research nest

LESSON 8 · RESEARCH NEST COURSE

Present Your Findings

> *If a visitor gives your poster just 60 seconds, what is the one thing they should walk away knowing?*

A presentation is not your paper read aloud

A club symposium, class talk or school fair is real research sharing

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

What you will be able to do today

State your main finding in one sentence for a specific audience

Choose between a poster, a short talk and slides, and lay each out clearly

Turn a results table into one clear chart and tell your research as a story

Practice, time your talk and answer questions honestly, including "I don't know yet"

Output: a main message, a timed 60-second pitch, a poster or slide sketch and a checklist

KEY IDEA

One main message, shaped for your audience

Before you design anything, write your main finding in one sentence of 25 words or fewer.

Who is listening?

Club peers, teachers, judges, families or experts? Pitch words and detail to them, not to yourself.

What do they already know?

Define any term a smart 14-year-old would not know. Cut jargon you do not need.

How long do they have?

Poster visitors stay a minute or two; a talk slot may be three to five minutes. Plan for that.

What should they remember?

Your one main message. Every section, chart and sentence should support it.

Adapted from: UNC Writing Center, Speeches; NYU Libraries, How to Create a Research Poster

KEY IDEA

Poster, short talk or slides?

Slides show keywords and visuals; your full sentences live in your notes

Check the symposium rules: poster size, talk length, equipment

Format	How the audience meets it	Design rule of thumb
Poster	People walk past, read from a few steps away, then ask you	Headline title, large text, few words, one big figure
Short talk (no slides)	Listeners hear each point once and cannot look back	Clear signposts, short sentences, one quote or image held up
Talk with slides	Audience splits attention between you and the screen	One idea per slide, visuals over text, about one slide a minute

Adapted from: NYU Libraries, Poster Basics; Purdue OWL, Designing an Effective PowerPoint Presentation

KEY IDEA

Tell your research as a story

Every format follows the same arc. Practice it aloud until you can tell it without notes.

Rehearse three times aloud; time each run and cut until it fits

Not sure of an answer? "I don't know yet, but here is how I would find out" is honest and fine

1. **The problem** — Why should anyone care? One concrete hook
2. **What I did** — Method in one or two plain sentences
3. **What I found** — Your main message, with one number, quote or image
4. **Why it matters** — Who could use this, or what it changes
5. **Limits and next steps** — What you cannot claim yet, and what you would test next

Adapted from: UNC Writing Center, Speeches

WORKED EXAMPLE · STEP 1 INVENTED EXAMPLE · SIMULATED DATA

Noor turns her paper title into a poster headline

Main message: in our school, noisier study spaces were linked to lower self-reported concentration

Audience: club members, teachers and visiting families at the symposium

BEFORE: THE PAPER TITLE

Background Noise and Self-Reported Concentration in Three School Study Spaces: A Mixed-Methods Study

AFTER: THE POSTER HEADLINE

Quieter study spaces, better focus? Students rated concentration 3.9/5 in the library but 2.6/5 in the cafeteria corner

WORKED EXAMPLE · STEP 2 INVENTED EXAMPLE · SIMULATED DATA

From a results table to one clear chart

Keep only the numbers that support the main message

Order bars to show the pattern; label them directly; start the scale at 0 and end at 5

Mean self-reported concentration by study space (1–5 scale; n = 31, 27, 26)



Adapted from: UNC Writing Center, Figures and Charts; Purdue OWL, Data Visualization

WORKED EXAMPLE · STEP 3 INVENTED EXAMPLE · SIMULATED DATA

Noor's 60-second pitch and a hard question

NOOR'S PITCH, THEN A VISITOR'S QUESTION

"Ever tried to revise in the cafeteria and given up? I asked how noise in our study spaces relates to concentration." [1] "84 students rated their focus from 1 to 5; I measured noise with a phone app and interviewed six." [2] "Ratings fell from 3.9 in the library to 2.6 in the cafeteria corner. Unpredictable talking was the biggest complaint." [3] Visitor: "So noise causes it?" Noor: "Not proven. The link was moderate (rho = −0.48) and students chose their spaces." [4]

Problem: a familiar hook

What I did: plain and short

What I found: numbers plus one theme

Honest answer: association, not proof

FRAMEWORK

Poster layout map

Across the top: a headline that states your finding, plus name, school and supervisor.

