



Popular Multimodal Genres At S&T

Research Posters

Use the resources you have available.

- Missouri S&T provides templates for research posters which you may (or may not) choose to use.
- If you need to print your poster, the S&T Print Shop can help you do that (for a fee).
- Ask your roommate or friends to help you review your poster, or visit the Writing Center for a more expert review.

Check criteria and requirements.

- If your research is written for a particular institution, that institution may have certain requirements, such as requiring the use of certain colors.
- Sometimes the required sections for the poster may not be identical to the sections in your report. For example, you may not need a reference section or it may need to be much smaller than the one in your original report.

Focus on basics—avoid the unnecessary.

- Space is limited, so consider your audience. How much background information does your audience require?
- Consider how much description is necessary for images or figures.

Don't simply copy and paste from a textual report.

- Consider how long your original report is. There is likely a lot of detailed information, and not all of it is needed on a poster.
- Keep in mind that many of the individual sentences in your report were written in the context of that report. Because of that context, individual sentences may not work well alone or in shorter paragraphs.
- If you use images, some of the text may be redundant on the poster.

Organize by topic, left-to-right, or top-down.

- Consider how people normally read documents.
- In the United States, readers normally start at the top left of the page and end at the bottom right.



- Keep in mind how people generally process information. Readers want to understand the background of a subject before trying to answer a question about the subject.

Keep the composition of the poster in mind.

- Keep in mind that it is not fun or easy to look at a massive block of text that takes up half of a poster.
- Don't attempt to cram as much content as possible onto the poster. Too much content can make it hard for a reader to focus on important information.
- Avoid excessive blank space. Some options to utilize extra space include:
 - Adding more description
 - Increasing the size of figures
 - Using a professional background with background design

A research poster should look professional but pleasing to the eye.

- Content and format are not mutually exclusive. The way the poster is designed should feel connected to the topic
- Remember the intended audience! What would catch their attention? Does your poster make you look credible?

Keep images on theme.

- Ensure that they are the best representation of the section (methods, intro, results, discussion/significance) at hand. Does the image reflect the section that it's in?
- Avoid using unnecessary images. An image may work well to represent a certain section, but it may occupy too much space or require too much description.
- A picture is worth a thousand words. Use images that give an observer the best idea possible and then keep the descriptions brief.

The colors used in the poster should not be a distraction from the actual content.

- Choose a cohesive color palette.
 - Simple is best!
 - Choose colors that complement each other.
 - Ensure all text is readable (utilize contrast).
- Usually neon colors are poor choices because of their brightness.
- Limit the number of colors that you use. Around 3 to 5 colors is often an appropriate number. 1 background color, 1 text color, and 1 to 3 accent colors often work well, but adjust the number of colors to find what works best for your poster.



Use legible fonts and sizes.

- Consider how far people will be standing away from your poster to determine how large to make your headings and text.
- Make sure that the fonts you choose can be easily read from the distance your readers will be standing. It can be tempting to use a font that is not the default font, but it needs to be something that can be easily read.

What about “virtual” posters?

- Virtual posters are (often scientific) posters designed to be viewed digitally. These posters have the advantage of allowing their designers to easily incorporate technology and interactivity. On the other hand, their format may make access and accessibility more complex.
 - Focus on your audience: Where is your poster going to be? Who is going to view it? For what purpose? How are they going to access it (device, software, etc.)?
 - **Make sure** any links work and will work for the lifetime of the poster.
 - Ensure that links are not on corresponding physical posters.
 - Make sure the poster size works across different mediums (iPhone, Android, laptop, desktop, etc.).
 - At the very least, can people on all devices open it and see the basic information/view links?
 - Have people with different devices look at the poster, open it, and let you know what works and what does not work.
 - For more information on virtual posters, consider referring to <https://www.morressier.com/post/how-to-design-an-effective-virtual-poster>

Flyers

- Flyers follow many of the same principles as posters. Please refer to the principles above to guide your compositions.
- Because flyers are generally smaller than posters, they have less content overall. They also:
 - Focus on images, colors, and graphics
 - Minimize text to absolute essentials

Slideshow Presentations

Some fun examples of what not to do in presentations:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbSPPFYxx3o>



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjcO2ExtHso>

Balance text and images.

