your poster:

Minimal Text

A poster is a visual medium, so your visuals will do most of the talking. However, the poster also needs text to explain your visuals and to quickly convey your argument. Choose your words carefully because your poster should not include much text. Avoid blocks of text on the poster. Use lists and bullet points as much as possible.

Bullet-point-like sentences

Rather than writing long, complex sentence, think in terms of bullet points, use preferably phrases, not sentences. Only put the essential text that will convey your ideas on your poster. Words like “Moreover, furthermore” and phrases like “In other words...” , for example, should not be on a poster.

Citations: You must cite any relevant sources of textual or visual information on the poster.

Conventions: Finally, don’t forget those important small details! Proofread, proofread, proofread to make sure you follow the conventions for grammar, mechanics, and style on your poster.

Video 3: Designing your Poster

No matter what the purpose of your poster is or who the intended audience is for your poster, remember that your poster needs to convey its message visually. The kinds of visuals and the layout you choose will be based on the type or genre of the poster. Some important aspects to consider while designing the poster are:

Navigation - Your poster should establish a clear pattern for reading. Lines, colors, and other design elements should help your readers to see the pattern quickly. Remember that your audience typically views your poster from three to five feet away. Make sure that the text and visuals on your poster are visible from that distance.

Images: Your images are the most important component of the poster, so use good, high-quality images as far as possible. Do not use copyrighted images. Use images that you have taken yourself or images that you have permission to use. The larger the image, the more attention it will receive, so keep that in mind while deciding the layout and size of your images.

Arrangement - The layout of your poster is important. Pay attention to the arrangement of the elements on your poster and aim for consistency. Keep images close to the text that analyzes them. Use text boxes, lines, and other design features to show relationships between images and text.

Size matters in a poster- Provide larger images and more prominent design elements for sections that you want your audience to focus on. Give more prominence to images and minimize the text on your poster. People will tend to look at images and text that is in larger font or bold font more than text in smaller or normal font, so remember to put the aspects you want to highlight in bold or larger font.

White Space - It is also important not to fill up the space on the poster with too much information. Leave enough blank or “white space” so that your poster does not look cluttered. Aim for a good balance of text and visual elements.

Colors and Fonts – Unless you are making certain specific design choices, choose colors that show a high contrast between the background of your poster and the text on the poster. Choose a light-colored font, for example, only if your poster has a dark background.

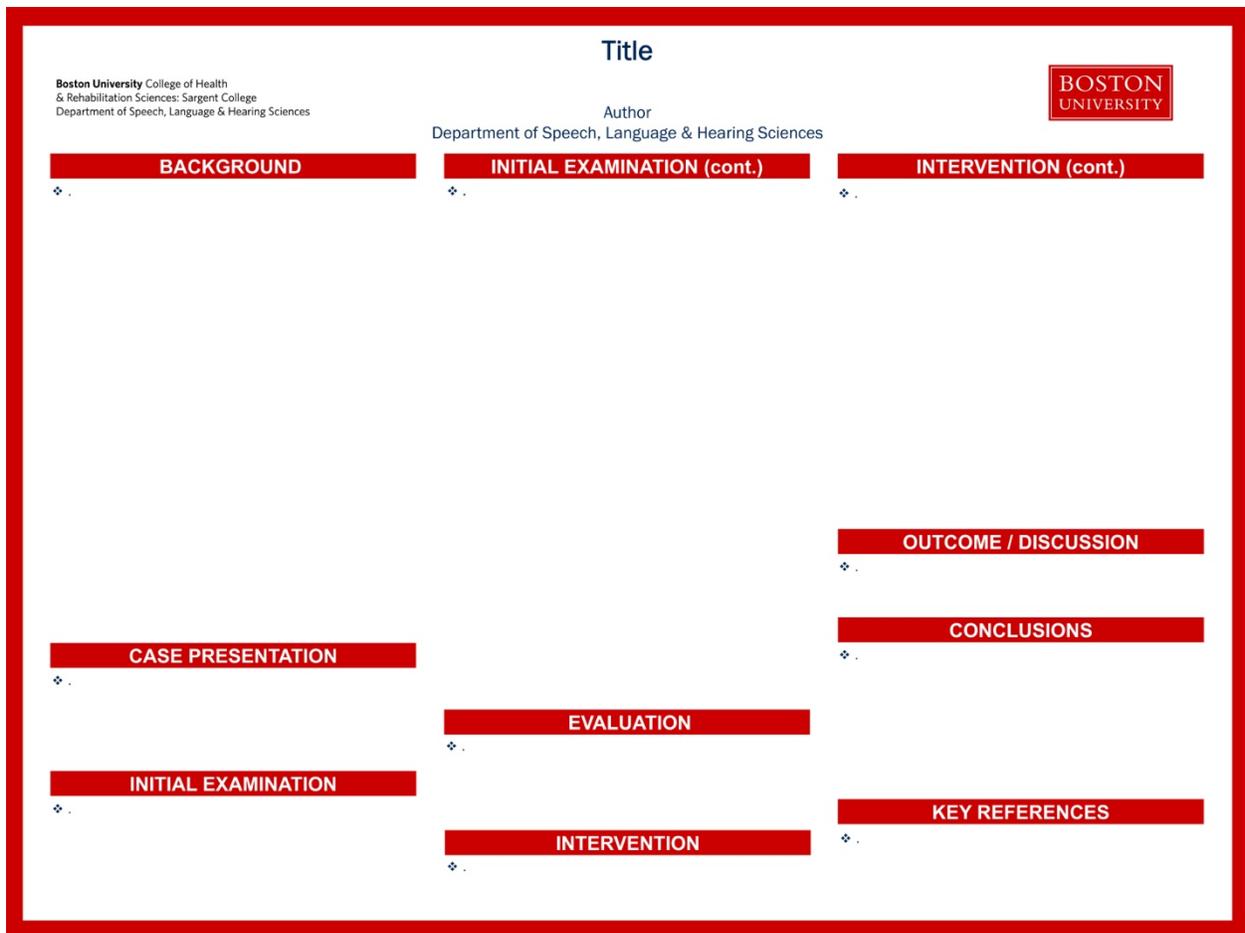
Black script on a white background has the highest contrast. Green script on a blue background, on the other hand might not be legible to your audience. In general, colors on the opposite sides of the color wheel have the highest contrast.

