

Creating a Presentation Poster

Before going to the computer:

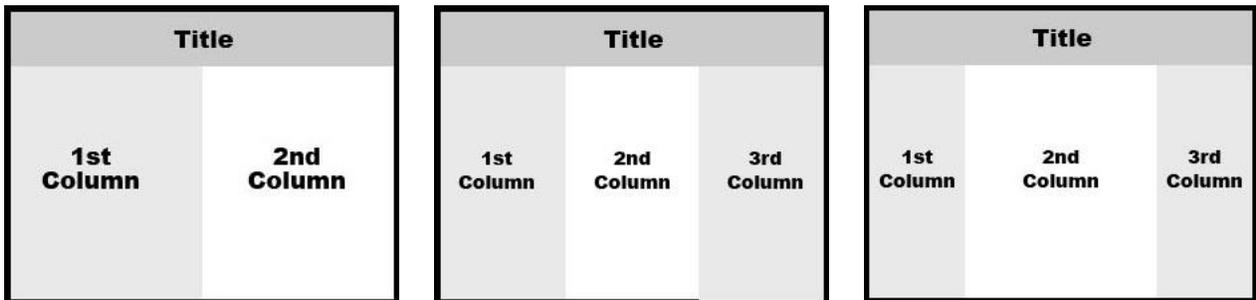
- Find the major points your paper/presentation and limit yourself to the information (text, images, graphics, charts, etc) that supports those points. Too much information will make it hard to read.
- Think about the poster’s layout – sketch it out on paper if you need to. What kind of title do you want on the top of your poster? Do you want 2 or 3 columns? If 3 columns, do you want all to be the same size or the center one larger? Try to balance the information between your columns. (see Design Tips below)

Starting the poster in Microsoft PowerPoint 2013:

- Open the program, then click the Design tab, select Slide Size (far right side of the ribbon), and, from the dropdown menu, select Custom Slide Size. Change the “Slides sized for:” to Custom, and then the Width and the Height to the size you want your poster to be printed at. Slide Orientation should be Landscape, Handouts Orientation doesn’t matter.
 - Mac Users (PowerPoint 2011) can change the slide size by going to the Themes tab, select Page Setup (first one on left), from the dropdown menu select Page Setup..., then click on the “Slides sized for:” dropdown menu and select Custom from the list. Change the Height and Width to the size you want your poster to be and click the OK button on the bottom.
- You can pick a pre-made design and/or color scheme from PowerPoint. Just make sure the theme and/or color scheme is appropriate for your presentation and budget.
- If you want to create your own design, insert images, charts, graphics, diagrams and text boxes as you need them.

Design Tips:

Basic Layout -



There are benefits to each of the layouts. If you can divide your points evenly, use either the 2-column or equal 3-column layout. If you have a larger graphic, image, diagram, or chart, use the 3-column layout with a wider center panel. You will have to make that information fit “logically” in the center. Avoid having just a single column layout, it is a lot of space to fill and hard for your viewers to read. Make sure the text blocks line up in each of the columns and have an equal width.

Color - Because you want your poster to have a professional look, limit the number of colors as well as the ones you select. Unless your topic calls for “wild” colors you should keep them subtle. Limit the number of colors to 2 or 3. If you don’t use one of the pre-made color schemes, you could use some of the colors in the graphics, photos, graphs, or charts in your paper. Also make sure the colors selected fit your purpose, for example somber topics shouldn’t have neon or too bright of colors.

Titles - When designing the title section, use an easy to read font. Always have a contrast between your text color and your background color, if you have a dark text color use a light background or for light text color use a dark background. Gradients can be difficult if one of the colors is too dark or too light. The one in the sample goes from black to a dark gray so white text is usable. You could use a light yellow (or blue, pink, green, etc.) to white gradient with black text. Ask yourself if a viewer is standing a couple feet away from your poster, will he or she be able to read it clearly?



Text - Unless your topic calls for a specialty font, use another easy to read font. Color can be used, but too much can distract from what you are trying to say. Again ask yourself if a viewer is standing a couple feet away from your poster, will he or she be able to read it clearly?

Graphics, Charts, Logos – Make sure any graphics, logos, charts, etc used in your poster are your own work, copyright free, or you have permission to use them. Another thing to think about is resolution of those graphics, logos, etc. If it is too low, the image will be pixelated and won't look clear when it's enlarged to fit on the poster. You should also have them appropriately sized for your poster. Small graphs may be difficult to read.

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Layouts: 2 Columns, 3 Columns, or More?

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Titles and Fonts

When designing the title section, use an easy to read font. Always have a contrast between your text color and your background color. If you have a dark text color use a light background or for light text color use a dark background. Gradients can be difficult if one of the colors is too dark or too light. The one in the sample goes from black to a dark gray so white text is usable. You could use a light yellow (or blue, pink, green, etc.) to white gradient with black text. Ask yourself if a viewer is standing a couple feet away from your poster, will he or she be able to read it clearly?

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Using Every Color on the Palette?

Because you want your poster to have a professional look, limit the number of colors as well as the ones you select. Unless your topic calls for "wild" colors you should keep them subtle. Limit the number of colors to 3 or 4. If you don't use one of the pre-made color schemes, you could use some of the colors in the graphics, photos, graphs, or charts in your paper.

Graphics, Charts, and Logos...Oh My!

Make sure any graphics, logos, charts, etc used in your poster are your own work, copyright free, or you have permission to use them. Another thing to think about is resolution of those graphics, logos, etc. If it is too low, the image will be pixelated and won't look clear when it's enlarged to fit on the poster.

2 Column Layout with the graphics balanced between the columns. Color bar across the bottom to mirror the one across the top.

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3 Column Even Layout with all the graphics in the center column.