

Make a Poster With Excel

By Lorrie Jackson

WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?

You will learn how to make a classroom poster using Microsoft Excel.

What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

This techtorial contains instructions for Microsoft Excel XP, but the directions are similar for earlier versions of Microsoft Office.

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard V.c. in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#), click Standards in the menu bar on the left, and then click the arrow to the right of Standards and Performance Indicators for Teachers.

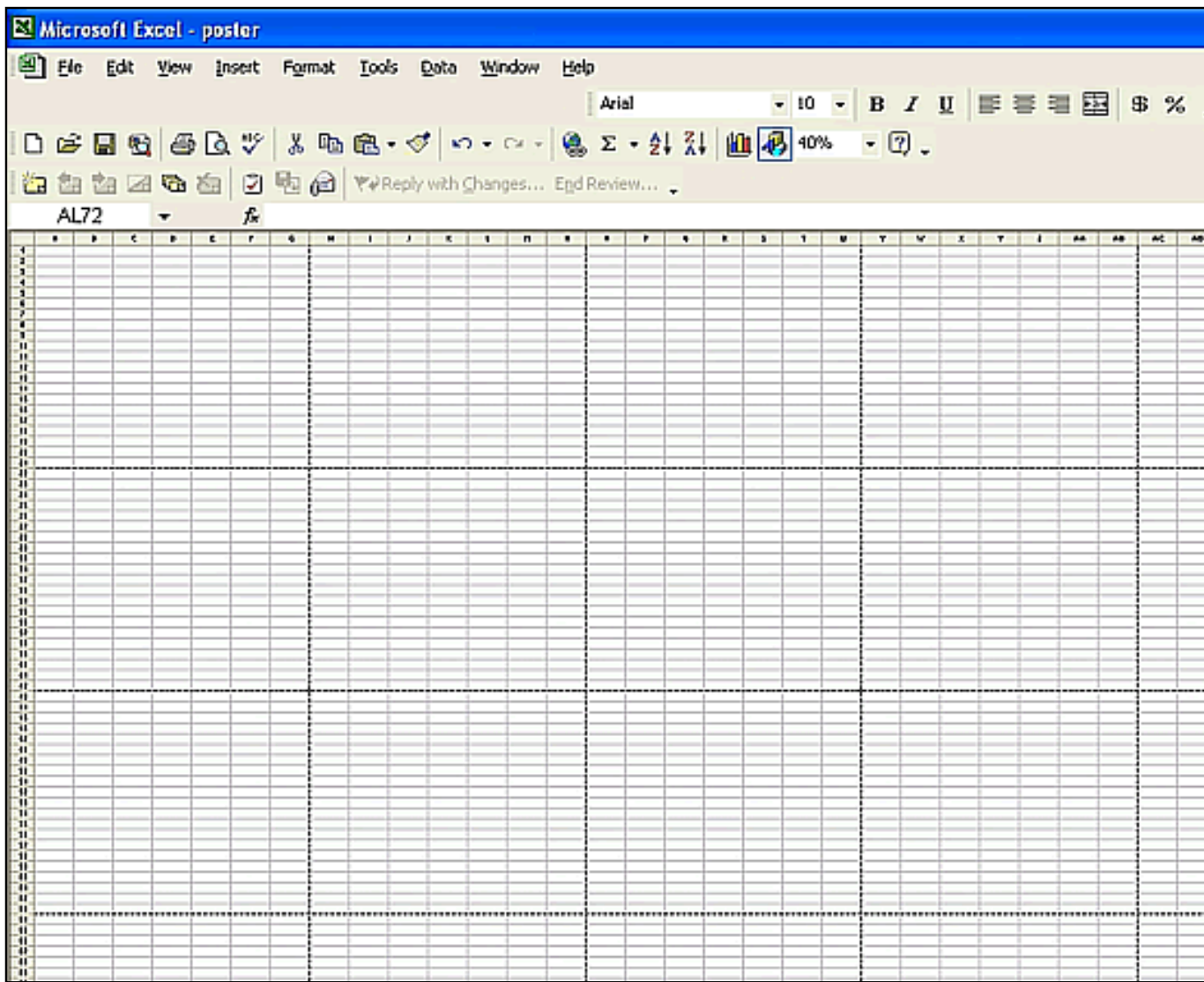
STEP ONE: THE BASICS

Do you think Microsoft Excel is just for math and science? You're wrong! You can use Excel for a number of tasks and activities that have nothing to do with numbers. How about making colorful posters for your classroom, for example?

