

GUIDELINES FOR POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Here are some guidelines for preparing a SIP poster for presentation. These guidelines are targeted toward research posters, but if you are preparing a poster that presents other material (e.g. a report on a SIP internship), you will find that you can adapt much of the information to your particular needs. Note that the style of writing for a poster should be the same as for your SIP report. The language of the poster should be formal in its style and tone, without the use of contractions (e.g., "can't," "3-D") and avoiding conversational phrases (e.g., "deal with").

These are the main components of a research poster:

Title:

The title should be in large, bold font and should be easily read from 10 or more feet away. It should announce the topic or questions of your research, so that the reader has immediate context for the material you are presenting before reading the smaller print. The title should contain sufficient information and detail so that the reader has a sense of the specific question or topic that is addressed in the poster. For example, a title such as "Memory of Infants" is too general and ambiguous, whereas "Elementary School Children's Ability to Remember Infants' Faces" is much clearer.

Author and Affiliation:

For example:

Kyle Anderson
Kalamazoo College

Abstract:

Follow rules from APA. Use larger font than other sections, but not as large as title section. Keep to one-third page or less. (Note that even though there is no abstract on the model poster on page 6, the department requires one.)

Introduction:

Introduce the problem or research question, and put it in context of previous research. Cite only the studies that are most relevant to your study. Include citations in APA style, as you would in the literature review to a paper. Keep under two pages.

Methods:

The subheadings in this section should be Participants, Apparatus or Materials (if any), and Procedure. The main body of this section should be the Procedure, and should describe all the steps of the procedure. Be sure to organize the steps chronologically, and to provide enough information for the reader to understand exactly what you did, and to see how the procedure addresses your research question. Keep to less than one page.

Results:

Only include the results that directly relate to your hypotheses and discussion. Again, the little details can be omitted. Be as visual as possible. Keep to less than one page not including any figures or tables.

Discussion:

In this section, evaluate and interpret the theoretical and practical implications of your results. Keep this short (under two pages) and only discuss what is directly relevant to your hypothesis.

Tables, Figures and Illustrations:

Include one or more tables, graphs, charts, diagrams, or photographs of apparatus or other relevant materials, if possible. Do not include any tables, graphs or charts that are not directly relevant to the material you are presenting. The figures should be functional, as opposed to purely decorative. They should be shown on separate pages from the text.

References:

List all references cited in the text of your poster, do not exceed 10 or so. Follow APA format for listing references.

Tips for Poster Presentation:

1. Do not crowd your poster with unnecessary detail. Be selective in your choice of what to include and what to omit. Remember, however, that your poster should tell "the entire story" of the research question, background, procedure, results and implications of your study. Do not assume that the reader knows as much about your study as you do, and be sure to include sufficient explanation so that a competent college student who has taken a few psychology classes can understand the content.
2. Emphasize the visual. Whenever possible, use graphs, pictures and drawings instead of text. Show, rather than describe!
3. Font size: For the body of your text, use a font style and size that can be clearly read from a distance of 4 feet (usually about 16 to 18 point or above). For your title and name, use larger font, Be consistent with the choice of font, and use one font style only.
4. Foam Core Poster board: Use an illustration board of approximately 30 x 45 inches, non-fluorescent color. These are available at the college bookstore.
5. You may want to off-set pages (use white paper for all pages of your poster) by adding colored paper larger than the pages in order to frame them. Construction paper works well. It is best to select no more than three colors, or shades of the same color. Make sure that the finished product looks clean and professional--not cute or gaudy.
6. You should plan on including 5 to 7 pages of text and figures (if any). You can break up some pages into half sheets or smaller. Arrange pages on the board in such an order that readers can follow the sequence from beginning to end. Check that the arrangement of pages is balanced and attractive--not too cluttered, nor too sparse. Again, make sure the finished product looks polished and professional.