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Constructing Posters in *PowerPoint 2003*™ Using a Template

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

There are many ways to create a scientific poster. An easy way is to create one giant slide in PowerPoint, then take it to a commercial print shop.

One way to design a poster in PowerPoint is to add your own information to a PowerPoint poster slide that's already been created (called a template). Another way is to design your own PowerPoint template. The tutorial in Chapter 1 uses a template. To learn how to create your own poster design see Chapter 2.

Posters are made up of elements that include text boxes, tables, graphs, images and design elements such as lines and shapes. There are two main differences between creating slides for a slideshow and creating a poster. One is that slides for a presentation have few text boxes and the format of these are controlled by a master slide, so you don't have to think about margins and hanging indents and so on. When you create a poster you have to manage multiple text boxes, manually format bullets and hanging indents, and align these multiple elements into a logical, easy to read and pleasing design. Second, a poster is much larger than a presentation slide, so you will have to zoom in to work with text and zoom out to see the poster as a whole.

When you create a poster in PowerPoint, you will be creating a presentation containing one giant slide. The slide can be up to 56 inches wide and tall, but most poster printers use paper that is 36 inches wide, so in this tutorial you will be creating a slide that is 4 ft. 8 in. wide (56 inches) by 3 ft. high (36 inches). Below are examples of poster templates containing a design (colors, font, point size, gradients, lines) and places for column titles.

Poster Templates
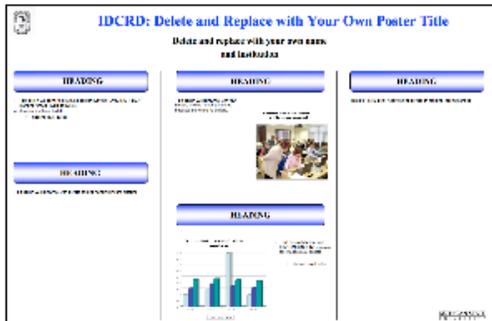
Blue Gradient

Green Gradient
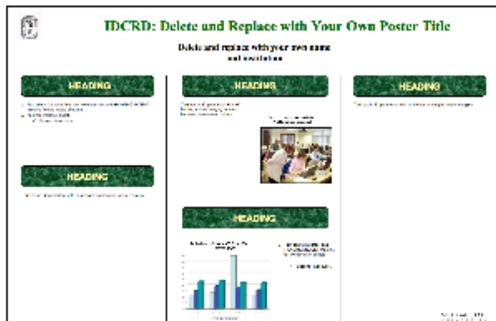
Green Marble
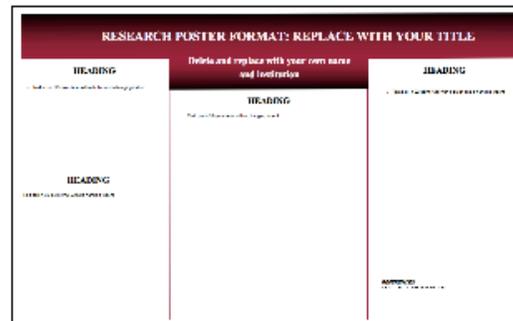
Wine Gradient

Any poster can be used as a template. Simply replace the text, images, table and graphs in that poster with your own. This poster is what you will be using for a template.
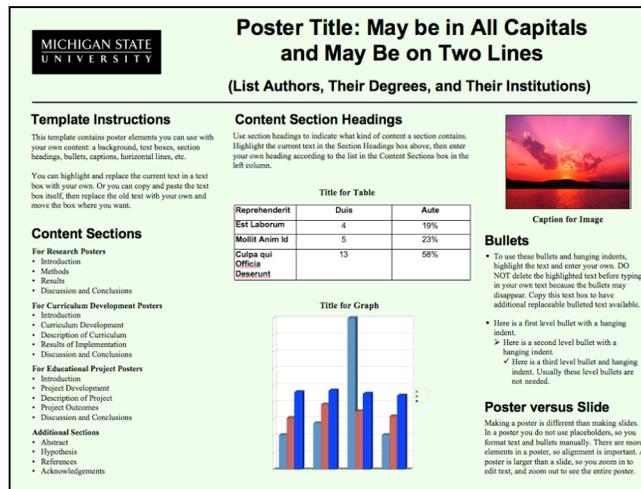
USE ZOOM VIEW

The entire poster template slide is visible on your screen, but it's too small for you to read the text. You can make it big enough to read the text, but then you can't see the whole slide at one time. You can use the **Zoom menu** on the toolbar at the top of the screen to select the view size you want.

