

Unit 2 Scientific Poster

This unit is designed to advance your research skills by asking you to create a poster about a scientific debate or discovery related to the subject of your study. After analyzing multiple scientific articles, you will be asked to synthesize the information and present it to a more general audience using visual rhetoric.

RHETORICAL SITUATION CHART

Genre	Purpose	Audience	Role	Rhetorical Situation
Scientific poster for conference	Clearly present information about an important debate or discovery related to your subject of interest in the natural sciences to a general academic audience	General academic of non-experts in scientific fields	Junior scientist researcher	You are being asked to present on a recent debate or discovery in a scientific field for an undergraduate conference on recent events in the sciences

YOUR ROLE

You are encouraged by a professor to practice your public speaking and presentation skills by applying to a local science conference for undergraduate students. While you have not conducted your own research just yet, there is a poster presentation time specifically aimed at first or second year students to present on a topic of interest to them. This is the information that the conference provides about this poster session:

The Conference for Undergraduate Research in the Sciences is inviting abstract submissions for this year's theme: "New Debates, New Discoveries." We ask that applicants focus on debates and discoveries within the recent 10 years that are reshaping fields in the natural sciences. Posters must be standard size and presenters must plan to give a 5-minute informal presentation of their work. Abstracts for submissions must be under 300 words.

FEEDER 1: PITCH A TOPIC

For the first step in this project, you will need to choose and then conduct research on a recent scientific debate or discovery that you think may appeal to the organizers of this conference before you can send in an abstract submission about the topic of your work to the conference. As the call-for-posters from the conference states, the organizers are interested only in new debates or discoveries from the past 10 years and they are interested in hearing about how these new debates or discoveries are reshaping fields in the natural sciences. You should look for at least 2 scientific papers related to the same subject that you can analyze and synthesize for a reader.

A successful pitch (an abstract submission):

- Clearly state the debate or discovery that you will be depicting in your visualization by defining its important terms.
- Justify the practical and theoretical significance of this debate or discovery for the contemporary moment.
- Concisely summarize the major key points of the debate or discovery.
- States what major research you will refer to in your poster presentation through in-text references.
- Adopt a professional and cordial tone.
- Concisely pitch the idea for your poster presentation in 300 words.

FEEDER 2: POSTER PLAN

In order to create a good poster, you need to make a detailed plan regarding the contents and layout for your work. Luckily, the Design Lab at UNC has created a thorough worksheet that you can use not only for this specific conference posters, but all your future posters, to help you map out what your poster should look like. You will need to download and print out the Design Lab worksheet that asks you to (1) define your audience; (2) define the content you will include; and (3) draw out your poster. There are 2 additional pages at the end of the worksheet that you can choose not to print out when you submit your worksheet (instead, you will just submit 2 regular double-spaced pages containing the content, i.e. text, of your poster). You will submit this as a hard copy assignment.

Successful poster plans will:

- Show a clear idea about how you will organize your content for a viewing audience in your “Define Content” section
- Summarize most salient features of your debate or discovery by
 - Providing clear background and context of the subject
 - Explaining the exigency of the subject for our current moment
 - Articulating 2 or 3 major points about the subject given the information from the 2 sources (minimum) that you have read
- Appeal to general readers interested in science and technology, avoiding too much jargon or, on the opposite end, too much simplification.
- Include a correctly cited list of scientific papers used in the construction of this work.
- In rough sketch, show how you are going to lay out and organize your text (think about if there will be specifically named sections, where images would go, etc.)
- In rough sketch, show awareness of format demands (avoiding clutter, thinking about juxtaposition of text, images, figures, etc.).

UNIT PROJECT: SCIENCE POSTER

Your final poster must be both rigorous in its content and visually appealing to your audience of science experts, especially because many of them may not be experts in your field. What you want to do is be able to utilize the poster as a story about a particular research subject. The assignment should be submitted as a PDF.

A successful science poster will:

- Fit within the standard poster sizes.
- Have conducted significant research work on the subject that includes synthesized information from at least 2 peer-reviewed articles on subject.
- Clearly define the specific research subject you are interested in pursuing.
- Articulate 2 or 3 major points about the subject.
- Appeal to general readers interested in science, avoiding too much jargon or, on the opposite end, too much simplification.
- Include a correctly cited list of scientific papers used in the construction of this work.
- Avoid clutter or overly distracting contrast.
- Show a good mixture of text and visuals.
- Be free of grammatical and mechanical errors.