

How to use PowerPoint 2013 To Create a Research Poster

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Creating a NEW poster

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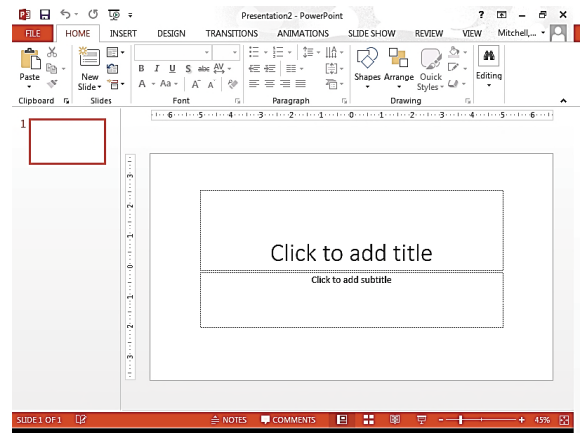
4.1 SAVING YOUR POSTER TO SEND TO THE PRINTER

Created by Bob Mitchell,

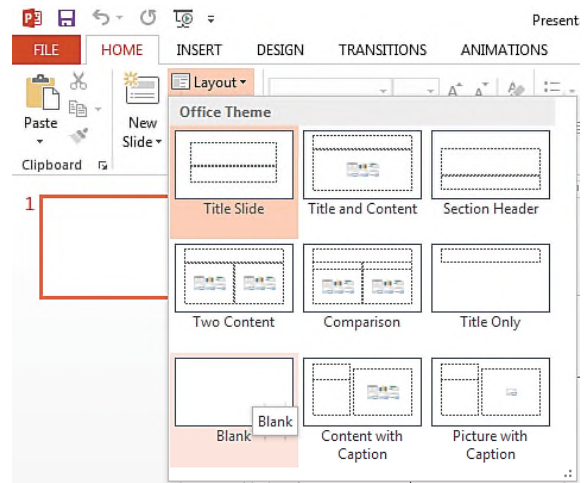
Biomedical Communications Unit, College of Veterinary Medicine, Washington State University.

1.1 USING POWERPOINT 2013: Creating a NEW poster

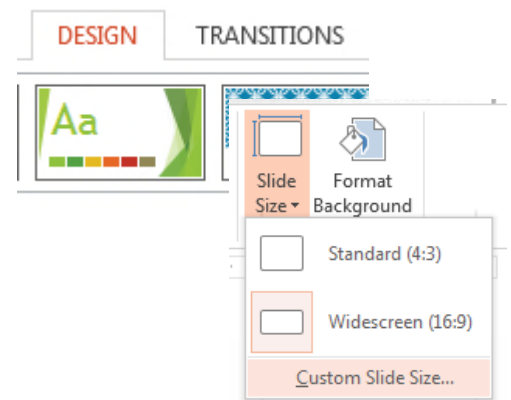
When PowerPoint first opens, it will open to a blank presentation seen at the right.



Under the **HOME** tab, click **Layout** and select **Blank**. This will give us a clean starting point.

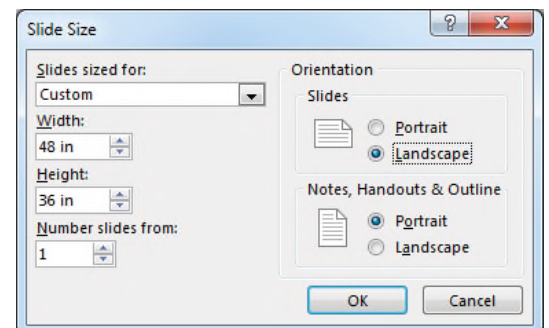


Under the **DESIGN** tab, click **Slide Size** to the top-right and select **Custom Slide Size**.



Select either **Portrait** or **Landscape** under **Orientation > Slides**. Then enter the **Width** and **Height** supplied by the particular conference guidelines.

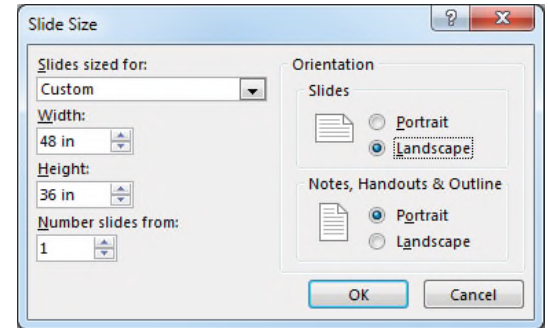
If either the Width or Height are greater than 56", you must divide both dimensions so that they are less than 56" (see the next page for more information)



1.2 USING POWERPOINT: Creating a NEW poster

PowerPoint will not allow either the Width or the Height to be greater than 56". What do you do if you need a larger poster, say at four feet x six feet (48" x 72")?

