



Tips for Creating Informative Posters (1 of 3)

A POSTER IS A VISUAL PRESENTATION of information that combines text and graphics. Posters should be thoughtfully organized and visually pleasing. Like other writing projects, posters benefit from planning; students should create rough drafts of their posters. Even a quick sketch of a planned layout is helpful.

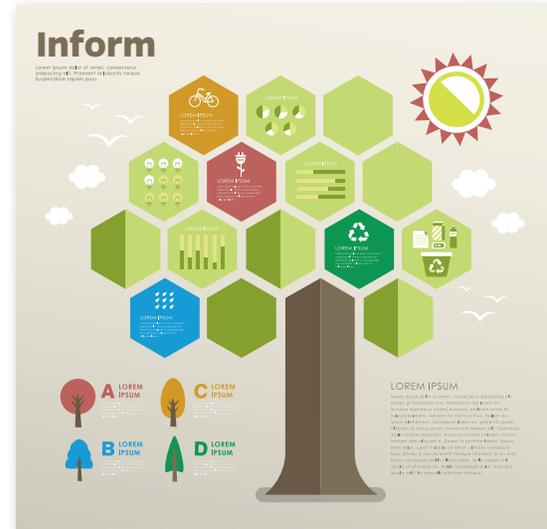
The key to making an informative poster is keeping things simple while still including all essential facts. Students should begin by focusing on the most important aspects of their assigned topics. When in groups, they may find it useful to select a leader and timekeeper to keep them on track. Students must decide what important information should be included on the poster and how this information can be supported by graphics such as maps, photos, and drawings. Discussing who will view the poster will help students tailor their designs to meet the needs and expectations of the audience.

A poster should include a title, presented in lettering that can be read from a distance. Text should be grouped into sections and labeled with headings. Graphics should be related to the text and be good quality and in focus. Text and graphics should be neatly arranged to avoid clutter. Correct spelling and grammar are important; errors are a distraction. In a lower corner, students should identify the sources they used to obtain the information and graphics.

Providing students with a rubric beforehand can help set clear expectations and guide the design process. A sample rubric is provided at the end of this document or you can make your own rubric using the free tool, RubiStar, at <http://rubistar.4teachers.org>.

General Design Tips

- ▶ Horizontal text is easier to read than vertical text.
- ▶ Simple fonts are easier to read than fancy fonts.
- ▶ Use appropriate text size to insure viewers can read everything from an acceptable distance. Text in a paragraph should not be smaller than 28 points.



- ▶ Use contrasting text and backgrounds (dark text on light backgrounds or light text on dark backgrounds).
- ▶ Avoid distracting backgrounds that make text difficult to read.
- ▶ Include white space (places with no text or graphics); inadequate white space makes poster look cluttered.

These and other tips can be found in a two-page handout by the University of Illinois Extension titled *Poster-Making Tips* (available online, see Additional Resources).

If possible, provide some or all of the following materials to help your students make posters:

- ▶ Poster/presentation/display board, flipchart paper, poster paper
- ▶ White and colored paper
- ▶ Tape, double-sided tape, glue, glue sticks
- ▶ Scissors
- ▶ Printer
- ▶ Markers, pens, paints, colored pencils
- ▶ Lettering stencils, pre-cut poster letters
- ▶ Rulers, yardsticks
- ▶ Publications or websites that contain information about your state's forests, trees, and birds.



Tips for Creating Informative Posters (2 of 3)

Making Posters for Activity 3: Atlas of Change

The Climate Change Atlas provides the bulk of the information that your students need to create posters. The Atlas also contains many maps that can be printed and incorporated into a poster, or projected on to paper and traced. Some photos are displayed in the Atlas and more can be obtained through links to USDA Plants Database, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, others links provided in the Additional Resources section of Activity 3. In addition to maps and photos, students can also include visual representations of data such as tables, charts, and graphs, by using graphics showcased in the Atlas or by creating their own based on data provided.

Colorful images enhance the look of a poster. If a color printer is not available, students can print selected images and manually add color with markers, colored pencils, or paints. If no printer is available, encourage students to create their own graphics using art supplies; maps, and photos by consulting appropriate graphics online as models. You can also use a projector to display an image from a computer screen onto a piece of paper taped to the wall and students can then trace the image outline onto the paper and add details.

Graphics can also be obtained from relevant printed publications available by contacting state and local land management agencies, local nature centers and museums, or your county Extension office. For example, some state forestry agencies publish a guide to forest trees.

If students want to find a specific image, they can use Google Images at <http://www.google.com/imghp>. For example, if students wanted to find a photo of an oak/hickory forest, they could type “oak hickory forest” into the Google Images search box and choose from the results, providing proper credit for the image.

Additional Resources

Poster Making Tips

University of Illinois Extension

http://my.extension.uiuc.edu/documents/8092403090309/0501_poster.pdf

This two-page handout provides a multitude of helpful tips.

Poster Sessions

Colorado State University

<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=78>

This writing guide focuses on posters presenting original research but includes lots of information about preparation and design for posters in general.

RubiStar

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org>

This free online tool provides customizable, generic rubrics, including a Making a Poster rubric template.

References Cited

National Council of Teachers of English/

International Reading Association

(NCTES/IRA). (2006). *Poster Session Rubric*.

Retrieved from http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1076/rubric.pdf



Poster Rubric (3 of 3)

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Coverage of the Topic	Details on the poster capture the important information about the topic and increase the audience's understanding.	Details on the poster include important information but the audience may need more information to understand fully.	Details on the poster relate to the topic but are too general or incomplete.	Details on the poster have little or nothing to do with main topic.
Use of Graphics	All graphics are related to the topic and make it easier to understand.	All graphics are related to the topic and most make it easier to understand.	All graphics relate to the topic.	Graphics do not relate to the topic.
Organization	Information is very organized with clear titles and subheadings.	Information is organized with titles and subheadings.	Information is organized, but titles and subheadings are missing or do not help the reader understand.	The information appears to be disorganized.
Layout and Design	All information on the poster is in focus and can be easily viewed and identified from two meters (six feet) away.	Most of the information on the poster is in focus and the content easily viewed and identified from two meters (six feet) away.	Most of the information on the poster is in focus and the content is easily viewed and identified from one meter (four feet) away.	Much of the information on the poster is unclear or too small.
Sources	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately and correctly documented.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but there are a few errors in the format.	All sources (information and graphics) are documented, but information is incomplete or many are not in the appropriate format.	Some sources are not accurately documented.
Mechanics	No grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Almost no grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	A few grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.