Creating an Academic Research Poster

SWCC Library

Prepare Your Abstract

This is your important first step towards a successful poster presentation. The abstract should convey your message in a few sentences with short paragraphs that describe the work. Your abstract provides a snapshot of why the reader should take the time to engage with the poster and you. The first sentences should describe the problem being addressed and the value of your research.

Defining Academic Research

- Academic research posters should answer a question that is supported by your abstract, including how it correlates and impacts others, and why this research matters or has significance.

- The poster summarizes information or research concisely and attractively to help publicize and generate discussion around a topic.

- The information is divided into five sections:
  - Introduction (what you did)
  - Design or methods (how you did it)
  - Results
  - Conclusion (what you learned)
  - References

Types of Research
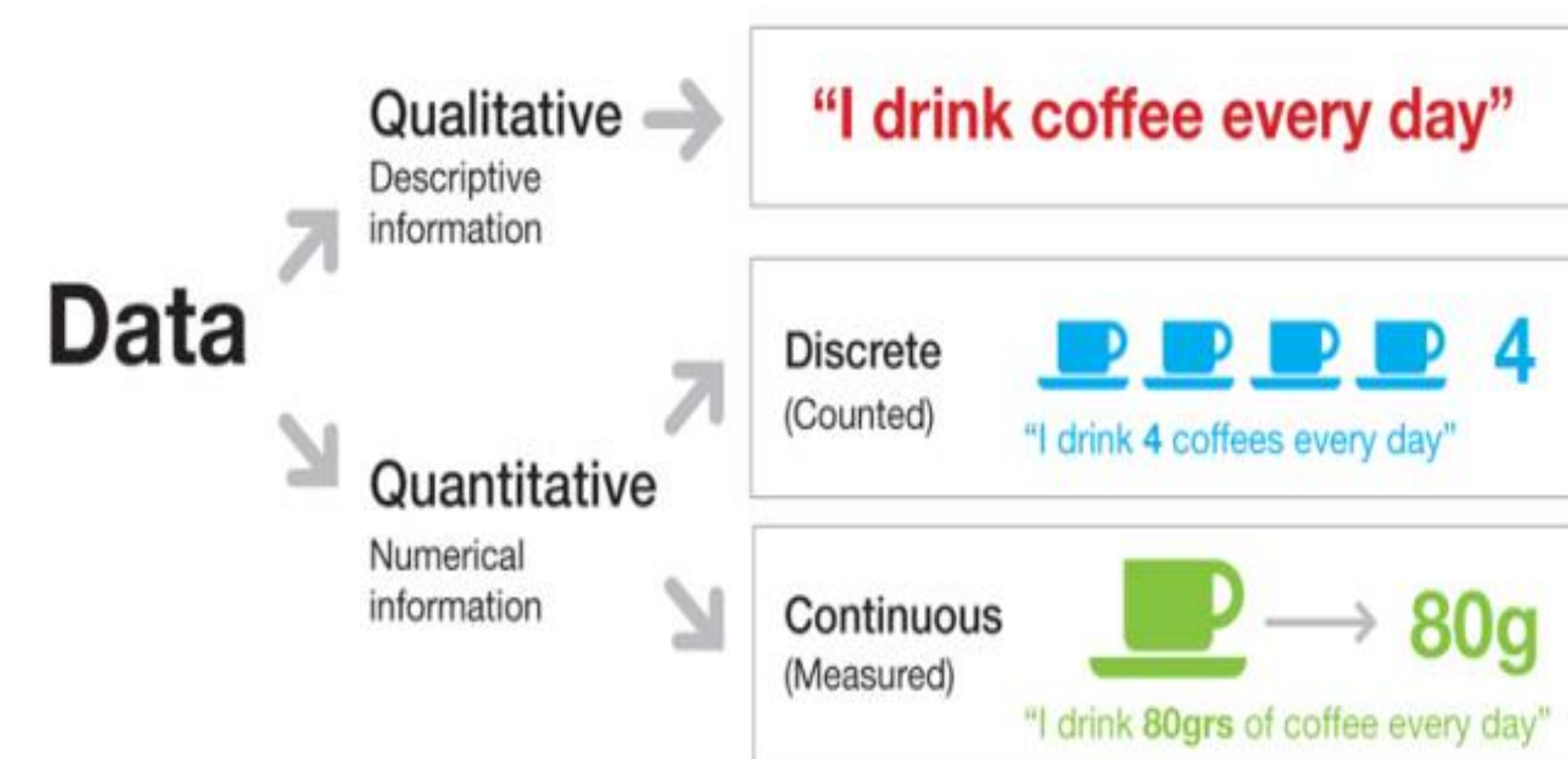
Qualitative Data	Quantitative Data
Overview:	**Overview:**
• Deals with descriptions.	• Deals with numbers.
• Data can be observed but not measured.	• Data which can be measured.
• Colors, textures, smells, tastes, appearance, beauty, etc.	• Length, height, area, volume, weight, speed, time, temperature, humidity, sound levels, cost, members, ages, etc.
• Qualitative → Quality	• Quantitative → Quantity

