A Guide to Participating in the
4-H GRAPHIC DESIGN PROGRAM

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The 4-H Graphic Design Program gives 4-H members the opportunity to use their creativity and artistic ability to promote their project areas or 4-H program. 4-H'ers are encouraged to develop their visual communication skills by also identifying locations to display their created materials as a means to communicate with external audiences about the 4-H program.

GETTING STARTED

4-H'ers should contact their local county 4-H Extension office for all rules. 4-H'ers may choose to enter in one of four classes for this program.

- **Brochure:** A tri-fold brochure that should contain information on both the front and back. It should be easily read and printed on 8 ½ x 11 inch sized paper.
- **Flyer:** An 8 ½ x 11 inch paper that promotes 4-H or a 4-H related program, project, event, or activity.
- **PowerPoint Presentation:** 5-10 slides and a script to accompany the presentation. For best presentation, include the script for each slide in the "notes" section of the PowerPoint.
- **Other** (Any other promotional material- mini-books, bookmarks, postcards, etc.)

SCORING GUIDELINES

Each class will be judged on the following:
- Font Style and Graphics- 20 points
- Flow of Design- 20 points
- Color- 20 points
- Educational Components- 20 points
- Clear Delivery of Message- 20 points

FONT STYLE AND GRAPHICS- 20 POINTS

The fonts and graphics used in a design can greatly affect how the viewer perceives a message. For example, If you've ever seen a *spooky* font used to advertise an upcoming scary movie, you have felt how fonts can move you emotionally. Likewise, the graphics you use will either enhance or detract from the message you want your audience to receive. When choosing fonts and graphics, consider:

- **Font** (the look of the letters). There are two categories of fonts: serif and sans serif.

  Serif fonts like Times New Roman, have small lines that extend from the tips of the letter, appearing like small feet or tails. Serif fonts are especially good for printed materials. Examples of serif fonts include Times New Roman, Georgia, Book Antiqua, Palatino, and Garamond.

Sans Serif fonts do not have the lines extending from the tips of the letters. They are often used for on-screen documents, documents projected onto a screen (i.e. a PowerPoint presentation), but are not good for long blocks of text. Examples of sans serif fonts include Arial, Verdana, Lucinda, and Impact.

- Underline, *italics*, and **boldface**: These techniques are often used to gain the attention of the audience. However, overused or used incorrectly, they can be distracting. Use them sparingly.
- **Bullet points:** Bullet points are used to help readers process information quickly. Bullet points are not meant to be full sentences, but rather a quick note. For instance, good bullet points generally:
  - Tell a story
  - Share only one idea
  - Use a consistent style (i.e. begin with a verb or noun)
  - Abide by the 6 x 6 rule (no more than six bullet points each with no more than six words per bullet point.
  - UPPERCASE/lowercase: As a general rule of thumb, using a combination of upper and lower case letters is ideal. Reserve all uppercase for special items such as titles.
- **Graphics:** should be complementary to the design and not copyrighted. If a 4-H emblem is used, it must follow the emblem guidelines found on pages 8-13 at: https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/4-H%20Name%20and%20Emblem%20User%20Guide%202014.pdf
- **Photos:** The Florida 4-H photo galleries are a good place to locate Florida 4-H photos. These can be found at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/florida4-h/sets/

FLOW OF DESIGN- 20 POINTS

All elements of a design should flow smoothly, and be appealing to the eye. Things to consider as you design your graphic:

- **Negative or White Space:** It is difficult to focus on a design that is overfilled with text and images. Negative space, is the unmarked or blank portion of the page or design. Effective use of negative space makes a design seem less cluttered and results in a design that is more easily read.
- **Breaks:** Successful designs ensure that items (words, graphics, paragraphs, bullet points, etc.) do not break across pages, columns, or margins in a distracting manner. Any of these breaks can "break" the audience's attention and cause them to miss the message.
- **Harmony:** Design flow captures the audience's eye and purposefully moves their attention from one section to another seamlessly. Harmony is what makes all of the

pieces come together and create this flow. There is neither too much nor too little that fills the space. Fonts, colors, images, and information come together as one. If any of these items stand out too much, consider removing or adjusting them until everything is seen at once and no one thing stands out more than another.

- **Balance:** A balanced design gives a feeling of stability to the design. A design can either have Symmetrical, Asymmetrical, or Radial Balance.
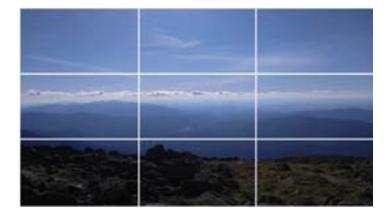
Symmetrical: Having objects of equal weight on equal sides of the design.
Asymmetrical: Having objects of unequal weight that balance each other around a central point. Feels balanced, even though objects are unequally distributed through the design.
Radial: Has a center point and elements are found around the center point. A daisy would be an example of radial design.

