

Creating a Research Poster in PowerPoint

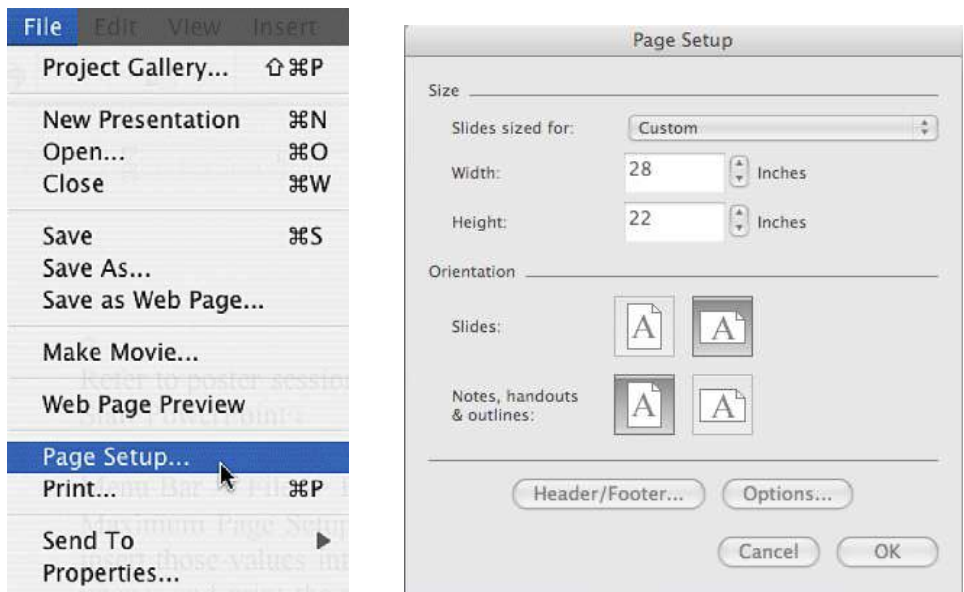
Adapted by Libertad Flores from guidelines by the Department of Medical Graphics and Photography, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, July 2011

1) Planning

- Divide your material into sections, for example: Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Conclusions
- Consider creating a sketch on paper to rough out your poster, including tables, graphs and photos
- Whenever possible, represent materials graphically rather than textually
- For reader comfort, plan content in vertical columns rather than horizontal rows
- Consider your color choices carefully
- Gathering photos, graphs, and illustrations to be used in advance will save you time
- Carefully proof your text

2) Setting up your poster

- In PowerPoint, open a New Presentation and go to PAGE SETUP under the File Menu



- Slide sized for: Custom
- Page setup does not accommodate the actual size of a poster, so you'll enter a page size that is 50% of the final product. Enter a width of no more than 28" and a height of no more than 22". Click OK.
- You may get a message "current page exceeds printable area of paper in printer". Click OK and ignore the warning, as you will not be printing to your own desktop printer.
- Leave at least a 1" white margin/border around the edges of your poster for printing purposes. Your content should not butt up against the printed edges

3) Color

Background of the poster: White and lighter colors work better

- Select the **design** tab, **background styles, format background**
- Text: Dark, contrasting colors are easier to read
- Use one or two accent colors for visual interest and draw attention to important information.
- Consistent colors are a must. Top priority should be placed on readability. Maintain a good contrast between the background color and the text color.

4) Insert text

- Use common, easy to read sans serif fonts, such as Arial, Helvetica, Verdana, Palatino. Do not use any “City” fonts, such as Geneva, New York or Chicago
- Use **bold**, *italics*, or color, and avoid script fonts as these are hard to read. CAPITAL LETTERS ARE LIKE YELLING!
- Try not to underline, as that denotes a hyperlink
- Sizes:
Title: 45 – 120 pt font, depending on title length. It’s OK to write titles in **Bold**
Headings, Authors/Institution: 30 – 60 pt font, depending on space
Body text: 18 – 30 pt font
- Create a text box for each block of information
- Type directly into PowerPoint when possible, as opposed to pasting text in as a graphic, so that you can edit it directly
- If you need to cut and paste text, use **Paste Special** under the Edit menu. If you just use *paste*, the text will not be editable.
- Let text wrap in the text box. **Do not** use a hard return at the end of each line of text, only at the end of a paragraph. Use only soft returns (shift+ return) if you must manually put in a line break.
- •Insert image place holder boxes, by drawing rectangles as placeholders for your images *after* you have placed all the text and know how much room you have for the images. This is helpful because after your pictures go in, they make the file very large, possibly prone to crashes, and it will take a long time to save. You can then double-click on the rectangle to get the **Format Auto Shape** box. Select the **Size tab**, and make a note of the size the image in that box should be.

