NM 4-H Tip Sheet

Making Posters
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The Purpose of 4-H Posters

4-H Posters provide an opportunity for members to share information about 4-H and a wide range of projects. Posters may be stand-alone pieces that can be exhibited at fairs and events, or visual aids developed to assist with presentations.

COMMUNICATION VALUE

Signs attract attention in order to identify something, offer directions, or issue a command. A poster does more. A good poster is self-explanatory, or it speaks for itself. Posters make people:

STOP
READ
REMEMBER.

An effective poster: Attracts attention, focuses on a main interest or idea, and motivates you to take action.

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

A successful poster will:

- Catch the eye of the passerby.
- Be simple and clear: People glance only briefly and are immediately "told or sold", don't be too wordy.
- Impress an idea or a fact upon the viewer (remember, focus on one idea or interest).
- Stimulate the viewer to:
  - Support your idea
  - Get more information
  - Take appropriate action.
- Have space left over- *white* space is not *blank* space. Posters that are uncluttered are easier to read.

PLANNING A POSTER

As mentioned earlier, a poster should have one main idea. A presentation may require a series of posters to illustrate the points of your talk. (Thus, the phrase: illustrated talk.) Have the reason for the poster clearly in mind before you start. If you are working on a presentation, an outline of the topic may be helpful. For help in preparing a presentation refer to Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks, 200.D-1 / R-2001.

- Consider who your viewers will be
- Decide what you want them to know
- Decide what you want them to do
- Think of a clever theme or slogan
- Limit your effort to one main idea
- Make a small rough sketch
- Remember that this type of visual communication is an *aid* to what you are trying to teach with your presentation

NOTE: *Presentation visual aids may be computer slides or other variation of a poster, but the general guidelines still apply!*

MATERIALS NEEDED

* There are a variety of materials that may be used to create posters. Letters may be hand-drawn, computer generated, pre-cut, stenciled, etc. Any paper substantial enough to stand up on an easel, foam board, cardboard, or poster board may all be used to create posters. Be sure and refer to the contest guidelines (fair books, etc) to insure that you are creating a poster of the proper size. For presentations, posters should be large enough to be viewed from 8 to 16 feet away, and small enough for the presenter to easily handle.

* Once the base is selected, other materials can be gathered to give the poster more eye appeal. Markers, paints, glue, and scissors may all be necessary when constructing a poster. Don't forget a ruler and a pencil.

* Start off with some scratch paper and sketch out how you want your poster to look. This will help you be more specific on the type of materials you need.

CHOOSING COLORS

Color combinations affect how easily the message is read as well as the overall appearance of the poster.

♦ Consider the Contrast: This means you use dark letters on a light background, and light letters on a dark background.

♦ Let the most important items be the most important color.

♦ Colors that are close to the background shade will not show up well and cannot be read at a distance.

♦ Avoid using too many different colors. Two or three should be sufficient. This is for the purpose of letters and backgrounds, color photos or clipart may be added to enhance your poster, just be sure they do not overwhelm your main point!

♦ Avoid putting red and green next to each other- this is hard to focus on if a person is colorblind.

♦ Avoid bright neon colors- they may catch the eye, but they are hard to focus on.

LETTERING

♠ Lower case letters are easier to read than all capitals. Use capitals only for emphasizing an important phrase or word to give variety.

♠ Save fancy or script lettering for catching the attention of the viewer.

♠ When hand lettering, always use guidelines. Using a ruler, lightly pencil in straight lines that can be erased when your poster is complete.

♠ Letters may be cutout and glued on, or precut letters may be purchased.

♠ Keep written material to a minimum. Use only headings, captions and signs necessary to tell the story. Use different size lettering for items of varying importance.

♠ Allow margins to keep things from running together and looking too cluttered.

♠ Below is a table of letter sizes and their effectiveness:

Size	Viewing Distance
¼ inch	8 feet
½ inch	16 feet
1 inch	32 feet
2 inches	64 feet

REVISE – RE-DO – REARRANGE

Refer to your original sketch. Cut out all your letters, pictures and graphics. Draw guidelines and place or draw in letters. Lay all your components out on your poster. *How does it look?* Revise and rearrange as needed! Re-do anything that should be a different color or size. Move things around until you are happy with the overall effect and message of your poster. Glue everything in place- Remember, neatness counts!

Consider entering your poster in the County Fair. A great activity for your 4-H Club is to sponsor a poster contest promoting 4-H and then use the posters around your community!

Appoint Poster Police

Ask your parents, other 4-H members, leaders or Extension Agents to look at your poster and tell you what they think!

Put It All Together

♣ Double check that all letters or drawn objects are outlined with permanent marker (washable markers might smear).

♣ Erase all excess pencil lines neatly (a gum eraser is best for this).

♣ Posters may be laminated, or stored in a large trash bag to protect them until you need them.

♣ Practice using your posters in your presentation to insure smooth transition from one to the other.

♣ Good luck with your poster!

Tips for Poster Making

Use Guidelines

<u>Light pencil lines that can be erased</u>

Posters can be any shape

REMEMBER

Too

Prufe

Reed

YOu

Wurk

Vary *Lettering* **STYLE** and *Direction*

Dark on Light can be easily seen

Light on Dark is OKAY, too!

Add Borders

Leave White Space

Try Pictures