

Part VII: Creating a Research Poster in PowerPoint

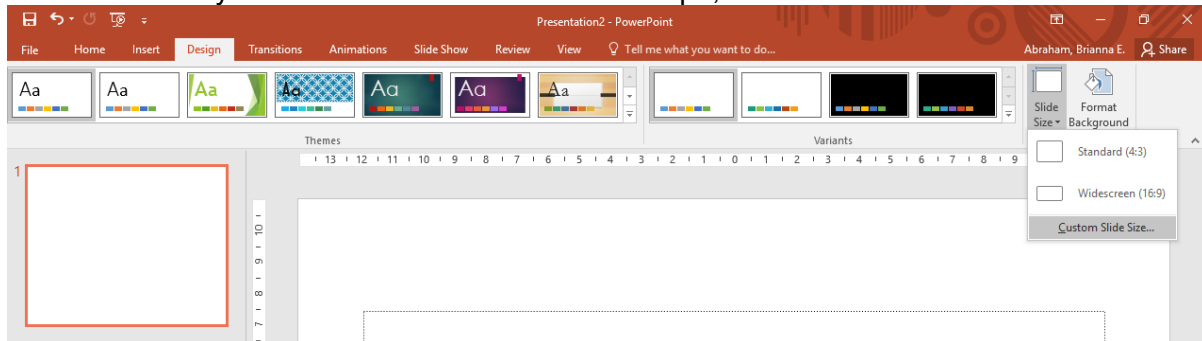
This is how you will present your research to the community at our annual Symposium, as well as at any competitions or poster fairs. This is NOT taking your paper and putting it onto a poster. This IS visually representing your research so readers can understand why you did what you did and what you discovered.

Plan your poster

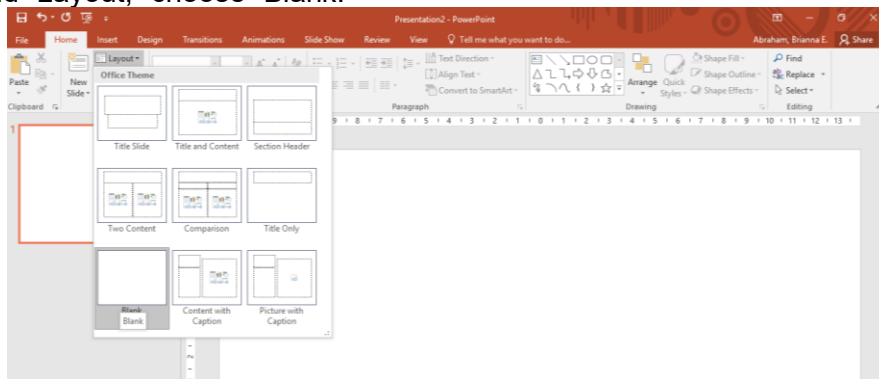
1. Make a rough sketch of the different sections of your poster (Abstract or Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion/Analysis, Conclusion, Acknowledgements) and how you want them laid out on the poster. Rule of thumb is to keep the information organized from top to bottom, left to right.
2. Whenever possible, represent information graphically rather than textually.
3. Consider color choice carefully. Text should be easy to read and colors should complement each other. Check out a [color wheel](#) if you have never seen one.
 - ✚ Background of the poster should be white. Text should be dark/black.
 - ✚ Use one or two accent colors for visual interest and to draw attention to important information. This can be done with the title header and section headings of the paper or borders around the different sections.
 - ✚ Consistent colors are a must. Most important is readability of the poster. Maintain a good contrast between background color and text color at all times, including in the title and section headings.
4. Gathering photos, graphs, and illustrations in advance will save time.

Setting up your poster

1. In PowerPoint, start with blank presentation. Under “Design,” choose “Slide Size” and “Custom Slide Size.” Enter a width of no more than 42” and a height of no more than 36”. If you are unsure, enter those measurements exactly. Be sure the orientation is landscape, and click “OK.”

