

# MAKE HISTORY.

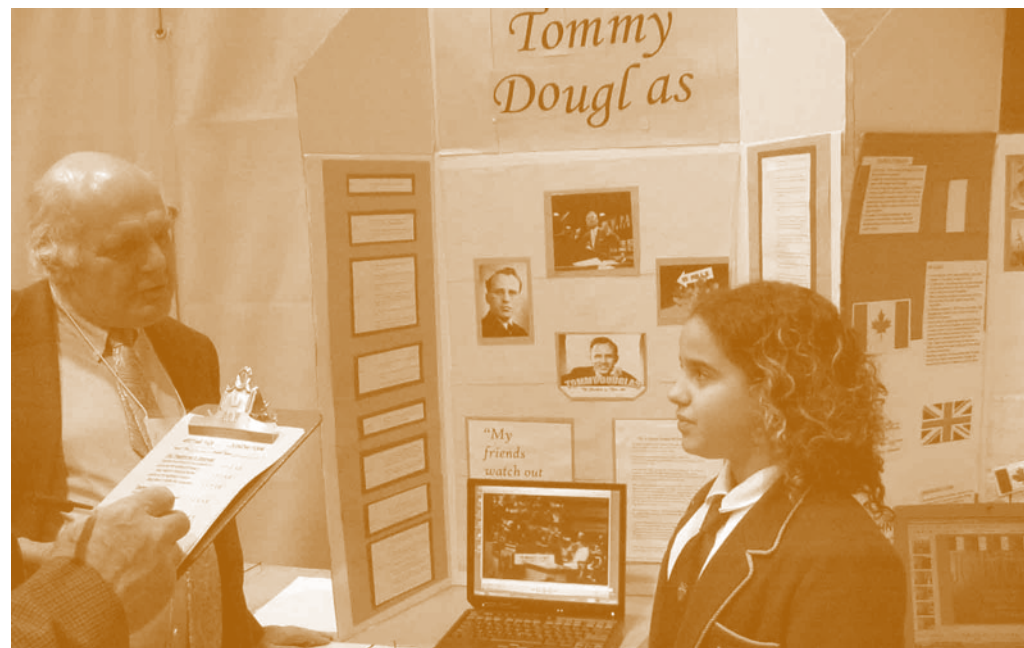
Preserve Manitoba's Past.

## Heritage Fair Exhibit Guide

Tips for helping students  
create heritage fair exhibits



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## What is this guide about?

This guide's purpose is to help community heritage organizations participate with grade four to nine students in preparing heritage fair exhibits. It takes a fun approach to highlighting skills used to help students create attractive, informative and dynamic exhibits. It encourages lasting partnerships between schools, youth, heritage organizations and the community as they join in celebrating Manitoba's diverse and colourful history.

## What is a heritage fair?

A heritage fair is an educational experience that develops and encourages awareness and interest in Canadian history. You may choose to encourage students to become involved in a local or provincial Historica Fairs Program that highlights Canadian history themes. The Historica Foundation of Canada promotes the Historica Fairs Program nationally and encourages provincial and territorial participation. The Heritage Fair Exhibit Guide focuses on the skills heritage organizations need to create exciting 3-Dimensional history exhibits, one of the Fair's presentation formats.

The Historica Fairs Program actively involves students, schools, heritage organizations, businesses and community groups in contemporary celebration of shared traditions and history. Students choose from 3-Dimensional displays, creative writing and performance or audio-visual media to tell stories about Canadian heroes, legends, milestones and achievements, and present the results of their research at a public exhibition.