Use Credible Tools

Relying on credible sources is the most important part of any research presentation.

- Find peer reviewed articles based of the findings of others who specialize in the field you are researching or have some type of credentials that makes them an expert on this topic.

- These sources can be found utilizing the many different services the library has available including: text resources, databases and periodicals.

- Sometimes the information you are looking for may not have been conducted and that is when the researcher needs to make the decision to collect the data themselves through surveys, additional research and fact checking.

Webpages are more challenging and here are some tips to check their credibility:
- **Home page** – especially the "About Us" link which reveals the author or sponsor
- **Author** – Look for who the author is and what you can find out about the person or organization
- **Check the Date** – Is the information current? For many disciplines, the currency of information is vital
- **Evaluate the site you are considering**
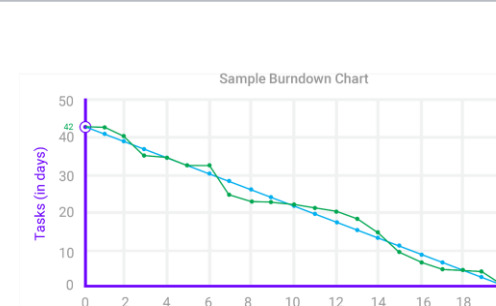- **When in doubt, check a book or database out!**