- **Don't use paragraphs.**
- Use text to get straight to the point.

Avoid too much empty space—slides are a supplement to the spoken/verbal presentation.

- Try to consider the potential of PowerPoint as a medium. You can use space and images to illustrate main ideas while keeping the audience's interest.
- Think about other visual mediums. These mediums use more than just blank slides with information—if your presentation is just reduced to text, the audience might as well read your presentation as an article.

Use bullet points effectively.

- Consider using bullet points if that format works best to present your information.
- Use bullet points to guide a viewer through what you're saying out loud and use images to support those ideas.
- Don't just use a bullet point for everything. Doing so could cause your message to be lost. Try to only use bullet points for your key points.

Focus on basics—avoid the unnecessary.

- Avoid unnecessary use of pictures or information that could be spoken instead of contained in a bullet paragraph.
- Write the key points on the slide and elaborate on them in the spoken portion of your presentation.

Keep images on theme:

- Ask yourself if the image best represents the section at hand: methods, intro, results, discussion/significance.
- Using images can reduce “dead” space. Feel free to enlarge or crop images to emphasize their key aspects.
- Keep in mind that you don't have to explain or describe the image in the text of the slide. You can elaborate on the image in the verbal part of your presentation.



Use legible fonts and readable contrast of colors (no red text on green background).

Make sure you are using an appropriate font size.

- If you are presenting to a large room, people in the very back may have trouble reading a font size that would otherwise be readable if they were closer to the front of the room.
- If you are presenting online, you can often use a smaller font because everyone watching can read it.

Don't copy and paste from a textual report.

Content and format are not mutually exclusive.

Check criteria/requirements.

- Sometimes the order that the requirements are listed is not the best for your style of presentation. Feel free to reorder content if it is allowable for the assignment. However, double-check to ensure all necessary content is contained in your presentation, since it can be very easy to miss a detail if you are making the presentation in a different order from the criteria layout.
- Some requirements apply to the presentation as a whole or are relevant to every slide (consider something like a “professional format” requirement).

Consider going through all of the slides to see the overall idea before going through the details of each slide individually.

- Make sure everything looks like it belongs where you have placed it. “Walk through” your presentation.
- This process of looking at the big picture of your presentation can also help you understand how you intend to flow from one topic to the next.

Check for consistency, especially when working with groups.

- Use similar transitions between slides—but only use them if your audience and professionalism matches.
- No paper airplane animation please (unless you’re presenting about paper airplanes!).



Try to stick with a general theme but use some variance to keep it interesting and/or divide out subtopics.

Notes for converting between Google Slides and PowerPoint:

- Always check your formatting afterwards, making sure text isn't covered up or running off the side.
- The safest bet is to not switch between these.
- When turning in for assignments, consider submitting the PPT or Slides document as a PDF—that way, the formatting stays how you want it to be.
- Keep in mind that program generated themes also do not always convert from PPT to Slides or vice versa. Again, the best solution is just to maintain the same file format or use a PDF format.

PowerPoint (PPT) vs. Google Slides (Slides):

PowerPoint

- Auto-generated “Design ideas” (essentially templates)
- Available without internet access as long as you have the file and a compatible device
- Sharable but may not be as easy to collaborate with others
- Guides to align objects on the slides
- More option for aesthetics
 - SmartArt to make lists and diagrams more interesting and more aligned with the given topic
 - Object layering may be easier allowing for easier use of background elements
 - Broader selection of preset images in the icons section
 - Several 3D models
- Some features may only be available with Office 360 (students at S&T have this)

Google Slides

- Free templates and styles online
- Available anywhere with internet access
- Easily shareable and easy to collaborate with multiple people at once
- Guides to align objects on the slides
- Limited fonts—many can be downloaded, but may not be free
- Free to all



Videos

Use a script!!!!

