



4-H Action Exhibits

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An Action Exhibit features one to three 4-H'ers showing a process; making or doing something while explaining it to the audience and answering the audience's questions.

Action Exhibits are different from most fair exhibits. In the fair exhibit, the display just sits there to be looked at, while in the Action Exhibit, everything **comes alive**; the 4-H'ers are actually involved in doing something. Action Exhibits are different from 4-H demonstrations in that constant talk is not necessary, more people may be involved and more time is involved.

- e Action Exhibits have one to three participants.
- e All participants take an equal role in planning and doing the Action Exhibit.
- e The exhibit is organized so that each person has a given time to work.
- e You will have about 45 minutes to present. This may mean you will repeat the process you are doing several times over.
- e If a product is made, it needs to be made in the allotted time from step one to the finished product. Samples may be used to show different steps.
- e Action Exhibits are set up on the tables and booths that are provided. Sometimes easels are provided. 4-H'ers should check with the organizer to find out what is going to be available.
- e The participants must provide all materials and equipment needed.
- e Scoring is done by roving observers during the presentation. Score sheets will be returned so that the participants will continue to learn and improve their skills.
- e To participate at the state level, all members of the team must be at least 12 years old.

How to Plan an Action Exhibit

1. Choose a topic: What have you done or learned that you want to show to others?

2. Choose your action: Do you want to do an Action Exhibit by yourself or work with others in planning and doing an Action Exhibit? What action will you be doing?

3. Choose your goal: Do you want to teach others something? Do you want to show others how to do something? Do you want to promote something or compare different processes (such as comparing well-knitted sweaters to poorly knitted sweaters)?

4. Choose a title: Make it short and catchy. Have a one-idea theme. Tell the most important point and be original. Then make a poster with the title and make any other posters that will help show or explain your topic.

5. Choose your support materials: What materials, equipment, and ingredients will you need to make your exhibit active? Write it down on an index card and double check to make sure you have all you need before going to do your Action Exhibit. A plastic tablecloth or a suitable table cover should be used to protect the table and don't forget a drop cloth or newspaper for the floor to catch any harmful drips.

6. Practice! Practice your Action Exhibit by doing all the necessary steps in the process. Your Action Exhibit is smoother when you've done it several times and when you're experienced in making or doing your topic. Check the time limits. Remember to keep your working area neat, clean and free from clutter. After practicing, decide if there are ways to improve your Action Exhibit.

7. Get People Interested: Decide on ways you might involve the audience. Think of a series of questions that you can use to capture the audience's attention: "Have you ever tried to make or do this?" "Would you like to try making or doing this?" "Would you like to taste this?" "Do you know how to do this?" When appropriate, involve the audience in a "hands-on" way; in moving/doing the various steps in your action exhibit.

Setting Up Your Exhibit

Choose a focal point for your exhibit

e Try to avoid always using the middle of the table as the center of your exhibit.

- e Think about what is seen as the most interesting part of your display. The viewer's eye should naturally go from the title poster to the most important part.
- e If several objects are involved, vary the sizes, shapes, colors and heights. You may want to use covered boxes or storage containers to vary heights of the objects.

Arrange your exhibit

- e Left to right is the way the eye usually travels. Place heavy, large or bright objects on the left side of your display.
- e Decide on the type of balance that you want to achieve. Formal or symmetrical balance means both sides are the same. Informal or asymmetrical balance means the left side is "weighted" different than the right side. Circle balance means the display is arranged around a focal point.
- e Decide on an overall color scheme. Chose your colors with care. Grays, greens and blues are good for backgrounds. Warm colors (red, yellow, and orange) seem to "advance" or stick out and are still stimulating. Cool colors (blue, green) seem to "recede" and are calm and restful. What is the theme of your exhibit - exciting or restful?
- e Be sure your audience can see what you are doing.
- e Use labels if you have several items on display.
- e Avoid clutter. Make sure everything is really needed and leave out anything that doesn't fit the one idea or theme.
- e Make all lettering easy to read: simple, neat and well spaced. Spell all words correctly and erase any pencil guidelines you use.

Materials Needed

1. **Backgrounds**- Cardboard display boards from an office supply store are excellent. You can make your own background from corrugated or seamless rolls of paper. Plywood or tempered hardboards are also good construction materials.

2. **Exhibit Fronts** - You will want paper, cloth or another material to cover or skirt the front of the table. This makes your exhibit area appear neater and hides cords and extra supplies under the table.

3. **Fasteners** - You will need a way to attach your posters, secure your background and table skirts. Thumb tacks, sticky tack, spray adhesive, map tacks, rubber cement are possible choices.

4. **Stability** - Stability of your exhibit is important. You should expect that the exhibit will be bumped at some point. Make sure everything is secure and try not to use fragile items that are easily broken.

5. **Exhibit Materials** - Don't forget to bring all of the materials, ingredients, tools, utensils, extension cords or other supplies you will need to do your Action Exhibit. Cover trade names so that you are not promoting a specific brand.

6. **Remember** - You can't use materials that will leave the area (floor, tables, walls) damaged.

Other Important Considerations

- e Live Animals - While the use of live animals is not always prohibited from Action Exhibits, you should consider their use very carefully. Would the use of a model be just as effective? How might a live animal detract from the rest of your presentation? Live animals can be unpredictable and should be caged. Ask your county educator if the animal you plan to use is allowed in the building where the Action Exhibits will be going on. A valid rabies vaccination for any animal at a 4-H event is absolutely required. Bring your rabies certificate to the event.
- e Firearms & Weapons - Any type of firearm or weapon is prohibited from a 4-H Action Exhibit or Demonstration. Most schools and the University of New Hampshire do not allow firearms or weapons in their facilities.
- e Food Safety - If your Action Exhibit involves the preparation and or serving of food, be sure you are following all current food safety guidelines. In fact, you should talk about how you are following safe food preparation practices as part of your exhibit. You wouldn't want to serve food prepared in an unsafe manner to your audience and risk them getting sick. You should refer to *Food Safety Checklist for 4-H Demonstrations or Exhibits* or check with your 4-H Leader or County Extension Educator if you have questions about safe food handling for your Action Exhibit.
- e Be aware of copyright laws - If you are using a recipe from a copyrighted cookbook or directions for a craft from a magazine - you must have permission to display and share this with others. You can ask permission by calling the customer service phone number listed in the magazine or book. Most publishers are happy to grant you permission if you ask however, they may not allow you

to hand out copies of the recipe or directions to complete a craft. Be specific in your questions when you call and ask for permission. Ask them how you should give them credit as well. Typically, they will ask that you write "Reprinted with permission from Betty Crocker" on the bottom of your poster or something similar.

- e Electricity or special needs - If your Action Exhibit requires the use of electricity or something out of the ordinary, always check with your county Extension Educator to make sure you will have what you need.
- e Identify your Action Exhibit as 4-H - Your audience should know you are a 4-H member. You can be creative in how you accomplish this. Use a 4-H tablecloth, display the 4-H flag on your table, wear a 4-H apron, etc.

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