RULE OF THIRDS

Imagine breaking down your design into thirds, both horizontally and vertically, so that you have nine parts forming a grid. Important elements of your design should be placed along these lines of intersection.

(Photo credit: Shaina Spann, Baker County 4-H Extension Agent)

COLOR- 20 POINTS

Color also contributes to the overall flow of a design. Color used in your design should be complimentary and attractive. Some things to consider when choosing colors:

- **Use contrast.** Dark font looks best on a light background, and light font looks best on a dark background. Choose a background that compliments both the fonts and images being used.
- **Avoid using complimentary colors** such as red and green, blue and orange, or yellow and purple next to each other. This combination is difficult to view for those who

are color-blind and can make things seem to disappear on the page.

- **Avoid using too many colors.** Two or three well-chosen colors may be more effective than a host of randomly chosen colors.
- **Be careful with neon colors.** While bright neon colors may be eye-catching, they can also be difficult to focus on or distract the audience from the overall message.
- **Color creates mood and helps tell a story.** Choosing the right color combination can make the message of the design very strong, or accidentally change the message entirely! Here are some examples of how color is commonly used to affect a design:
  - Red: Passion, Love, Anger
  - Orange: Energy, Happiness, Vitality
  - Yellow: Happiness, Hope, Deceit
  - Green: New Beginnings, Abundance, Nature
  - Blue: Calm, Responsible, Sadness
  - Purple: Creativity, Royalty, Wealth
  - Black: Mystery, Elegance, Evil
  - Gray: Moody, Conservative, Formality
  - White: Purity, Cleanliness, Virtue
  - Brown: Nature, Wholesomeness, Dependability
  - Tan or Beige: Conservative, Piety, Dull
  - Cream or Ivory: Calm, Elegant, Purity

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS- 20 POINTS

The graphic design should attempt to communicate something of value to the viewer. Whether that is a simple message such as, "4-H is fun" communicated through a logo or a much larger message such as how to give a speech through a PowerPoint presentation. In either case the viewer should leave knowing or feeling something they have not before. The internet is a treasure trove of information, but you have to do a bit of homework to ensure that the information you are reading is from a reliable source. One way to evaluate the credibility of an internet source is by reviewing the domain name. Some domains are generally known to be reliable and contain credible information, but some may be harder to guarantee. Remember when reviewing sources that even the most credible sites can be biased or publish opinion pieces of their contributors. Some examples domain names and their meanings include:

- **.com:** Commercial site. The information on .com sites are generally going to have a positive spin on a product it promotes. This is not necessarily a credible source of information.

- **.edu:** Educational institution. Usually these are credible as they are from a school (kindergarten-university) but students may also have .edu websites which may reflect a student's beliefs, not necessarily those of the institution.
- **.gov:** Federal government site. These can be considered credible.
- **.org:** Traditionally a non-profit organization. Generally, these can be considered credible, but view these with a careful eye as some will advocate specific points of views over others.
- **.mil:** Armed forces. This can be considered credible.
- **.net:** Network. Any kind of information can be found on this domain. It might be credible or it might not. Be careful.

Cooperative Extension is also an excellent source of information. The purpose of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service is to bring research-based information from the University of Florida to the citizens of Florida. With this in mind, you can be certain that information through your local county extension office is factual and correct.

CLEAR DELIVERY OF MESSAGE-20 POINTS

Beyond ensuring that your entry uses proper grammar and correct spelling, what you actually say is critically important to the overall effectiveness of your design. Things to consider:

- **Have someone proof read your work.** Check for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- **Clear messaging.** Use only one main idea or point in your design. People should be able to tell what your piece is trying to tell them within a brief glance.
- **Organization.** In the English language, we read from top left to bottom right. Because the reader is used to this pattern, you should use the same in your design. The most important information should usually go on the top left, working down to the least important information on the bottom right.
- **Your words should be simple and to the point.** Avoid using a lot of filler words.

FINAL STEPS

Graphic design is a fun and powerful field. Designers can easily get their message to a large audience with an effective design. Test your piece out on three or four people. Ask them how they feel when they see the design, what they think the

message is, and any suggestions they have for improvement. Remember to make sure your test audience has people of different ages, genders, and backgrounds as well as a couple for whom your message is intended and a couple who you are not trying to reach. This will help you make sure your piece can have the most impact and reach the most people possible. Most importantly, have fun!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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