Create a Document

- Click Start > All Programs > Microsoft Excel to open Excel.
- Click File > Page Set Up.
- Choose the Page tab. Change Orientation from Portrait to Landscape, and adjust Scaling to 200 percent.
- Choose the Margins tab. Set the Left, Right, Top, and Bottom margins to "0.5." Set the Header and Footer to "0.0." Click OK.
- Click View > Zoom. Click the circle next to Custom, type 40 percent, and click OK.

Your screen should look like this:



STEP TWO: THE LAYOUT

To make an acceptably sized poster for your classroom wall, you probably will want to create four 8½-inch by 11-inch pages, and then tape them together. Notice the dotted lines on the Excel document you created in Step 1? Those lines indicate where each page starts and stops.

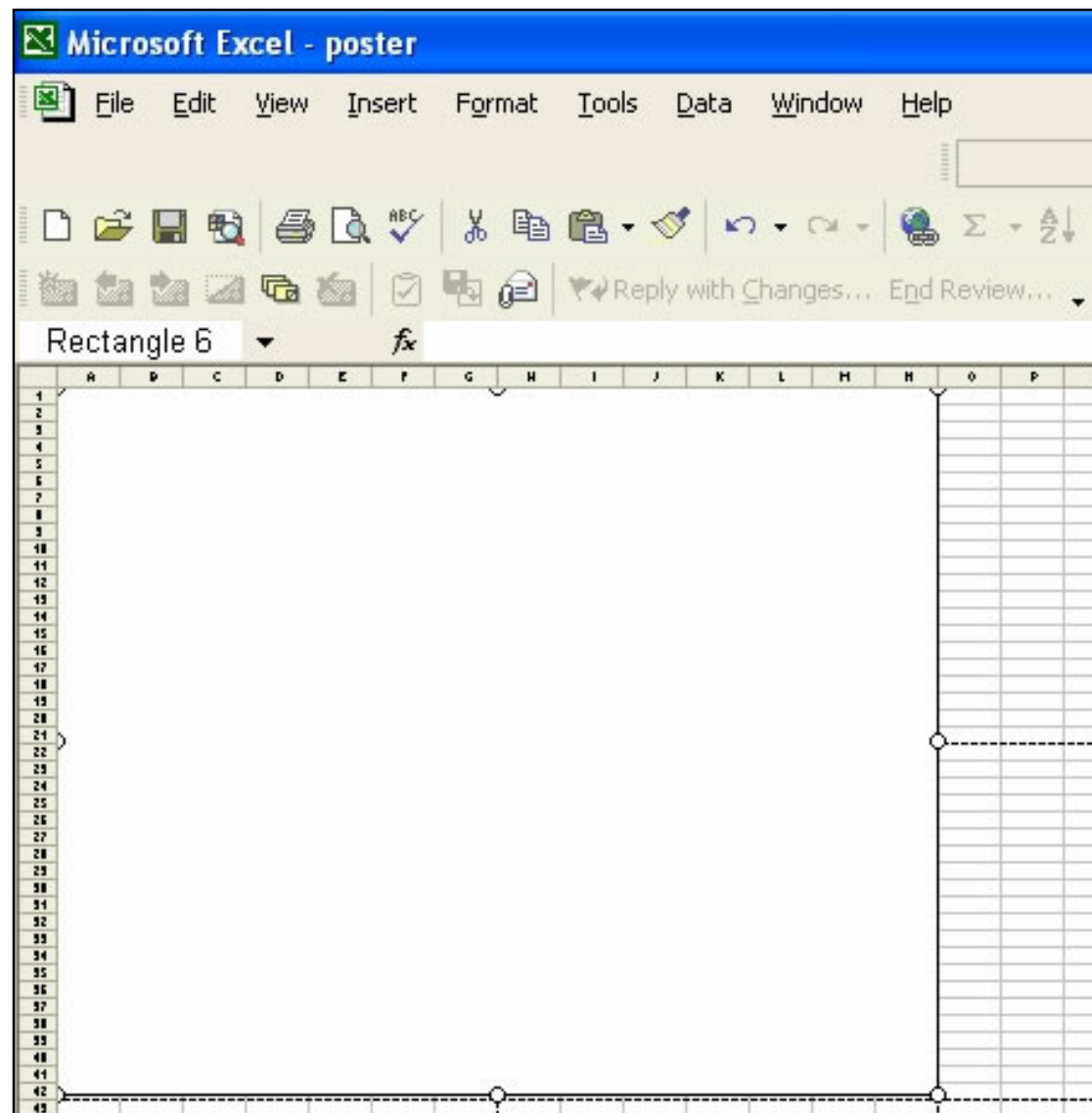
Create the Layout

