

Giving scientific presentations: abstract, poster, talk, (paper)



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Elements of a scientific presentation

- Title and Abstract
- Background
 - The problem/issue
 - Objectives/Questions/Hypotheses
- Methods
- Results & Discussion
- Summary of conclusions
 - Hypotheses verified?
 - Implications
- Acknowledgements
- References

Abstract

Guidelines for writing abstracts for conferences:

1. Topic (dusky dolphin sexual behavior), research question (is the female choosing a mate?), methods, results, and conclusion.
2. Specific project objective. Keep the above categories in mind and identify key points (if you have a ms prepared, even in draft, consult it for each key point)
3. Arrange the key points in the order outlined in #1. Add transitional language as needed to create a cohesive story.

Writing parts of the abstract

1. Title: Try to keep it to \leq 11 words. Do not be too cute.
("The Porpoise of Pingers: Avoiding Nets?")
2. Introduction sentences that explain topic, purpose, and research question(s). (1-2)
3. Research methods (this may also include the type of data analysis you used). (1-2)
4. Results / findings. (2-6)
5. Conclusions, implications, and/or recommendations. (2-4)
6. NO "Results will be discussed"!

Research posters: Some guidelines

An effective poster is ...

Focused

Focused on a single message.

Graphic

Lets graphs and images tell the story; uses text sparingly.

Ordered

Keeps the sequence well-ordered and obvious.

Spoken presentation

- Keep it simple
- Introduce, explain, conclude
 - Tell them what you're going to say, say it, then tell them what you've said
- Focus on the most important findings
 - Leave a conclusive take-home message
 - This is not a data dump
- Be enthusiastic and confident!
 - Slow down and make eye contact
- 1 slide/minute

Basic slide guidelines

- Minimize text slides
 - ~6 lines, < 10 words/line
- If you use text slides:
 - Avoid using slides as a teleprompter
 - Talk to the audience, but don't read to them
 - Use simple animation to help audience follow your points (simple!)
- Alternative: use simple visual elements instead of text

IN SUMMARY:

Oral

- ~12 slides maximum for 10-12 min. pres.
- You control the information flow
- Walk viewers through results
- Tell them what it means

Poster

- Readable from 5 feet away
 - Title: 85 point, Authors: 56pt, Sub-headings: 36pt,
Body text: 24pt, Captions: 18pt
- You can try to control information flow, but it needs to be clear on its own
- Clearly identify conclusions

Oral presentations:

- Wide exposure
- Little personal interaction
- Only 15 minutes
- Few questions
- Rehearse
- Equipment problems
- Can be terrifying

Poster presentations:

- Smaller, more focused audience
- More detailed discussion
- Two hours!
- Lots of prep effort
- Printing delays
- Can be terrifying