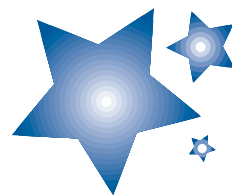
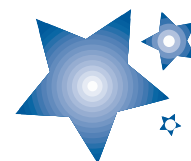




Tell a Story with a Blue Ribbon Exhibit



*Preparing
Doing
Sharing
Reflecting*



*Think
out of
the box.*



**A GUIDELINE FOR DESIGNING
COUNTY AND STATE FAIR YOUTH EXHIBITS**



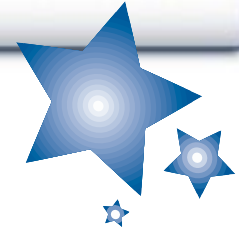
Center for 4-H Youth Development

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About This Guide



Purpose of This Guide

- To give young people step-by-step instructions on how to design an exhibit that tells a story to fair visitors.
- To give information to youth leaders and educators about teaching young people how to make an exhibit.
- To help youth build communication and technical skills from planning, constructing, and presenting an exhibit at county and/or state fairs.

This guide is arranged as a workbook so that you may record your plans and ideas for creating an exhibit.

Intended Audience for This Guide

- Any youth (sixth grade or older) interested in creating and building an exhibit for county and/or state fairs.
- Any educator or youth leader who teaches youth how to design exhibits.

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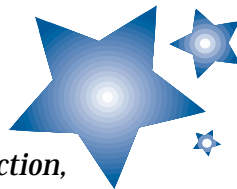
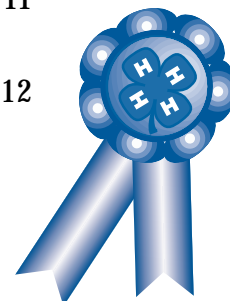
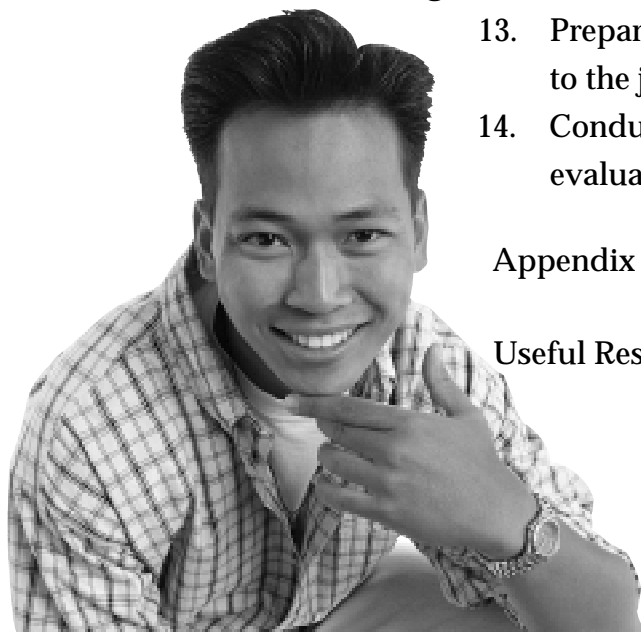
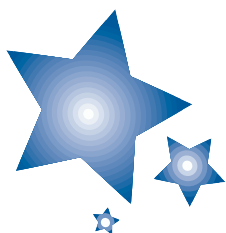


