

Presenting your Poster



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Goal: Tell a memorable story and teach the audience something



What made a good story when you were 5?

What makes a good story?



Interesting, engaging pictures

Words you understand

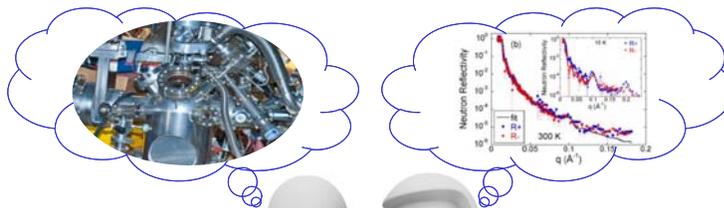
A logical narrative with a clear beginning,
middle, and end

Clear, unambiguous explanations

New ideas that stimulate your thinking

Nothing has really changed since you were 5.

Put your audience first: what they want to know, not what you want to talk about



You Your audience

Prepare a “stump speech” to introduce your poster

Should be 1–2 min.

Briefly state

- 1. What you studied and why it’s important**
- 2. What methods you used**
- 3. What your principal results are**
- 4. What you think they mean**
- 5. What you’re going to do next**

Prepare two versions—one for experts and one for novices

Be prepared to be interrupted with questions; rehearse possible answers

Coordinate the elements of your stump speech to the sections of your poster

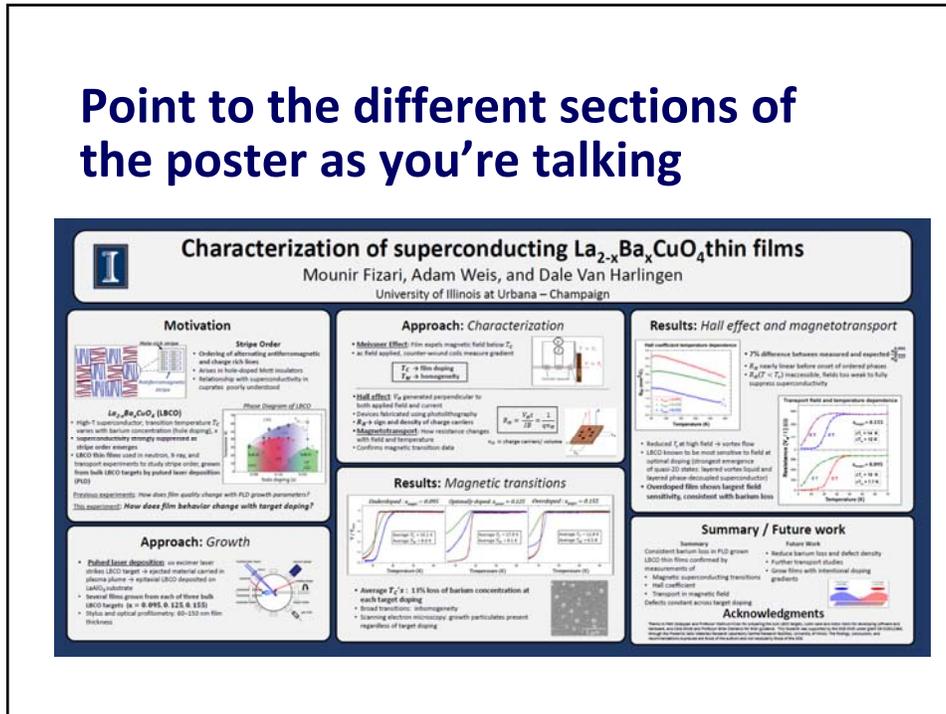
Stump speech:

- 1. What you studied/ why it’s important**
- 2. What methods you used**
- 3. What your principal results are**
- 4. What you think they mean**
- 5. What you’re going to do next**

Poster:

- 1. Motivation**
- 2. Methods**
- 3. Results**
- 4. Conclusions**
- 5. Future work**

Point to the different sections of the poster as you're talking



Prepare two versions of your stump speech

Non-experts:

- Emphasize the “big picture”
- Explain what's new and why it's important
- Use simple words—no acronyms or jargon
- Don't get bogged down in technical details

Experts:

- More technical language
- More detailed explanations of methods and results
- More math

Rehearse both versions



Out loud

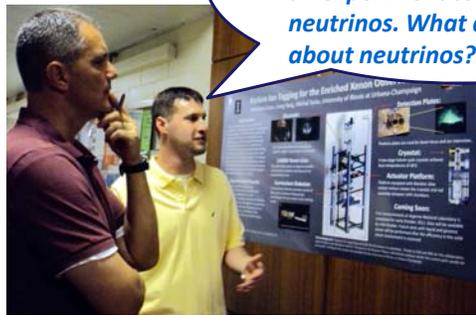
In front of real people

**Okay to write it out first, but practice until
you can deliver your lines without notes**

How do you know which version to give?

