

# Skagit County 4-H Educational Display

## HOW-TO GUIDE

### What is an Educational Display?

An educational display stimulates thought, teaches facts, or shows a process. It may result in action on the reader's part: Displays should make people *stop, read, and remember*. An educational display can take the form of a poster, a tabletop display, a mobile, or a large display.

The 4-H motto is "To Make the Best Better." Doing your best while working on an educational display will require lots of creative skills, as well as knowledge you have learned about your topic. Making it *better* requires planning. Often displays have seconds to get their messages across, which is why planning is so important.

### A Closer Look at Some Display Formats



#### Posters

Posters must have one main idea. The idea can be sophisticated, but it must be presented simply (i.e.) "Every Body Needs Milk." Posters tell a specific message effectively. Words and the design are kept at a minimum. Posters are meant to be read quickly, and from a distance of *at least* 10 feet.

#### Graph

A graph is a drawing showing the relative sizes of numerical quantities. It is used to present facts in picture form so that they will be clearer and easier to understand. Most commonly used graphs are (1) line graphs, (2) bar graphs, (3) picture graphs, and (4) circular (pie) graphs. Graphs should be labeled.

#### Chart

A chart is a diagram, drawing, list, plot, map, or table designed to make information easy to understand. Charts are used to provide data and serve as an aid to education. Charts should be titled.

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### Initial Planning of Your Display

#### Choosing a Topic and Format

First, do you have a topic or message in mind? If you do, think about what type of educational display would showcase your topic. If you would like to illustrate a short educational message, choose a poster. If you would like to examine the parts of something, consider a chart or mobile. Want to explain the details of your topic or include 3-dimensional objects? Consider a tri-fold or tabletop display. Choosing the right format for your message or topic will lead you on the right path toward a great result.

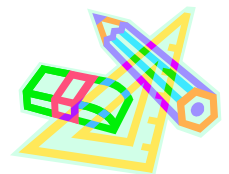


If you don't have a message in mind, consider all the format options just described. Think about how much time you have and what materials you have access to.

Determine a 4-H project in which you would like to make a display. Ask your parent, 4-H leader, or friend for ideas. Then choose the best idea and get started. Remember that you can enter up to 3 educational displays, so if you have time, you can always choose the best 2 or 3 ideas!

#### Sketching

Draw a small-scale sketch of your idea. The sketch will help you think about where you can place the words and other items on the display. It will also help you think about spacing and whether anything is missing.



This guide is based on Educational Display Scorecard C0679; "Making Posters" (New Mexico State University, 200 D-6 R-2003); "EM4573 4-H Educational Display Guidelines" (out of print); "214-200 4-H Educational Displays" (Oregon State University Extension); and poster handouts developed by Lou Bergeson.

# Educating Your Viewer

Your display must have educational value. The Educational Display Scorecard lists 4 requirements for this:

- Is there one main idea?
- Is the message effectively and accurately presented?
- Does the message elicits viewer response?
- Is the message appropriate for the intended audience?

The final requirement listed is that charts and graphs must have a title (of course, large displays must have a title too.) Posters won't need a title, because their short specific message is all that needs to be presented. Read the rest of this page for more tips.

**When planning your display do NOT forget about one specific item that can “make or break” your educational display: SPELLING.**

Correct spelling is EXTREMELY important.

Why? When the viewer sees a word misspelled, he or she may not trust what you have written on your display. A misspelled word may indicate you haven't put thought or care into your display or poster, or that you aren't knowledgeable about the subject. A misspelled word also ruins the layout because the viewer's focus is drawn to the misspelled word and not the rest of your work.

To make sure you don't misspell any words, plan the words you want to put on your display. Ask several adults and friends to check your spelling. The more people that look at it, the better. You can also use the spell check feature on the computer. Be especially careful of homophones, words that sound the same but are spelled differently. Homophones that people often confuse are their, they're, and there; your and you're; to, two, and too.

## Determine a Specific Message (One main idea)

Choose a subject that is narrow enough that your viewer can learn about it quickly. The display needs to be able to convey its message in a relatively short amount of time.

## Present Your Message Effectively and Accurately

The best way to make sure your message is accurate and effective is to educate about something you know or have learned, especially in 4-H. Sharing your knowledge with others through an educational display is a great way to serve your community. After you've determined your message, check with an adult or 4-H leader to make sure it is accurate.

## Elicit Viewer Response

Decide what you want the viewer to do or to learn. Make sure your message will have that result. Think of a clever theme or slogan to make your message memorable.

