

## **Outils de rédaction d'un abstract, d'un article...**

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### **POSTERS**

#### **Developing an Effective Poster Presentation**

San Francisco Edit

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Using a combination of visuals and text, posters communicate concepts and data to an audience, allowing the author to meet and speak informally with interested viewers. Poster presentations provide an opportunity for investigators to present their work at scientific meetings and are preparatory for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Here is some advice to help you in developing an effective poster.

**Plan, Plan, Plan.** Start the process early. Planning is crucial. Start with the due date and work back to create milestones. Allow time for peer review and heavy editing. Make it simple, attractive, and large.

**Follow the Guidelines.** Just like with a manuscript, you need to follow the guidelines established by the meeting. It is your responsibility to know the physical requirements for the poster, including acceptable size and display format.

**Graphics.** Let graphics and images tell the story; use text sparingly. All visuals should relate to all your points and conclusions. Usually 4-6 figures are included in a poster. Make them simple, readily comprehensible, and self-contained. Keep figure legends very short (10-25 words maximum).

**Organization.** Organize posters for a vertical flow of information (up to down in columns) so the audience can view the entire poster in one left-to-right pass. Keep the sequence well ordered and obvious. If necessary, use cues - numbers, letters, arrows - to guide them.

**Headings and Title.** Use headings to help guide individuals through your poster, find your main points, and summarize your work in large letters. A reader should be able to get the main points from the headings alone. Headings should be at least 36 point in size, the title, at least 5 cm tall.

**Text.** The text should be readable, at least 24 point in size. We recommend that you use bulleted points and use an active voice. Keep text elements to 50 words or fewer. If you can read all aspects of the text when you are standing above it, then the font size is adequate. Individuals will likely be viewing and reading your poster at a distance of about 3 feet.

**Fonts.** There are two styles of fonts, sans serif and serif. For bullet points use sans serif fonts such as Arial, Helvetica, and Avant Garde. Since they are easier to read, use serif

fonts, such as Times, Roman, and Palatino, for blocks of text.

**Poster Size.** Check well in advance the size poster you will be permitted to display. Plan your poster so that it will make the best use of this space without exceeding it.

**Colors.** Use a light color background and dark color letters for contrast. Use a theme of only 2-3 colors and avoid overly bright colors.

**Mounting.** Since you will need to transport the poster to the conference, don't try to mount all of the text onto one large piece of poster board – use several smaller pieces. If you are able, create the entire poster on a single large computer generated page. This can be rolled into a tube and transported easily. This has the added advantage of enabling you to print out a miniature version and providing it to people who come to your presentation.

**Presentation.** Your poster is not your presentation, only your visual aid. Everything you put on your poster relates to a carefully crafted message. Plan and practice a three-minute presentation (Introduction: 0.5 min., Main points: 2 min, Closing: 0.5 min). Visitors to your poster may ask for additional details, so be prepared to provide more information if requested.

**Questions.** You should be able to anticipate many of the questions individuals will have and you should prepare and practice a response to those questions.

**Mistakes.** The three most common mistakes made in constructing a poster are (1) including too much text, (2) using a font size that is too small, and (3) not planning for the available space.

## Responding to Reviewers

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After submitting your manuscript, you will receive a letter from the journal's editor containing comments from the different reviewers, whose identities are normally kept confidential. The letter will either reject or provisionally accept your manuscript. If the editor has rejected your manuscript, there will usually be reasons given for the decision. If that is the case, you need to assess the reviewers' comments to determine whether your manuscript might be accepted if you made certain revisions. In the majority of cases, the editor and reviewers will be trying to help you produce a high quality manuscript.

Do not take the reviewers' comments personally. In some instances it might be bad timing. The journal might have just accepted or published a similar study. You can always submit your manuscript to another journal. If you do, it is usually best to take the reviewers' comments into consideration. Even if you feel that the reviewers have misunderstood something in your paper, others might do the same. If the editor believes that the subject of your paper falls outside the scope of the journal, there is no point in challenging this. You have no choice but to submit your manuscript to another journal.

If your manuscript has been provisionally accepted, you now need to plan a strategy for revising your paper and gaining full acceptance. This will include resubmitting a revised manuscript and responses to the reviewers' comments.