Table of Contents

A Guideline for Designing County and State Fair Exhibits

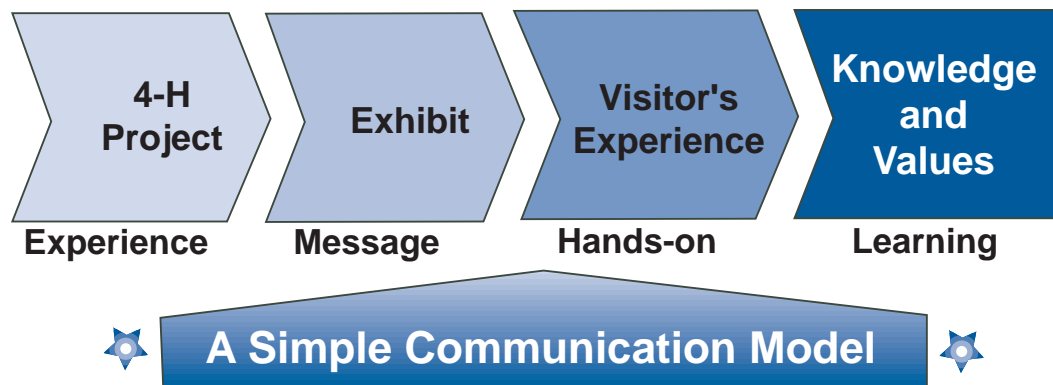
Introduction	1
What is an exhibit?	1
What makes a good exhibit?	2
Six points for successful exhibits	2
Exhibit planning	3
Preparing	4
1. Understand your audience	4
2. Plan ahead	4
3. Develop one theme	4
Doing.....	5-8
4. Choose the type of exhibit you want.....	5
5. Gather information	5
6. Prepare a budget	6
7. Design your exhibit with good use of text and color	6
8. Make a mock-up	8
9. Test the effectiveness of your exhibit.....	8
10. Make necessary revisions.....	8
Sharing	9
11. Construct your exhibit	9
12. Test your exhibit with the Exhibit Checklist	9
Reflecting.....	10
13. Prepare for making your presentation to the judges	10
14. Conduct a final assessment and evaluation	10
Appendix A	11
Useful Resources	12



A Guideline for Developing State and County Fair Exhibits

Introduction

Perhaps you've studied fishing techniques, researched solar energy, or rehabilitated a wild animal. Whatever the subject, you have worked hard researching and learning about your topic. Now it's time to tell your story at a county or state fair using a creative and well-constructed exhibit that will be seen by hundreds of fair visitors and rated by a panel of judges. With an exhibit, you can do more than simply repeat what you have learned. You can help create interest in a topic so that others will want to learn more. Your fair experience can be a lesson in communication where you send the message through your exhibit and visitors can learn from your experience.

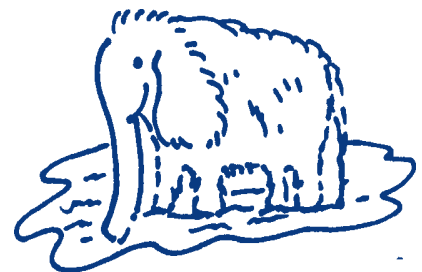


What is an exhibit?

An exhibit is a structure that tells a single story and communicates a theme through visual presentation (drawing, photo, object, interactive media) and written or recorded text.

It's not hard to make a creative and attractive fair exhibit. The following guidelines will help you develop your exhibit step-by-step. Whatever your topic is, be creative. Along with sharing your skills and knowledge of the topic, creativity is the key in developing a good exhibit.

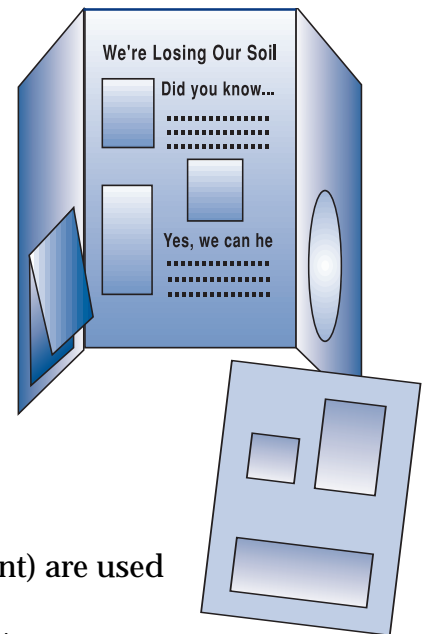
There are many ways to get your message to your audience. Remember, people may spend only a few seconds at an exhibit. Your exhibit needs to be eye-catching and the text needs to be to the point. Visitors are first attracted to your exhibit by visual images and then well-written text. In designing and constructing your exhibit, you need to think about what your audience sees.



