

A poster is a large-format picture and/or written text that displays some kind of message to the public. The purpose of posters may be to make public announcements, sell products, persuade the public to support a certain viewpoint or course of action, or to provide information about a particular theme or topic of interest. Posters usually consist of eye-catching images, interesting captions, and appropriate but minimal text. Posters are normally mass-produced and posted in various places to catch public attention; however, in the context of a learning experience a single copy would be produced for display in the classroom. In other words, it is likely to be a means of sharing information or research findings with classmates.

Suggestions for Students

Planning the Poster:

- Determine the purpose of the poster and your prospective audience.
- Gather and examine a variety of posters for effective use of images, colour, and text.
- Conduct research to collect necessary information and visual materials.
- Select and/or develop visuals you plan to include, ensuring that size and colour are appropriate.
- Carefully select and/or develop the text information you plan to use, organize it into "chunks," and summarize information into brief, precise statements.
- Determine the size and background colours of your poster.
- Plan the layout carefully for a balanced, unified, and visually effective product.
- Determine the method of construction you will use (ranging from manual to fully computerized).

Constructing the Poster:

- By definition, a poster is large format, thus the minimum size should not be less than four times the size of a normal sheet of paper; the maximum size could be a metre or more per side.
- Generally posters are in portrait layout; however, for purposes of sharing research in a class setting, the landscape layout may be appropriate.
- Text should be kept to a minimum and displayed in large attractive font so that it is easily visible from a short distance.
- The number of images should also be kept to a minimum. It's best to use large, colourful, and attractive images that are carefully selected to portray a message.
- Images should be labelled and referenced in the text.
- The poster should be organized into "panels" if there is a lot of information and numerous images to display, as would be the case in a research poster.
- The poster should "begin" in the upper left corner and progress to the right and downwards. Panels should follow the same pattern (the way we read a page).
- The title of a research poster, along with the name of the author, should be prominent in the upper middle portion. The bibliography should also appear on the poster.
- Develop the first draft and have someone critique all components, including format, balance, choice, and number of images, amount of text, spelling, and general appeal.
- Make any changes necessary and create your final copy.

Displaying the Poster:

- The poster can be laminated for a more professional look (and preservation).
- Place the poster on a bulletin board or wall with its centre at eye level.