Choose the font style on your poster carefully. Sans Serif fonts like *Arial* and *Verdana* are more legible from a distance than Serif fonts like *Times New Roman*.

Type Sizes: Make the type on your poster as large as possible. As a general rule, the smallest text on your poster should be clearly visible from 3 feet away. At the minimum, type should be 72 points for the title, 36 points for the headings, 24 points for body copy.

Consistency - Aim for consistency. Use colors, fonts, type sizes, and other design features in ways that create consistent patterns. For example, make sure all major headings appear in the same color, font, and type size.

Poster Templates – If you are designing an academic poster, very often, your department or school might have a poster template you can use. These templates already come with the department’s or university’s logos and color schemes, so the task of designing your poster is much easier. Here, for example, is a poster template from Boston University’s Sargent College’s Department of Speech, Learning, and Hearing Sciences:



Source: Boston University College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences: Sargent College

There are several types of poster creation software that will enable you to create a professional-looking poster. *Power Point*, *InDesign*, and *Adobe Spark* are some of the options. Some software like *Adobe Spark* come with built-in templates that you can use to create an effective poster. There are also several free templates available online that you can download and use to create your poster.

Video 4: Presenting your poster

A poster session is a good opportunity for you to display your topic or your research. An effective poster can convey your material in a concise manner and can lead to interesting and useful discussions. If you are presenting a poster at a conference, you will usually be in a room with other poster presenters and a rotating audience. Your audience will come and ask you questions if your poster looks interesting to them.

A poster session is a good way for you to directly get feedback on your topic from your audience, so interact with your audience as much as possible. It is important to practice what you will be saying to your audience ahead of time. Be ready to answer questions and also be ready with a response if you cannot, for some reason, respond to a question from an audience member at that point in time. Have a short summary of the material on your poster ready before the session. Your audience will expect you to quickly tell them what your subject, your argument, or your findings are while they are engaging with you. People usually spend between 1-3 minutes at each poster before they move on to another one, unless they are very interested in your topic and want to learn more. You can also prepare a very brief summary or outline of your research as a handout for anyone who stops by.

Try and stand by your poster for the entirety of the poster session. If you leave, your audience may not be able to understand the poster without you there to provide context. Stand on one side of your poster, so that the poster is visible to people who are walking by. Look welcoming and invite your audience to learn more about your poster and your subject. While you are explaining your topic, do not read directly from your poster. Give your audience a sense of the big picture and focus on your main arguments and findings. Use the visuals and the headings on your poster to explain and support your main points and to persuade your audience that your ideas or results are interesting and worth learning about.

Video 5: Using Adobe Spark to Create a Poster

This is a casual walk-through of Adobe Spark, and how to use the tool. Video has Closed Captioning.

**** See Below for List of References**

List of References

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