ASK!

*Hi, I'm Matt. Thanks for
stopping by. I'm working on
an experiment to detect
neutrinos. What do you know
about neutrinos?*



Be prepared to be interrupted with questions during your speech

Respond to a question as soon as it is asked,
don't just keep rattling off your speech



*That's a great question.
We're interested in them
because they are a
candidate for dark matter.*

Rules for answering questions:

Always be respectful

If you don't understand the question, ask for
clarification

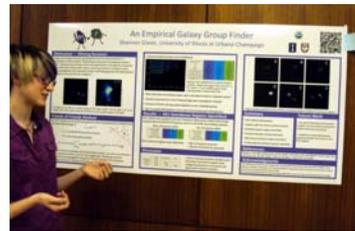
If the question is off-topic,
redirect

Don't ever argue with a
questioner—you'll just
look bad

If you don't know the answer, just say so*

*Make a note of it to ask your adviser!

*Ask for the person's email address and say you'll find
out the answer and send it to him or her.



PHYS 499 Posters, October 2012; Shannon Glavin

Find out *before* your session . . .

The location and time by which your poster is to be displayed

What kind of surface your poster will be mounted on

Whether you need to provide your own tape, thumbtacks, Velcro strips...

Whether other needed equipment will be provided (electrical outlet, table, easel)

Tip: Don't expect the meeting organizers to supply you with anything other than space

Tips for successfully presenting your poster:

Arrive early (early birds usually get the desirable locations)



Bring your own “poster hanging” emergency kit

Have your “stump speech” prepared to explain your work to visitors

- Give the big picture
- Explain why the work is important
- Have two versions—one for experts and one for non-experts

Greet each visitor with a smile; ask questions to elicit interest and level of understanding

Be prepared to mount your poster on any surface

Your poster-hanging toolkit should include:

- Push pins or thumbtacks
- Straight pins or drawing pins
- Plastic mounting putty
- Velcro® strips and glue
- Clear PCV tape or masking tape
- Scissors



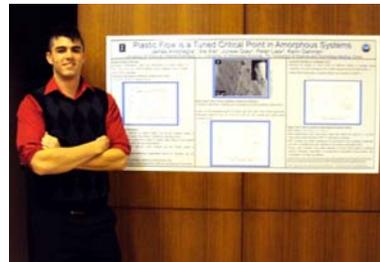
Have a permanent marker the color of your text for emergency typo corrections

Have a small notebook and pen handy for notes

Convey your enthusiasm for your research project

Greet people as they walk up to your poster
By your stance and expression, invite them to ask questions

Have your business cards, copies of your paper, or other handouts ready



PHYS 499 Posters, October 2012; James Antonaglia

Tip: Open your hands, lean forward, and smile

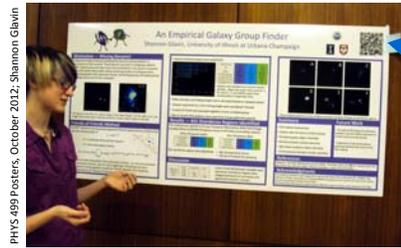
Have hand-outs available

A miniature version of your poster

An extended abstract or a summary

Reprints or preprints

Include your complete contact information



Tip: use a QR code to link to the group's web site or a copy of the paper

Tip: an 11-in × 17-in sheet of paper, folded in half, gives you four pages for additional information about your work in one handout

Some advice from the experts:

Never ever put anything on your poster that you do not thoroughly understand



**That figure you got from somebody else
and added at the last minute...**



...will be all the audience asks questions about

Some final advice:

Eat breakfast (or lunch) before your session

**Take a bottle of water with you—it's hard to
talk when your mouth feels like a desert**

Wear comfortable shoes

**Wear clothes that are loose enough you can
point to things on your poster**

**Take pride in what you've learned and done—
don't apologize**

Relax and have fun



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