4) Insert text, Continued

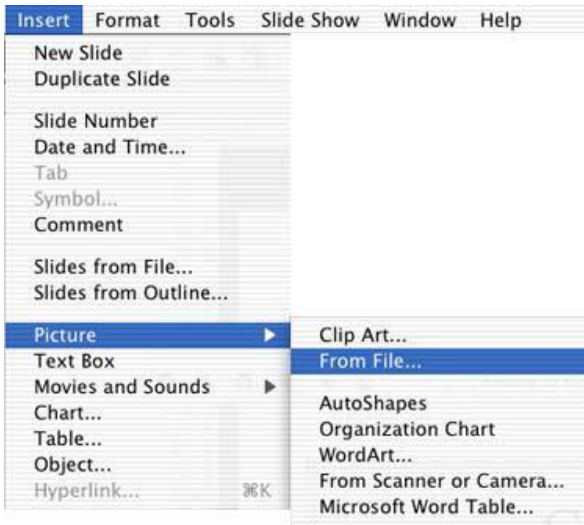


5) Edit your images

- Use graphics– illustrations, photos, graphs– whenever possible. They will add interest, capture the viewers' attention, and give information “at a glance.”
- Pictures imported from web sites/the internet tend to be low resolution images, for onscreen presentations and web pages only, and not for printing on a poster. **Check that you have high resolution, or they may not look good blown up.**
- Resolution of images should be 125-225 dpi (which will be 250-450 dpi when your poster is printed at 200%). File format should be TIFF, PDF or JPG . For line art, text, illustrations or cartoons, 225 dpi is a good resolution.
- Consider Adobe Photoshop or some other image editing application to edit images if available
- Using the SHIFT key when you resize graphics with your mouse will preserve the aspect ratio
- If you are scanning images, be sure to save at 150 – 300 dpi
- Do not use WordArt in your poster. It does not look as good when printed large

6) Insert your images

Always **Insert** your images (pictures, illustrations) **rather than using Copy, Paste** into PowerPoint



- Browse to find your picture and click **Open** or **Insert**
- If you are inserting tables, graphs or illustrations from another Microsoft Office application, use copy and then **Paste Special** into your poster



Size of printed image file guidelines

4 inches by 6 inches	1.5MB
8 inches by 10 inches	5 MB
8.5 inches by 11 inches	6 MB
12 inches by 18 inches	14 MB
24 inches by 36 inches	55 MB

7) Fine-tuning

Have a colleague proof your poster.

- The most common mistake is including too much text, so whittle where you can. Too many words will turn readers away and people may avoid your poster altogether.
- Once your text and pictures are in place, you may decide to add some color or texture effects. The color options and background effects are found under Format on the toolbar, or you may double click the border of any text box to view the Format Text Box and play with color and line options.

Adding borders:

- Click AutoShapes in the Drawing toolbar, point to Lines, and then click the line style you want.
- Drag to draw the line. To constrain the line to draw at 15-degree angles from its starting point, hold down SHIFT as you drag. To lengthen the line in opposite directions from the first end point, hold down CTRL as you drag.

Change the color of a line or border:

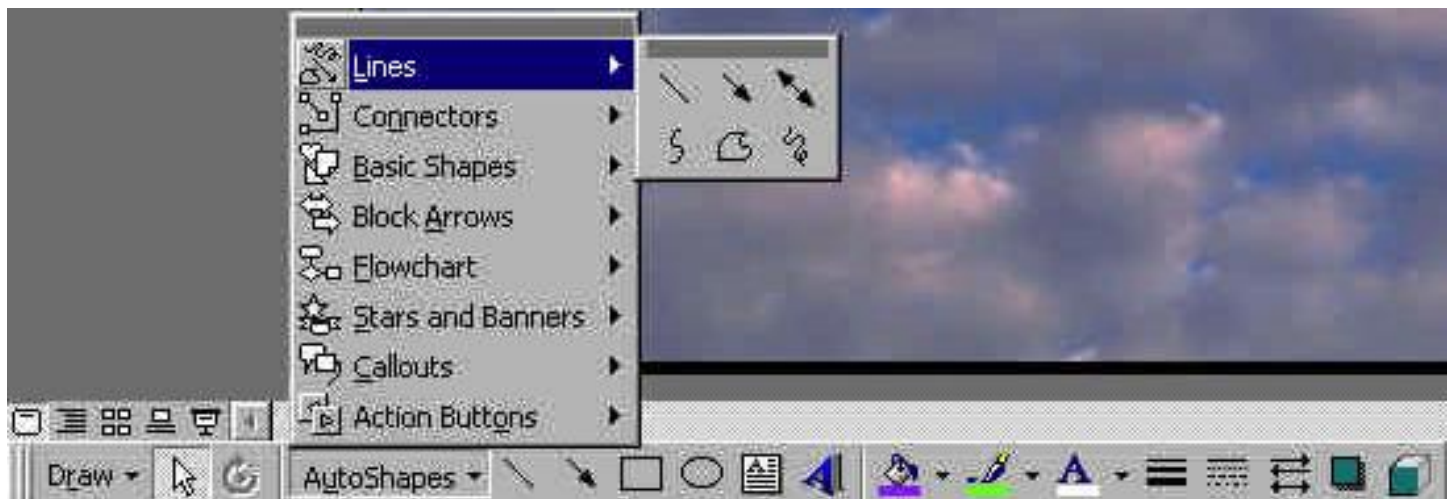
- Select the object you want to change.
- On the Drawing toolbar, click the arrow next to Line Color, or right mouse click and select **Format Autoshapes**

Change the style of a line or border:

- Select the line or border you want to change.
- On the **Drawing toolbar**, click **Line Style**.
- Click the style you want; or click **More Lines**, and then click a **style**.

Add or change a fill:

- You can fill objects with solid or gradient (shaded) colors, a pattern, a texture, or a picture. Any time you fill an object, the new fill replaces the old one.
- If you change an object's fill, you can easily change it back to its default.



8) Make sure the poster looks just how you want it to look

- Carefully review your poster. Take a walk, and then review it again. Congratulate yourself.
- Print a copy of the poster for preview. Under **File**, select **Print**, making sure you click the **Scale to fit** box. If it looks correct, save your poster: from the **File** menu select **Save**

9) You may want to make a PDF of your poster before you submit for printing (not necessary)

- With a pdf, no shifting of information, layout, fonts or symbols will occur, but make sure the pdf you submit is exactly what how you want your poster printed.
 - To make a pdf on a Mac:
 - a) Use the print dialogue box – this is a little tricky
 - b) Use Adobe Acrobat Distiller
 - To make a pdf on a PC:
 - a) Use Adobe Acrobat Distiller