## Make Appropriate for Intended Audience

Consider who your viewers will be. Displays need to be in good taste and show not advocate any political or religious view; they must be based on a 4-H project. (Remember 4-H involves lots of projects!)

## Titles for Charts, Graphs and Large Displays

Select a title that will:

- Tell what the display is about
- Be short and simple
- Attract attention (interest audience to keep reading)
- Encourage the viewer to read more.

**Tip:** If you have consulted a book, website, or other source for your message, list the source on the front of your display. People who view your display might want to learn more, and then they'll know where to find more information.

# Designing Your Display

The educational display scorecard refers to 4 design elements: Color, Lettering, Illustration, and Layout.

## Choosing Color

### *Effectively Used & Pleasing to the Eye*

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

- Consider the contrast: Use dark letters on a light background, and light letters on a dark background. 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, with 1 color being dominant. The most important items should be the dominant color. Clipart and illustrations may add more color, but should harmonize with the background and letter colors.
- More about colors: (1) Generally speaking, fluorescent colors and interchanging colors are not pleasing to the eye. (2) White poster-board and black ink combination (without any other colors) is actually hard on the eye because of the stark difference. (3) Avoid putting red and green next to each other—this is hard to focus on if a person is colorblind.



## Illustration

### *Part of Message and Not Just Eyecatcher*

Illustrations help make your display more attractive and interesting, but they also have to be part of the total picture for your display, and enhance the message. Photographs, drawings, and clip art are common illustrations, or visuals.

Determining an appropriate illustration will be much different for a poster than for a large display. You can consider 3-dimensional visuals and illustrations for large displays. (Posters, charts, and graphs must be flat.)

When selecting your illustrations, do not use any copyrighted material (cartoons, graphics, etc.) unless you have permission from the author or artist.

## Lettering

### *Easily Read & Suitable to Message*

- Select lettering that is horizontal rather than vertical and bold enough to easily read from a distance. Avoid fancy or decorative letters except to highlight one or two words.
- Be consistent with the style you use. Too many fonts are confusing.
- Letters in the main heading should be larger, possibly heavier. All letters should be simple, legible and in groups.
- Style of lettering should suit the message and illustration.
- Avoid using pencil and ball-point pen. Broad felt-tip pens, press-on letters, poster paints, large cut-outs and bright construction paper work better. When using a stencil, connect the lines and fill in the letters. Computer lettering is acceptable.
- Consider lettering sizes in the table below. Remember that posters should not have any letters smaller than 1/2 inch. In fact, most letters should be much, much bigger! Tri-fold table displays might have smaller letters for explanatory material that are viewable from 5 feet, away, but need to have larger lettering for headings to draw in the viewer.



Viewing Distance	Minimum Letter Size	Line Thickness
10 feet	1/2 inch	3/32 inch
20 feet	3/4 inch	1/8 inch
50 feet	2 inches	5/16 inch

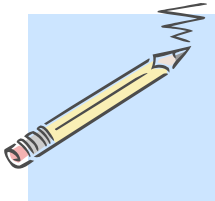


# Designing Your Display, continued

## Layout

**Simple & Orderly, Organized Parts, Good Spacing, Neat, and Planning Reflected**

Once you've gathered all your materials, arrange any elements on your poster board or display



board. Doing this before gluing them down, or using pencil before using marker will help you to see that you have enough space, and have put items in the best place.

When you consider the layout, or arrangement of your display, here are some items to think about: Flow/focus, spacing, borders, and unity and balance.

### Flow/Focus

The design of your display should lead the viewer's eye to one central area of interest. For a poster, this may not be dead center. For a tri-fold display will usually be the center panel of the display. The viewer will generally read from top to bottom and from left to right.

### Spacing

A well-designed display has plenty of open space. It should not appear cluttered. Leave a nice margin on all sides of your poster or large display. Arrange sections of

text with space between them, and leave space between visuals and illustrations.

### Borders

Adding a border to your display can give it a professional, finished look. It will also help it stand out from the wall it's displayed against.

*(Continued on next column)*



For large displays, consider using borders to "box in" important sections that you want the audience to see first. You can also mat various elements to have the same effect as a border.

## Unity & Balance

These are key elements of an appealing display. Unity means all of the parts look like they belong together. Balance means that elements are evenly distributed across the display. Unity and balance make the parts of the display look simple, orderly, and organized.