100%	See what the poster will look like when printed. Use the scroll bars to see the parts of the slide that are off the screen. Good for checking alignment of elements.
33%	See a smaller view. Good for editing text.
Fit	See the entire poster on the screen. Good for seeing the overall layout.

1. Open the template in PowerPoint XP.

2. Locate the **Zoom** menu on the toolbar.

3. Select **100%** to see what is visible on the screen at the size. Scroll the screen to see various parts of the poster.

4. Select **33%** and scroll the screen again.

5. Select **Fit** to see the entire poster on the screen.

ENTER TEXT

You can enter text into the poster by typing text or by pasting in text from another file.

TYPE TEXT

If you want to type text into a poster, you must first create a text box in which to place it.

1. From the **Insert menu** select **Text Box**.

2. Click on the poster. A text box appears, with the cursor inside it. You can now start typing. You can change the font, size, alignment, style and color of the text just as you would for any text on a slide.

If a text box already exists and you want to add or replace text, you can click inside the text box and start typing, as below:

3. Highlight the word or words you want to replace.

4. Type the text you want. The new text will replace the highlighted text.

COPY AND PASTE TEXT

Another way to get text onto a poster is to copy it from another file, such as a Word or PowerPoint file, and paste it into the poster template. Each section of text in the poster will be contained in separate text boxes.

1. Copy the text you want from a Word file or a PowerPoint slide.

2. Go back to the poster in PowerPoint.

3. Select **Paste Special** from the Edit Menu, then select either **Formatted Text** or **Unformatted Text**, then click **OK**.

    This use of **Paste Special** allows the text to be pasted inside a text box, which means you will be able to edit and format it. If you just use Paste, the text will be pasted in as an image, which means you will not be able to edit or format it. You will be able to resize it, but this will distort the text.

4. Check the point size and change it if necessary.

MANAGE BULLETS AND HANGING INDENTS

Because there are multiple text boxes in a poster, bullets may not be formatted automatically, as they are when you create presentation slides. Here you will learn how to manage bullets.

If you are using a template, you can copy a text box that has the kind of bullet and formatting you want, and replace the text. This is one of the advantages of using a template. If you have had to create a new text box that is not formatted already, you will have to manually insert a bullet and hanging indent.

Insert a Bullet and Hanging Indent

A hanging indent is what is used to get all the text after a bullet or number to line up under the first line of text, rather than lining up at the left margin under the bullet or number. This makes the bullet or number easier to see and the text easier to read. The numbered paragraphs below use hanging indents.

1. Highlight the text you want to have a bullet and a hanging indent.

2. Click the **Bullet** button on the toolbar at the top of the screen. Notice that there is no space now between the bullets and the text, and the third line of text does not have a hanging indent but wraps to the left margin and appears right under the bullet.

3. Sometimes you can simply press the **Tab key** to insert a hanging indent, aligning the remaining lines under the first line of text. But sometimes this does not work, and you have to manually create a hanging indent.

Manually Create a Hanging Indent

Hanging indents are controlled by the two indent markers on the ruler. (If the ruler is not visible just under the toolbars at the top of the slide, open the **View menu** and click on **Ruler**.)

The **First Line Indent** marker, the triangle circled in blue on the top of the ruler, controls the left margin of the first line of a paragraph. The **Hanging Indent** marker, the triangle circled in red on the bottom of the ruler, controls the left margin of the rest of the lines of text in the paragraph.

You can move these markers independently or together. To move them together, drag them by the rectangle on the bottom of the **Hanging Indent** marker. To move them separately, drag them one at a time by the triangle only.

A hanging indent has the top marker to the left of the bottom marker, as shown above.

1. Highlight the text for which you will be creating a hanging indent.

2. Drag the bottom triangle toward the right. Now the top line is aligned at the top triangle and the rest of the lines with the bottom triangle.

Delete a Bullet and Hanging Indent

If you have text that is bulleted and you delete the bullet, you will have to delete the hanging indent as well. If you don't the top line of text will be farther to the left than the rest of the text.

1. Highlight the paragraph from which you want to delete the bullet, then click the **Bullet** button in the toolbar to turn bulleting off.

   In this example the paragraph no longer has a bullet in front of the first line, but it still has a hanging indent. Now you will remove the hanging indent so all the text lines up at the left margin.

> The Primary Care Faculty Development Fellowship Program at MSU trains approximately 18-20 primary care academic medicine fellows per year, of whom approximately nine practice family medicine. Medical education researchers have described factors that facilitate curricular change in medical schools. Educational researchers studying how academic medicine fellows apply what they have learned have described a "cost-benefit" model of transfer of training. In our research we were interested in identifying organizational and individual facilitators and barriers to implementation of fellows' curriculum development projects.

