Student Guide – Poster presentation

This guide provides some suggestions to assist you in completing a poster presentation assignment. As with any assignment, always:

1. Read the instructions of the assignment carefully.
2. Read the rubric/marking guide.
3. Clarify any concerns you have with your Unit Coordinator.

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1 What is a poster presentation assignment?

A poster presentation is a way to show your research or present a topic visually. It consists of a big poster that combines text and graphics to outline your main findings or ideas. The poster often includes pictures, charts, and short lists of facts to help explain your research or a topic. The goal is to make it easy for people to understand your main points quickly just by looking at your poster. It's a common way many professionals and academics present their research at conferences. A poster presentation assignment is great practice for the real world!

2 Planning your poster

2.1 Know the audience

Understanding who will view your poster is important. This will help you decide on what content to include and the language to use. Read the instructions for the assignment very carefully, as they should tell you who the audience is.

2.2 What is the title of your poster and the key message(s)

Your poster title will depend on the main message you want to convey. If your poster is about a topic, keep the title simple. For instance:

“Supporting students with anxiety”

“Chemical reactions”

“The Global Food Crisis”

If your poster is presenting your research, it can be a sentence – but only if it is clear and concise. Here are some examples:

"Harnessing Solar Energy: Innovative Photovoltaic Cell Designs for Increased Efficiency"

"Exploring the Gut-Brain Connection: Probiotics and Their Impact on Mental Health"

"Artificial Intelligence in Education: Enhancing Learning Through AI Tutoring Systems"

"The Economic Impact of Climate Change on Coastal Tourism: A Case Study from Australia"

"Cultural Heritage and Urban Development: Balancing Modern Infrastructure with Historical Preservation"

3 Designing your poster

3.1 Layout

Read the instructions for the assignment carefully as they may tell you what the required size and layout is. There are two basic layouts: portrait or landscape. Choose the best method for presenting the content in a logical flow, such as columns or sections with headings.

A logical flow means that the viewer will understand where to start reading/looking and where to finish. For example, from left to right, or from top to bottom.

It is important that your poster is not overcrowded and that it does include some white space (areas with no text or graphics). This includes making sure your poster has a border.

3.2 Images & Graphics

Use high-quality images and graphics that are directly relevant to your content. Do not include images or graphics just to make your poster eye-catching or colourful.

Graphs, charts, and tables will be very important, and you don't want the viewer having to squint to read them. So, try to avoid using small numbers and labels. When choosing colours it is important to have high levels of contrast between foreground and background colours.

Most important of all, use images and graphic to complement your text and to support your key message or findings.

3.3 Text

Keep any text concise and to the point.

- Use bullet points to break down complex information.
- Make sure headers and sub headers are clear and informative.
- If you need to emphasise information use underline, italics or colour highlight text. Do not CAPITALISE!

Consider the readability of your font choices and ensure that all text is legible from a standard viewing distance (between 2 and 3 metres). Some good fonts to use include Arial, Verdana, Tahoma and Times New Roman.

4 Tools to create your poster

There are many apps and websites that can help you create your poster. Consider using one that are you familiar with. This way, you will save time not having to learn a new tool. Most will require you to create an account, and some might even charge a fee for access or advanced features. Be aware of the terms and conditions for any service you sign up for! Some suggestions include:

Canva

Canva is a free-to-use online graphic design tool. Use it to create presentations, posters, and videos. Plus, it was created by people from Perth!

Venngage

Venngage is a useful tool for creating engaging tables, charts, and infographics to include in your poster.

5 Presenting your poster

Depending on the instructions for your poster presentation assignment, you may also be asked to present the poster in class along with giving a short talk.

When presenting your poster, be prepared to give a brief talk summarising it. Practise explaining your poster in a concise and engaging way. Point to the poster during your explanation, but *do not* just read straight from the poster!

You will need to be ready to answer questions from the audience, so practising with a friend, family member, or classmate is a good idea!

An effective poster will stimulate discussion and feedback.