Before you create the layout, you'll want to set the print area for your completed poster. To do that, highlight cells A1 through M42. (Those are all the cells in the first four pages -- two on top and two on bottom -- that will make up your poster. Click File > Print Area > Set Print Area. Now when you print, only those four pages will print!

- Click View > Toolbars and make sure the Drawing toolbar is checked.
- On the Drawing toolbar, click the rectangle drawing tool.
- Drag your mouse across the Excel document so the rectangle covers four squares or

pages (two on top, two on the bottom).

The white rectangle will be your poster.

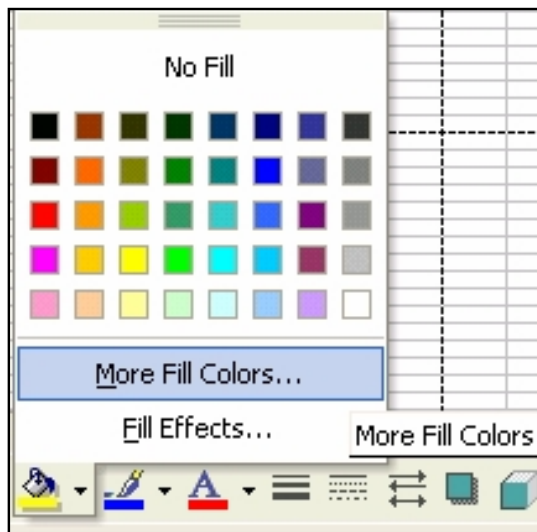


STEP THREE: THE DESIGN

Begin with color and images to establish the look of your poster.

Color it!

- On the Drawing toolbar, click the Paint Can and then click a color. If you don't see the color you want, click More Fill Colors, and use the options under either the Standard or Custom tab to get just the hue you're looking for.



