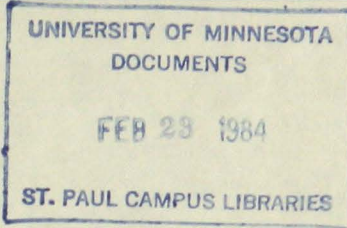




Hank Drews  
1984



# Overhead Transparencies, Preparation And Use

The overhead projector is so common that many speakers rely only on overhead transparencies to visually support their talks. Almost every school, hotel, and public meeting place is equipped for the use of overheads.

Overheads are an effective teaching tool with important advantages over other instructional aids. You can face your audience and respond to their questions. They're flexible enough so that you can change the sequence of your presentation at any time. Further, you may use devices such as masks, overlays, and polarized tape to lend special meaning to your topic. You can also write on transparencies for spontaneous effect and use them in a lighted room so the audience can take notes.

When preparing overhead transparencies, keep in mind that your purpose is education-not entertainment. Make your artwork easy to read and understand.

## REPRODUCTION

Overhead transparencies do have some disadvantages. Originals usually require hand preparation. Photographs and slides may be made into overhead transparencies but the cost can be high. Certain xerographic copiers can reproduce your colored photo images on overhead transparencies for reasonable cost but their quality is mediocre. If you want high quality overhead transparencies from your slides or photographs, take them to a photo shop and ask for an 8 X 10 inch print on *film*. Be sure to say that you want it printed light for use on an overhead projector.

There are several other methods of copying original material for overheads. Each method has its own requirements for preparing originals. Usually the result is black letters and lines on a clear background. However, many color choices are possible with the infrared and diazo methods.

*Infrared* is a process which copies black ink, and graphite. The process doesn't copy color or the permanent ink, black marking pens. You can use xerographic copies to make transparency masters from material which would not otherwise reproduce on infrared.

*Xerography* is a common office copier process. Overhead transparencies are possible in this medium; however, the artwork must be fine line. Bold areas tend not to reproduce well.

*Diazo* is a process in which overhead transparencies are made from translucent or transparent masters. Tracing paper is often used. The art work can be black, line, or continuous tone. This process is well suited for quantity production. The quality is better than the infrared process, but the preparation of the master is more involved.

Other processes which are used to a lesser extent include dry photo, diffusion transfer, and letterpress printing.

## LETTERING

*Size.* As a rule, projected type should be at least 1 inch high for every 25 feet of viewing distance. In practice, it is sometimes difficult to plan overheads with this rule in mind. It is easier to follow the rule that letters at least 1/4 inch high on overheads will be readable when projected. Larger letters should be used for titles and emphasis.

As a rule, 100 words or about 12 lines of type are considered the maximum amount practical for an overhead. The ideal overhead would have less than 25 words in 5 lines.

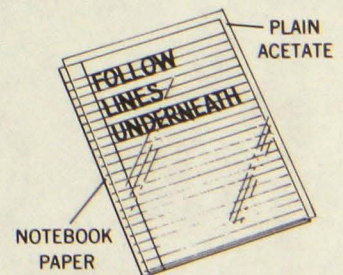
Wording on visuals should be brief and concise. Don't use complete sentences. Key words will suffice since the speaker will be filling in details. Those twenty-four words can be reduced to nine words for a visual as illustrated.

- WORDING**
- brief
  - key words
  - incomplete sentences
  - for support only

*Techniques.* There are several methods of lettering for overheads. Most typewritten copy is less than 1/4 inch high and, therefore, unacceptable. A critical factor for each method is size. Special typewriters with type about twice the size of that in a standard typewriter can be used. The illustration names both poor and good styles of typewriters.

POOR	GOOD
elite executive pica	Directory Speech-Riter OLYMPIA

*Handlettering*, if legible, is a good technique for overheads. You can use notebook paper for guidelines when lettering directly on plain acetate which avoids any need for machinery as shown here. Or, if you are preparing a master for an infrared copier, you can letter directly on ruled notebook paper with a black marking pen. The color lines will not copy.



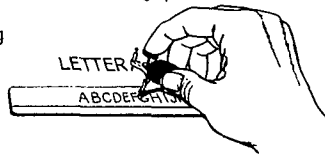
This archival publication may not reflect current scientific knowledge or recommendations. Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.