- Try to break it up into manageable parts (“acts” and “scenes”).
- Remember that the video is more than just dialogue: props, movement, etc.
- A table with columns for dialogue and visuals can help organize what you need for the video.
- Even if your video is basic, try to consider what is in the background of your video.
- It may help to do a few “table reads,” where you and anyone else in the video read through the script before recording anything.

Be selective with visuals.

It may be helpful to separate video and audio files.

- This can make editing each part a bit easier
- Separating the two files is often very helpful for voice-overs and narration
- Consider the file format for your audio. This may not matter often, but some formats can be easier to manipulate than others. Be aware of what you plan to do with the audio file later.

Always do a test shot for video and audio.

Tips for Voice Work:

- Keep your pace natural.
- Break up your script into bite-sized pieces.
- Try to keep the quality of your audio as high as possible.
 - Drape blankets or recording caves to improve audio.
 - Avoid echoey areas.
 - Minimize other noises:
 - AC running
 - Fans (even on computers)
 - Street noises
 - Loud breathing
 - If possible, avoid using integrated mics in laptops. They won’t usually provide high-quality recordings.
- Steer clear of pause-y type of transitions. The dead air can take away from the overall effect of the video.



- Be mindful of inflections. Sometimes it's hard to pick up on some inflections if both parties are not in person or don't know each other.
- Tone when recording:
 - You generally want to avoid being too conversational.
 - However, also remember that it can get boring if you read like you are reading a textbook.
 - Find the happy medium. Keep in mind that your tone may change depending on the context of the video.
 - Consider using a quiet (royalty-free) music backing track to fill space. The track can fade in and out when speaking/silent in order to avoid dead space.
 - For an auditory and visual of how to sound natural while reading a script: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxCPa9J8BzY>

Consider your camera size and how you choose to position your camera.

- If you're doing a more informational type of video, keep your face in the center of the screen or slightly above the center.
- Particularly with phone cameras, the field of view can change dramatically depending on whether the camera is in landscape or portrait orientation.
- If you have a tripod (or something similar for your phone), use it.
- Make sure that your camera is focused on the correct subject.

There are resources on campus that may help with making videos.

- Camtasia on AppsAnywhere
- Toomey has spaces for video conferences.
- Library study spaces may be helpful to reduce outside noises.
- Panopto and Zoom (best if you are just recording yourself and/or your screen)

Watch your recording before presenting or submitting it. Doing so is important to make sure that everything is easily understood and that everything looks good.

Speeches

Ensure you understand your topic thoroughly.

- Speeches, however well-planned, often involved a bit of ad-libbing. On the one hand, they often aren't memorized, or aren't fully memorized, meaning that some words will be composed in the moment. On the other, speech situations often involve question-and-answer either during or after the speech. In either case, the speaker



needs to be able to say accurate things about their topic without being able to fully plan them beforehand.

Create an outline and/or a script.

- To build a well-structured speech, consider writing out the bones, including
 - The first thing you're going to say (the introduction).
 - The main points.
 - The subpoints supporting the main points.
 - The last thing you're going to say (the conclusion).
 - Transitions

Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse!

- For most, the key to giving a good speech is good writing and lots and lots of rehearsal. Practice helps your delivery and can help you be calm, cool, and confident during the actual speech.
- Transition from your script or outline to notecards or memorization.
- Rehearse your speech aloud with whatever level of support (full script, outline, notecards, none) you plan to use several times before you actually give it.
- Time your speech as you practice, especially if you have a time limit.

Keep stress in mind.

- Giving speeches can be stressful! There may be pressure involved with the purpose of the speech, and there may be social stress involved with public speaking itself. Plan for this.
- When you are stressed, you are likely to speed up while talking. Practice speaking with a consistent, measured pace.
- If you can, practice with some of your stressors in place: ask a parent or roommate to watch you give your speech, practice in the room you will be speaking in, run your presentation while you practice. The more stress you can inoculate yourself against, the better.