The following will assist you in responding to the reviewers' comments and resubmitting your manuscript:

1. Read all of the comments from reviewers and the editor.
2. Never respond immediately. Allow yourself a few days to reflect on the comments.
3. If the comments from the editor and reviewers can be used to improve your manuscript, by all means, make those changes.
4. If your manuscript was rejected and you still feel that your work deserves publication, send it quickly to another journal. Some data can become less relevant if too much time passes.
5. If your manuscript has been provisionally accepted, it is a good idea to respond promptly. As soon as possible, begin drafting a polite, thoughtful, clear, and detailed response.
6. Be polite. Avoid a defensive or confrontational tone in your response. The goal is to extract helpful information from the comments, adopt any useful suggestions to improve your manuscript, and calmly explain your point of view when you disagree.
7. Respond completely to each comment in an orderly, itemized manner, and, if necessary,

copy and paste into the letter any substantive changes made to the manuscript. There is no limit on the length of your response. Most editors are willing to read a long and complete response.

8. Change and modify your manuscript where it makes sense. You are not required to make every suggested change, but you do need to address all of the comments. If you reject a suggestion, the editor will want a good reason with evidence supported by references. Just because you prefer it your way is not a good enough reason.

9. Reviewers do not always agree with each other, in which case you must make a choice. Decide which recommendations seem more valid, and note in your response letter to the editor that you received conflicting advice and made what you think is the best choice.

10. If the reviewer is obviously wrong and has made a mistake, you are entitled to provide an argument and provide facts that can be referenced.

11. Sometimes you are asked to reduce considerably the length of the manuscript. You must not feel too attached to your words and should shorten the manuscript.

12. Ensure that what you say you have done to the manuscript, has in fact been done, and do make sure you follow the journal's guidelines. Editors become irritated when they find that comments made in the response letter do not match what is in the manuscript.

The process of getting a paper published in a scientific peer-reviewed journal is a challenging but rewarding one, once all your hard work finally pays off and the reprints arrive.

## Effective Use of Software in Scientific Presentations

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Many communication experts agree that there is a right and a wrong way to use presentation software like PowerPoint or Keynote. If used correctly, the software can greatly enhance your presentation. Here are some technical tips to assist you in developing an appropriate presentation.

1. Learn to use the software. Use the software's templates, accepting its defaults for point size, margins, and placement.
2. Keep the layout and style as consistent as possible.
3. Choose colors with care. The text and background colors should contrast, dark letters on a light background for small rooms, light letters on a dark background for large rooms. The background should be a solid color, no fading, photos, etc. Avoid red-green combinations because a significant fraction of the human population is red-green colorblind.
4. Use animated features in moderation. Overuse of these effects, such as slide transitions and custom animations, can be distracting. Focus should be on the content.
5. Strive for simplicity and visibility. Eliminate any words, lines, and diagrams that do not add essential information to the slide.
6. Display data using diagrams and figures instead of tables; they are easier for the audience to comprehend.
7. Keep tables simple. There should only be one table per slide. The font size for the data should not be smaller than 22 point. If you need to decrease the font size to have the table fit on the slide, eliminate some of the data or do not use the table.
8. Use fonts at least 36 point in size for titles, 28 point for main bullets, and 24 point for sub-bullets. If it can't be, read it's a waste.

9. Limit text blocks to no more than two lines each. Do not have large text blocks containing paragraphs; the audience will spend time reading the text and ignore what you are saying.

10. Use a heading on every slide.

11. Limit the number of items on each slide. Each slide should make just one or two points using 7-9 lines maximum.

12. Avoid using too many words in bold, italics, or capital letters.

13. Use the same font throughout to avoid distraction. Sans serif fonts (e.g., Arial) are easier to read and more attractive than fonts with serifs (e.g., Times New Roman).

14. Using “builds” in diagrams and text slides can be very useful. Text builds can be made even more effective if you darken previous text as new material is added.

15. Control the number of slides. Budget 2-3 minutes per slide (e.g. 30 minute talk = 10-15 slides).

16. Practice with feedback and then practice some more.