Be creative
with your visuals!

What makes a good exhibit?

1. The topic comes to life (dimension/motion/lighting/sound).
2. Points are easily understood by the audience.
3. Topic has appeal for all ages.
4. The exhibit is memorable.
5. It helps others learn through positive experiences.
6. The message flows from beginning to end. It is clear where the visitor should begin and how to continue through the exhibit.
7. The design makes good use of color.
8. Modern display techniques (such as a hands-on component) are used to teach visitors about the topic.
9. Familiar examples and experiences are used to make points.
10. The message is conveyed using a display of objects and/or specimens (i.e., 3-ring binder that supports the display).

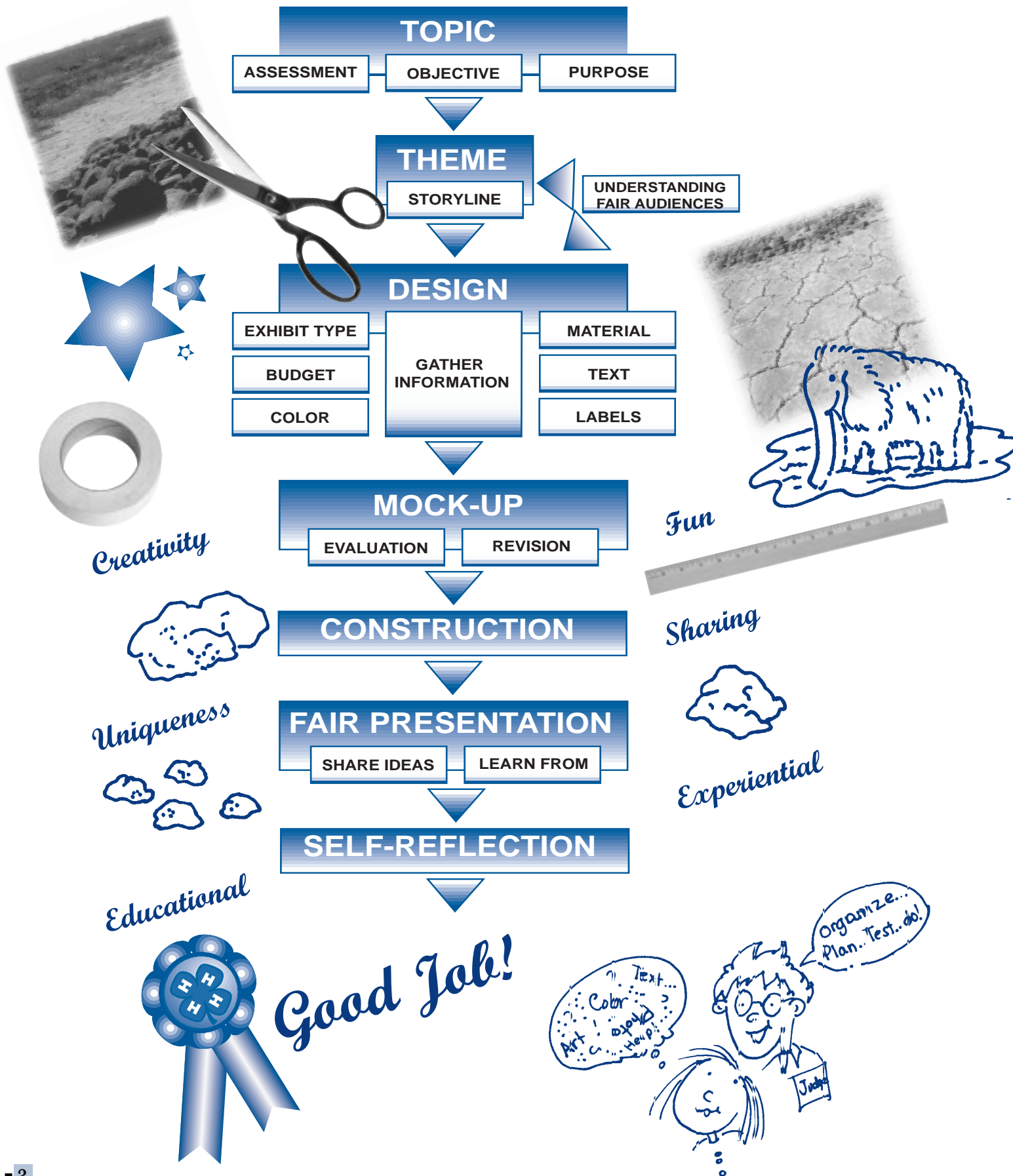


Six **Points** for successful exhibits

1. Don't wait until the last minute to start your exhibit. Plan ahead!
2. Make sure your information is accurate. Flashy displays without valid information will not impress judges or the public.
3. Do the work with support from a caring adult.
4. Be creative.
5. Select a topic suitable for your age, skills, and knowledge.
6. Have fun, enjoy, and learn something new while making your exhibit.



Exhibit Planning



Preparing

1. **Understand your audience.** Typically family members (from preschoolers to senior citizens) come to see fair exhibits. They come to experience and learn new things and have fun while doing it. However, they usually spend only a few seconds to a few minutes (one to five minutes on average) at any one exhibit. Your exhibit has to catch and hold their attention. Audiences of all ages respond more to interactive (hands-on) exhibits. Consider using flip cards or matching games or other interactive gimmicks.
2. **Plan ahead.** Think about what you want your audience to understand after they view your exhibit. Start your planning by writing down the following:
 - My exhibit topic is _____
 - My exhibit is important because it (list two reasons or needs that your exhibit meets)
 1. _____
 2. _____
 - The purpose of my project is to _____
 - My exhibit meets its purpose by (informing, teaching, demonstrating).
Show your results:
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
3. **Develop one theme.** Your theme should help you tell your story to fair audiences. Audiences remember information best when the exhibit has just one theme. Develop a storyline that gives the message you want your audience to remember.

