

Creating Large Format Posters Using PowerPoint

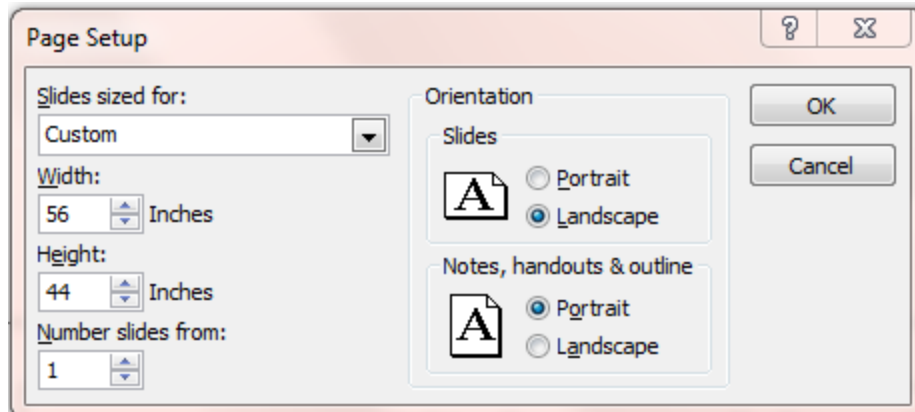
TIP SHEET

INTRODUCTION

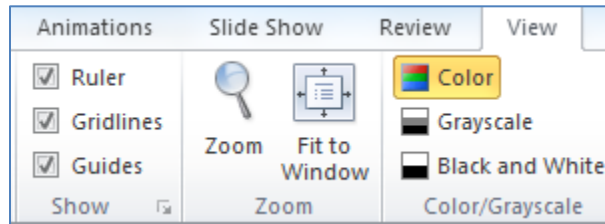
- The ideal poster is designed to:
 - Tell a story
 - Provide a brief overview of your work
 - Initiate discussion
 - Stand alone when you're not there to provide an explanation.
- Before you begin working in PowerPoint, sketch out your poster on paper. Keep it simple! Someone should be able to "get it" in **30 seconds**, and *fully read your poster in about 5 minutes*. You can provide more in-depth information in a handout.
- Decide what **3-4 points** you want the poster to express. Know your audience so you can tailor your poster to their academic level.
- Decide on size, background, and layout of your poster (you can change this if it doesn't work).
- Text should be large enough to read from **5 feet** away.
- Also remember the typical circumstances in which a poster is viewed: a hot, congested, noisy room filled with people who are primarily there to socialize, not look at posters.

CREATING THE POSTER

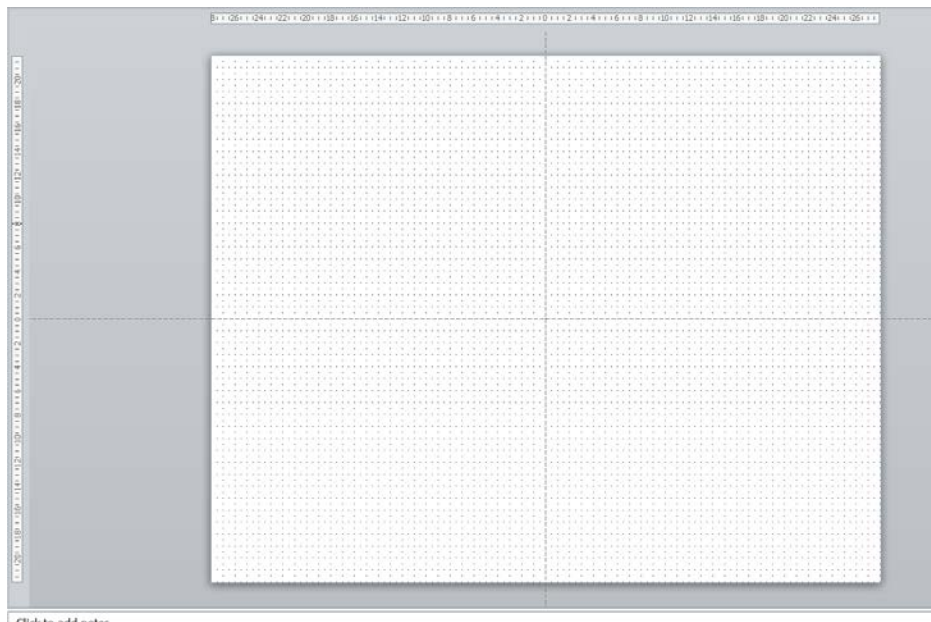
- Start PowerPoint 2010 to open a new slide presentation. You will be making just ONE slide in PowerPoint. Choose a blank layout.
- Set the poster size by clicking the Design tab and "Page Setup. Under "Slides sized for:" select "Custom." Set the width and height. At the USC School of Medicine, the Large Format Printer in the IRF is suitable for printing color posters *up to 44 inches* high (in landscape format). A common poster size is 44x56 inches, so we will set our poster to that size. (Another commonly used poster size is 24x36 inches.)



- Use the ruler, gridlines, and drawing guides to help you line up your poster elements. Under the View tab, select “Ruler,” “Gridlines,” and “Guides.”



- Your slide should now look like this:



- In the View tab, click “Fit to Window” to see the whole slide (if you can’t already). You can also zoom in to work on details. (*Tip: Use Cntrl + mouse wheel to zoom in or out*)
- Select a background using one of the designs in the Design tab or find a template online. This is not required; you can choose to have no background design and simply add graphics yourself. Play around until you get the color scheme that works well with the subject of your poster. Remember:
 - ✓ Maintain a good contrast between the background color and text color
 - ✓ Black text on a white background = excellent readability and high impact
 - ✓ Do not use a gradient color fill in the background (does not print well)
 - ✓ Do not use black in the background
 - ✓ Check a Print Preview to get an idea of what the poster will look like
- To add elements to your poster, use the Insert tab, then add Text Boxes. Arrange the text boxes on your slide. You should have 3-4 vertical columns. Here are some suggested font sizes:
 - **Title:** 72-120 points (should be nearly the entire width of the poster). For the title, consider using a large, bold Sans-Serif type font, such as Arial Black, Franklin Gothic Heavy, Tahoma, or Verdana.
 - **Authors and Affiliations:** 48 – 80 points
 - **Headings:** 36 – 72 points. Headings and text should have the same font. For readability, consider Times New Roman or Arial.
 - **Text:** 24 – 48 points

Whatever point size you use, be consistent among elements in the poster!

- Examples of possible combinations of Headings/Sections:

Combination 1	Combination 2	Combination 3	Combination 4
Author/Title/Affiliation Objectives Data Sources/Settings Study Design Data Collection Principle Findings Conclusions Funding Sources	Author/Title/Affiliation Objectives Methods Results Conclusions Funding Sources	Author/Title/Affiliation Methods Descriptive Issues Statistical Analysis Conclusions Relevance Funding Sources	Author/Title/Affiliation Background Information Research Question Methods Conclusions Further Research Questions Funding Sources

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- ✓ Top priority should be placed on readability.
- ✓ Use colors that stand out.
- ✓ Use a mix of upper and lower case letters.
- ✓ Avoid putting too much information on your poster (posters with 800 words or less are ideal).
- ✓ Don't try to fill up all the white space. Keep 30-40% of your poster empty.
- ✓ Add thin borders to each photo or chart to give them definition.

Laura T. Kane, MLIS, AHIP, School of Medicine Library

laura.kane@uscmed.sc.edu

8/23/16