Why discuss posters?

- At a conference there may be more than one way in which you will present your work:
  1) Oral talks, where you will use slides projected on a screen to present your work to an audience in a formal, time-limited way
  2) Posters, where you will stand in front of a printed display (among many other competing displays) and talk to people informally about your work as they walk by
Scientists present posters at conferences for a variety of reasons

- Disseminate results in an interactive, non-time-limited forum
- Get immediate feedback from other researchers
- Gain recognition for their work
- Establish future collaborations
- Teach the audience something
- Learn something themselves

Why do scientists present posters?

1. Disseminate results
   - interactive,
   - time not restricted (1-2 hr sessions)
2. Get immediate feedback from other researchers
3. Gain recognition
4. Establish future collaborations
5. Teach the audience something
6. Learn something themselves

Most conferences limit oral presentations to at most 20 minutes—some may be as little as 10 or 12 minutes. Giving a poster presentation allows you to spend much more time explaining your work, but you have to compete with other presenters for your audience’s attention.
Your poster must be tailored to your audience to be effective

Who is your audience?
What do they need to know?
What is their level of understanding?
What one idea or image do you want them to take with them when they walk away?

Tailor your poster to your audience:

1. Who is your audience?
2. What do they need to know?
3. What is their level of understanding?
4. What one idea or image do you want them to take with them when they walk away?
A good poster has four key characteristics

Eye-catching  Well-organized
Readable    Succinct

4 keys to a good poster:
1. Eye-catching → draws attention to itself
2. Readable → various computer programs available to help
3. Well-organized → logical
4. Succinct → says no more (or less) than needs to be said
Every poster should have a “headline” and a “byline”

Title——in 120-pt font
<10 words
Your name and affiliation—in 80 pt
No abstract

Every poster should have:
1) “headline” = title = 120 pt font (less than 10 words)
2) “byline” = your name, affiliation/institution = 80 pt font
3) NO abstract on posters
Remember that people will be looking at your poster while standing, not sitting

Put important points at eye level

(See slide and point out poster setup.)
1) People will be standing, walking around poster, NOT sitting
2) Put important points at eye-level
3) Make sure you know whether poster stands will be provided
Use “reader training” to guide the organization of your poster

Most viewers will look first at the upper left corner of the poster; put something interesting there to catch their attention

Break up your story into “columns” (think “newspaper”)

Put important points at the top of each column

Viewers will examine your poster in the same way in which they read:

1. Will look first at the upper left corner of the poster; put something interesting there to catch their attention
2. Break up your story into “columns” (think “newspaper”)
3. Put important points at the top of each column (demonstrate on slide)
How will the viewer navigate through this poster?

This is an example of a BAD poster! The reader is NOT GUIDED and must find his/her own way.

Some of the reasons (try to elicit from attendees/use pointer?)
1) Abstract shouldn’t be included
2) Font is too small
3) No easily spotted title, author info
4) “Newspaper columns” would have been a more logical layout
Poster styles have evolved over time...

think outside the “box”

Posters are now computer-generated, sophisticated (See pics on slide)
The body of the poster should feature the methods and results

Problem statement, motivation, objectives
Previous or related work

**Methods**

**Results**

Applications or future work

Source(s) of additional information
Acknowledgments
Authors' contact information

Poster Body
1) Problem statement/motivation for research
2) Objectives
3) Previous work
4) METHODS: what are the technical/procedural aspects of the research?
5) RESULTS
6) Applications to future work
7) Acknowledgments: who assisted you
   - Shared ideas
   - Manpower/labwork
8) As we already mentioned: your contact info
Use headings to guide the viewer through the poster

- Descriptive
- Concise
- Parallel
- Logical
- Hierarchical

Headlines should guide the reader thru the poster:

1) Descriptive
2) “Short and sweet”
3) Parallel/Neat
4) Logical
5) Hierarchical = most important ideas at the top/eye level
Position your important points strategically

At eye level
At the top of columns
In the center

From 3 m away, how does the viewer know what is important?

Strategic placement of important points:
1) At eye level
2) Tops of columns
3) In the center
4) How will it look from 3 m away? Readable? Understandable?
(See slide itself)
Dissect/ Elicit from listeners(?):
1) Important info in center, above midline (the problem)
2) “Newspaper column” format
3) Attention-grabbing
4) Clear charts
Use the visual elements of the poster to tell the story

Emphasize main points

Illustrate experimental apparatus, schematics, samples, photographs or simulations of results

Summarize numerical data to show trends or reveal relationships

Use printed handouts to:
Convey complicated information
Provide additional details

Use the visuals to tell the story: “A picture is worth a thousand words”

1) Emphasize points
2) Illustrate equipment/samples
3) Summarize data
4) Show trends/relationships

Printed handouts:
1) Convey complex info
2) Provide added details
Label all elements in a figure and point out important features

Simplify—omit overly complex details
Label both axes of graphs, show units
Provide a caption
Give credit

A schematic diagram depicting the passive or ligand-targeted accumulation of liposomal DDS in breast cancer tumors through the EPR effect.

Position versus time for kinesin motility. The blue and green traces are from E215C homodimer kinesin; the red trace, from the heterodimer S43C-T324C kinesin. The numbers correspond to the step size ± δv.

SIMPLIFY:
1) Omit overly complex details
2) Label both axes on a graph
3) Show units
4) Provide captions
5) Give credit for what is not originally yours
Keep text to a minimum:

1. Use short phrases and bulleted lists
2. Use pictures
   - To illustrate key points
   - To convey results
   - To spark audience interest
3. Present numerical data in tables or graphs
4. Choose an easy-to-read font
5. DO NOT PUT TEXT IN ALL CAPS (too hard to read and to proofread!)
6. Avoid long lists, too
But you have to have some text…

… a title is advisable, too

This is a poor example: title your work!
The author’s names have been covered up so as not to embarrass them; but their original poster had no title! Some text to explain the meaning and significance of the plots is essential.
A software presentation program (PowerPoint, Illustrator, Canvas) can combine text and graphics easily on one “page”

In PowerPoint, go to “Page Set Up”—“Custom”
Set Height and Width
Title—120 pt Author—48 pt Headings—80 pt

Software presentation programs can help to combine text and graphics easily

- PowerPoint
- Illustrator
- Canvas

For custom setup:
1) Go to “Page Setup”
2) Choose “Custom” to set height/width

Suggestions for font sizes:
1) Title = 120 pt
2) Author = 48 pt
3) Headings = 80 pt
Make a timetable for preparing your poster, and stick to it!

Decide on your objectives
Analyze your audience
Make an outline
Assemble graphics
Decide on text
Eliminate 50–80 percent of the text
Prepare handouts
Proofread everything three times

Make a timetable for preparing your project (poster, proposal, paper) and stick to it:
1. Decide on your objectives
2. Analyze your audience
3. Make an outline
4. Assemble graphics
5. Decide on text
6. Eliminate 50–80 percent of the text
7. Prepare handouts
8. Proofread everything three times
Have hand-outs available for interested viewers

A miniature version of your poster
An abstract or a summary of the project
Reprints or preprints
Include complete contact information on all handouts

Have hand-outs available:
1. A miniature version of your poster
2. An abstract or a summary of the project
3. Reprints or preprints
4. Include complete contact information on all handouts
For further guidance…


http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/IndexStart.html
http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm
http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~utsurge/Resources/Posters101Article.htm
http://www.biology.eku.edu/RITCHISO/posterpres.html

Useful book/websites for pointers and advice

Questions on:
1) Preparation of posters?
2) Content or components of posters?
3) Organization of posters?