

Designing Posters: Telling the story

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Why use a poster?

- To provide visual assistance in disseminating ideas
- One-on-one engagement with others
- Advertise and summarize your work
- To reach across a broad collection of people



Characteristics of effective posters

- Readable
- Highly visible
- Organized
- Delivers a clear, concise, and self-explanatory message; less is *more*



Starting from square one

- Work closely with your faculty advisor, community partner, or any members
- Understanding your intended message
- Knowing your audience
- Only include pertinent information; avoid “extra” content



What's your point?

- In five minutes or less, how would you describe your research?
- How can you answer the “So, what?” question?
- How well does the content of your poster match your topic?



Knowing your audience

- **Experts:** Individuals with a relatively high level of disciplinary knowledge and interest. Can engage in in-depth conversation; using jargon and technical language in the discussion.
- **Wide-ranging discipline.** Individuals who may have some general familiarity with the field (or in related disciplines), but not enough to be considered an expert. Using minimal jargon and technical language is best.
- **General audience.** Individuals with little to no familiarity with the subject matter. Explain your work to them in the most basic way possible, completely avoiding jargon and technical language.



Poster Content

Your poster is a succinct description of your work. Good posters generally include some of the following headings/sections :

- Title: describes your conclusion or question in non-technical terms will attract more viewers to your poster
- Introduction: A statement that gives a quick overview of your poster. Include relevant background to provide a context for understanding the central question or theme of your poster. Define acronyms if you use them, and avoid lab jargon.
- Objectives: A concise statement of the goal, question, or problem. Include a hypothesis, if appropriate.
- Methods: A brief description, diagram, or flow chart representing each key process or procedure used to test the hypothesis.
- Results/outcomes: Describe the data collected and the methods used to analyze the data. Photographs, tables, or graphs should be as large as possible, easily interpreted, and labeled with a caption or figure legend.
- Conclusions/Implications (if applicable): Provide a summary, discuss significance of results, and key conclusions. Do the results support or not support the hypothesis?
- References: Cite key publications in the text of your poster and list the references here. Include sources of any images or other materials used in the poster.
- Acknowledgements: Thank the individuals, programs, and funding sources that contributed to the research.



Sample Poster Layout



Title

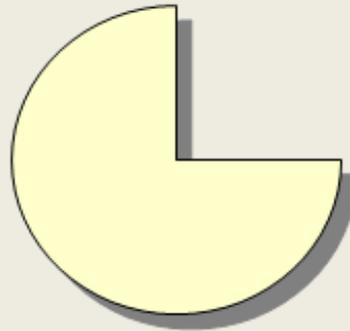
Author Name/Affiliation

Introduction

Results

Conclusion

Methods



Implications

References

Acknowledgements

Layout

- Content should follow progression
- Readers read from left to right and from up to down
- Leave space between sections
- Adjust Line Spacing; keep text boxes/sections evenly lined up.



Creating the poster

- Avoid excessive text; use phrases rather than full sentences. Keep each text element to approx. 50 words or less
- Avoid jargon
- Maintain organization (with headers, numbers, bullets, etc.), avoid clutter
- Use graphics (images, clip art, etc.) sparingly
- Original fonts and colors can be used, but use conservatively
- Keep color themes to 2 or 3 colors
- With graphs, use easily distinguishable colors
- Don't forget the most important aspect: ***The Project Itself!***



Creating the poster

- **Font sizes**

- Poster Title: ideally between 70-110 pt. font (this may vary depending on the font type used)
- Section Headings: ideally between 30-60 pt. font
- Section narrative: ideally up to 36 pt. font

- **Images**

- Images should be as close to 300 dpi (dots per inch) as possible. Original fonts and colors can be used, but use conservatively
- The higher the resolution, the better
- Consistently check your images at full-size to determine their quality

- **Poster sizes and dimensions**

- Poster sizes typically vary based on venue
- Common sizes include 18 x 24 in, 32 x 40 in, 36 x 48, 42 x 48



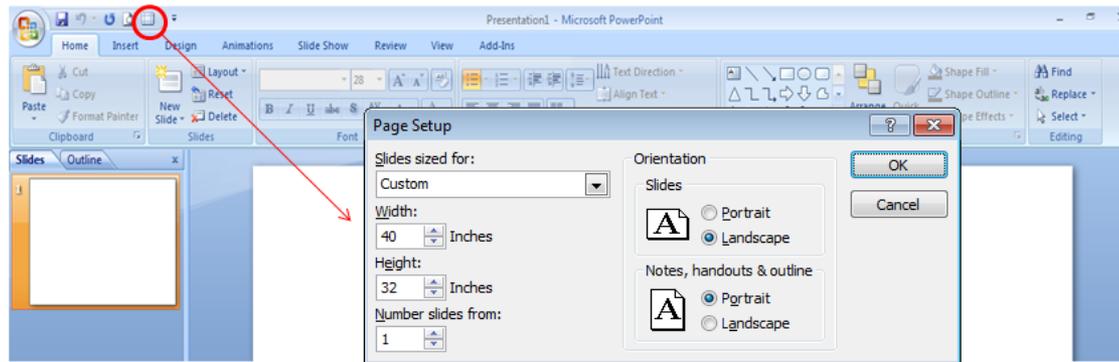
Designing the Poster

- PowerPoint is ideal, though other graphic programs work as well (Adobe Illustrator, Publisher, etc.)
- Templates are available at http://www.umflint.edu/research/poster_printing or can be located via a number of search engines.