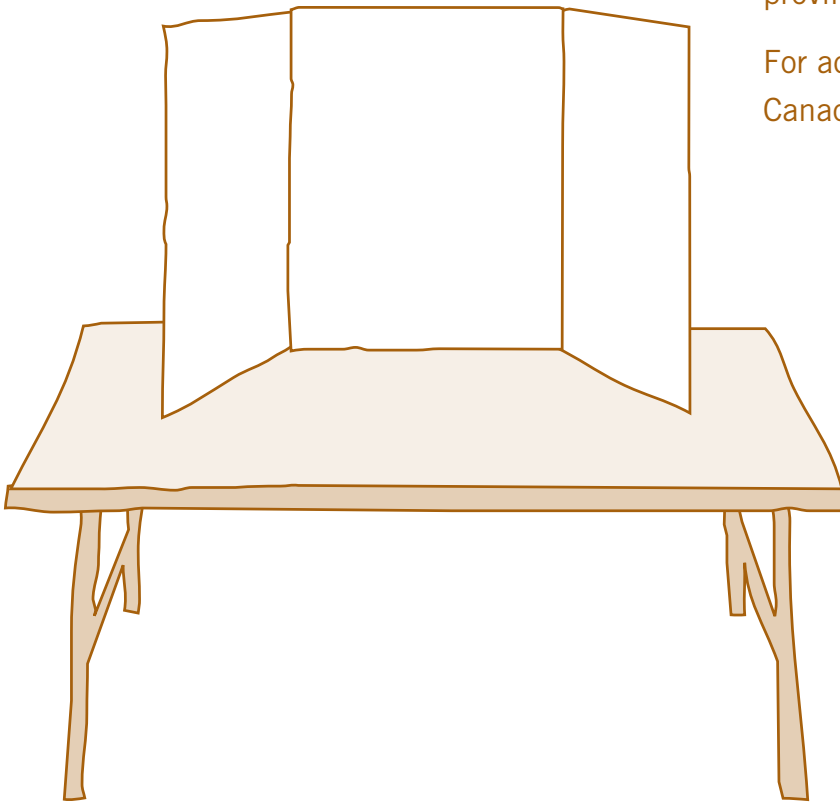


*An exhibit backboard tells the story in words and pictures.*

The Historica Foundation intends that every eligible student in Canada will have the opportunity to participate in a fair or an on-line fair showcase during his or her years at school. The Fair has grown to include more than 200,000 students across Canada each year.

Manitoba's Historica Fairs Program, which began in 1993, encourages students in grades four to nine to explore their Canadian heritage in a dynamic, hands-on learning environment. Presented first at classroom and school fairs, student exhibits may be selected to compete for recognition at community, regional, provincial and national levels.

For additional information on Historica Fairs and the Historica Foundation of Canada, visit: [www.histori.ca](http://www.histori.ca)



## Why are heritage fair exhibits good for your organization and youth?

Community heritage organizations are assets for teachers and students.

Collections, exhibits and personal insights into community history are exciting tools for teaching children about heritage.

You can help students have fun and learn more about our heritage by providing:

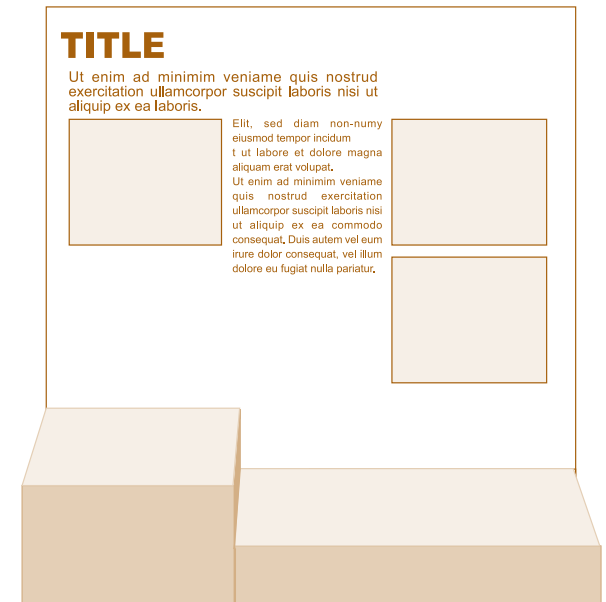
- ideas for exhibit topics or themes
- research materials and artifacts
- library collection and study space
- advice on developing exhibits
- exhibit display space and judges

Some of the many benefits to heritage organizations that work with schools to create heritage fair displays include:

- raising the profile of the heritage organization in the community
- viewing heritage organizations as an educational resource for schools
- encouraging others to help tell your community's history
- attracting youth and families as supporters of your heritage organization

## Where are heritage exhibits displayed?

You can help students develop a heritage exhibit as a school or community event and set it up at the local school, community library, community centre, archives or museum.



