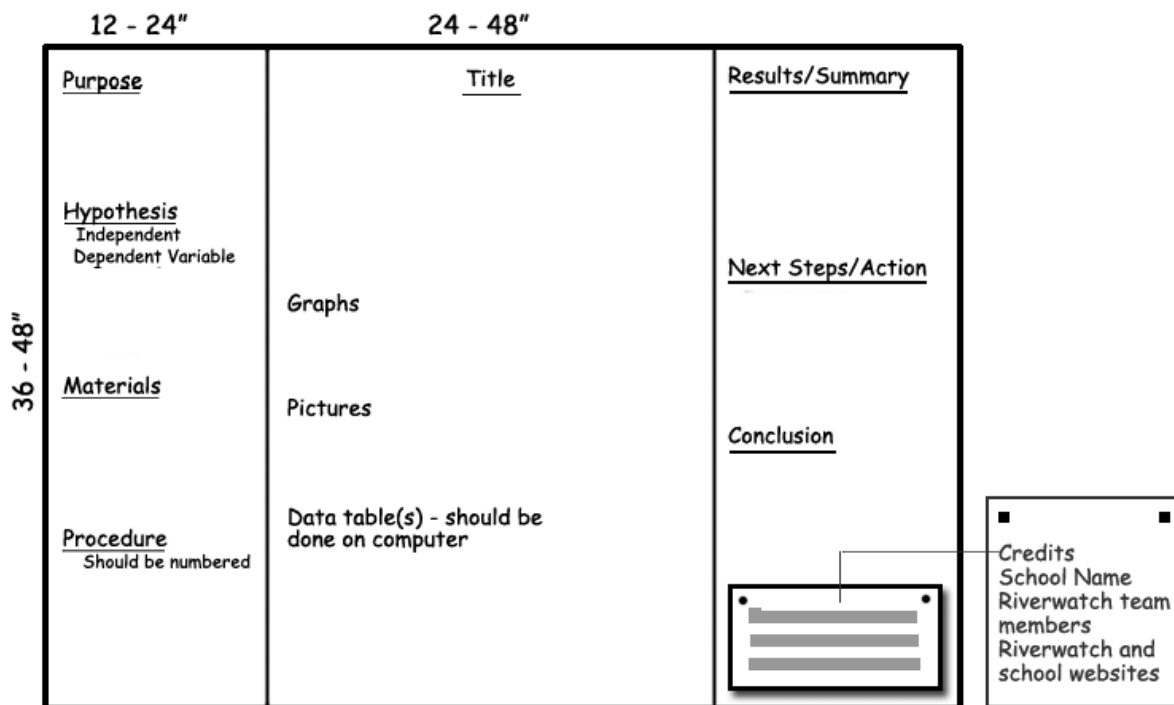


# Guidelines for Developing Riverwatch Displays

## General format

By looking at your display board, an observer should be able to clearly see your purpose and/or hypothesis, experimental data in the form of charts and/or graphs and a shortened version of the conclusion in your project paper. Arrange your graphs, charts, tables, photographs and/or diagrams neatly across your display board. Remember to take time to use stencils or carefully made letters for all printed titles. You want to give your board a "professional" or "polished" appearance. Hand written words can give a messy look to your hard work.



## Tips:

- ! Remember, it is natural for people to flow from left to right when reading your display.
- ! Don't glue until you have everything arranged.
- ! Check and double check for spelling errors.
- ! Never write directly on the board.
- ! Glitter glue should not be used.
- ! Use colored borders behind information

This is a public presentation; by planning carefully, striving to be clear in what you say and how you say it, and assuming a professional attitude you will have an educational impact (Remember, you are the water quality scientists, attempting to teach others).

1. Determine the size of your display . Most display boards are 3-panel and typically each side panel is 3-4 feet in height and 1 - 4 feet wide. They are made to sit on a 6 – 8 foot table. The center panel often is the same height as the sides but can be up to twice as wide. (see illustration)
2. Determine a specific concept you would like to get across to the audience.
3. Create and abstract and draft layout to guide your display development.
4. Determine if you have all the elements you'll need for the display:  
**Data:** Do you have the data and graphics you will need? How much time will you need to prepare the data for presentation (tables, photographs, etc.)?  
**River Watch Staff:** Does material need to be sent out and returned or do you need to meet with a river watch resource person to prepare your display.
5. There are often things that go wrong, so do not wait until the last minute to do even a simple task.