PowerPoint handles layout, text, and certain images in a vector format, which means the dimensions can be resized larger or smaller without losing quality. At BCU, we have taken properly formatted PowerPoint posters and printed them at twenty feet long or greater and have had no problems.



If **either** the Width or height are greater than 56", then divide **both** dimensions by an amount that will set them both at 56" or less.

For example, a 48" x 72" printed poster should have a layout size of 24" x 36" (both dimensions divided by two.) A 48" x 144" poster should have a layout size of 16" x 48" (both dimensions divided by three.) Don't worry about the small dimensions; it will scale up properly as long as your charts and graphs are scalable (see section 3.5) and your images are of sufficient resolution (see section 3.6).

Just be sure to let your printer know what amount to scale the file up to! For instance, if your layout is ½ the printed size, it is imperative that you let your printer know that the file needs to be printed at 200%.

Equally important is making sure your *aspect ratio* is correct. If a poster should be printed at 48" x 72" (2 x 3), then your layout aspect ratio should be the same (24" x 36" or 2 x 3).

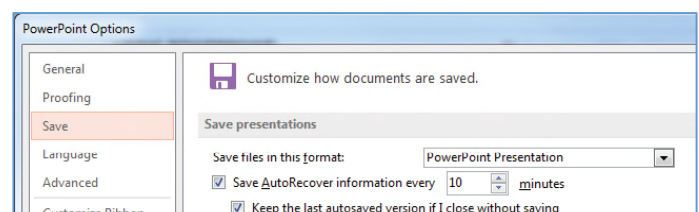
Be sure to scale both dimensions, not just the one that is larger than 56". If you try to do a 48" x 72" poster with a layout of 48" x 36", you're going to create some headaches for yourself and the printer.

SAVE OFTEN!

Don't be caught having spent hours' worth of work without saving and then the power goes out or PowerPoint crashes.

To save, click the FILE tab, then Save or Save As. Save to a location you can easily remember and give it a name that is readily recognizable.

PowerPoint 2013 defaults to saving your files automatically every ten minutes. To check the setting, click the FILE tab, then Options, then Save. Be sure **Save AutoRecover** every... is turned on and the time is set to ten minutes or less.



2.1 POSTER BACKGROUNDS:

If you choose to use a background for your poster, be sure it is just that: the background! It should be a subtle backdrop for the important content of your poster.

The best way to select your background is to click the **DESIGN** tab, then the **Format Background** button on the upper-right.

Your background should not have any sharp transitions or contrasting colors. If your content will be white, choose a dark background. If your content will be dark, choose a light background. In either case, images are not a good idea unless they are very blurred and muted.

