

Making the Best 4-H Clubs Better

Intended Audience

- 4-H Club members

Lesson Objectives

Club members and parents will:

- Identify important information to include in 4-H project displays
- Understand and apply basic design principles to make their own project displays.

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment and supplies

- Pencils
- Paper
- Sticky notes (variety of colors)
- Scissors
- Sample exhibits (optional)

Do ahead

- Review lesson
- Gather equipment and supplies
- Gather sample exhibits

Blue Ribbon Project Exhibits

BACKGROUND

Most 4-H members work for weeks to complete their 4-H projects in time for judging week. (Sometimes they even finish a day or so before the event!) However, members have a very short amount of time to communicate all they've done and learned to a project judge during their county's judging event, often only about 5 minutes. How do members tell them all that they've done, learned and applied in only 5 minutes?!?

Project exhibits or displays can help. Having a visual aide can remind members of important points to cover, allow judges to SEE what the member has done, and present what the member has learned in an appealing and fun way.

In counties that conduct exhibit judging, this may be the *only* way that members have to communicate what they have done. In those counties, judges can't ask the right questions to get at the information they want. They have to select the winners solely on what they see. Project exhibits convey a message to those looking at them. Let's make sure they say what we want them to say!

WHAT TO DO

Activity: Making a Mock Exhibit - Have each member (or group of members working together) lay out their own mini project exhibit. They should get a blank sheet of paper, several sticky note pages, scissors, and a pencil. Give members 5-10 minutes to create their exhibits using the materials provided. You may want to try giving them a silly topic for their exhibit so they don't have to spend time coming up with an idea.

Things to remember

- What info should be displayed? Examples include what they did, what they learned, why they chose the project, *relevant* pictures, project helpers, relationship to real world issues, career connections, and so on.
- Layout: Remind members of how we read – left to right. Our eyes are trained to follow this order. Place things so that your eye will follow the information in the way you want it to.



Sources

The sources may contain information that IS NOT on your state/county. Disregard any listed size/dimensions.

- Michigan State University 4-H Youth Development, Communications Toolkit Fun, Skill-Building Activities to Do With Kids, http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/communications_toolkit
- Iowa State University Extension & Outreach, 4-H Exhibit Tip Sheet, <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4hfiles/projects/hotsheets/PosterTipSheet.pdf>
- New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service, Making Posters, <http://aces.nmsu.edu/4h/documents/making204-h20posters-fixed.pdf>

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- Lettering – if you print out your wording, change font, size and letter spacing for emphasis only. If you are writing, be sure to use line guides and write neatly! Spelling matters!
- Color – can help members create interest and visual appeal, but can overwhelm viewers if it's overdone.
- “White space” is open, empty space on the display and is an important part of the design. It's hard to read information when items are crowded.

Additional Information: When members work on their full-size displays, there are a couple of additional things to remember:

- Follow directions – if the county gives dimensions/sizes to follow – DO IT! Ability to follow directions is an easy way for the judge to evaluate the exhibits.
- Size – if a member's display will be viewed from a distance – it's at the back of the club's fair booth and judges/viewers cannot walk inside the booth – the member should use the following rough estimate of letter size to be easily read:

<u>Letter Size Viewing Distance</u>	
¼ inch	8 feet
½ inch	16 feet

From: New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service, *Making Posters*.

Optional Activity: Ask experienced members to bring successful exhibits from previous years to share with new members. Discuss what works and what doesn't with each exhibit.

TALK IT OVER

Reflect

- Discuss what worked and what didn't with your members. You may ask members to critique each other's work, but make sure that positive and negative comments are used. You may ask members to find 2 good things and 1 thing to work on in each other's displays. Discuss which displays are easiest to read. Why? If you were doing a full-size display, how would you do it differently?

Apply

- For the next meeting, have members bring a layout of their project display for review. It is great to get feedback from several different people on project displays!