

Poster design: the short form

You might have bought this book because you have a conference coming up, you have a poster that you are supposed to present, you need help immediately and are becoming rather desperate. This isn't a great situation to be in, but these things happen.

Here are some guidelines that are extremely robust and will get you to a poster that looks perfectly respectable and that nobody will complain about.

Read the instructions and find out how big the poster boards are. In your graphics software, make your page a few inches shorter in each dimension than the listed maximum.

Divide your paper into three equally sized columns, with 2-inch (50 mm) margins around the sides and between each column ([FIGURE 1.1](#)). That is, take the width of your paper, subtract 8 inches (200 mm) for the margins, and divide by three to find your column width. If your poster is 48 inches (1,220 mm), your columns will be $13\frac{1}{3}$ inches (340 mm) wide. Yes, it's an awkward number, but computers don't care.

Across the top of your paper, put a horizontal title bar. The size you need will depend on how many words your title is. Type your title in letters more than an inch (25 mm) high. List your name, and the names of other authors, in smaller print beneath that. Do not put anything else in this area.

Consider the remaining space to be roughly divided into six sections: top left, bottom left, top center, bottom center, top right, and bottom right.

Find a high-quality photograph related to your research and put it in the top left or top center section. If you can't find a photograph, find some other kind of image of something distinctive and readily recognizable (not a graph).

FIGURE 1.1

A three-column poster layout.

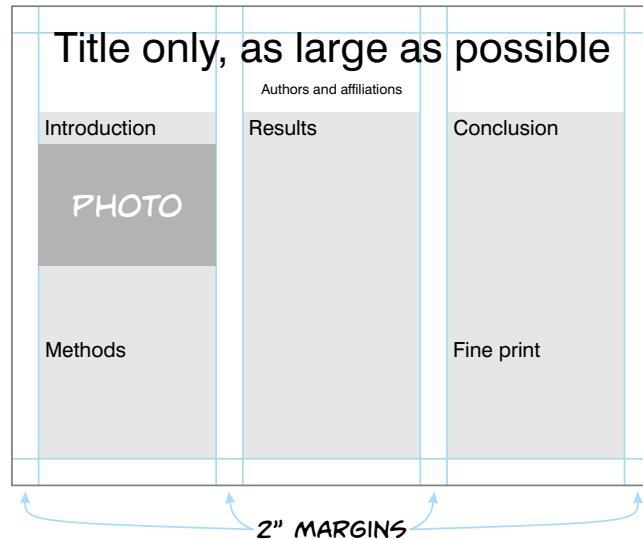


FIGURE 1.2

Final conference poster using a three-column layout.

Cloning crayfish cell culture

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Cell culture method

1. Collect embryos shortly after being produced by mother. Stabilize for 7–9 days in water at 20°C.
2. When embryos reach early gastrulation stage (embryo ~65% cells), perform serial dilutions with Dulbecco's modified Eagle medium complete (10% fetal bovine serum), from 100% water 25% water in 25% intervals, 24 h apart. Wait 24 h.
3. Prepare T25 tissue culture flasks with 3.5 ml Dulbecco's modified Eagle medium complete (10% fetal bovine serum) with 200 µl of 5.4% polyethylene glycol (antifungal agent) and 200 µl combination of nitrofurazone (antibacterial agent) and potassium dichromate (antialgal agent).
4. Place embryos in 1.5 ml tubes with media composed of 0.5 mL Dulbecco's modified Eagle medium complete (10% fetal bovine serum) with polyethylene glycol and combination of nitrofurazone and potassium dichromate.
5. Wash embryos in this media twice.
6. Pierce embryonic membrane with a 10 µl pipette tip. Collect embryonic cells and media using a 1 ml pipette, with tip cut to enlarge the opening to match the size of the embryo.
7. Homogenize embryos with 1 ml pipette tips, and suspend in 1 ml Dulbecco's modified Eagle medium complete (10% fetal bovine serum) in T25 tissue culture flasks.
8. Incubate at 28°C, 5% carbon dioxide.
9. Replace media on day 5, with additional antifungal / antibacterial / antialgal treatment.
10. Scrape attached cells on days 7–9 (based on rate of expansion and viability).

Discover more marbled crayfish research at: Marmorkrebs.org

Results

Cell attachment began about 12 hours after transfer to cell culture flasks. All structures were attached by day 5. The background had become opaque by day 7. Cells were successfully passaged to new flasks at least three times, and remained viable for at least 13 days. Mitochondrial DNA sequences for cytochrome oxidase subunit I (COI) and cytochrome B (CYTB) genes from cultured cells (day 13) confirmed their identity as crayfish cells.

Conclusion

Embryonic cell culture expands the methods for studying Marmorkrebs *in vitro* and can be used as a test bed to develop techniques for use in whole animals.

Acknowledgements

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Put an introduction and methods in the left column. Do not use an abstract.

Put your results in the middle column.

Put a conclusion in the top right section. Put references, acknowledgments, and any other fiddly bits in the bottom right section.

Align your text and graphics to the edges of your columns and do not intrude into the margins.

You can hang a poster like this on a poster board of almost any conference anywhere without risk of looking incompetent. You will see many iterations of this style in a typical poster session ([FIGURE 1.2](#)). There are still wide degrees of success in pulling off this one simple format. Attention to detail and good choices can elevate this format from competent to stylish.

This is not the only design, nor is it necessarily the best design for your content.

Now that we've done things the quick and dirty way, let's do things right by taking the long way around: a slower, but more polished approach to the conference posters. Let's start from the point of view of someone going to a poster session for the first time.

Chapter recap

- A poster layout of three evenly spaced columns with wide margins might not be exciting but it's hard to screw up.