Tell readers why your work matters, what you did, what you found, and what you recommend. Avoid excessive focus on methods – it's the results and implications that count!

Minimize text – use graphics.
Keep text in blocks of no more than 50-75 words – don't create large, monolithic paragraphs of prose.

Headers should help readers find what they're looking for.

Get your message across with effective visual displays of data and small blocks of supporting text.

Think of your poster as an illustrated abstract.

Overall appearance.
Use a pleasing arrangement of graphics, text, colors.

Your poster should be neat and uncluttered – use white space to help organize sections. Balance the placement of text and figures.

Organization.
Use headings to help readers find what they're looking for: objective, results, conclusions, etc.

A columnar format helps traffic flow in a crowded poster session.

Text size.
All text should be large enough to read from 1-2 meters, including the text in figures. Title should be larger, to attract attention from far away.
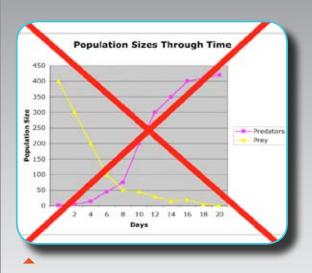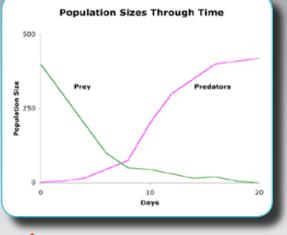
Use color cautiously.
Dark letters on light background are easiest to read. Stick to a theme of 2-3 colors. Avoid overly bright colors – they attract attention but wear out reader's eyes.

Don't fight reader gravity,
which pulls the eyes from top to bottom (first), and left to right.

Clean graphs show data clearly!

Desired message: Prey decreased as predators increased.

Message is now loud and clear!

Focus on relationships – exact values are usually not important.

Label data directly, when possible. Legends force reader to look back and forth to decode graph.

Eliminate "chart junk" to keep focus on data (Tufte 1983). Grid lines, detailed ticks on axes, data markers, and grey background are not needed.

Prepare a summary handout.

You want people to remember your work – a handout provides a written record for readers.

Your handout can include:
• a miniature version of your poster
• more detailed graphics, tables, and prose
• *complete* contact information.

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Include full contact information. You want to be found – the reader should not have to look up anything to find you.

source: Hess, G.R., K. Tosney, and L. Liegel. 2006. Creating Effective Poster Presentations.
URL=http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters, visited 11/20/2006.