The larger your display is, the more important unity and balance is. For large displays, here are some techniques you can use: Use the same header style on different sections of text and the same letter style or font. Keep sections the same approximate size. Having one section of text be three lines long and another a full page doesn't look balanced. Alternate text and visuals. Use a color scheme to tie everything together.

## Finishing Touches

- Have a friend, parent, or 4-H leader check your final layout before you glue it down.
- Erase all excess pencil lines (a gum eraser is best for this.)
- Your display will need to hold up against outdoor weather, especially humidity, at the fair. Use rubber cement or bottle glue, rather than a glue stick.
- Posters may be laminated. Attach a hanger if you do not want your poster to be stapled when hung.
- Store your poster or display in a large trash bag, to protect it until you need it.



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# Making Your Display **UNIQUE**

The educational display scorecard lists **Originality & Creativity** as part of the requirement for an educational display.

Your display should: **Show Imagination** and Have a **New idea or an innovative way of presenting a familiar one.**

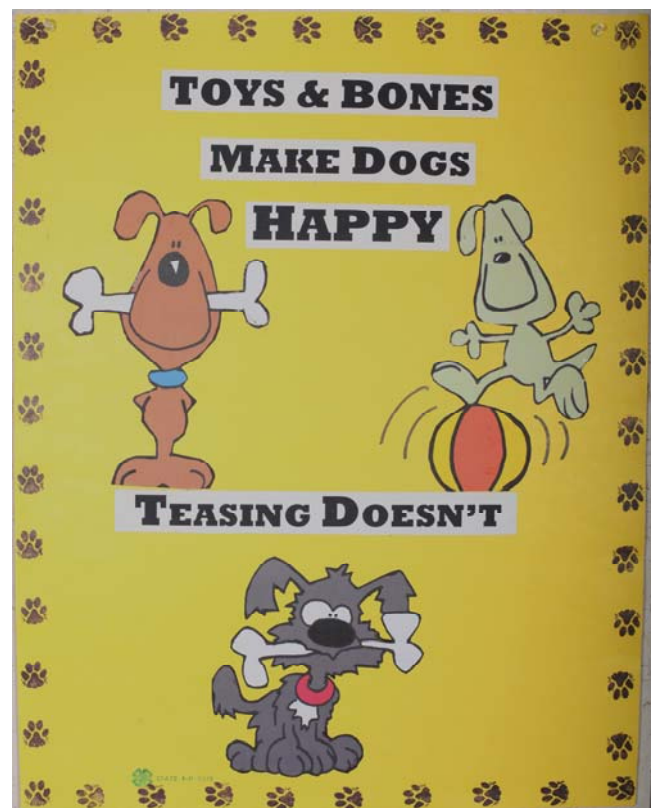
## How is this accomplished?

- First, make sure your message isn't obvious. It should point out something that most people may not know. Or it can make them think about something they know in a different way.
- Second, make sure your message is not too general. Are you using facts and creative wording, rather than opinions and common adjectives?
- Third, make your design unique. Focus on making **one** element stand out to catch the viewer's eye. If you make too many elements look unusual, your display may look confusing or cluttered. For instance, keep your lettering simple, and add a unique border or a colorful illustration. Or keep your illustration simple to highlight the words of a really catchy message.
- Fourth, let your imagination run wild. Write down all of your ideas, then settle on one that's creative and original, yet still practical.

## Are you making a tri-fold or large display?

Because your display is larger and can be 3D, you have more options for creativity.

- Consider adding texture, or items such as grass or rope that may enhance your theme. You can also mount visuals on spacers to move them out from the background.
- Make your display interactive. Ask questions with lift up tables to see the answers or set up a board with lights that show the right match between visuals and descriptions.
- Choose attention grabbing techniques: actual objects, models, motion, lighting, and, of course, color, contrasts, and illustrations.