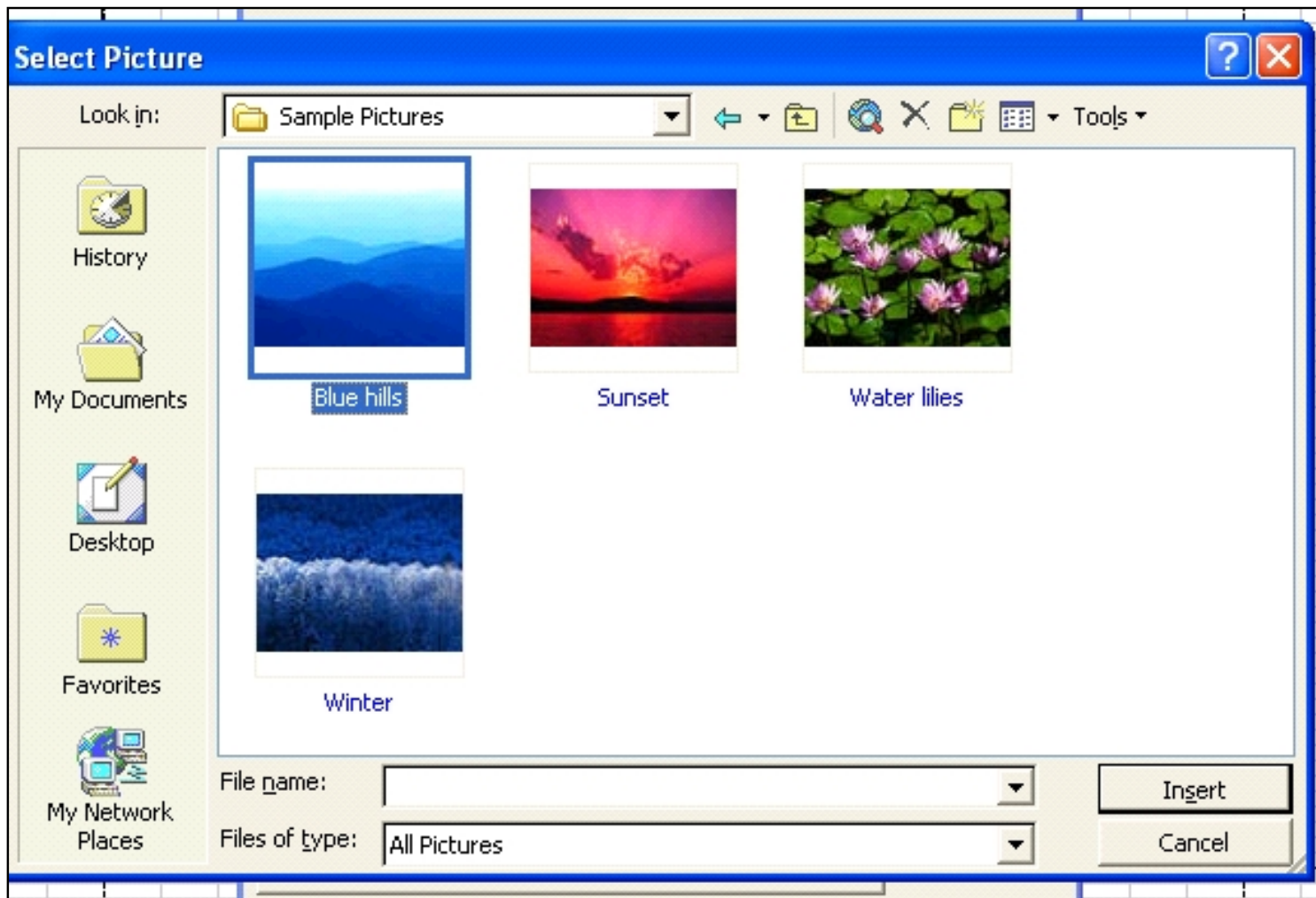
- To make the background even more unique, click the Paint Can again and then click Fill Effects. A new window will appear with four background options:
 1. **Gradient:** Pick one, two, or three colors, and the those colors will fade into one another on your poster. (If you chose only one color, that color will fade from very light to very dark. Because the shading could make light or dark text hard to read, it's best to not use that option.)
 2. **Texture:** This option provides patterns, such as grass, marble, burlap, and so on. Click several patterns to find their names. Parchment and blue tissue paper are two textures that will not obscure text.
 3. **Pattern:** These are patterns (polka dots, lines, and so on) that use two colors. They are not good choices for a background because they're too busy.
 4. **Picture:** This option allows you to insert images into your poster's background. We'll use this one for our test poster.

THE IMAGE

Have you ever seen a motivational poster -- one featuring a photo of nature and an inspirational message? Let's use a background picture and WordArt text to make a motivational poster for your classroom.

Picture it!

- Click the Paint Can and click Fill Effects.
- Choose the Picture Tab and select Picture. You now should now see the My Pictures folder from your My Documents folder.
- Click to open the My Pictures folder. In addition to the images you have saved in that folder, you should see four additional photos -- hills, sunset, water lilies, and winter.