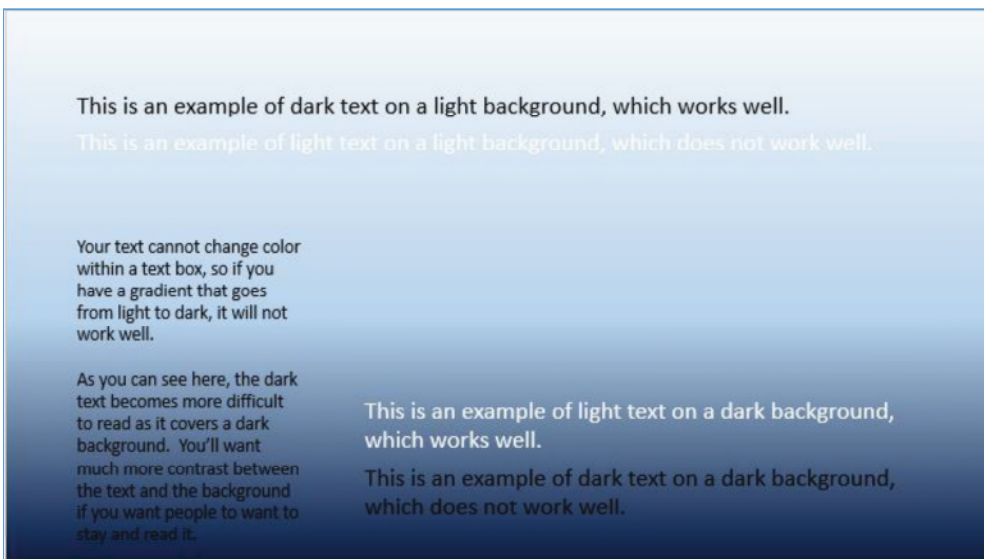
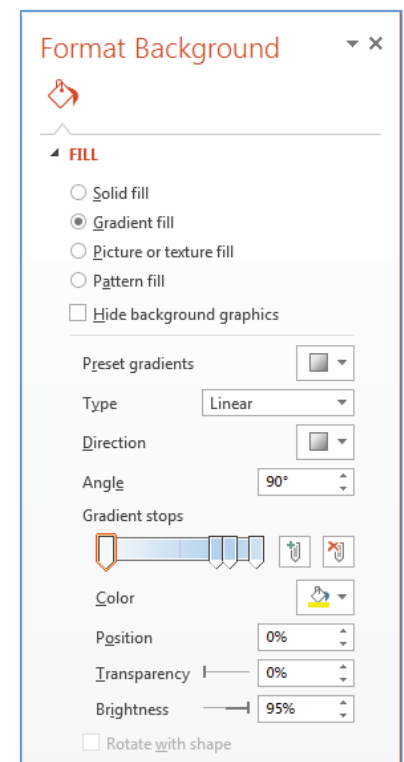
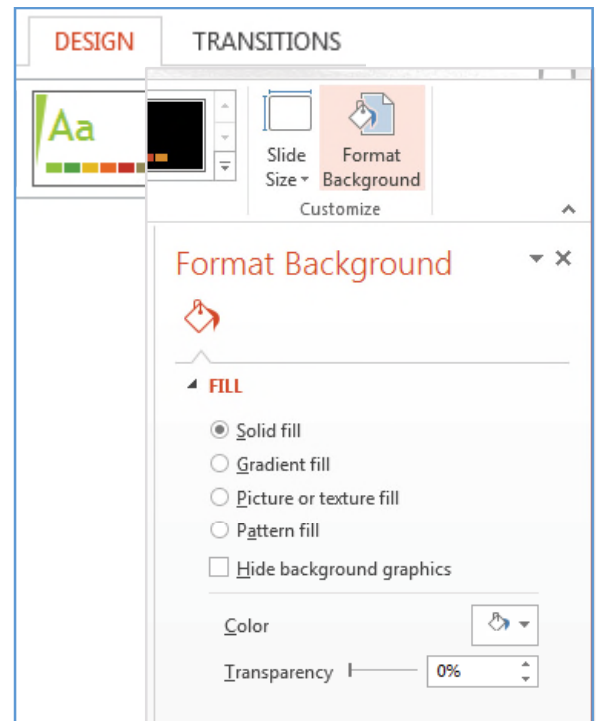
Options are:

Solid fill: a single color of your choice.

Gradient fill: a color that fades to another color. Pick a dark color that fades to a very similar dark color, or a light color that fades to a very similar light color. Do not pick a light color that fades to a dark one or vice versa, since your text will be a consistent light or dark theme.

You have some additional options with type, direction, angle, transparency and angle. Feel free to click through the settings, but remember to keep it subtle.

Gradient stops may be added if you want more control over the gradient.

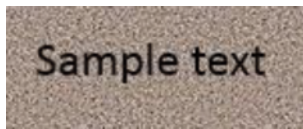


2.2 POSTER BACKGROUNDS:

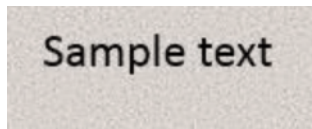
Additional background options are:

Picture or texture fill: this is an image which you can load or you can use one of the textures provided within PowerPoint. Remember to use an image or texture which will cause the text and graphics of your presentation to pop out and make the background a backdrop for your content.

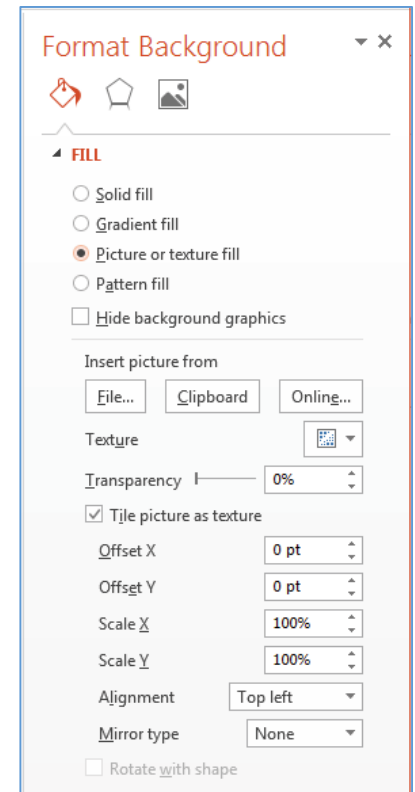
You can also experiment with scaling and transparency to make an image or texture work as a better subtle background.



texture supplied by PowerPoint

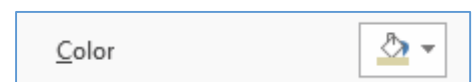


same texture with 63% transparency



The last option is **Pattern fill**, which we generally do not recommend.