Example

Topic: Relationship between trees and human beings

Theme: Trees and me, we share many things in common.

My Theme: _____

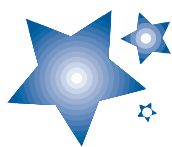
My Storyline: _____



Doing

4. **Choose the type of exhibit you want.** Most exhibits have posters, specimens, interactive pieces, or a diorama. Decide what type of exhibit will best show your theme and purpose.

My exhibit is the _____ type.



Poster display with
interactive pieces



Diorama



Poster display

It's OKAY
to think of other ideas
...virtual reality ...
video ... audio ...
Use your imagination!



Specimen

5. **Gather information.** There are many ways to get information about the topic you have chosen. You can use the library, personal interviews, surveys and the Internet (just to name a few).

- Allow yourself time to get information. If you run into a problem, have you allowed enough time to work on it?
- Use enough resources to make sure your information and data are accurate.
- Be aware of copyright laws for reproducing materials and visuals. For example, do you need permission to use animated characters such as Pokeman, Garfield, Snoopy, etc?
- Show where your information came from by listing your resources (i.e., Internet, book, magazine, etc.)

For example: 1. <http://www.umn.edu>

2. Hahn, Jeffrey (1997) Collecting and Preserving Insects, St. Paul, MN:
Minnesota Extension Service, University of Minnesota.

The sources I used for my exhibit:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



6. **Prepare a budget.** How much can you afford to spend on your exhibit? List what you would need to make the exhibit you have planned and the cost for each item. Take out ideas that are too expensive.

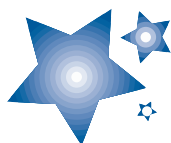
Item	Amount	Item	Amount
PosterBoard	2.00	Photos	\$
TOTAL			\$

Qualities

7. **Design your exhibit with good use of text and color.** Consider the following qualities of a well-designed exhibit in designing your own:
- **Attractive** — neat, clean, and artistically balanced with interesting objects, visuals, and colors.
 - **Brief** — well organized and simple, with five or fewer main ideas and only enough text to develop the theme. Make all illustrations simple with bold design.
 - **Clear** — a theme that can be recognized and understood quickly.
 - **Safe** — nothing can come off the display that might injure people.