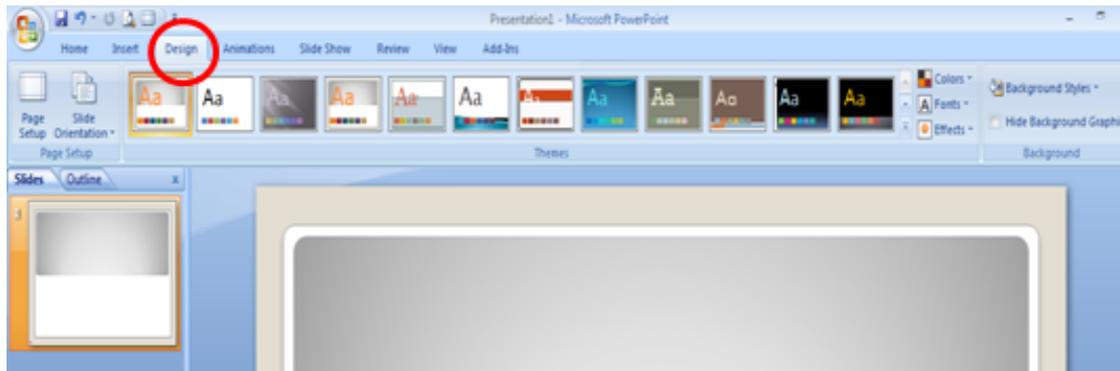


Designing a Poster From Scratch

Specify poster size in *Page Setup*

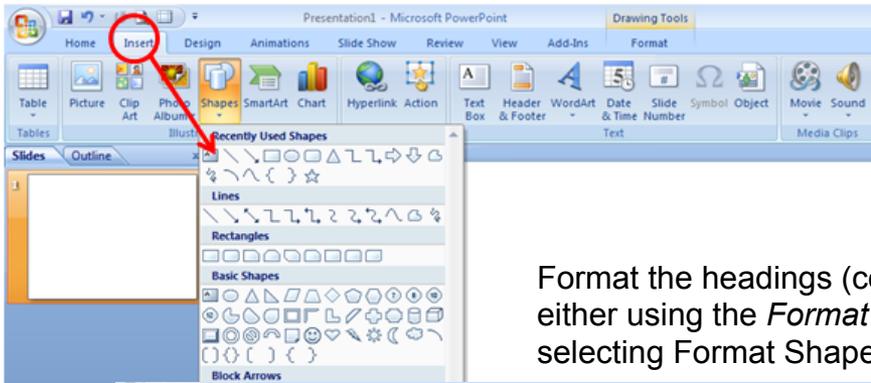


Select a background or create a custom background in *Design*

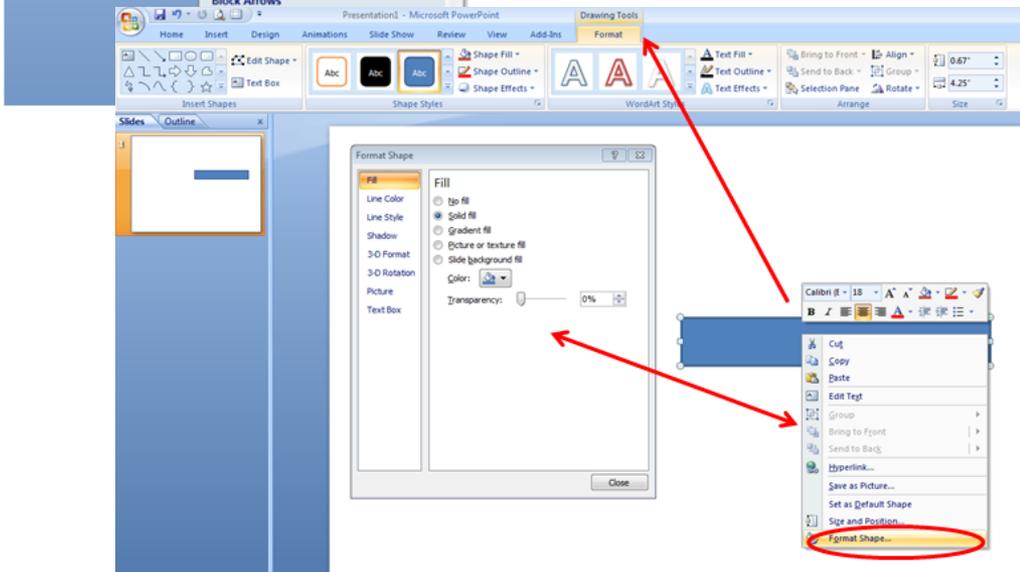


Designing a Poster From Scratch

Create section heading by selecting *Insert* and choosing a heading shape.