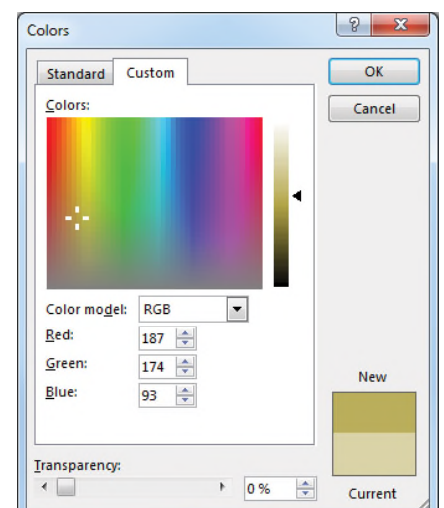
Additional colors may be found under Solid fill or Gradient fill by clicking the paint bucket icon.



FYI:

WSU Crimson is RGB 152 / 30 / 50 or Pantone 201

WSU Grey is RGB 94 / 106 / 113 or Pantone 431



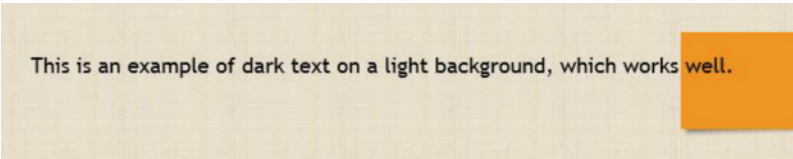
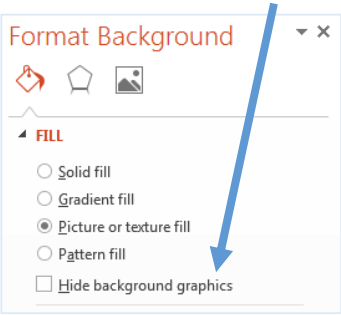
2.3 POSTER BACKGROUNDS:

Another background option:

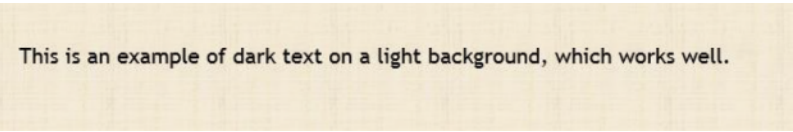
Themes are provided by PowerPoint, which are found by clicking the DESIGN tab and selecting one of the themes and their variants.



Some themes have additional graphics, which may be turned off by deselecting **Hide background graphics**.



Background graphics on

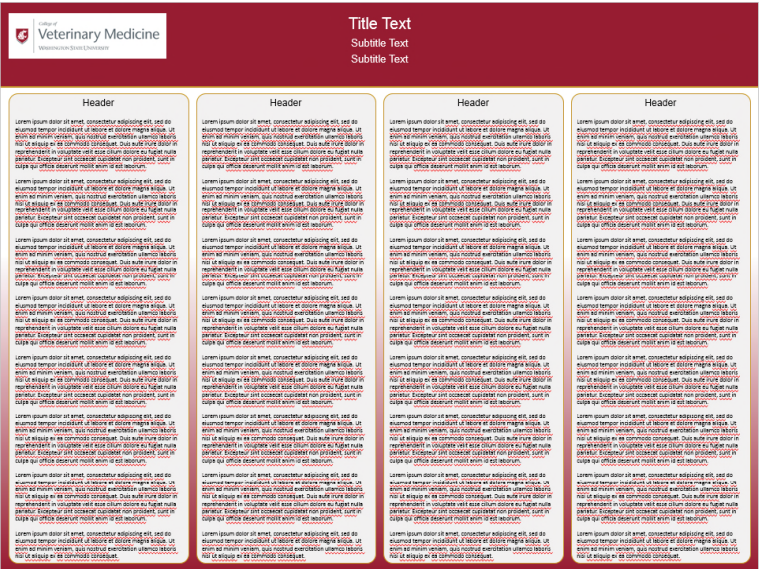


Background graphics off

BCU is also in the process of updating our poster templates, which will include several different WSU brand-friendly templates in common poster sizes.

