

Science Fair Display Do's and Don'ts

Do

1. For any drawings or written text, start with pencil, not pen.
2. Sketch a rough layout on a piece of paper before pasting up your display.
3. Leave yourself plenty of time.
4. Gather all of your material and organize it into categories.
5. Study examples of winning displays in science fair books for ideas. However...Be original!
6. Come up with a catchy title and display it prominently.
7. Include all required categories and content on your display.
8. Tell the story of your science project in a logical, easy-to-read manner.
9. Arrange items from left to right, from top to bottom.
10. Space elements evenly across your layout, to achieve a balanced, consistent look.
11. Draw attention to the most interesting parts of your project with color and graphics.
12. Use black or dark colors for type.
13. Mount black-and-white text blocks on colored construction paper for contrast.
14. Choose a simple font that is easy to read. You may want one font for headings and another for body text, but make sure they are both easy to read. (Easy to read fonts include: Arial, Comic Sans, Tahoma, Verdana)
15. Use subheads and bullet points rather than long paragraphs of dense text.
16. Label all graphs, charts, and tables. On graphs, make sure you label the X and Y axes.
17. Write descriptive captions for photos.
18. Proofread and double- and triple-check all text before sticking it on your display board.
19. Avoid clutter.

Don't

1. Leave your display until the last minute.
2. Forget to spell-check and proofread!
3. Write or draw directly on the board.
4. Use too many fonts, or fancy fonts that are hard to read.
5. Display photos without captions.
6. Go crazy with colors. A few bright colors are good to accentuate key elements and add pizzazz. But stick to a handful and keep it professional.
7. Cover every inch of your display; remember to leave some breathing room (what graphic designers call "white space") between blocks of text and graphics.
8. Use white school glue to stick thin paper to your board, or it may ripple.
9. Be afraid to get creative. Science is not dull; it's dynamic!
10. Glue any 3-D objects to the display board at home. Wait until you transport the board to the fair, and do it there.