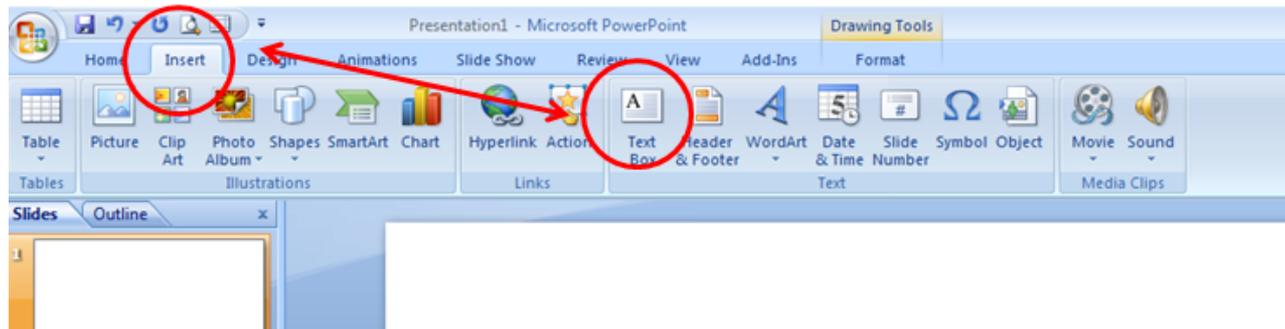


Format the headings (color, fill, shape, size, bordering lines, etc.) by either using the *Format* tab OR by right-clicking the heading and selecting *Format Shape*. Select "Edit Text" to add text to your heading



Designing a Poster From Scratch

Insert your content by adding Text Boxes from the *Insert* tab. Or you can copy and paste your content from a document to your poster. Note: Be sure to resize your text once on your poster

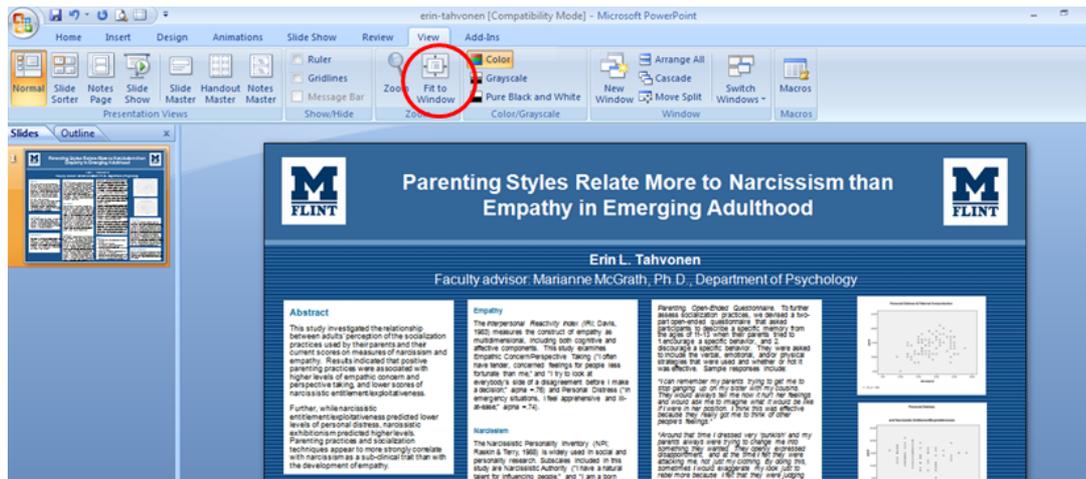


From here, insert any tables, graphs, logos, or any other materials you'd like. Rearrange the items and sections on your poster as you see fit.



Designing a Poster From Scratch

Use *Fit to Window* under the *View* tab to see how your poster looks. You can Zoom in and out as you need.



- Review your poster for grammatical errors, spacing between sections, and any other areas of aesthetics. **Edit Ruthlessly!**
- Once you have a final draft of your file, save it to a flash drive. Visit Andre Louis in the Office of Research (4203 WSWB) at least three days before you need your print.



Presenting Your Poster

- Protect your poster. Lamination is recommended if possible. Carry tubes are also useful
- Arrive early enough to set up
- Bring handouts (i.e. poster printouts on standard-sized paper) and business cards for your visitors. Include detailed information about your work in a narrative form, your bio, as well as your contact information.
- Have a 3-5 minute presentation prepared for visitors you might have.
- Avoid *reading* your poster. Instead, describe it. Explain the key points, the importance of your research, the posters images, and the overall “big picture.”



For additional questions, contact:

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