



# Designing a poster

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## Introduction

You may be asked to design a poster as an assignment. This is a useful skill both in research (for example, when presenting at conferences) and non-research jobs (for example, an employer may request a poster to be designed as part of a promotional campaign). In both instances, the aims of the poster change slightly but the overall considerations still apply. However, if you are interested in designing posters outside of the academic context, you should read some material on marketing and communications to help you gain an insight into commercial poster production. This resource focuses on designing posters in an academic context.

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## Things to consider when designing your presentation

### 1) Orientation

The first decision that you will have to make is whether you want to present your poster as a 'portrait' or 'landscape'.



One type of orientation is not inherently better than the other. Think about whether your poster content would be better suited to a particular orientation.

## 2) Size

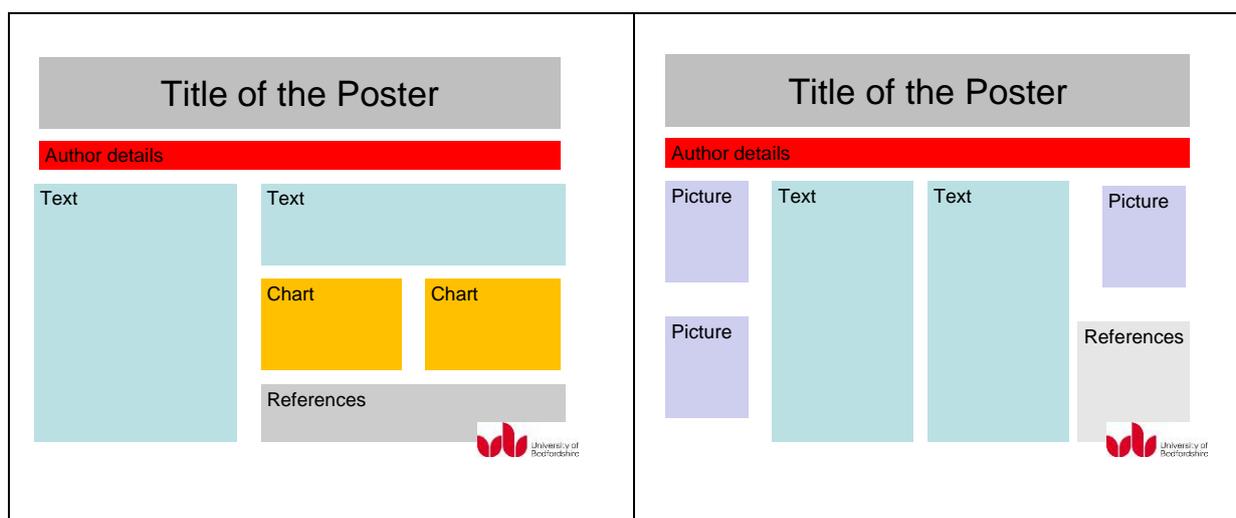
Follow the information in your assignment brief.

## 3) Presentation of text

It is quite common to present poster text in columns - in the same way that a newspaper presents information. If you decide to present your information in columns think about how it will be read (i.e. which parts does your reader need to read in order to make sense of subsequent information). Remember that English is read left to right!

## 4) Plan

It is useful to plan out the design of your poster on a piece of paper before you start designing it on the computer. The following are examples of poster plans:



## 5) Content

You will need to be selective in terms of what to include in your poster. Think about what is the key message that you want to convey to your audience. The information that you include in the poster should support this message and communicate why this topic is important.

## 6) Use of pictures, figures, charts and tables

A poster will be more interesting and eye catching if you are creative in terms of how you communicate your message. Think about whether there are different ways of presenting information for example, a table could be a good way of showing comparisons.

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### Who is your audience?

Remember who will be looking at your poster and make sure that the language you use is appropriate. It might be necessary to define any abbreviations, jargon or subject specific terminology that you have used.

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### Font size

It is important to make sure that your poster is readable. It is therefore very important that you resist the temptation of using very small font in order to fit on a lot of information. The following are basic guidelines when selecting poster font size:

- Main title in 72 point font
- Names of the authors 48 point font
- Use sub headings in at least 36 point font
- Make points in 24 to 28 point font

### Font type

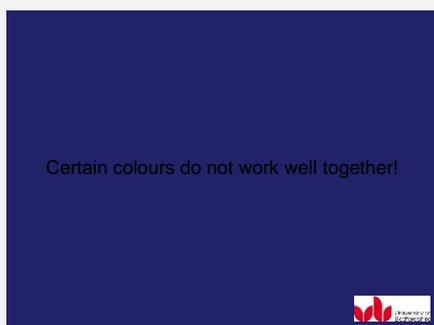
As with any assessment it is important that you select a suitable font type. Typically, Arial or Times New Roman font types are used in assignments.

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## Use of colour

When designing a poster you should think what colours you are going to use (for example, font or slide background). Remember that certain colours do not work well together.

### Example:



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## References

As with any assignment make sure that you provide references in the text of your poster and in a reference list at the end.

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## Prepare for questions

It is quite common for poster readers to ask the poster presenter questions. If this is part of your assessment, it is a good idea to think about the type of questions you might be asked. A good way of identifying potential questions is to consider what queries you had to answer whilst researching the poster. Think about how you would go about answering them.

## Printing the poster

Remember that the reprographics team will be very busy at certain times of the year. You should therefore aim to finish your poster several days before it needs to be submitted so that you leave plenty of time to arrange printing.

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## On the day of the presentation

It is important to be organised on the day of your presentation. The following are a few things to consider:

- Don't forget to find out how the posters are to be attached to the wall. You may need to take Velcro tape, drawing pins or Blue Tac with you
- Get there in good time to set up. This might enable you to get a better location for your poster. If someone else is setting up the poster display, make sure that you submit your poster in plenty of time before the start of the exhibition.
- It can be useful to have some A4 copies of your poster which you can hand out to people who are interested.
- If you are presenting at a conference, it is a good idea to have printed copies of your contact details which you can give to interested viewers.

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## Further information

The Learning Resources Study Hub provides a range of opportunities (such as workshops and drop-ins) for you to enhance your academic skills. For more information visit: **I**

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