Transfer letters may be used for overhead transparencies. They are available in black and transparent colors and are produced by several companies. The letters come attached to

transparent paper and are pressure-sensitive with an adhesive back. Apply pressure with a ball point pen across the surface of the letter to transfer letters to your transparency master. These letters will give a professional look, but they are slow to work with. It is impractical to use transfer letters for large amounts of copy.



Stencils and letter guides are useful aids in hand lettering. When using stencils, be sure to fill in gaps. Plastic letter guide templates can be used with either pencil or inking pen. The LEROY system consists of an engraved template and a lettering scribe.



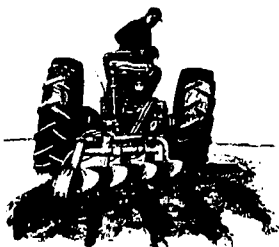
# Wrong Right

style. Different styles of type are available to enhance the meaning of words. Transfer letters in particular have many styles. For clarity, select simple typefaces rather than fancy ones.

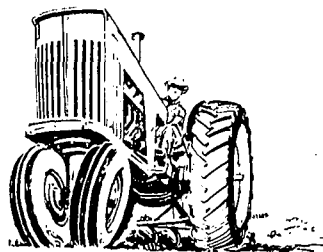
UNACCEPTABLE	ACCEPTABLE
Old English Brush Script	Gothic Condensed News Gothic Times Roman

## ARTWORK

If you aren't a skilled artist, you can still make excellent transparencies by using "clip art." Black line art appearing in magazines and newspapers can be cut out and pasted on overhead masters. One time use of such pictures for an educational purpose is not against copyright laws. Notice the difference between line art and continuous tone. Line art reproduces best.

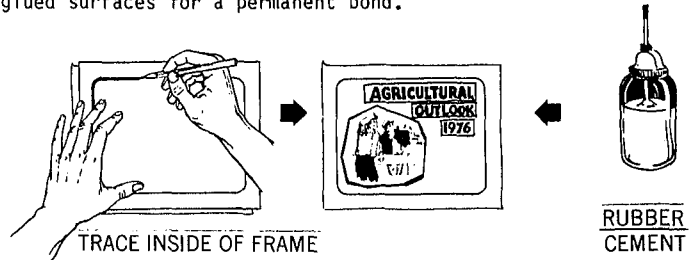


CONTINUOUS TONE



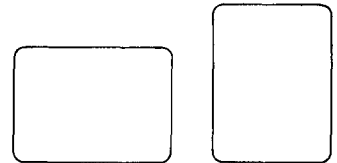
LINE ART

You can also do your own line drawings by tracing photographs with a soft pencil. Begin by tracing the inside of a frame on an 8 1/2 X 11 inch sheet of plain paper. Use rubber cement to paste up type or clip art. When using rubber cement, coat both surfaces and let them dry. Then, press together the two glued surfaces for a permanent bond.

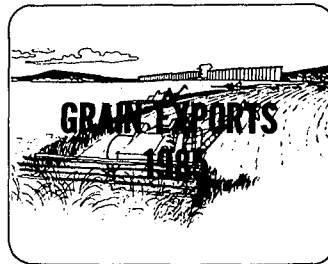


## LAYOUT

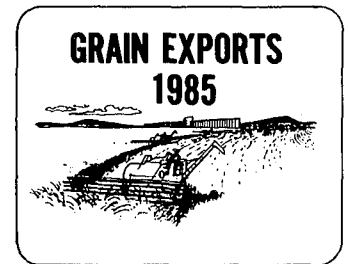
Use the horizontal format for overheads rather than vertical. Horizontal overheads are better for rooms with low ceilings in case you adapt your overheads to television.



Layout refers to the arrangement of art and type. In general, avoid superimposing type over a complex background as shown.

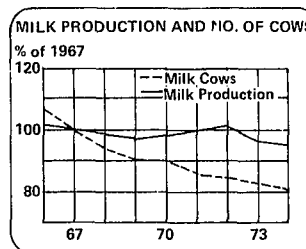
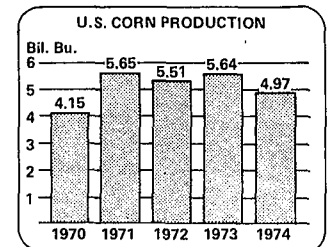
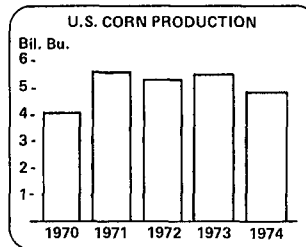


POOR

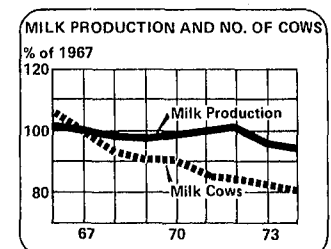


GOOD

Graphs are more effective if you simplify the copy by using key words rather than complete sentences. Plot lines should be bold and grid lines light. For bar graphs, when possible put totals on or above the bars. Avoid using legends. Instead, put labels on the bars.