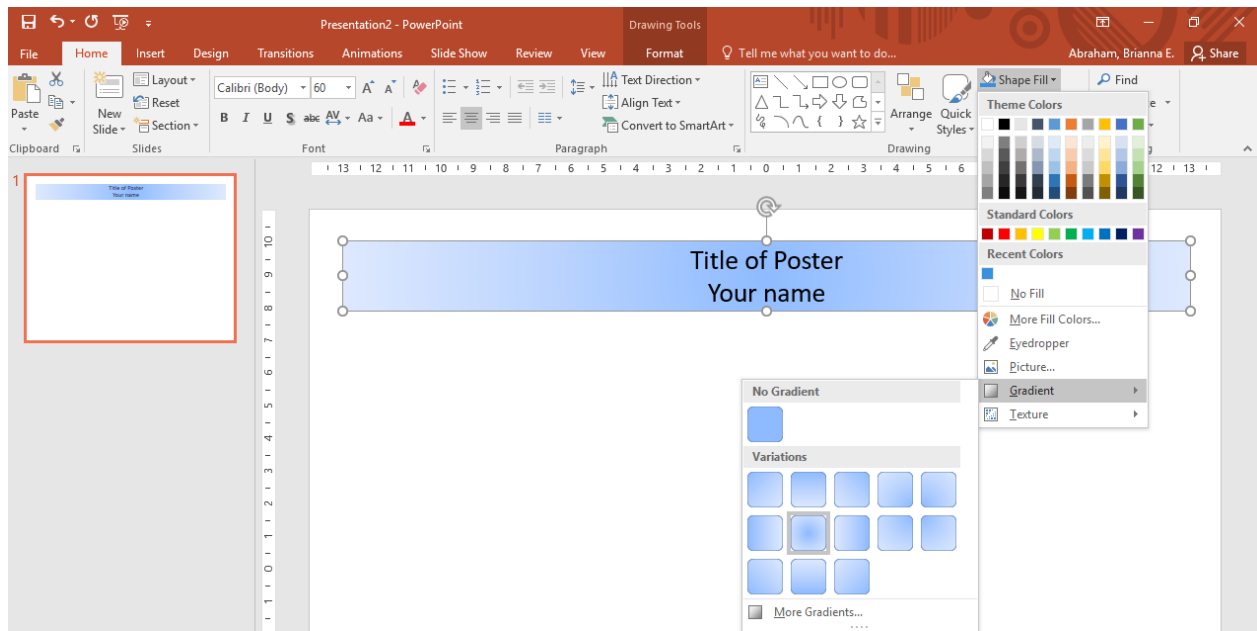


2. Leave at least a 1” white margin/border around the edges of the poster for printing purposes. Your content should not butt up against the printed edges.
3. Under “Home” and “Layout,” choose “Blank.”



Inserting Text

4. Under the “Insert” tab, choose “Text Box” to insert a title. Position it 1” from the top, and stretch out the length to 1” from each side. This will set your width for the rest of the poster.
5. Under the “Home” tab, use “Shape Fill” to add background color and gradient to make the poster more visually appealing.



6. Use common, easy to read sans serif fonts such as Arial, Helvetica, Verdana, Calibri, or Palatino. Do not use any “city” fonts such as Geneva, New York, or Chicago. Avoid script fonts as these are difficult to read.
7. Use **bold**, *italics*, or color to emphasize headings or important items. CAPITAL LETTERS ARE LIKE YELLING!
8. Avoid underlining text as that denotes a hyperlink.
9. Appropriate sizes:
 - ❖ Title: 45-120 pt font, depending on the length. It’s okay to write titles in **bold**.
 - ❖ Headings, Authors/Institution: 30-60 pt font, depending on space.
 - ❖ Body text: 18-30 pt font
10. Create a new text box for each section heading, block of content or caption. Be sure to align the text boxes using the ruler and guidelines so the headings are across the top and the columns are aligned vertically.
11. Type directly into PowerPoint, as opposed to pasting text in as a graph, so that you can edit it directly.
12. Let text wrap in the text boxes. DO NOT use a hard return at the end of each line of text, only at the end of a paragraph. You can align the text to the left or justify it, whichever is more visually appealing to you.

Images

13. Use graphics (illustrations, photos, graphs) whenever possible. They add interest, capture viewers’ attention, and convey information at a glance.
14. Pictures must be high resolution for large-size posters. Pictures from websites are usually low resolution, so they are only suitable for onscreen presentations or web pages.
15. Resolution of images should be 125-225 dpi. File format should be TIFF, PDF, or JPG.
16. Using the SHIFT key when you resize graphics with your mouse will preserve the aspect ratio.
17. **Always insert your images** instead of using copy and paste when possible.
18. Per the rubric, you are expected to have at least one CHS logo in the title banner at the top of the poster. If you are working with another organization, you can include their logo in the other top corner. If not, you can include the MST logo as well. **Note: when presenting at competitions like SEF, logos may not be allowed**, so always preview the rules and requirements. If we need to print a second version of your poster, we will.

Editing Poster

19. The most common mistake on a poster is too much text. Whittle, whittle, whittle those words down to the bare minimum that conveys the same meaning. Too many words will turn readers away.
20. Always have someone else look at your poster. Ask them for feedback on clear, concise wording and the overall look and design of the poster.
21. Be sure to reference the rubric to see what we are looking for when we grade your poster.