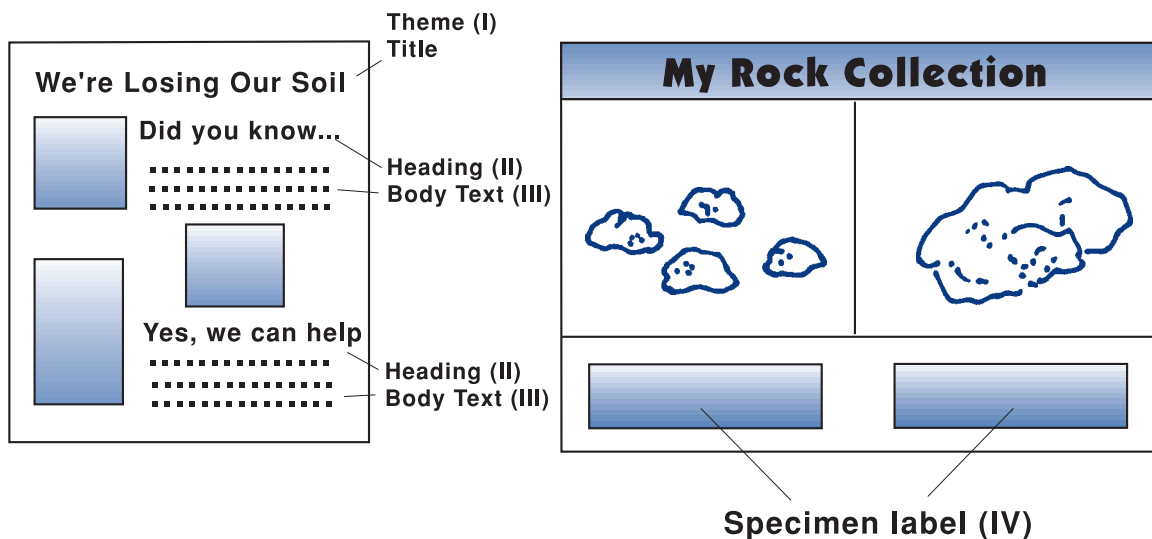
In writing text for an exhibit:

- Think about how the words can support the visuals (objects, pictures, drawings, etc.).
- Use descriptive titles, instead of topic titles. For example, “We’re Losing Our Soil,” is better than “Soil Erosion.”
- When possible, build sub themes into headings so viewers can see the deeper meanings of the theme title (see Figure 1, page 7 for level II header examples).
- Limit your level II headings to four or fewer main ideas.
- Think visually. A good graphic may provide a better message than words.
- Limit words in the body text to 225 to 300 words. Most readers spend 45 to 60 seconds reading text.
- Keep text simple and easy to read. Avoid technical terms. If you must use a technical word or term, explain it.
- Limit sentence length to 10 or 15 words. Use short paragraphs.



- Be personal. Personal words make reading easier and more interesting. Try using “you,” “me,” “I,” “she,” “yourself,” and so on. Talking to and asking questions of your audience is also effective. For example, a title might ask, “Who built the first radio?”
- Try to avoid unusual typefaces. Hand lettering creates the sense of a work in progress. It can work in a title, but it is not recommended in the text. Use computer-generated or typed text if possible.
- Use appropriate type size to make text as easy to read as possible (see Table below). All lettering should be readable from five feet away. The type size should be at least 18 points (or 3/16 inches) and the style should be bold or semi-bold. The font you choose should be simple and clean looking. Times Roman, Helvetica, Century Schoolbook, and Palatino are good, readable fonts.
- Text should be enjoyable, informative, and accurate (based on facts).