## ***Think BIG!***

1. The title banner should be readable from 15 - 20 feet away.
2. If space permits, use first names for authors to facilitate interactions, however middle initials and titles are seldom necessary.
3. Use abbreviations where possible.
4. City names, or even states, often may be dropped from the institutional affiliations.
5. There are seldom rules regarding line justification of the title. Determine if you will left or center justify the text of the title banner once it has been formatted, based upon personal preferences and space constraints.

## ***Illustrations***

The success of a display directly relates to the clarity of the illustrations and tables.

- Self-explanatory graphics should dominate the display.
- A minimal amount of text materials should supplement the graphic materials.
- Use regions of empty space between display elements to differentiate and accentuate these elements.
- Graphic materials should be visible easily from a minimum distance of 6 feet.
- Restrained use of 2 to 3 colors for emphasis is valuable; overuse is not. (Florescent colors should be avoided.)

## ***Display text***

Double-space all text, using left-justification; text with even left sides and jagged right sides is easiest to read. The text should be large enough to be read easily from at least 6 feet away.

- Section headings (Introduction, Methods, etc.); use Helvetica, Boldface, 36 point
- Supporting text (Intro text, figure captions, etc.); use Helvetica, 24 point (boldface, if appropriate)
- If you must include narrative details, keep them brief. They should be no smaller than 18 point in size, and printed in plain text. Remember that posters are not publications of record, and you can always come to the session armed with handouts.

One option is to consider using a larger size (36 pt) for the Conclusion text, and a smaller size (18 pt) for Methods text.

Other options for fonts include Helvetica, Arial, Geneva, Times Roman, Palatino, Century Schoolbook, Courier, and Prestige. Note that these fonts represent a range of letter spacing and letter heights. Keep in mind that *san serif* fonts (having characters without curlicues or other embellishments) are easiest to read.

**Be consistent:** Choose one font and then use it throughout the poster. Add emphasis by using boldface, underlining, or color; *italics* are difficult to read.

## ***Display Background***

Two basic rules to keep in mind are:

- 1) **Artistry does not substitute for content**
- 2) **The fancier the display, the greater the time investment.**

There are several common approaches.

- Some folks use pieces of mat board (or Bristol board) to make a solid background for the each display panel. They may then choose to use a complementary color as a border for important elements of the display.
- Others use smaller pieces of board to frame only the elements of the display, leaving spaces between the elements empty.

Either approach works; the former gives a unified appearance and is easier to hang straight, while the latter is easier to carry to and from the meeting. It is also possible, but often expensive, to have a commercial house reproduce your completed display panels as a single large sheet, which can then be rolled into a cylinder for transport.

The choice of a background (and complement) color is up to you. The general consensus, however, is that softer colors (pastels, grays) work best as a background - they are easiest to view for hours at a time, and offer the best contrast for text, graphic, and photographic elements.

Check with your school's art department for possible background access to or ordering supplies.

**Teachable Moment:** *You may want to invite your art teachers to help your team think about color scheme for their display!*

It is recommended to mount display materials on poster, mat, or bristol board

You may want to use a colored background to unify your poster:

- ➡ Muted colors, or shades of gray, are best for the background. Use more intense colors as borders or for emphasis, but be conservative - overuse of color is distracting. Florescent colors are not recommended!
- ➡ Two to three related background colors (Methods, Data, Interpretation) will unify the display.
- ➡ Use a light background with darker photos; a dark background with lighter photos.
- ➡ Use a neutral background (gray) to emphasize color in photos; a white background to **reduce the impact of colored photos.**

Example of possible layout for Riverwatch school/community watershed display board. Not all items are applicable to all partners, and other items of interest may be added. Be creative - think OUTSIDE these boxes!

■ **Red River Basin Resources**

- issues and needs
- history
- goals/purpose of program  
how does it address above noted needs?

**Hypothesis**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Procedures**

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**School site map related to location in the Red River Basin**

Photos of monitoring activities being done at your sites. Use captions to explain what is being monitored and why.

■ **Summary**

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Next Steps/Actions  
Future Plans**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

■ **School Information**

- Role in Riverwatch
- Riverwatch team members
- Operational overview
- Website and contact information