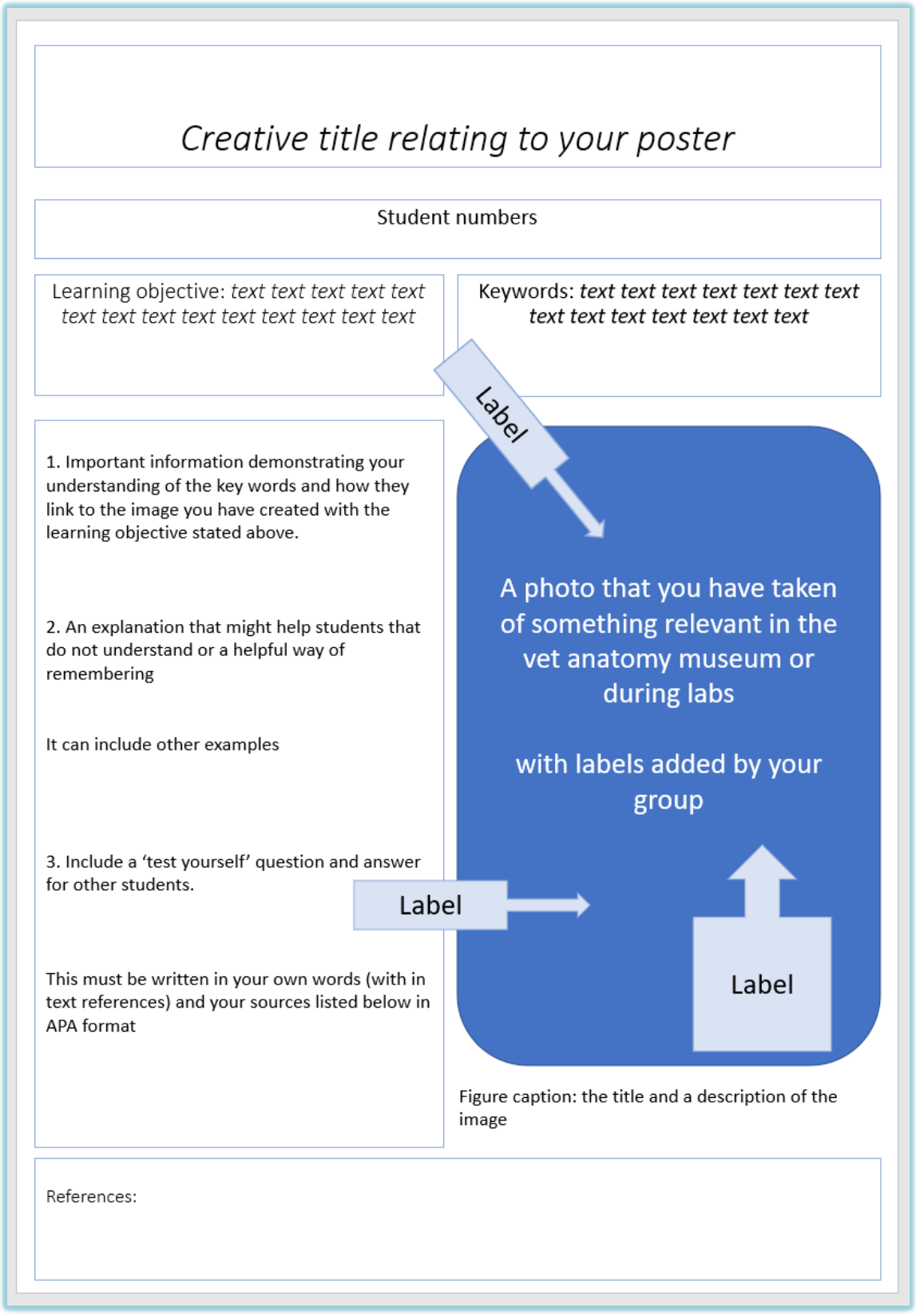
6 Referencing

A poster still needs to meet academic integrity principles, so you must read the instructions for the assignment carefully as they should provide you with advice. If you are unsure of which referencing style applies (e.g.: APA, Chicago etc.) then ask your Unit Coordinator. In general, make sure you:

- Leave room for a reference list at the bottom of your poster.
- Add citations, attributions, and captions to images.
- Include correct in-text referencing in your text.