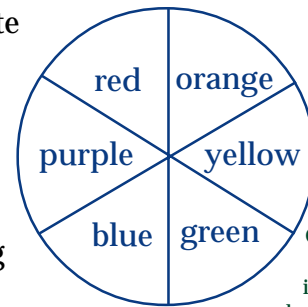
Type of text / distance	Readable from this distance	
	1 to 4 feet	4 to 6 feet
Titles (I)	>72 pt. 3/4 inches	>96 pt. 1 inches
Headings (II)	>48 pt. 1/2 inches	>72 pt. 3/4 inches
Body Text (III)	>24 pt. 1/4 inches	>48 pt. 1/2 inches
Captions and Specimen Labels (IV)	>18 pt. 3/16 inches	>24 pt. 1/4 inches



In choosing colors for your exhibit, try to:

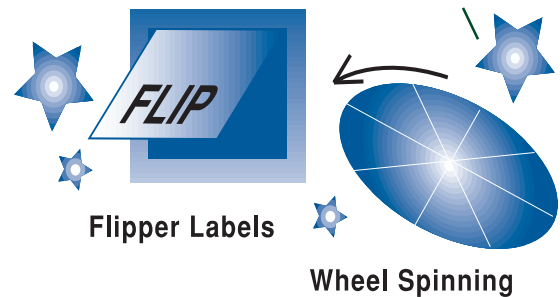
- Relate the color to the topic of the exhibit. For example, green for forest, blue for sky and water.
- Use a color from the materials you have. For example, if you already have a color board for a poster display, use the same color for framing graphics or other appropriate uses. Headings should be black or contrasting colors.
- Use cool colors for less important parts of the exhibit. Cool colors include blues, greens, and grays. To attract attention to the featured parts of the display use warm colors such as reds or yellows (or use black if the background colors are soft). Use white if the background colors are bright or deep such as blue or red.

- Avoid overly bright, neon colors that might irritate viewers' eyes and detract from the exhibit's attractiveness.
- Check the color wheel for good color combinations. Colors opposite from each other on the color wheel (such as red and green) are visually attractive and can be used for contrasting the background from text and objects. Keep colors harmonious and limit yourself to only two or three colors.



Color this color wheel and use it to select good color combinations.

8. **Make a mock-up.** Take your creative ideas and sample colors and put them together in a mock-up. You don't have to make a full-sized exhibit at this stage. You can draw or use paper to make a smaller version of the exhibit. Think about focal point(s) or interactive pieces you can use in your exhibit. Consider pictures, drawings, objects, flip-up labels, spinning wheels, and matching games.



9. **Test the effectiveness of your exhibit.**

Ask your parents/guardians, family, and friends about their response to your exhibit. Is it interesting? Does it encourage curiosity? Is it easy to read and understand? Take notes so you can remember what was said.

What three things did people understand from looking at my exhibit?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

10. **Make necessary revisions.** Change and improve parts of your exhibit based on the feedback you receive from family and friends.

Three things I need to change or improve in my exhibit are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



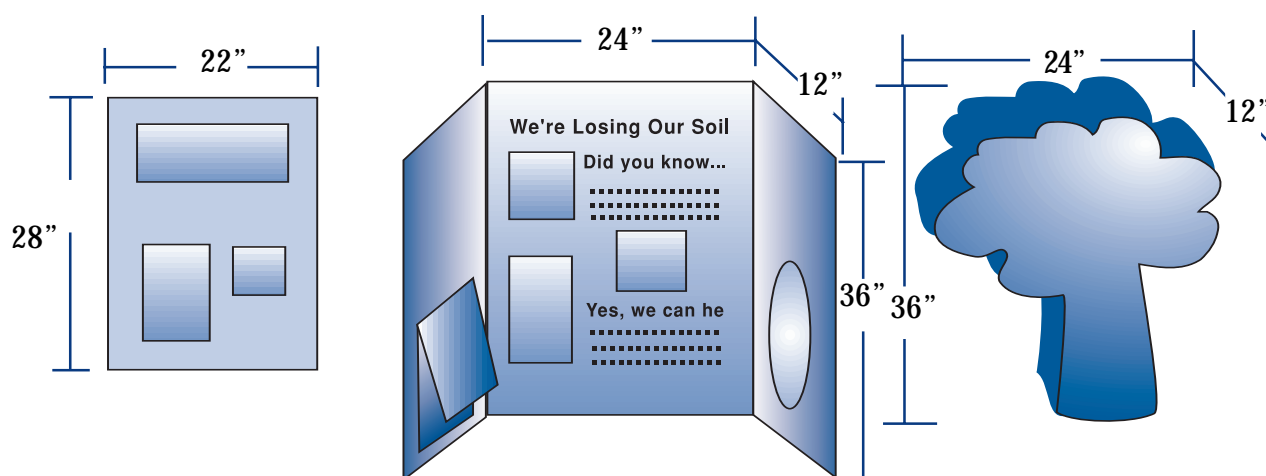
Think if I was a person walking by what would I like!



