Presenting your results in a poster instead of a talk has advantages

- Personal interaction
- No time limits
- Immediate feedback
- More relaxed
- More questions

Tip: While both communicate results, a poster is NOT just a paper stuck on the wall.
An effective poster must

Attract and engage the audience
• Prominent title
• Visually interesting figures
• Clean, uncluttered appearance
• Highlight key points so they are immediately recognizable
• Be arranged logically so a viewer quickly understands the “story”

Tip: Your audience will not approach you if your topic is not clear from a “safe” distance (3 m)

Distill your message

Don’t try to tell the “whole story”
Present only enough data to
• support your conclusions and
• show the originality of your work
Every poster must have a “headline” (title) and a “byline” (authors)

Title—
in 120-pt font
<10 words

Your name and affiliation—
in 80-pt font

Ask your adviser NOW about co-authors

Tip: If it’s important, make it **BIG**

Most viewers will start at the upper left corner of the poster and read down and across

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

Put important points at the top of each column

Tip: Keep lines of text <20 words long. People’s eyes don’t easily track strings of text longer than that, even at 30 pt
**Use headings to guide the viewer through the poster**

Make your key points immediately recognizable

Use headings to create an “information hierarchy”
- Descriptive
- Concise
- Parallel
- Logical

**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?

**Tip: People look at color first**
Here’s a good example of strategic positioning

Production of $\Lambda$ Particles from $\Sigma'$ Decays at HERMES

Background
- Exercise spin transfer through fragmentation process
- Study spin nature of $\Lambda$ particles produced in deep inelastic scattering (DIS) events

The HERMES experiment

The problem
- New HERMES data improves precision of $\Lambda$ production measurement
- $\Lambda$ production in association with $\pi^0$, $\phi$, and $\rho_0$

The hunt for $\Sigma'$

Results
- Measurement for $\Sigma'$ yields upper bound for $D_\Sigma$
- $\Sigma'$ production in association with $\Lambda$

Future plans
- New HERMES data will improve measurement

Tip: Position important information above the midline and in the center

Use the visual elements of the poster to tell the story

Emphasize main points
Illustrate apparatus, methods, and results
Summarize numerical data to show trends or reveal relationships
Use printed handouts to:
- Convey complicated information
- Provide additional details
- Give your contact information

Tip: Keep all text (total) to <600 words
Leave adequate “white space”

Effective posters look uncluttered

Use white space to isolate and emphasize important details

Leave at least 1.5 in (4 cm) of white space between columns

Balance elements on the page

Tip: Leave at least 1.5-in (4-cm) margins on all sides of your poster; no plotter prints to the very edge of the paper

Use easy-to-read fonts

Sans-serif fonts usually print well and are easier to read from a distance

ORNATE FONTS ARE HARDER TO READ

DON’T USE ALL CAPS, EVEN IN THE TITLE
—much harder to read (and proofread!)

Title—120 pt
Section headings—60 pt
Figure captions—48 pt
Text—36 pt

Text sizes are for a 28-in high by 56-in wide format
Scale the font with the size of the poster
Present text in lists rather than paragraphs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use figures to:</td>
<td>Use figures to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ promote interest</td>
<td>▪ promote interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ provide supporting evidence</td>
<td>▪ provide supporting evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ explain complex ideas quickly</td>
<td>▪ explain complex ideas quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ show relationships</td>
<td>▪ show relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ give the viewer something to remember</td>
<td>▪ give the viewer something to remember</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tips for successfully presenting your poster:

Have your 2-3 minute “elevator pitch” prepared to explain your work to visitors
- Give the big picture
- Explain why the work is important
- Have two versions—one for experts and one for non-experts

Greet each visitor with a smile; ask questions to elicit interest and level of understanding
When Someone Approaches:

Introduce yourself and look at his/her name tag.
“Hi! I’ve been working on …” and pause to give an opportunity for a response
If get a response – try to use it to get into your presentation
If not, or if in doubt, move into your regularly scheduled pitch

Rules for Poster Speeches:

In general, you will have a diverse audience

- Always give some background and context.
- Use plain language and avoid jargon and acronyms – they already know you are smart.
- Keep eye contact to see if you are losing or boring them.
- If you are unsure if losing/boring audience: just ask.
- Be flexible – A memorized speech repeated verbatim is as big a loser as a speech that is too long. On the other hand, a disorganized speech is equally bad. This takes practice …
- Don’t read your poster, but do make use of it: alternate connecting what you are saying to figures on the poster with eye contact. This takes practice …
Convey your enthusiasm for your research project

Greet people as they walk up to your poster

By your stance and expression, invite them to ask questions

Have your business cards, copies of your paper, or other handouts ready

Tip: Open your hands, lean forward, and smile