Aim for a few hundred words in total, with text readable from about 3 metres

Read left to right, top to bottom; the key figure is the largest item

Left column	Centre (largest)	Right column
Question: one sentence	KEY FIGURE: chart, image, quote or prototype photo	Conclusion: two or three short bullets
Why it matters: two or three lines	Main message in large type under the figure	Limits and next steps
Method: a three-step diagram	Optional small table or image	References, thanks, contact

Adapted from: NYU Libraries, Poster Basics; UT Austin Office of Undergraduate Research, Research Poster Resources

COMMON MISTAKES

Common presentation mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Why it hurts	Fix
Wall of text on poster or slide	Nobody reads it; your message gets lost	Cut to keywords; move sentences to your notes
Unreadable chart: tiny labels, 3-D, legend only	Viewers cannot see the pattern	One simple chart, large direct labels, honest scale
Reading slides aloud	Audience reads faster and stops listening	Slides show visuals; you explain in your own words
Overclaiming ("noise causes...")	Says more than your design can show	Use "linked to"; state a limit out loud
Running over time	Rushed ending, no time for questions	Time three rehearsals; cut background first

PAIRS · 20 MINUTES

Practice: build and test your 60-second pitch

Use your own project, or Noor's simulated results if yours are not ready

1. **Message (3 min)**
   Write your main finding in 25 words or fewer
2. **Visual (3 min)**
   Choose one chart, quote, image or prototype photo
3. **Sketch (5 min)**
   Draw the poster map or a five-slide outline
4. **Pitch and time (5 min)**
   Say it aloud to your partner; time it on a phone
5. **Tough question (4 min)**
   Partner asks one hard question; answer honestly

MODEL RESPONSE INVENTED EXAMPLE

Model responses: one message, one visual, any discipline

Science poster (biology)

Message: cress grew taller with more daylight. Visual: one bar chart. Limit: one windowsill, two weeks.

History talk

Message: town papers shifted from blaming to praising nurses. Visual: two short quotes from 1918 and 1920.

Engineering demo

Message: the cardboard splint held for 10 trials. Visual: the prototype, live. Limit: not tested on people.

Literature reading

Message: weather mirrors the narrator's guilt. Visual: one passage read aloud, key words highlighted.

TEMPLATE

Presentation readiness checklist

- [ ] Main message in one sentence (25 words or fewer) that a classmate can repeat
- [ ] Headline title states the finding; name, school and supervisor shown
- [ ] One key visual, large and labelled; text readable from about 3 metres
- [ ] Story arc complete: problem, what I did, what I found, why it matters, limits
- [ ] Claims match the design: "linked to", not "causes", unless you ran an experiment
- [ ] Rehearsed aloud three times and timed to fit the symposium slot
- [ ] Three likely questions prepared, including "What else could explain this?"

Adapted from: NYU Libraries; UT Austin Office of Undergraduate Research; UNC Writing Center, Speeches

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Check your understanding

Next step: present your poster or short talk at the club symposium

Bring your timed pitch and checklist; afterwards note feedback and one change

Which is the strongest poster headline?

A Noise **B** My Research Project on Study Spaces **C** Quieter spaces, better focus? Library 3.9/5 vs cafeteria 2.6/5

D A Very Long Title Listing Every Variable and Method Used

You have a four-minute talk slot. About how many content slides should you plan?

A 1 **B** 4 to 5 **C** 12 **D** 20 or more

Noor's data show rho = −0.48 and students chose their own spaces. What may she honestly claim?

A judge asks something you cannot answer. What is a good response?

SOURCES & FURTHER READING

Sources

New York University Libraries. (n.d.). How to create a research poster: Poster basics. guides.nyu.edu/posters

Office of Undergraduate Research, The University of Texas at Austin. (n.d.). Research poster resources. undergraduates.utexas.edu/academics/undergraduate-research/research-poster-resources

The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (n.d.). Speeches. writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/speeches

The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (n.d.). Figures and charts. writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/figures-and-charts

Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). Designing an effective PowerPoint presentation: Quick guide. Purdue University. owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/visual_rhetoric/designing_effective_powerpoint_presentations/index.html

Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). Data visualization. Purdue University. owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/visual_rhetoric/data_visualization/index.html

Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). Visual rhetoric: Overview. Purdue University. owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/visual_rhetoric/visual_rhetoric/index.html