7 Examples

7.1 Layouts

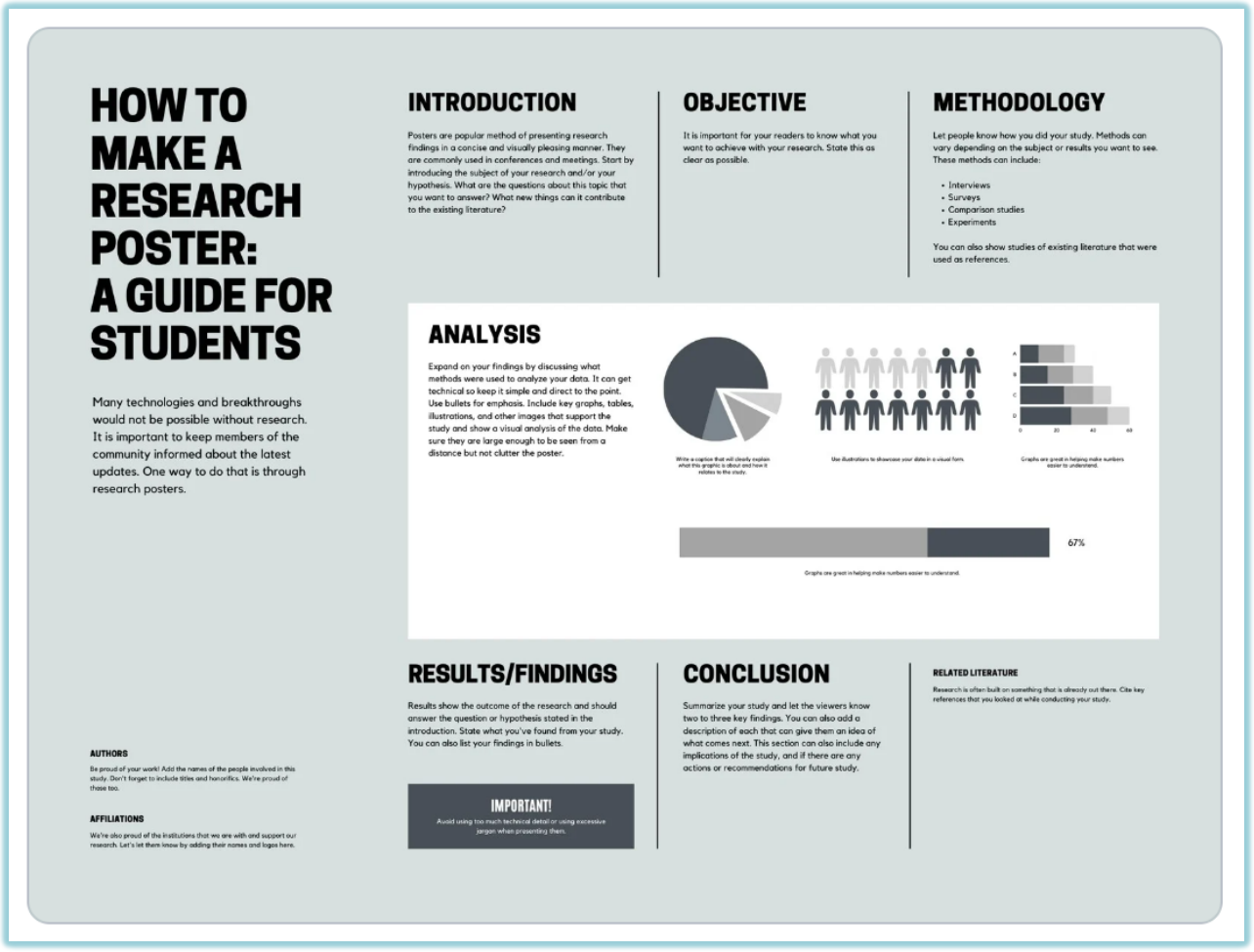


Example provided in ANS102 using PowerPoint.

