Banner Basics

Prepared by: Rhonda Atkinson, editor, Kansas 4-H Journal

The Best Banner

Must Be Focused

A banner, poster or educational display must have a center of focus from which the reader's eye can move. Focus is created through the use of visual contrasts - *large - small; dark - light; round - square, etc.*

We read from left to right and top to bottom. The design should allow our eye to do this or have a very strong reason and design for our eye to do otherwise.

Artwork Must Be Attractive

An illustration of any kind sends a powerful message; therefore, the right graphic tremendously enhances the exhibit. Unfortunately, the wrong graphic can severely detract from the effectiveness of the message the 4-H members want to convey through their banner, display or poster.
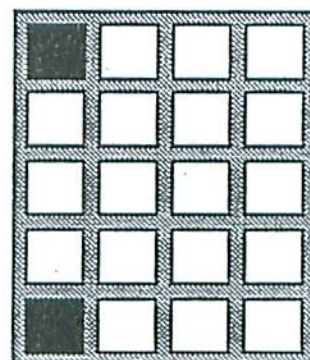
Craftsmanship Says Quality

Craftsmanship is attention to detail: uniform spacing, alignment of objects, clean cuts on letters and illustration pieces.
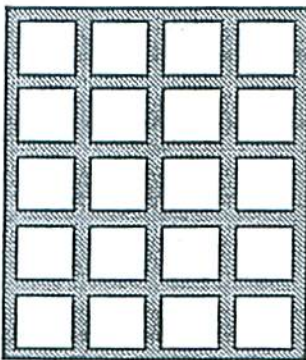
Where to look?
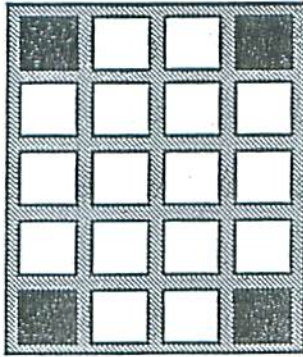Identical squares have equal value; the reader can't tell what's important or where to look.
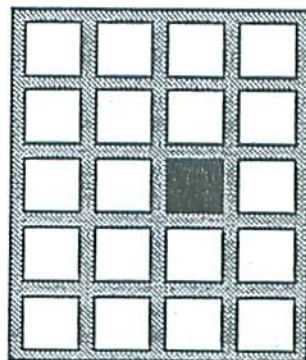
Focus
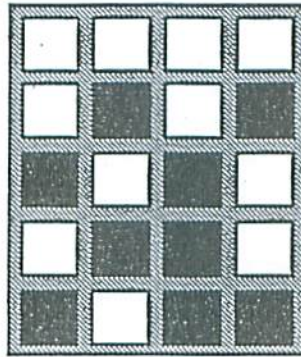A visual contrast will put the reader's eye exactly where you want it.

Top to Bottom
When two objects carry the same "weight", the eye automatically goes to the top one.
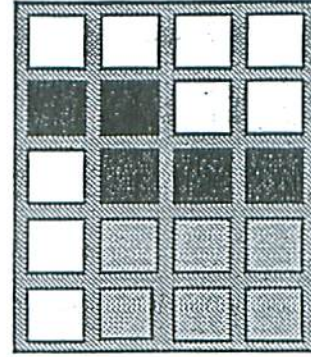
Banner Basics

Left to Right; Top to Bottom
Equal weight to multiple objects causes the eye to be confused. It will then go from left to right and top to bottom.

Overload
Many objects of the same weight cause the eye to not focus on anything. The message is then missed altogether. A common mistake for young members who fill the need to have many graphics.

Prioritize
By changing the contrast, the eye is guided through the message. It can be guided by contrasts in color, size, texture and placement.

Three Types of Banner Designs

Typographical -   *Uses type only*
Graphic or Symbol -   *Symbols only*
Combination -   *Combination of type and symbols (usually the most effective)*

Four Design Elements in a combined design:

Color:
Color can be one of the first things that attracts the eye to the banner itself. Once the eye is focused on the banner, color also plays an important part in directing the eye through the message. Generally, light colored letters on a dark background works best for the banners. Think about what color the signs are on the interstates, reflective white on a green background, to remember this rule. The reverse also works well, a light background with dark letters.

Type:
The following chart can help in determining how large the letters should be:

Letter Size	Viewing Distance
1/4 inch	8 feet
1/2 inch	16 feet
1 inch	32 feet
2 inch	64 feet
3 inch	128 feet
4 inch	256 feet

Banner Basics

Type cont.

Since the eye reads from left to right and from top to bottom, the most effective banner type reads by line from left to right and from top to bottom. Placing vertical type on a banner is hard to read and should usually be avoided. Generally, the type should be to the left of the major portion of the graphics.

Graphics:

To be effective, the graphic must enhance the message to be conveyed. When graphic illustrations are used they must be simple, large amd must project a positive image and motivate one to act.

White Space:

This is the space left without any type or illustration and can be the single most important element in any design. Remember:

IF THE MESSAGE DOES NOT HAVE ROOM TO "BREATH", THE MESSAGE DIES!

Copyright and Trademarks

It is important to keep in mind copyright and trademark laws as you are judging these exhibits. Club members like to use themes, logos and song titles for banner messages, and often times could be considered in violation of copyright and trademark laws. A brief description of each follows.

Copyright:

Following the 1989 Berne copyright convention, almost everything created privately and originally after April 1, 1989 is copyrighted and protected whether it has a notice or not. Nothing is considered in the public domain anymore unless the owner explicitly puts it in the public domain. This means that written permission must be granted to use any material created privately and originally.

Trademark, or mark is any word, phrase, symbol, design, sound, smell, color, product configuration, group of letters or numbers or combination of these, adopted and used by a company to identify its products or services and distinguish them from products and services made, sold or provided by others. Marks are often categorized according to the type of idenfication involved. The most commonly encountered categories are trademarks, service marks and trade dress.

Trademark traditionally describes marks designating products, or "goods" (as opposed to services).

Service Mark indicates the source or origin of services (as opposed to goods). For all practical purposes, trademarks and service marks are subject to the same rules of validity, use, protection and infringement.

Trade Dress refers to the overall image or impression of a product (the product look and feel) and/or the way in which the product is packaged and presented to consumers.