Sharing

11. **Construct your exhibit.** Based on your mock-up and the feedback you received, it is now time to construct your exhibit. Make sure you understand county or state fair guidelines for exhibit construction. Most fairs require:

- Poster displays should not exceed 22 inches wide x 28 inches high with some exceptions.
- Three-dimensional exhibits should not exceed 12 inches deep x 24 inches wide x 36 inches high.
- Some county fairs have specific requirements for exhibit size, while others have none. Check with your county office for more information.
- For entomology exhibits, see Appendix A on page 11.
- For other exhibits, read the “Minnesota State Fair 4-H Program, Rules and Premiums” available at each county Extension office.



12. **Test your exhibit with the Exhibit Checklist**

- Is your exhibit simple and uncluttered with well-balanced spaces on right, left, top, and bottom? Do you have good use of white space?
- Does your exhibit make sense? Does information flow from left to right, top to bottom? Did you use pictures, drawings, and objects to give information?
- Does your exhibit use an interesting assortment of symbols, graphics, and words? Is the design well-balanced?
- Does your exhibit have a strong center of interest or a focal point?
- Did you use a readable typeface? Text needs to be clear and large enough for all audiences to read (see page 7).
- Is your exhibit creative? Is the design unique? Did you use color, text, labels, and objects appropriately?
- Does your exhibit look neat and clean? Are objects/papers attached securely on the board? Are there dirty glue spots or other blemishes?



Reflecting

- Is your exhibit durable and safe? An exhibit must be made to withstand humidity and temperature changes and sticky fingers. Make sure there are no dangers such as pins or items that could cause harm if they fall off.

13. Prepare for making your presentation to the judges. Now that your display is built, it's time to practice your presentation for judging. Decide how you want to tell the story of the exhibit to others, including why you decided to make the exhibit, what experiences and knowledge you gained in making it, how you shared your exhibit with people in the community and/or at school, and what you plan to do with your exhibit in the future.

These are the four specific things about my exhibit that I want to share with the judges:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

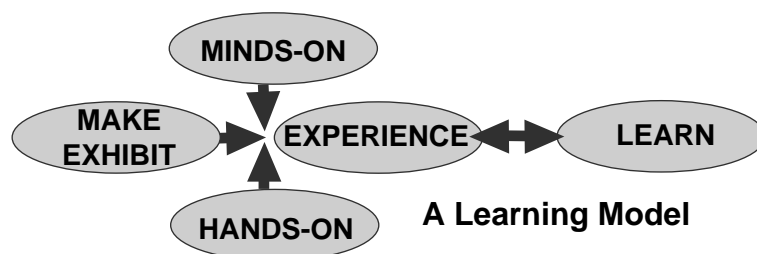
Practice your presentation in front of others and get feedback.

14. Conduct a final assessment and evaluation. Think about your feelings after working on your project. Talk to your audiences about your exhibit. This could be a part of your 4-H record. Write down what you learned from this project. What would you do differently if you made another exhibit?

Four things that I would do differently in future exhibits are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

After researching, writing, and developing your exhibit, you have learned life skills and demonstrated an experiential learning model (learn by doing).



