4-H Educational Display Guidelines

An educational display stimulates thought, teaches facts, or shows a process. It may result in action on the reader's part. The educational display can take the form of a poster, a tabletop display, a mobile, or a large 3-D display. Often displays have less than 60 seconds to get the message across, so planning is important!

Steps to Follow

1. **Select a 4-H Project Area** - determine which 4-H project you would like to create a display for. You must select a project in which you are officially enrolled to be eligible for fair entry.

Examples: a) clothing; b) horses

2. **Subject** - choose a subject/topic area within your selected 4-H project area. Consult 4-H member publications, magazines, and books for ideas. Picking a topic area that you are interested in will make creating your display a rewarding and pleasurable experience.

Examples: a) types of seams; b) the Appaloosa Horse

3. **Specific Message** - determine what message you want to get across or what you want to teach the viewer. Often times your subject area is too broad to be covered effectively on a poster display. You will need to narrow your topic to something the viewer can read and learn about quickly.

Examples: a) appropriate use of a flat-felled seam; b) Appaloosa coat color patterns

4. **Title** - select a title that will:
   - Identify the exhibit (tell content)
   - Be short and simple (no more than 4 to 5 short words)
   - Attract Attention (interest viewer to continue reading)

Examples: a) Seam Sense; b) Spot This!

5. **Use Attention Grabbing Techniques** -
   - Actual Objects
   - Models
   - Illustrations, photographs
   - Motion
   - Color
   - Contrasts

6. **Lettering** - select type that is:
   - Simple, clear and well-spaced. Choose typefaces that are easy to read if using a computer
   - Be consistent in style, use a ruler to ensure letter size consistency
   - Easy to read, consider line thickness as well as letter size
   - Don't use all uppercase letters (ALL CAPS) except for occasional headings

Letter Size for Visibility
(with Good Light, Good Eyes, and Good Color)

Viewing Distance	Minimum Letter Size	Line Thickness	Approximate Computer Font Equivalent
10 Feet	1/2 inch	3/32 inch	48 point font
20 Feet	3/4 inch	1/8 inch	72 point font
50 Feet	2 inches	5/16 inch	200 point font

7. **Select Colors** - used well, color can turn even an uninteresting display into one that attracts and teaches.
   - Limit to 2 or 3 colors, with 1 being dominant
   - Neutral or soft colors are best for backgrounds (grays, light greens, light blues, pale yellows, white)
   - Bright or intense colors are best for smaller areas or center of interest (bright yellows, reds, oranges)
   - Dominant colors are best for the lettering (black, dark blue)
   - Combinations such as black on yellow or red on white are easier to read than those that are complementary - like red on green or yellow in violet.

8. **Select Materials -**
   - **Backgrounds** - poster boards, illustration boards, foam core, plywood, and tri-fold cardboard presentation boards are all acceptable backgrounds for a display. Your background should be able to physically support whatever you put on it and also handle the stress of display during the fair.
   - **Illustrations and Artwork** - photographs, cutouts, drawings, cartoons, objects, etc. Use a copier, computer, or projector to enlarge items. Please Note: do not use copyrighted cartoons or graphics. 4-H cannot display exhibits that use copyrighted artwork (i.e. Garfield the Cat or Mickey Mouse). As a substitute to copyrighted cartoons use "clip art" instead.
   - **Lettering** - use permanent felt-tipped markers, speedball pens with wide points, brushes, stencils, cutout letters, or computer printed type. Warning - watercolor markers and ink jet computer printer ink tend to bleed while on display during the fair.
   - **Adhesives for 2-D items** - Rubber cement is best for mounting photographs, paper, or thin cardboard and cutout letters. Spray mount also works well for mounting photographs and paper products but should be used in a well ventilated area with adult supervision.
   - **Fasteners for 3-D items** - For attaching actual objects too heavy for paper glue, a hot glue gun or strong craft glue works well for items like flowers, pine cones, or fabric. To attach a heavy 3-D items, like grooming tools or veterinary items, you may want to experiment with fishing line, string, and wire. Remember you don't want your fastener to detract from your display.

9. **Determine Arrangement** - strive for a simple, uncluttered effect. Remember less is more. Opt for bulleted points rather than long paragraphs to get the message across.
   - Text should read from left to right, top to bottom
   - Design should lead eye to one center of interest

What is the Judge Looking For?

1. **A Good Design** - Is the layout simple and orderly? Is the display neat with adequate spacing? Does the display reflect design planning? Is the color pleasing to the eye and effectively used?
2. **Lettering** - Is the lettering easy to read from a distance? Is the type style suitable to the message?
3. **Originality & Creativity** - Does the display show imagination? Did the exhibitor present a new idea or an innovative way to present a familiar one?
4. **Educational Value** - Does the display show one main idea? Is the message effectively and accurately presented? Does the display's message elicit viewer response? Is the message appropriate for the intended audience?
5. **Age Appropriateness** - Does the quality of the work done reflect the age level of the youth who did the display? The physical, social, and thinking growth of a Senior 4-H member will be more developed than that of a Junior 4-H member.

   Often times younger members do not have the experience or coordination that older members have. A younger member's display may not be quite as neat as an older member's display. The younger member's handwriting may also be less precise.

   More information about the ages and stages of youth development is available from your local 4-H Office.

Reformatted and updated by Emily Killeen, 4-H Extension Coordinator, from the 1983 original WSU 4-H publication.

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