WSU and departmental logos will also be available.

Stay tuned!



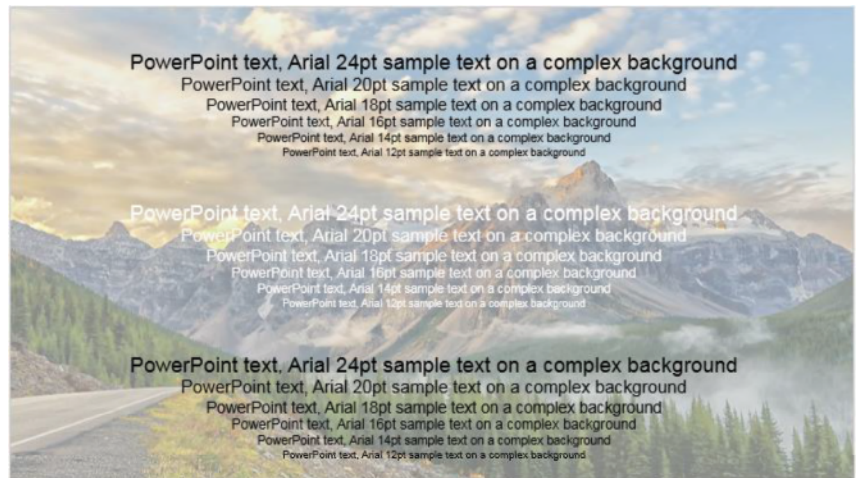
2.4 POSTER BACKGROUND SAMPLE:

This is an example of why beautiful pictures generally don't work well as a background. The image itself is stunning, but it makes the foreground text difficult to read due to too much variation in color and contrast.

This image could work if the text is placed in text boxes, but it still may draw the eye away from your primary text.



The background has been given a transparency of 54%, which is a bit more helpful.



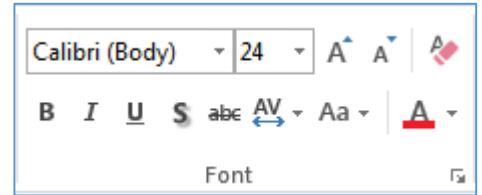
The text blocks have added boxes in order to make the text pop out a bit more. The center box has a very slight transparency in order to give some texture behind the text. The bottom box has no transparency.

This is a very rudimentary sample, but is meant to illustrate a common issue with pictures as a background.



3.1 TITLES:

The poster title is the first level of communication with the viewer. It should clearly communicate the essence of your poster to anyone attending your presentation. It should be readable from 15 feet away and therefore should be in contrast to its background and a bold font.



Typically, a sans serif font is easier to read at a glance. If you can, try a bold or semibold version of the font.

Here are some samples of common fonts (be sure to pick one that the printer uses – we always recommend using Calibri, Arial or Times New Roman. Which one(s) are easier to read than the others?

Calibri

Arial

Times New Roman

Brush Script

Impact

Vivaldi

Calibri (bold)

Arial (bold)

Times New Roman (bold)

Brush Script (bold)

Impact (bold)

Vivaldi (bold)

A serif font has extra tags at sharp corners and ends of the font, as seen in a font like Times New Roman. A sans serif font does not have the extra tags, as seen in a font like Arial.

You may notice that Brush Script and Vivaldi are difficult to read. Impact is a bold font, but becomes harder to read in a bold version.

Although you may be tempted to use a unique font, please be aware that the print shop needs to have the exact same font and if the print shop does not have it, PowerPoint will substitute a different font, which will mess up your layout. We strongly recommend using a common Windows font like Calibri, Arial or Times New Roman.

You might also consider using WordArt, which allows for some additional effects such as outline, gradients, and more. It can be found by pressing the **INSERT** tab and selecting WordArt. (Just be careful: it's easy to go from tasteful to tacky with just a couple options!)



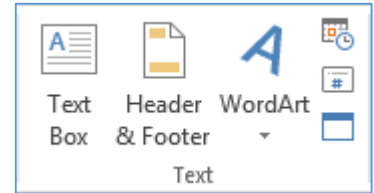
Calibri 18pt 24pt 36pt 48pt
72pt 96pt

3.2 BODY TEXT:

Text can be typed directly onto the poster layout or it can be copied from a different program (with caution – please see below.)

