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Poster Art
Guidelines For Members

By:
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Performing Arts Program Leader
Snohomish County 4H Program

A Handbook for 4H Members in Snohomish County

Cooperative Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of non-compliance may be reported through your local Extension office.
Parents:
Ask for the companion to this 4H member handbook:
Poster Art Judging Guidelines

The Judge Evaluates

+ Educational Value
+ Accurate Information
+ Design
+ Originality
+ Creativity
+ Neatness

Your Poster

+ A visual that should make an impact on the viewer's mind and memories
+ Must stimulate thought, teach a fact or show an idea
+ Is self-explanatory-speaks for itself (charts require explanations)
+ Has five seconds to capture the viewer's attention and state the message
+ Should be uncluttered with words so the message is easily viewed
It is important to understand correct poster making techniques!

- Subject area
  *One main idea*

- Message
  *Simple and uncluttered*

- Title
  *Short and easy to understand*

- Poster size
  *Visibility (how far away will the viewer be!)*

- Layout
  *Pleasing and eye-catching*

- Art Work
  *Attract the viewer’s interest*
Design

- Have balance, unity and simplicity
- Have one center of interest - not dead center
- The viewer should read your poster from:

  left → right

  top → bottom

- Have an invisible frame

To enlarge your art work, use an overhead projector or an image enlargement projector.

You can also graph paper grids and carefully transfer square by square the smaller artwork to the larger graph.
+ Easy to read
+ Letters placed so that they will not distract from art work:

Horizontal instead of Vertical

+ Consistent in style
+ Large, bold and simple
  line thickness 1/4 of the letter height
+ Spaced correctly by eye
  letters within words together
  apace between words
+ You may not need lettering if your art work clearly presents your message
+ Be readable from a distance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewing Distance:</th>
<th>Letter Size Should Be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 feet</td>
<td>1/2 inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 feet</td>
<td>3/4 inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 feet</td>
<td>1 inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 feet</td>
<td>2 inches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Color

+ Limit yourself to three colors or less
+ Overall—use one dominant color
+ Lettering should be in one dominant color
+ Center of interest—use a bright intense color
+ Use harmonious color combinations
+ Emphasize your words by using warm colors
  
  _reds-yellows-oranges_

+ Background colors should be in the cool color tones
  
  _blues-greens-gray_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lettering color</th>
<th>Background color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>black</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue</td>
<td>white</td>
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<td>white</td>
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<td>red</td>
<td>yellow</td>
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<td>green</td>
<td>red</td>
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<tr>
<td>red</td>
<td>green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**These color combinations work best.**

**Legibility order top to bottom.**
Illustrations

- Support the title or message
- Can be one or a combination of the following:
  - Drawings
  - Cartoons
  - Simple line drawings
  - Paper Cut-outs
  - Fabric cut-outs
  - Magazine pictures
  - Photos

Materials to Gather

- Background materials
  - posterboard, fabric, cardboard
  - corrugated paper, plywood, construction paper

- Mounting
  - rubber cement

- Lettering
  - broad felt-tip pens, poster paint and brush, lettering stencils
  - construction paper cut-outs, ready-made gummed letters

- Scissor, ruler

- Color Wheel (optional)

Avoid Using

- Pencils (except for guidelines you will erase)
- Chalk
- Ball-point pens
- Typewritten material or small computer fonts
- Drug-store sized photos (ads or flyers)
- More than three colors
- Colors that clash (non-harmonious – use a color wheel)
- Staples
- Masking tape or tape of any kind which will show
1. Plan and design a layout
   *sketch how your poster will look when finished*

2. Choose an appropriate *firm* background material for your display

3. Experiment with color combinations

4. Use *erasable* guidelines (erase all guidelines and pencil marks)

5. Rub off all smears of excess rubber cement

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**A Good Poster Will Make People:**

+ **Stop**  
  *catch the viewer’s eye*

+ **Read**  
  *information is stated simply and clearly*

+ **Remember**  
  *main idea or fact*

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**Use Attention Grabbing Techniques**
**Standard for Scorecard Judging**

**SCORE CARD FOR EDUCATIONAL EXHIBITS**

Examine the display for the qualities listed below. Decide placing earned.

Exhibitor Name or Number __________________________

Class ______ Lot ______

**DESIGN** (40 points)

- Color (pleasing to the eye)
- Effectively used

**Lettering**

- Readily read
- Style suitable to message

**Illustration**

- Part of message or just eye-catch?

**Layout**

- Simple and orderly
- Organization of parts
- Good spacing
- Neatness

- Reflects planning

**ORIGINALITY & CREATIVITY** (20 points)

- Shows imagination
- New idea or innovative way to present familiar one

**EDUCATIONAL VALUE** (40 points)

- One main idea
- Message effectively and accurately presented

- If poster, mobile or large display, does message stand alone? Elicits response from viewer?

- If chart/graph, is it titled?
- Is message appropriate to intended audience

**COMMENTS**

- Uses harmonious color combinations
- Avoids using colors that clash
- Has one dominant color
- Uses intense colors for center of interest
- Avoids using too many colors
- Large, bold and simple
- Readable from a distance 10-20 feet depending on exhibit area
- Horizontal rather than vertical
- Reads from left to right
- Consistent in style
- No pencil, ball point pen or typewritten material
- Creative placement, style
- Eye catching
- Promotes or assists message
- Art Work - attracts attention
- Is used to support the title or message
- Large drawings, photos, magazine pictures
  - (no postcard size photos, copyrighted illustrations or cartoons)
- Has balance, unity and simplicity
- Not cluttered with words
- Not cluttered with pictures
- Has one center of interest
- Reads from left to right - top to bottom
- Letters placed so that they will not distract from the art work
- Artwork placed so that it will not distract from the lettering
- Has an invisible frame
- Straight margins (sides, top, bottom)
- Space between lines of message
- Letters within words are evenly spaced
- A space between words
- Erased guidelines and pencil marks
- No glue, food or finger smudges
- No staples, or tape showing
- Poster size - easily visible
- Poster material appropriate for displaying (firmness to be considered)
- Areas of space filled and balanced
- Minimum lettering required for message
- Avoids too many words
- Creativity
- Originality
- Message - simple and uncluttered
- Self explanatory - speaks for itself
- Accurate information
- Captures the viewer's attention
- States the message
- Stimulates a thought, teaches a fact, or shows an idea
- Makes an impact on the viewer's mind and memories
- Makes people: STOP (catches their eye),
  READ (is simple and clear),
  REMEMBER (impress with idea or fact)

**Title**

- Short and simple - one main idea
- Offer compliments and constructive criticism

*Be positive when making suggestions for improvement, there is always something kind to be said!*

Sign the score card
EDUCATIONAL DISPLAY SCORE CARD

Examine the display for the qualities listed below. Place a check in each row to indicate placing earned.

Exhibitor Name or Number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Ribbon</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>No Placing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

DESIGN (40 points)

Color
- pleasing to the eye
- effectively used

Lettering
- easily read
- style suitable to message

Illustration
- part of message or just eye-catcher?

Layout
- simple and orderly
- organization of parts
- good spacing
- neatness
- reflects planning

ORIGINALITY & CREATIVITY (20 points)

Shows imagination

New idea or innovative way to present familiar one

EDUCATIONAL VALUE (40 points)

One main idea

Message effectively and accurately presented

Message elicits viewer response

Message appropriate for intended audience

Chart/graph is titled

COMMENTS

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