Poster Elements

- **Words**
  - Title
  - Section headings
  - Captions
  - Body text
- **Borders**
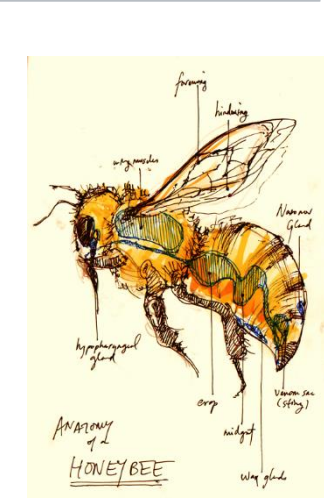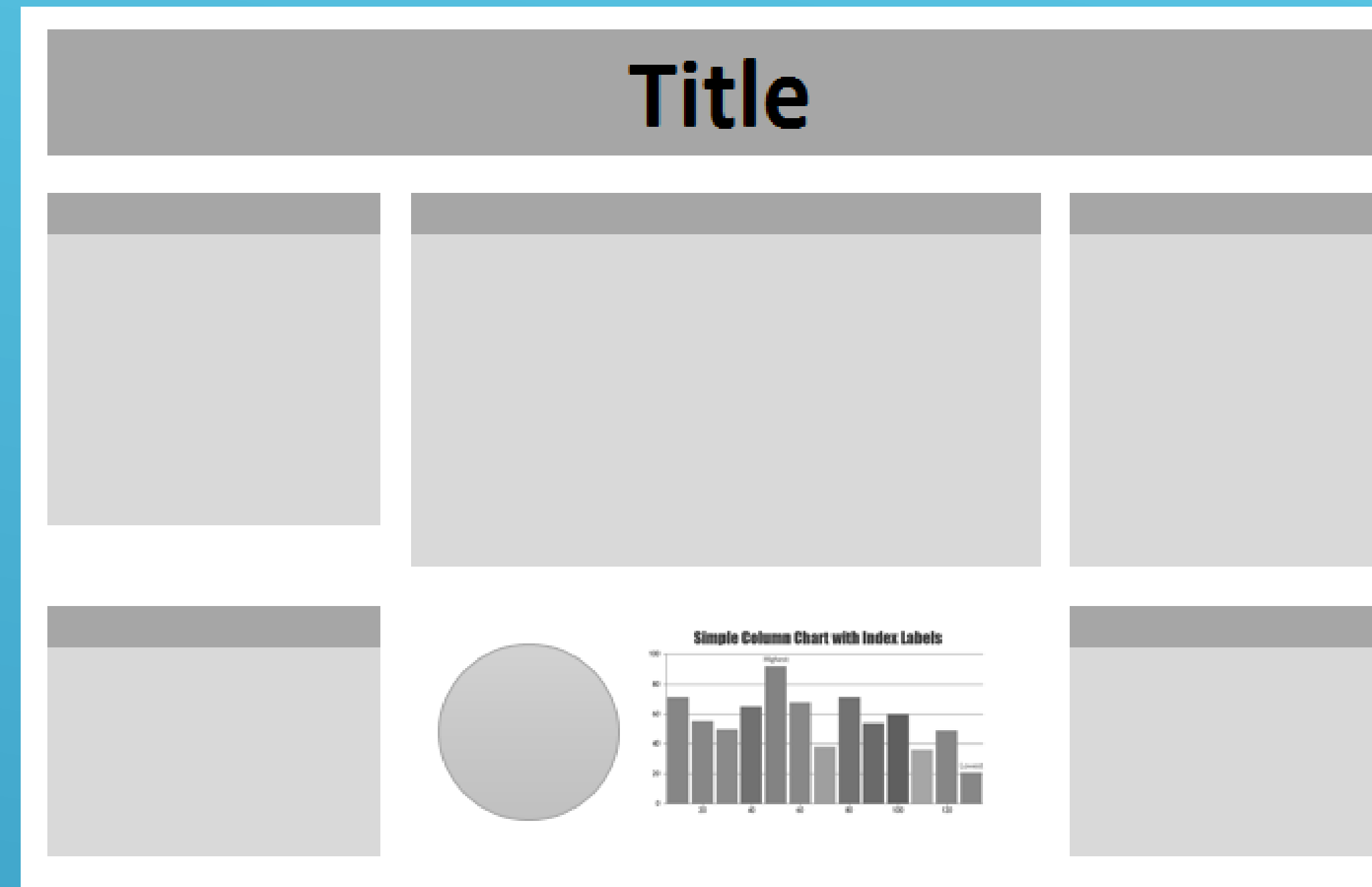- **Backgrounds**