TEXT USING POWERPOINT:

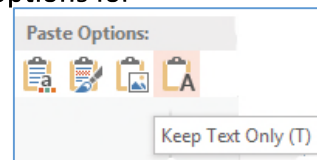
1. Click the INSERT tab and then select Text Box.
2. With the cursor, draw a box on the screen with the upper-left corner placed where you want your text to begin.
3. Begin typing your text.
4. After typing a line or two, grab the “handlebars” on the right side of the text box and bring it in to the width you prefer.



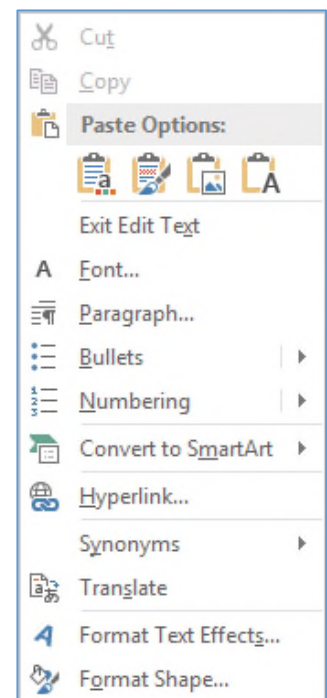
TEXT FROM ANOTHER PROGRAM:

Do not use a simple copy-and-paste technique when inserting text from another program like Microsoft Word. Using the following steps will give you more flexibility and freedom:

1. In your word processing program, select the text either from the menu or press CTRL-C on your keyboard.
2. Go to PowerPoint. Either create a new text box by following steps 1-2 of the TEXT USING POWERPOINT steps above or click on where you would like to add the text to an existing text box.
3. Right-click the mouse and you'll have some different options for pasting the text.
4. Under **Paste Options**, you'll most likely select **Use Destination Theme** or **Keep Text Only**.



An alternate method to step 3 above is to click the HOME tab and select the down arrow beneath the Paste icon. It will give you the same Paste Special options listed in step 4.



We recommend not having a large variety of fonts on a poster due to the disjointed feel that the layout will have. You may, however, wish to use various versions of the font (standard, bold, italic, bold italic) and different colors for variety. Just be sure to use it sparingly and make sure there is adequate contrast between the font color and its background.

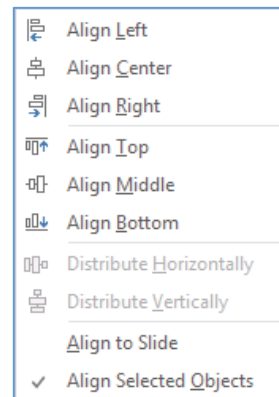
To help with layout, especially with paragraph formatting, press the VIEW tab and turn on the Ruler. You may also want to turn on Guides and even Gridlines if they are helpful. Tabs, bullets, and hanging indents are possible in PowerPoint, but they may be problematic for a novice word processor user. Unfortunately, there is too much to cover concerning that topic, but try to keep things simple if you're a beginner.

3.3 AVOID COMMON LAYOUT MISTAKES:

While working on your poster, you'll want to zoom in on the areas where you are doing the detail work. PowerPoint 2013 will help you with aligning objects (text boxes, images, charts, etc.) when you are dragging them around. You may notice dotted lines that appear and your selected object seems to "snap" to a location when you're moving it. Pay attention to where PowerPoint is thinking you may want objects to line up. You're not obligated to follow those guidelines, but they can be helpful.

When it comes to lining objects up, be sure to check out the **Arrange** functions, which are found under the **HOME** tab and clicking **Arrange**. Pay special attention to the **Align** functions – click on all the objects you want to line up and select which alignment you want to do. Take some time to play with it; you can always undo (CTRL-Z) if you make a mistake.

If you have multiple objects that you want to move together, select all of the objects and select **Arrange > Group**. If you wish to ungroup at any time, you can select **Ungroup**. Grouped objects can also be edited separately if you add an extra click when selecting.



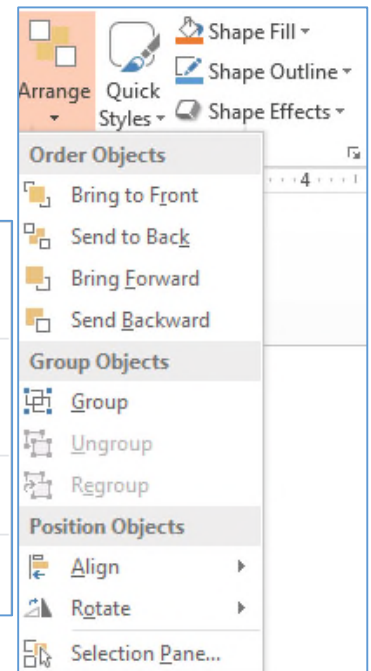
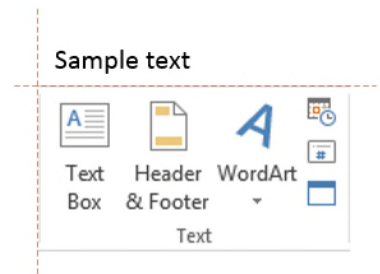
Be sure to also zoom out to view the entire poster occasionally so you can keep an eye on the overall layout. Step back every so often!