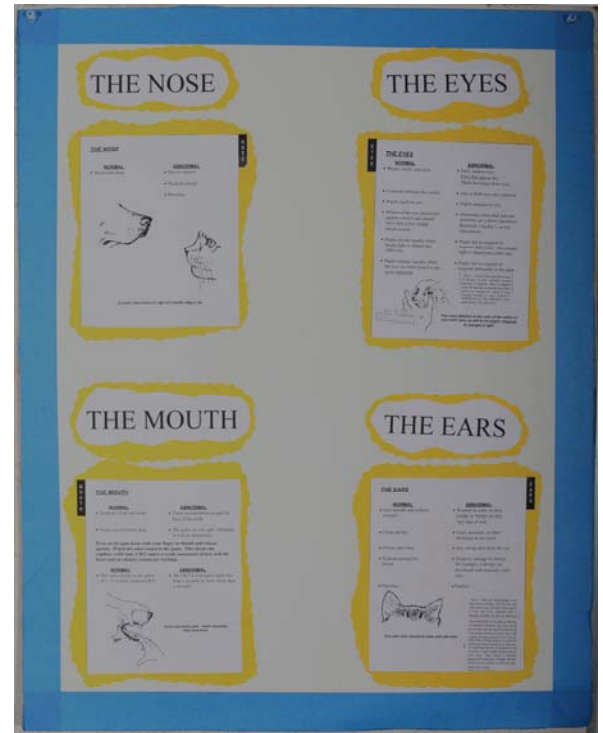
**Above:** Poster Example #1

**Left:** Poster Example #2

# Educational Display Scorecard & Poster Examples

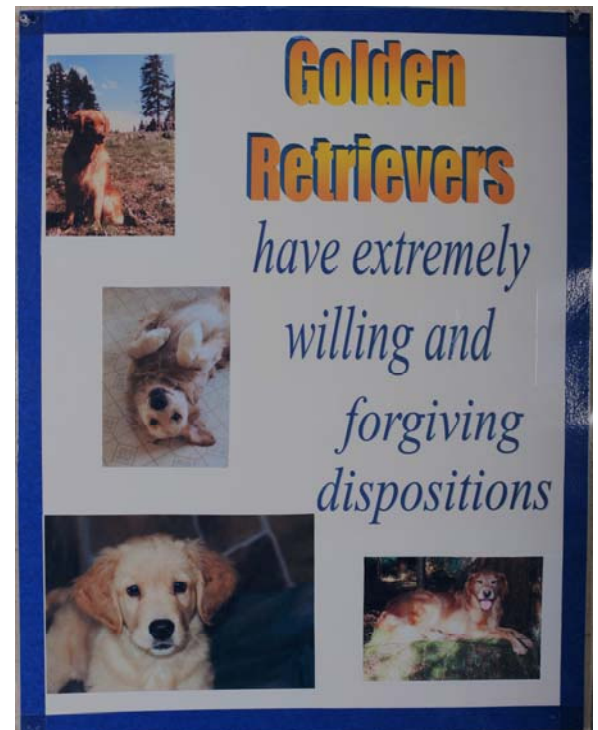
Check out the Educational Display Scorecard to see how posters and other displays will be judged. **Practice judging on your own** using the poster examples on this page and on page 5. Turn the page upside down to see the Ribbon each poster received, as well as comments about the poster to check if your judging matches up. (Thank you to the 4-H members who made these posters and Bonita Elfstrom for providing the pictures.)

EDUCATIONAL DISPLAY SCORECARD <span style="float: right;">CD679</span>				
Examine the display for the qualities listed below. Place a check in each column to indicate placing earned.				
Exhibitor Name or Number _____				
Class _____ Lot _____ Ribbon _____				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	No Placing
<b>DESIGN (40 points)</b>				
<b>Color</b>				
-pleasing to the eye				
-effectively used				
<b>Lettering</b>				
-easily read				
-style suitable to message				
<b>Illustration</b>				
-part of message or just eyecatcher?				
<b>Layout</b>				
-simple and orderly				
-organization of parts				
-good spacing				
-neatness				
-reflects planning				
<b>ORIGINALITY &amp; CREATIVITY (20 points)</b>				
Shows imagination				
New idea or innovative way to present familiar one				
<b>EDUCATIONAL VALUE (40 points)</b>				
One main idea				
Message effectively and accurately presented				
Message elicits viewer response				
Message appropriate for intended audience				
Chart/graph is titled				
<b>COMMENTS</b>	_____			
_____				



Above: Poster Example #3

Below: Poster Example #4



#1 Blue. Poster's message very creative and catchy. Drawing really brings the message home. Great idea to split up the poster to make the contrast more obvious. Suggest making lettering slightly darker, so easier to read from a distance. Great imagination. Excellent work!

#2 Blue. Poster's message is simple and effective. Great border and fun pictures. Excellent.

#3 White. Printed pages are much too small to read from a distance, and include too much information. Next time, choose only one of the body parts, choose one main idea about the body part, and illustrate that. You're on the right track with the blue and yellow contrast.

#4 Red. Great visual impact with the lettering and photos. Message is opinion rather than fact, so does not educate the viewer as much as it could. Layout has good flow. Good job.