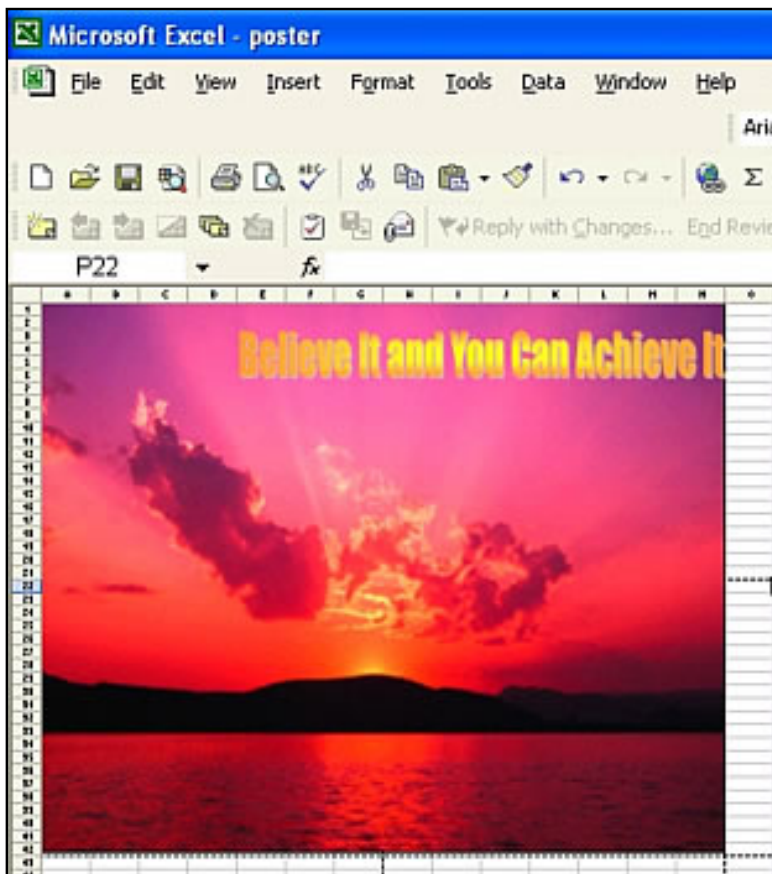


- Double-click the photo of the sunset to make that image your poster's background. (Note: if you do not see these pictures in your My Picture folder, you can insert another picture (See the techorial [Holiday Worksheets with Word](#) for more on inserting images.) or use a plain color or other fill effect for the background instead. If you use another picture, however, be sure to click the box that says "lock picture aspect ratio" to prevent your photo from being distorted.)

THE TEXT

Next, you need to add an inspirational message to your poster.

- On the Drawing toolbar, click the blue, slanted "A" to open the Word Art window.
- Click the yellow-orange text in the middle of the first column -- or click another color/format of your choosing. Click OK.
- In the WordArt text box, type the following phrase (or another phrase of your choosing): "Believe It And You Can Achieve It." Click OK.
- Click the WordArt text that now appears on your poster. Drag the text to the correct position on the poster. Your poster will look something like this:



- Save and print the poster. Tape the four pieces together to create a poster for your classroom wall!

POSTER TIPS

- Laminate your poster.
- Remember that any formatting you can do in Word, you also can do in Excel. You can, therefore add to your poster:
 - clip art;
 - shapes, arrows, lines, and so on;
 - images from the Internet (perfect for making posters about an historical figure or geographical location);
 - bulleted lists -- of class rules, grammar tips, spelling words, and so on;
 - tables, charts, and graphs;
 - mathematical formulas (using equation editor, a free download for Microsoft Office);
 - more.
- Guide students through the above steps to help them make posters for a science fair, technology night, school play, or other event.
- Watch for an upcoming techorial on making interactive posters. You'll learn to create a poster that kids can view on the computer and click on to get more information!