

# Poster Session

---

## Purpose

Poster sessions are a well-known, authentic means for researchers to share their work and knowledge at academic conferences. Poster sessions naturally involve elements of questioning and noticing, and can easily be adapted for both presenting and sharing student work and “launching” topics through observing and asking questions about artifacts and photographs. Critical thinking, dialogue, and individual responsibility for learning are given emphasis.

## Materials

- Chart paper
- Markers for each student
- Study and/or academic assignment materials
- Listener score cards

## Procedure

1. Divide students into groups—the size of the groups will vary depending on how the topic can be divided, size of class, age of students, and so on.
2. Assign each group a specific segment of a broad topic and/or a collaborative academic assignment (e.g., one group might be assigned the legislative branch of government, another the executive branch, and another the judicial branch).
3. Have students move into groups, provide each group with materials to further enhance their study of the topic and/or complete the academic assignment, and have each group research the topic and/or complete the assignment.
4. Explain the assignment or study.
5. Explain that each group will use their prior knowledge along with their new knowledge to create a poster or other visual with key points that each person in the group will use to teach others in the class. Be clear that each person has to understand the text and images on the poster in order to present the information effectively.
6. Students complete the assignment or study, and their posters.
7. Have student groups post the work around the room or in the hallway.
8. Regroup students so each new group has at least one member from the previously established groups.
9. Give specific directions: at which poster each group will start, that they will rotate through all the posters in their groups, and how much time they will have at each poster. Explain that the speaker at each poster is the person(s) who participated in its creation. Specify the kinds of information the speaker should present to the group—a summary, a synthesis, or an important question.
10. Explain what the listeners’ jobs are as they rotate from poster to poster: to ask their presenters a certain number of questions and record the answers on their scorecards. The total number of questions expected is for the entire rotation, not for a single presenter (e.g., Listeners must ask three questions TOTAL throughout the rotation).
12. Groups rotate, listen to the presenter, and ask questions as specified on their scorecards. *continued*

## Variations

- Use Poster Sessions to introduce and reflect on new material and build background knowledge, as in the beginning of a unit or lesson. For example, several quotes, photographs, or video clips can be set up around the room, while students rotate in groups and reflect on what they encounter. In this variation, “presenters” are students who have been introduced to the posters ahead of time and act as “experts” on the poster.
- Use Poster Sessions to display and share end products (writing, artwork, anchor charts, and so on) of group work.