- **Graphics**
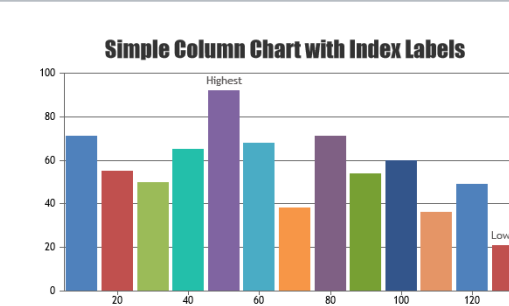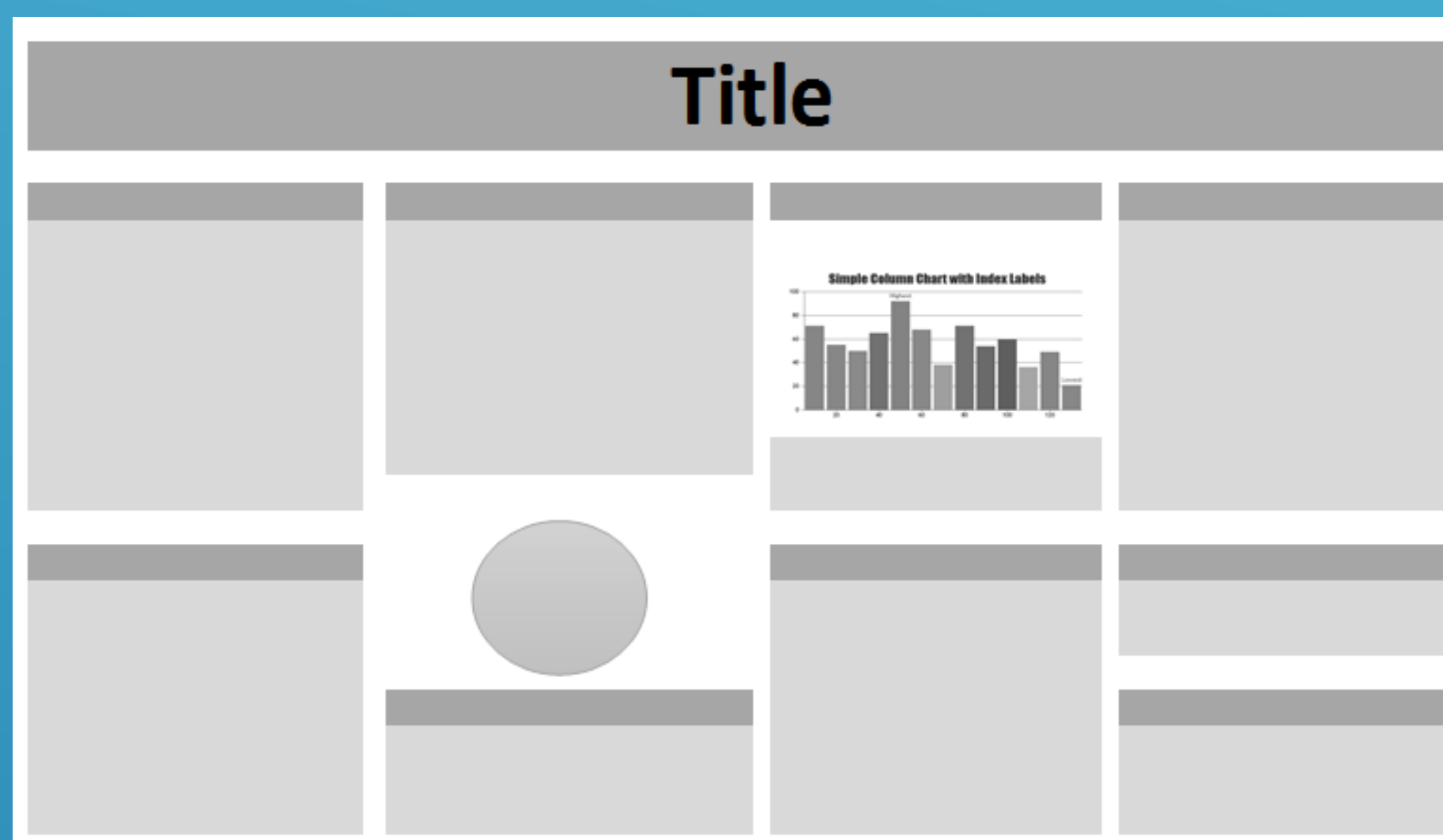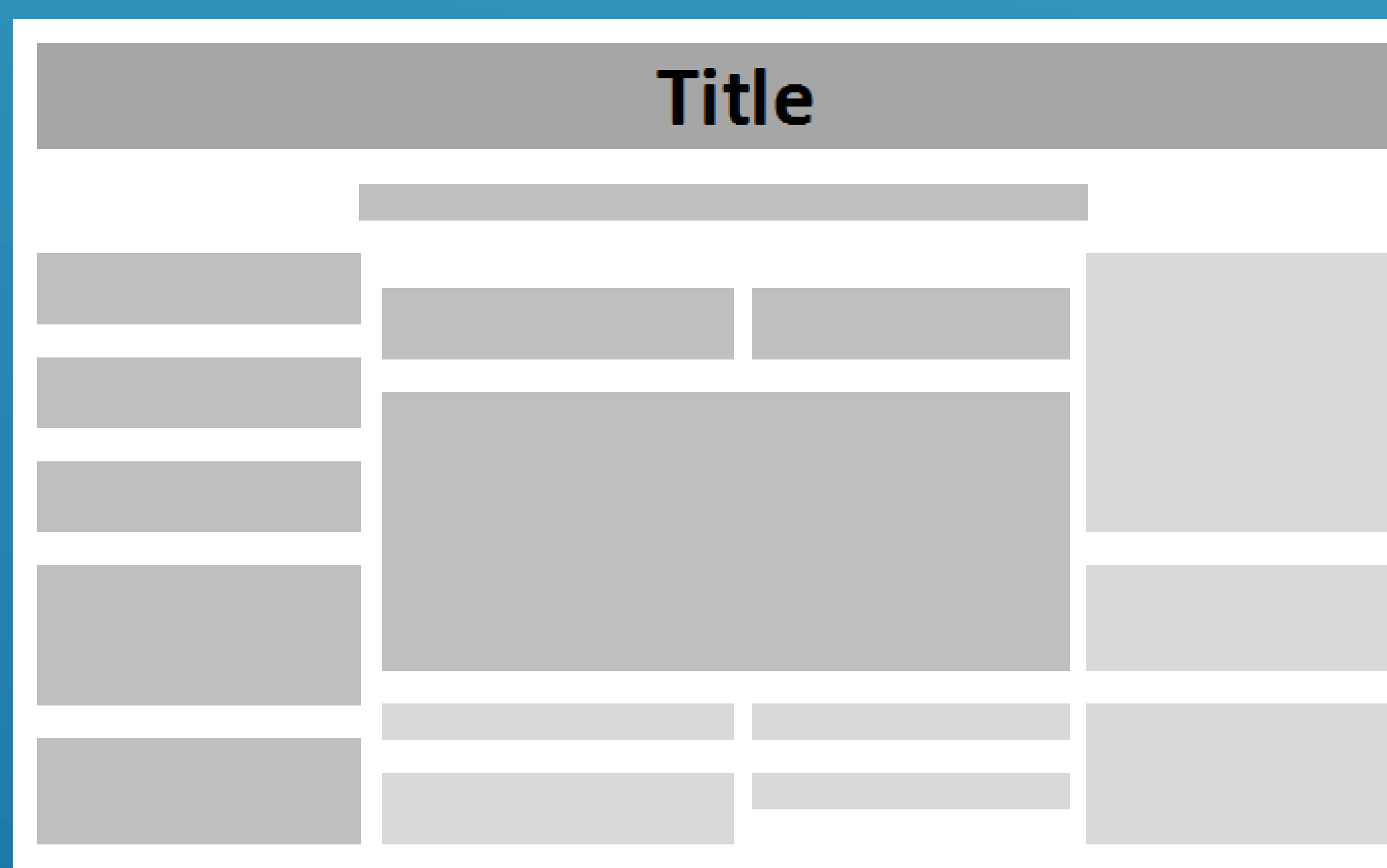
Charts   Graphs   Illustrations