2. Drag the bottom triangle**)** to the left until it lines up with the top triangle. Now all the lines of the paragraph are aligned at the left margin of the text box.

USE TEXT BOXES

Making a poster is like fitting pieces together into a puzzle. You will have to move the pieces around to get the best fit. You may also have to resize the pieces to make them fit.

Create a Text Box

1. From the **Insert menu** select **Text Box**.

2. Click in the poster where you want the text box to be. A text box will appear, with a cursor in it, and you can start typing.

Move a Text Box

You may need to move a text box so it is not too close to another poster element.

1. Click inside the text box to select it. The border of the text box now has a diagonal design. Any changes you make to the box actually happens to the text inside the box.
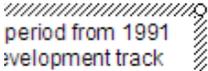
2. Now click on the **border** of the text box so that the border changes from a diagonal design to a dotted one. Now you can move the box itself instead of making changes to the text inside the box.

3. You can move the box by pressing the **Arrow keys** on the keyboard or by dragging the box with the cursor. If you drag the box, be sure to drag it by the border and NOT by one of the handles (circles) on the border.

Resize a Text Box

If a text box is too big and overlaps other text boxes, this will make it difficult to select the correct text box later. You might end up moving or deleting or making changes to the wrong text box. To avoid this problem, keep text boxes just large enough to hold the text in them.

1. Click on the border of the text box. Notice that the border now has handles (small circles on the border).

2. Drag the bottom handle up until the bottom border is just below the last line of the text.
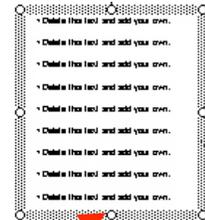
Format a Text Box

You can format a text box so that it has a border or not. You can also change the color of the border, the text and the background of the box.

1. If you want to make a text box border visible or invisible, right-click on the border, then select Format Autoshape or Format Textbox.

2. In the dialog box click on the Colors and Lines tab, then click on the Color menu in the Line section of the box.

3. Click on the color square you want. Clicking on "Automatic" will make the line black. Clicking on "No Line" will remove a border.

4. Click OK.

5. To change the background color of a box, click on the Color menu in the Fill section of the box.

6. Then click on a color box and click OK.
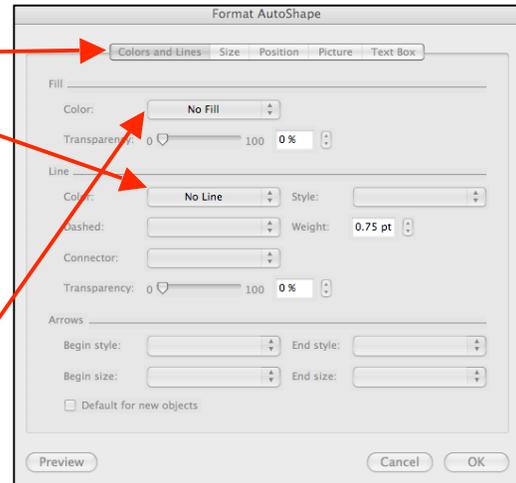
Copy a Text Box

If you have a text box that has the formatting (font, font size, bullet, indents) you want, you can copy that box, then change the text in the copy, thus retaining the formatting in the copied box.

1. Click inside the text box, then on its border.

2. Select **Copy** from the **Edit** menu.

3. Click anywhere outside the box to deselect it.

4. Select **Paste** from the **Edit** menu. The copy is pasted almost on top of the original.

5. Drag the copy by its border (NOT a handle) and place it where you want it.

INSERT IMAGES

You can insert photographs, charts, clip art and other graphics into your poster. First zoom out to FIT or 25% so you can see the entire poster on the screen because PowerPoint inserts images into the center of the poster. If you can't see the center of the poster, you may not be able to find the image or may not realize that the image has already been inserted.

INSERT AN IMAGE

1. Open the **Insert menu**, select **Picture**, then select **From File**.

2. Browse to your image file then click **Insert**. Now you will want to move the image and probably resize it.

MOVE AN IMAGE

Click in the **middle** of the image and drag it by its center to where you want it to be. Do not drag it by its border because you may accidentally resize it and distort its proportions.

RESIZE AN IMAGE

1. To decrease the size of an image, click on it to select it, then drag a **corner handle** in toward the center of the graphic.