You'll notice zoom controls on the lower-right area of PowerPoint 2013. The slider will allow you to zoom in and out. Clicking on the rightmost symbol (with four arrows facing outward on the page) will show the entire poster on your screen.



It is extremely important to make sure your text is readable. To find out if it is large enough, zoom to 100% and try to read the text from 15 feet away. Less text at a larger font will always be easier to read.

And remember, if you are laying out your poster and needing to print it at 200% because of the PowerPoint size restrictions, view it at 200% to preview your text size!



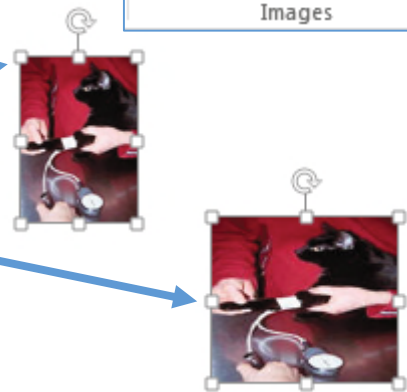
3.4 IMAGES:

If the old proverb that “a picture is worth a thousand words”, then choosing a good graphics (graphs, charts, photos, drawings) can entice many viewers and replace much of the text otherwise needed to get your point across.

To insert an image, under the **INSERT** tab, click **Pictures**.

Right-clicking on the image brings up some options, including a crop tool. Crop marks appear, which can be moved to show the portion of the image you wish to keep. Press the ESC key on the keyboard to apply the crop.

Resize images by grabbing a corner handle of the image.
Grabbing top/bottom/side handles will stretch and deform the image.



SCANNING IMAGES:

When scanning an image, save as a TIF (or TIFF) file. The TIF format saves all the image information, imports into PowerPoint, and prints well.

It is important to scan your image at the size you want it printed at. For instance, if the printed image on your poster will be 8 x 10 inches (even if the original physical image is a different size), then scan it at 8 x 10 inches, at 150-200 dpi. A 300-600 dpi will have more detail, but will not print any better than a 200 dpi file since ink dissipates slightly on a printed physical medium.

If you have the option, when saving a TIF file, select LZW Compression, which will yield a smaller filesize, but is a “non-lossy” compression scheme (kind of like a ZIP format.)

A “lossy” file format like JPEG does not work well for printing!

WEB IMAGES:

Be very careful with using graphics from a webpage. Often, the image is highly compressed, too small, or at a low dpi in order to be downloaded and viewed quickly on a web browser. If you import a small image and resize it so it's larger, you're just making a bunch of small blocky dots into large blocky dots.

Try to get the highest-resolution image you can. If the image is too large, you can use an image processing program like Photoshop or the free Irfanview.



3.4 IMAGES :

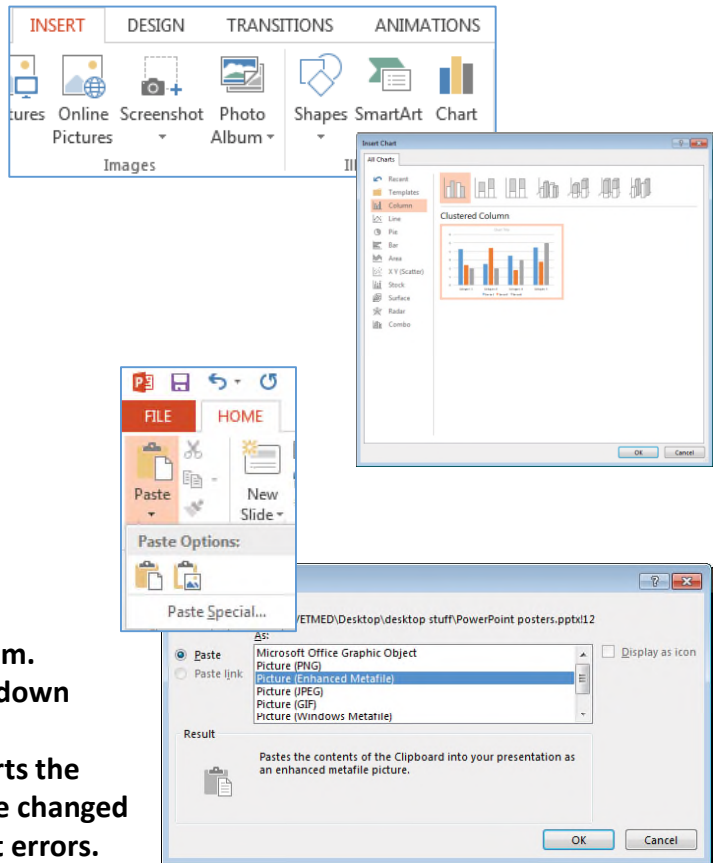
CHARTS:

Go to the **INSERT** tab and select **Chart**. This will bring up several different types of charts so you can select the one that meets your needs. After selecting one, press OK.

A default chart will be inserted into the PowerPoint slides with a spreadsheet. You can either manually replace the pre-formatted spreadsheet data or copy and paste information from another external spreadsheet.

You can also import a chart or graph from another program such as Microsoft Excel. In order to make it work for a poster, however, you will need to follow some specific steps:

1. **Copy the chart/graph from the external program.**
2. **In PowerPoint, go to the HOME tab, press the down arrow beneath Paste and select Paste Special.**
3. **Select Picture (Enhanced Metafile). This imports the document as a graphic file. The data cannot be changed from within PowerPoint, but will print without errors.**



Simply pasting the document in will allow you to change data in PowerPoint, but we often find the text moves around when printing and the chart may change appearance. A paste special of a graphic file is much better for printing purposes.

TABLES:

You can use Microsoft Word, Excel or Access to create a table.

- For a table you can easily include in PowerPoint, use Word.
- For a table that includes complex formatting (bulleted lists, custom tabs, hanging indents, cell formatting, etc.) use Word.
- For a table that includes complex calculations, statistical analysis, or charts, use Excel.
- For sorted lists, use Access or Excel.
- For full relational database capabilities, use Access.

As with charts above, follow these specific steps to import a table from an external program:

1. **Copy the chart/graph from the external program.**
2. **In PowerPoint, go to the HOME tab, press the down arrow beneath Paste and select Paste Special.**
3. **Select Picture (Enhanced Metafile). This imports the document as a graphic file. The data cannot be changed from within PowerPoint, but will print without errors.**

4.1 SAVING YOUR POSTER TO SEND TO THE PRINTER:

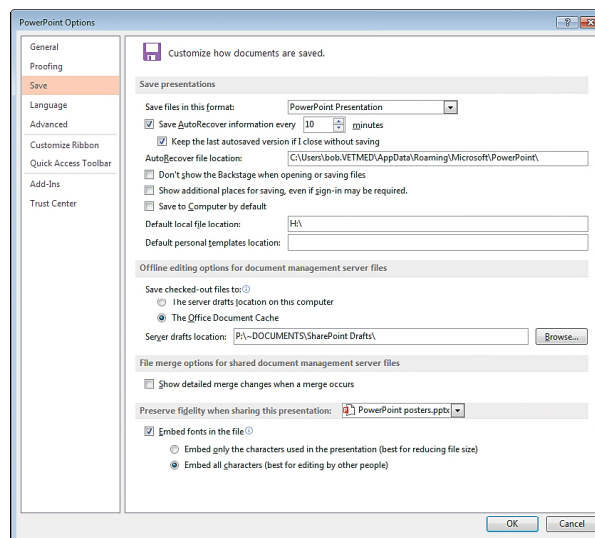
You can bring the file to us on a CD, USB drive, or drop it in our online dropbox located at:

<https://dropbox.vetmed.wsu.edu/bcu/>

If you use our online dropbox, please be sure to call us at 509-335-2624 during normal business hours **(M-F 7:30am to 5:00pm)** to make sure we received it and that we have all your information.

In order to maximize the likelihood that your poster will print properly:

1. Press the **FILE** tab.
2. Click on Options.
3. Click on the **Save** tab on the left side.
4. Turn ON “Embed fonts in the file” and “Embed all characters”
This will help us have the fonts you used if you chose fonts other than default Windows fonts.
5. Press OK and save.



IMPORTANT:

It would be a very good idea to also provide us with a PDF version of your poster.

1. Press the **FILE** tab.
2. Click on **Save As**.
3. After selecting the location, select PDF.
4. Select Standard on the lower-right.
5. Press **Save**.