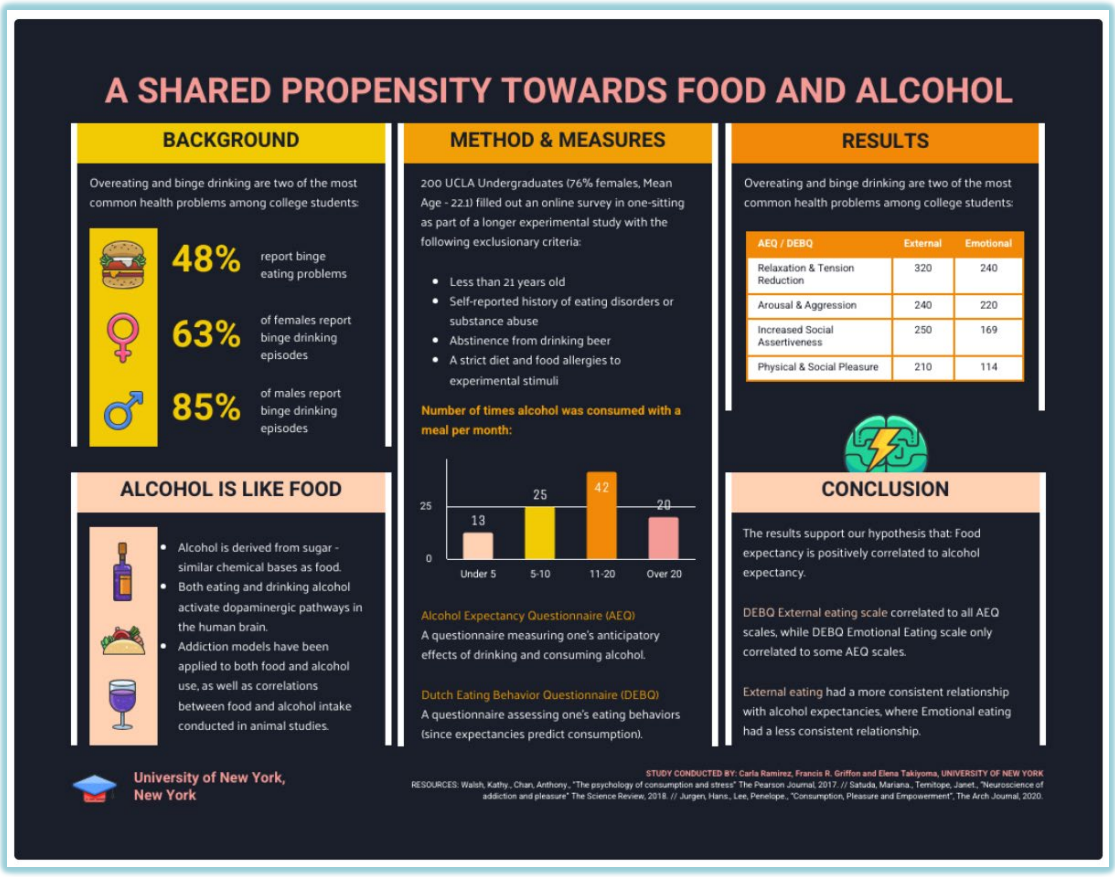
Example of columns in PowerPoint.

PowerPoint is primarily used for presentations, so you may have to adjust some settings based on the size requirements of your poster. Your poster will be created as one slide in PowerPoint. To adjust the size of a slide:

- Go to Design –> Slide Size
- Choose *Custom Slide Size*
- Set your desired width and height
- Choose the Landscape (horizontal) or Portrait orientation.
- Click OK.
- If a message appears telling you that “The current page size exceeds the printable area of the paper in the printer” just click OK.



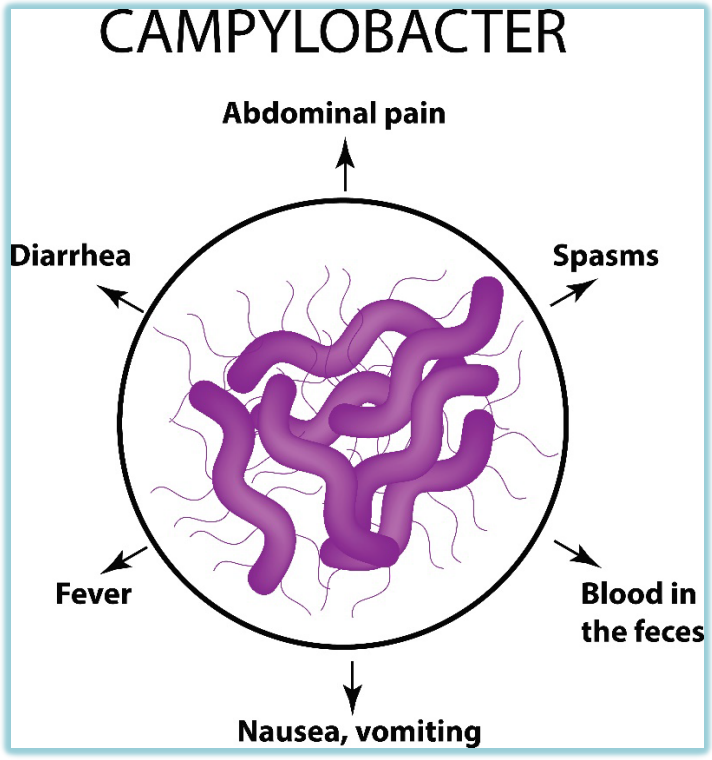
Gray Simplified Professional Landscape University Research Poster available on Canva.



