How To Prepare a Poster Project

General Rules

1. All posters must be 22" x 28" and **must be exhibited horizontally**.

22" ⬜ 28"

2. Posters must be mounted on a firm backing. Any thin, lightweight material that will keep the poster from bending forward will work. Examples are very stiff cardboard, thin paneling, thin luan board, or foam core board. (Foam core board is available for purchase at the Extension Office.)
3. All posters are required to be covered with clear plastic or other transparent material to protect the exhibit. This is required to keep the poster clean before judging and when touched by fairgoers.
   - Clear plastic sleeves are available for purchase at the Extension Office. These are the most convenient choice for poster coverings.
   - Clear plastic comes in various thicknesses, in rolls or sheets, and may be purchased at most hardware and variety stores.
4. All posters must have a title.
   - Some exhibits require a specific title, and others allow the 4-H'er to use creativity in choosing a title.
   - Check exhibit requirements for your particular project.
5. A small label is to be placed in the lower right corner of your poster.
   - This label should include the following information:
     Name
     Grade and Age
     Club
     Project and Division or Level
   - A label cut from a plain 3" x 5" file card works well. It has a smooth finish and is sturdy enough for gluing and removing smudges.
   - You may make your label on the computer.
6. **All posters, notebooks, and display boards include a reference list indicating where information was obtained, giving credit to the original author, to complete the 4-H member's exhibit. This reference list should/might include web site links, people and professionals interviewed, books, magazines, etc. It is recommended this reference list be attached to the back of a poster or display board, be the last page of a notebook, or included as part of the display visible to the public. A judge is not to discredit an exhibit for the manner in which references are listed.**

7. Neatness and cleanliness are important.
   Tip: K2R will take fingerprints off colored poster board.

Planning The Poster

1. A good poster does not happen by accident. Plan your poster ahead of time, make several rough sketches, and experiment.
2. Poster should have one main idea.
3. Poster should be self-explanatory.
4. The message of the poster should be brief and direct.
5. Poster should grab the viewer's attention immediately, help the person to focus on the main idea, and cause that person to take action.
6. Be sure poster follows specific project requirements.

Color

1. Use white poster board when required; experiment with other colors when not required.

2. Colors can create the desired mood or atmosphere for your poster. Colors have meaning, so use the appropriate color for your subject. Example: earthy colors (light brown, natural, greens, rusts) work well for forestry and wildlife posters.
3. Limit the poster to two or three colors so that color does not become too obvious to the viewer.
4. Choose color combinations that make your message easy to read. The following color combinations are listed from most legible to least legible: black on yellow, green on white, red on white, blue on white, white on blue, black on white, yellow on black, white on red, white on green, white on black, red on yellow, green on red, red on green, blue on red. *Reminder:* Marking pens may change color, depending on background color.

Lettering
1. Lettering should be large enough and dark enough to be easily seen.
2. Leave the same amount of space between letters.
3. Spaces between words should be about the size of a full letter.
4. Lower case letters are easier to read than capital letters. Use capital letters or other novel lettering methods only for emphasis.
5. Straight, simple letters are easiest to read.

Lettering Methods
There are many ways to complete the lettering on posters. Possibilities include:
1. **Hand Lettering** – Looks appealing if done neatly.
2. **Stencils** – Give a very neat appearance if used properly.
   - Close the gaps on stenciled letters to make them solid letters, which are easier to read.
   - Use a pencil to trace the letters directly onto the poster and then color them. Do not attempt to color through the stencil.
   - If colored pencils are used, the best are soft leaded ones. They are easy to use and blend, and strokes will not show. Hard leaded pencils are less expensive, but are more difficult to use.
   - Stencil letters can also be traced onto construction paper, fabric, contact paper, or colored paper and then cut out. Tracing the letters on backwards to the wrong side of the paper will help eliminate pencil marks.
3. **Self-Sticking Letters** – Are very neat but are more expensive to use. Adhesive on the letters sticks the letters to the poster, and they cannot be reused. Some adhesive letters may be repositioned and some are permanently attached once they are placed on the poster.
4. **Computer Generated Letters** – Entire words or groups of words may be mounted on poster.

Mounting Adhesives
1. **Rubber Cement** – Leaves no marks and won't wrinkle paper.
2. **Double Stick Tape** – Good for attaching leaves.
3. **White Glue** – Use only if item being attached is thick enough that wrinkling or damage will not occur.
4. **Glue Sticks** – Work well in many instances.
5. **Spray Adhesives** – Good choice for attaching leaves and other items to poster.

Extra Touches
1. **Colored Tape** – This is not necessary, but is an easy way to attach poster to backing and makes an attractive border. It is available in many colors (cloth or plastic) and is available at discount and craft stores. Tape 1" to 1 ½" wide gives the poster a nice border.
2. **Colored "Frames"** for pictures or labels.
3. **4-H Clover** somewhere on poster and/or 4-H in title.
   (Rev 12/14)