Layout Options

For a 36 x 48 poster you can have a 3 or 4 column layout. It's important to have the elements aligned and the flow of information in a logical order to make it easier to read.

Title
Example 1: 3 column layout

Title
Example 2: 4 column layout

Title
Example 3: 4 column layout

Display Board Tips

- Before beginning the poster consider the following:
  - What is your target audience?
  - What is your main message?
  - What does your viewer need to know?

- Important information should be readable from 5 feet away
- Titles should be short and draw interest

- Break text up into digestible chunks
- Text should be clear and to the point
- Consistent and clean layout – don't use acronyms

- Use of bullets, numbering & headlines makes it easier to read
- Use a sans-serif font like Arial or Helvetica for titles, headlines or labels
  - Keep your title sizes around 1.5 inches in height
    - Arial at 140 point = 1.5"
  - Headings around 40 – 60 pts.
  - Labels should use a 16-18 point font

- Use a serif font like Times New Roman for body text
  - Body text should be around 24 – 30 pts.
    - Times New Roman at 24 points = .25"

- Effective use of graphics, color and fonts
- Images that look good online may not be high enough resolution to look good in print at the size you need them to be

Presentation

How you present yourself and your display board are equally important. You interact with your audience while they review your board.

Always introduce yourself. Be sure to stand to the side of your board while making yourself clearly available to answer questions and explain your board.

Stay on topic to support your abstract, research and citations. Confirm that you have answered all questions.

References

1. American Evaluation Association. (2012). How to Design a Research Poster. Retrieved March 29, 2019, from http://p2i.eval.org
2. New York University. (2016). How to Create a Research Poster: Poster Basics. Retrieved April 2, 2019, from http://guides.nyu.edu/posters
3. Covil, A. (n.d.). Designing the Display. Retrieved July 29, 2016, from http://edtech2.boisestate.edu/angelacovil/506/display.html
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5. Penn State university. (2005). Designing Communications for a Poster Fair. Retrieved April 2, 2019, from http://personal.psu.edu/drs18/postershow.postershow.pdf