Academic poster example available on Venngage.

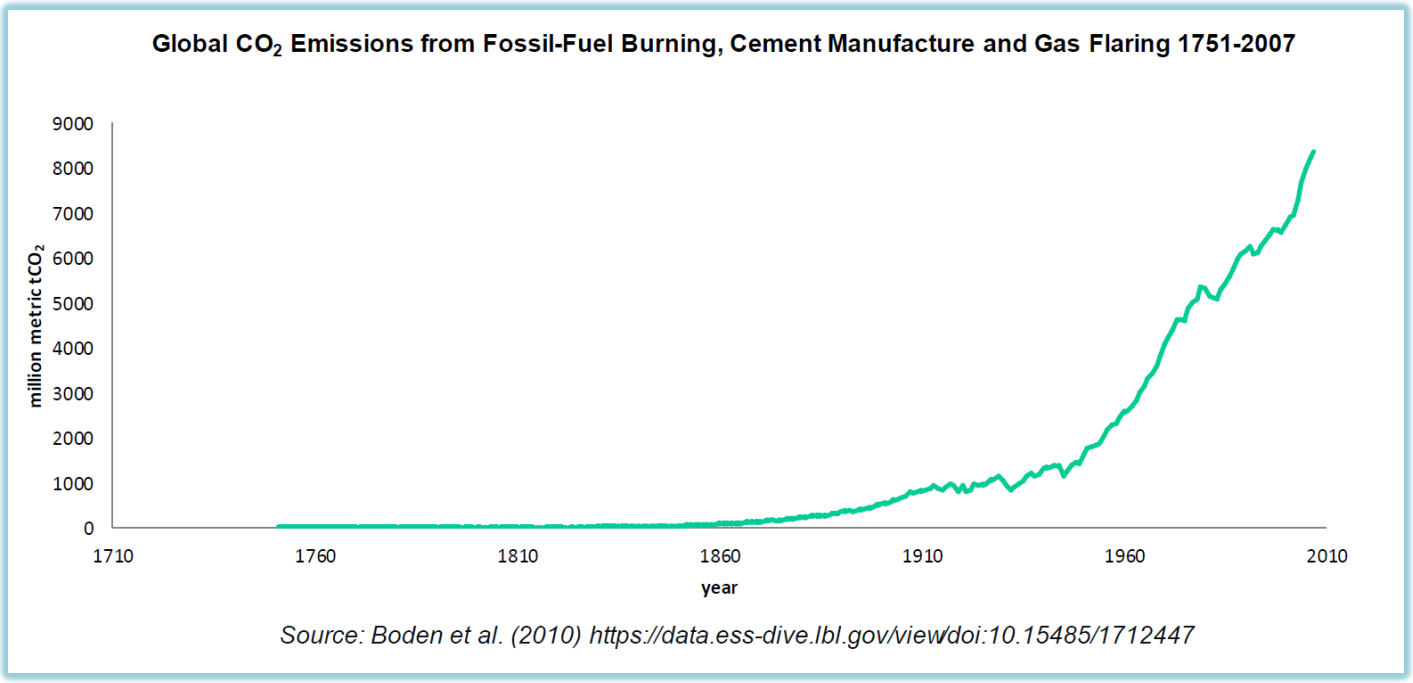
7.2 Images and Graphics

The image above is decorative and is unlikely to offer any value for viewers.



This image is better because it visually conveys a process by using arrows and labels.

The image above is decorative and is unlikely to offer any value for viewers.



Source: Boden et al. (2010) https://data.ess-dive.lbl.gov/view/doi:10.15485/1712447

A graph that visually represents the key message would be a better option.

7.3 Text and Colours

Recommended fonts include:

- Arial
- Times New Roman

Avoid fonts that mimic handwriting or that look unprofessional such as:

- *Script*
- Comic Sans

Use colour to make your poster stand out.	But avoid combinations that clash.
Make sure your text is easily readable against the background by choosing contrasting colours.	
**leave some white space between content*	

GOOD	BAD	GOOD	BAD