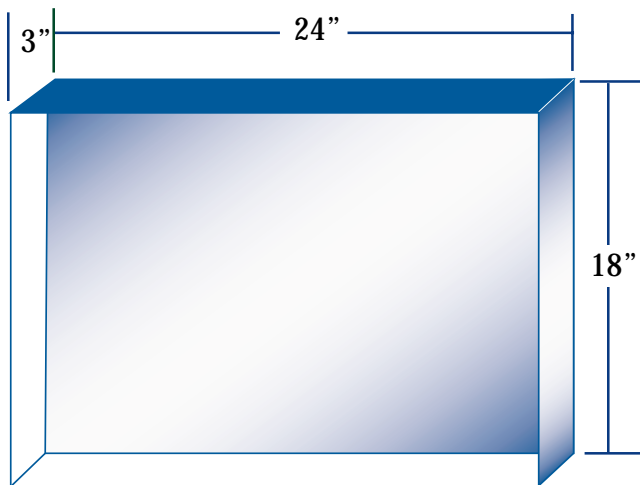
Life skills from developing exhibits:

- Communicating and sharing
- Creativity, design arts
- Building responsibility by setting goals

Congratulations! You have learned by doing and taught others in the process. Thank you for contributing to the community.

Appendix A

Entomology Exhibit



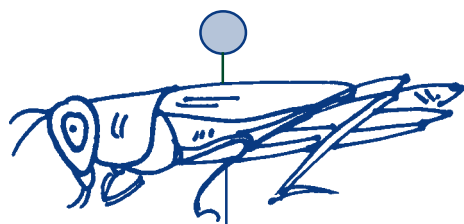
General insect collection

Must consist of a collection of at least 50 specimens of adult insects, representing at least eight orders.

Speciality insect collection

May include, but is not limited to, a collection of a single order, a collection of immature insects, a collection of insects from a particular habitat, or a collection of economic pests of a specific crop.

Labels for pinned specimens:



Use a permanent ink pen or pencil to write on labels. Computer printing is also acceptable. Do not use ball point ink or other nonpermanent ink that can run or smear when wet. Labels must be readable and approximately 1/2 x 3/4 inches in size or smaller.

St. Paul, Ramsey, MN
June 5, 1999
Stephan Carlson
In corn field

Locality label

1. Location (nearest town, county, and state from where specimen was collected)
2. Date specimen was collected (include day, month, and year)
3. Name of collector
4. Environment from which specimen was collected (such as feeding on oak leaf, or on surface of pond, or under a log)

Caroline grasshopper
Dissotera carolina
Orthoptera

Identification label

1. Includes the common and/or scientific name of the insect or insect order

For specific information on collecting, preserving, and pinning insects, see *Collecting and Preserving Insects* (F0-6892 1997) by Jeffrey Hahn. It is available through the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Useful Resources for You

- Dean, David (1994). *Museum Exhibition*, New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hahn, Jeffrey (1997). *Collecting and Preserving Insects*, St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Extension Service, University of Minnesota.
- Ham, Sam H. (1992). *Environmental Interpretation*, Golden, CO: North American Press.
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- Neal, Arminta (1976). *Exhibits for the Small Museum, A Handbook*, Nashville, TN: American Association of State and Local History.
- Neal, Arminta (1969). *Help! For the Small Museum, Handbook for Exhibit Ideas and Methods*, Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing.
- Pace, Karen; Howell, Cheryl; Kronenberg, Mary; Retter, Marian (2000). *Communications Tool Kit: Fun Skill Building Activities To Do With Kids*, 4-H 1560, Michigan State University Extension, East Lansing, MI: 4-H, MSU Extension Press.
- Pennsylvania State University (1996). *4-H Entomology Member's Guide, Catch the Bug*, PA: College of Agricultural Science and Cooperative Extension in the Pennsylvania State University.
- Serrell, Beverly (1996). *Exhibit Labels, An Interpretive Approach*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Serrell, Beverly (1985). *Making Exhibit Labels, A Step By Step Guide*, Nashville, TN: American Association of State and Local History.
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Exhibits that work!



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