2. To enlarge a graphic, click on it, then drag a **corner handle** diagonally away from the center of the graphic.

ADD A CAPTION

You might want to put a caption beneath images, graphs, charts or tables. To do this, insert a text box, move it to just above or below the image, then click inside the text box and type the caption.

ALIGN TEXT AND GRAPHICS

To make your poster look good, you must make sure that all elements of the poster—headings, text boxes, graphics and bullets—are lined up with each other. PowerPoint provides guides and alignment tools to help you.

USE GUIDES

The vertical and horizontal guides can help you align objects. You can see them on the slide, but they will not print. First zoom out so you can see the entire poster on the screen.

From the **View menu** select **Guides**. One vertical and one horizontal guide are displayed on the poster. (To hide the guides, select **Guides** again.)

You can drag these lines to line up text boxes and images against them.

USE ALIGNMENT TOOLS

PowerPoint has tools that align selected text boxes and images together, so if you first move one to where you want it, you can then select the ones you want aligned with it.

1. On the **Drawing toolbar** click on the **Draw button**. A menu will appear.

2. Hover the cursor over **Align or Distribute**.

3. The Align menu appears. Click on the **double dotted line** at the top of the menu.
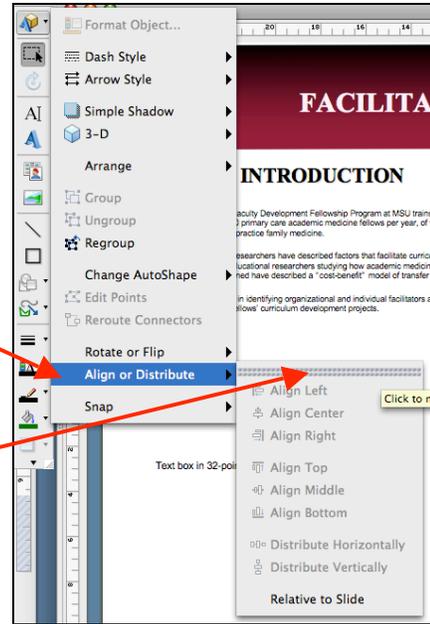
The Align menu is now a floating toolbar.

Aligning Objects

1. To align two objects to each other, click on the object to which you want to align the second object.

2. Then hold the **Shift key** down and click on the second object. Now both objects are selected.

3. Click on one of the **alignment buttons** on the **Align toolbar**. Both objects are now aligned. In this example the two headings are aligned vertically by their centers.
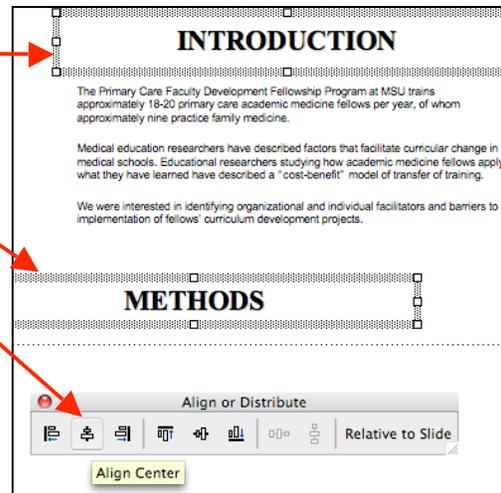
You can align objects by their centers, either vertically or, by their left or right sides, or by their tops or bottoms.

You can align objects relative you each other or relative to the slide. You can align anything that can be selected: text boxes, shapes, lines, images, tables, charts and so on.

If you have graphics that are the same size, you might want to align them by their side or top or bottom. But if the graphics are a different size, then you should align them by their center.

POSTER *FENG SHUI*

Now that you have all the elements in place in your poster, you need to see how it looks as a whole. The principles guiding the design of an effective poster are similar to those of *feng shui*: balance and harmony.

All elements of the poster, both the design elements and the content elements, need to harmonize with each other in terms of color, size, alignment and placement.

All elements on the poster need to balance each other so that one does not overpower the others.

Zoom to Fit and look at the entire poster. Then ask yourself these questions:

- Does the poster look cluttered, with too many elements and not enough white space around them? Either delete some elements or make them smaller or revise text to take up less space.

  Or does the poster look empty because of too much white space? Make the text and graphics larger, and rearrange the elements to lessen the amount of white space in one place.

- Is the text too dense (long paragraphs)? Summarize it. Put bullets in front of short summary phrases.

  Or are there too many bullets? Combine text into small prose paragraphs.

- Is there a sparing use of color that helps organize information or emphasize text or graphics?

  Or are there too many colors used, or gratuitous use of color? Limit the use of color to two or three, and only use color to organize, emphasize or facilitate understanding. Do not use color just to make the poster colorful.