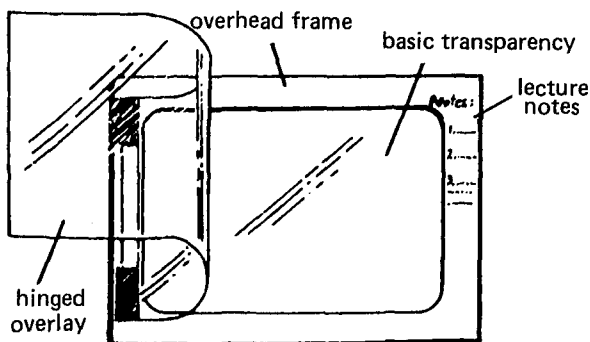


POOR



GOOD

## FRAMING

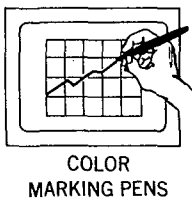
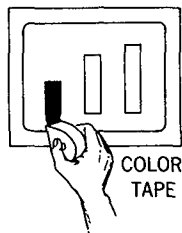
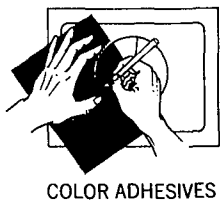


Mount overheads on standard overhead transparency frames which can be filed. Frames will protect the acetates while stored and you can use the frames as a convenient place to write your lecture notes.

Mount the base cell on the back of the frame. Use masks and overlays to help explain your material, hinge them with tape so they are easy to use and won't interfere with the projector lens post.

## COLOR

You can apply color directly to any overheads by using color adhesive sheets and tapes which are manufactured by several different companies. Cut color adhesive sheets directly on the acetates using a razor blade or art knife. Marking pens can be used to color areas but are especially useful for lettering and for drawing lines. These tools, tapes, and color sheets are sold at art supply stores, business supply stores, and drafting supply stores.



## PRESENTATION HINTS

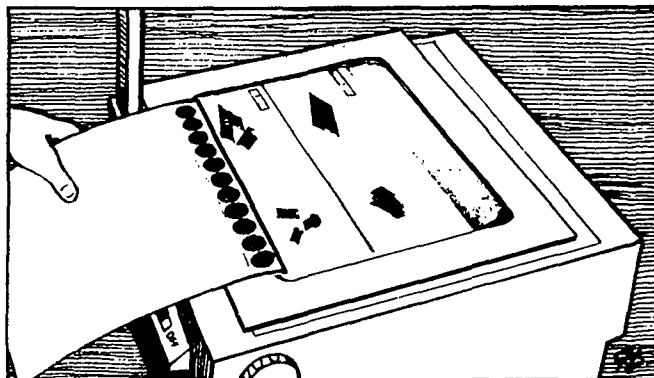
You need a screen at least 6 feet square if your back row is 25 feet or more away. To prevent distortion (keystone effect), tilt the top of the screen toward the projector until it is perpendicular to the light. Place the projector on a table about 2 feet high; then its writing surface will be at a convenient level and the projector will be out of the viewers' way.

A simple, common use of the overhead is as a chalkboard. You simply write on a clear sheet of a transparent material as it is being projected on the screen behind you. Use either wax pencil or a pen with quick-drying ink (in any color).

When presenting your information, try to:

- Design a visual for each main idea. Limit each to fewer than a dozen words. Use no more than two pictures per visual.
- Look at the audience, not the visual.
- Give the audience a chance to look at and absorb each visual before talking about it. It's hard to read one thing and hear other verbal messages at the same time.
- Pace your visuals—don't go through them so fast they can't be comprehended, but don't leave them up so long that they begin to distract.
- Plan the places where you will initiate discussions. Shut off the projector at those intervals.

With tape, 11 pennies, and a piece of stiff paper, you can make a mask for uncovering information on an overhead that won't fall off the projector when you pull it to the end of a list.



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USE THIS GRID FOR PLANNING OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCIES AT FULL SIZE

