



NM 4-H Tip Sheet

200.D-6 (R-2019)

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.