  Or are there colors that do not go well together? PowerPoint provides palettes of colors that go well together. Use them.

- Are there graphics that add information to the poster? Are they easy to read?

- Is the text large enough to read at a distance of at least five feet?

- Is the information arranged logically, so that readers can follow it without getting lost?

- Are the elements aligned exactly with each other?

- Does bulleted text have hanging indents? Does the NOT bulleted text NOT have a hanging indent? Are levels of bullets different from each other?

Questions like these help you look at the graphic design of a poster to see what you might want to change to make it look better. Show a small draft of the poster to others and ask for their suggestions. When you are done, you are ready to have the poster printed.

PRINT THE POSTER

When you print a poster, you usually send it to a print shop that has a large poster printer. Before you do that, however, you should print small drafts of the poster to check out alignment, layout, graphics, and to show to others for their opinion and suggestions.

PRINT A SMALL DRAFT OF THE POSTER

1. After you have saved your poster, select **Print** from the **File menu**.

2. Select the printer you want. In this exercise use the printer called A211_CL5500. This is the color printer in the OMERAD computer lab.

3. Click **Properties** then click the **Paper** tab.

4. In the **Size is** menu scroll down to **11x17** and click on it then click **OK**. You will be printing a small version of your poster on 11x17-inch paper. Be sure to put 11x17-inch paper in the printer!

5. From the **Print dialog box** click on **Scale** to fit the poster to the 11x17-inch paper. This is a very important step, because if you forget to select Scale, the printer will try to print the poster full size.
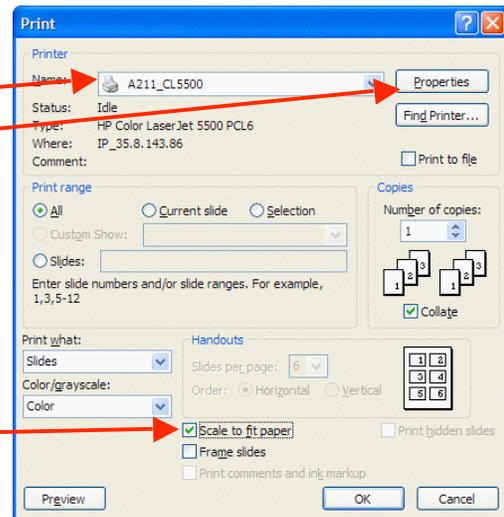
When you squeeze a large poster down so drastically in size, portions of the title box may be blank or other parts may look different. If this happens, and you do not see any reason for it in the slide in PowerPoint, try printing the poster on a larger size paper. If the problem disappears, then it was simply an artifact caused by printing the poster too small. When your poster is printed full size it will not have that problem.

PRINT THE POSTER FULL SIZE

Once you have tested your poster in a draft size and fixed any problems, you are ready to print it full size. You will need to find a place that can print posters, such as print shops, copy shops, hospital communications departments and university instructional media centers. Many of them now print posters from PowerPoint files but there are differences in how they do it. Here are some questions to ask when you call them.

Can you print a poster from PowerPoint?
>   Sometimes the print shop can print a PowerPoint slide and sometimes it may want the poster in Photoshop or as a hard copy.

What version of PowerPoint can you accept?

Make sure the version of PowerPoint that you use is the same as the one the print shop uses. If you have to convert the file to an older version of PowerPoint, print a smaller draft again in that version to make sure nothing was lost in the conversion.

How should I get the PowerPoint file to you?
Many print shops will accept PowerPoint files emailed to them or on a CD or flash drive.

What fonts can you read?
It is best to stick to commonly used fonts, such as Times Roman and Arial, because the print shop will also have these fonts. If you do want to use an unusual font, some print shops will ask you to send them the font.

What size poster can you print?
The maximum size slide that PowerPoint can create is 56" x 56". Many print shops print on plotters that use rolls of paper that are 36" high, so you need to ask what size posters they can print.

How much does printing cost?
Print shops usually price printing posters by the square foot.

How much does laminating cost? And can you do matte laminating?
For extra strength you may want to get your poster laminated. This costs more and adds glare to the poster, but does make the poster sturdier. It is possible to get a matte laminate that reduces glare.

Can you mount the poster?
You can have the poster mounted on foam core or some other rigid backing, but this makes it more difficult to take to a conference. On the other hand, if you want to hang the poster and have it last a long time, you may want to have it mounted.

How much lead time do you need?
Most print shops need at least 24 hours to print your poster, but you should ask them how much time they need.