## DISPLAY TIPS:

- *students can buy display boards or props (such as support boxes) at stationery stores or make them from heavy cardboard or thin plastic foam*
- *encourage students to think about the volume of space available for the display, not just the flat display surface. Use props, such as boxes or cans to give different heights and interest to displayed objects*

## TOPIC IDEAS:

Telephones

York Boats

Great Gray Owl

Music

Street Names



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## How to get involved with school heritage fairs

Arrange to meet with the social studies or history teacher at your local school to introduce your community heritage organization and outline how you can help students participate in a heritage fair and enhance their knowledge of Manitoba history.

If the school is unable to participate, you still have options. Have your group consider approaching a museum or the administrators of another public space where you might be able to sponsor a heritage fair outside school hours.

Teachers have access to information on organizing a heritage fair and they can help students select and develop topics. The *Kindergarten to Grade 8 Social Studies Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes, Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth*, lists learning objectives for students involved in history exhibits. They are:

- active democratic citizenship
- managing information and ideas
- critical and creative thinking
- communication

For additional curriculum information visit:

[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/cur/socstud/framework/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/cur/socstud/framework/index.html)



““

Let's think about an exhibit in a museum. A successful exhibit must create an effective balance between visual interest and historical information. It is designed to display content in an appealing and easy to understand format. The exhibit's dynamic statement should draw people in to learn about the topic.

””

**Tammy Axelsson, Executive Director**  
**New Iceland Heritage Museum, Gimli**

#### **TOPIC IDEAS:**

*Mammoths*

*Bridges*

*Logging*

*Christmas, Then and Now*

## **Helping students select an exhibit topic**

Heritage organization staff, volunteers, teachers and students can all participate in deciding on a heritage fair theme and exhibit topics.

Helping students select topics that reflect their social studies curriculum objectives will allow them to show:

- research skills
- critical thinking and self-reflection
- visual and written work skills

These skills are developed because participating students need to conduct historical research, interpret their research and draw conclusions about their exhibit.





## TOPIC IDEAS:

*Buttermaking*

*Historic Churches*

*Saddlemakers*

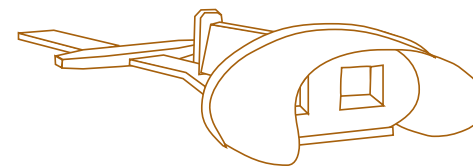
*Famous Manitobans*

*Mosasaurus*

It's important for exhibits to show viewers how the topic was developed. Heritage organizations can help students create an impressive exhibit by guiding them through key steps that will demonstrate analytical skills and reward viewers with a visually pleasing and insightful history lesson.

Here are some key questions to ask students while helping them create a 3-Dimensional exhibit. Many of these questions highlight criteria for student exhibit submissions to the Historica Fairs Program:

- Is it unique, challenging, creative and original?
- Does a local heritage organization have written and visual resources and artifacts to explore the topic?
- Do you need audio-visual equipment to enhance the display?
- Can you interview people for the topic?
- Will your exhibit promote critical thinking and self-reflection among students?
- Can the students communicate the topic effectively?
- Will viewers learn something exciting and appealing?
- How will the topic be done?
- How will the exhibit content be developed, designed and presented?





## Advising students on presenting a 3-Dimensional or backboard exhibit

Make sure students understand that words and pictures on a backboard exhibit tell a story. The topic and presentation should draw visitors to the display and encourage conversation with the student.

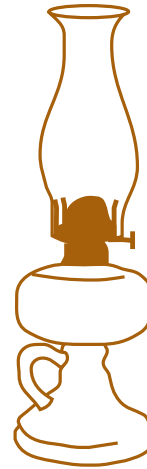
Make students aware they are expected to present and discuss their displays. Part of creating an exhibit includes preparing a report documenting their research work and explaining their exhibit topic.

Reinforce that historical accuracy is vital. The exhibit should describe topic research and analysis in words and support it visually. If there are only words to show, there is little reason for an exhibit. Most topics can be displayed with creativity in three dimensions using a tabletop and backboard.

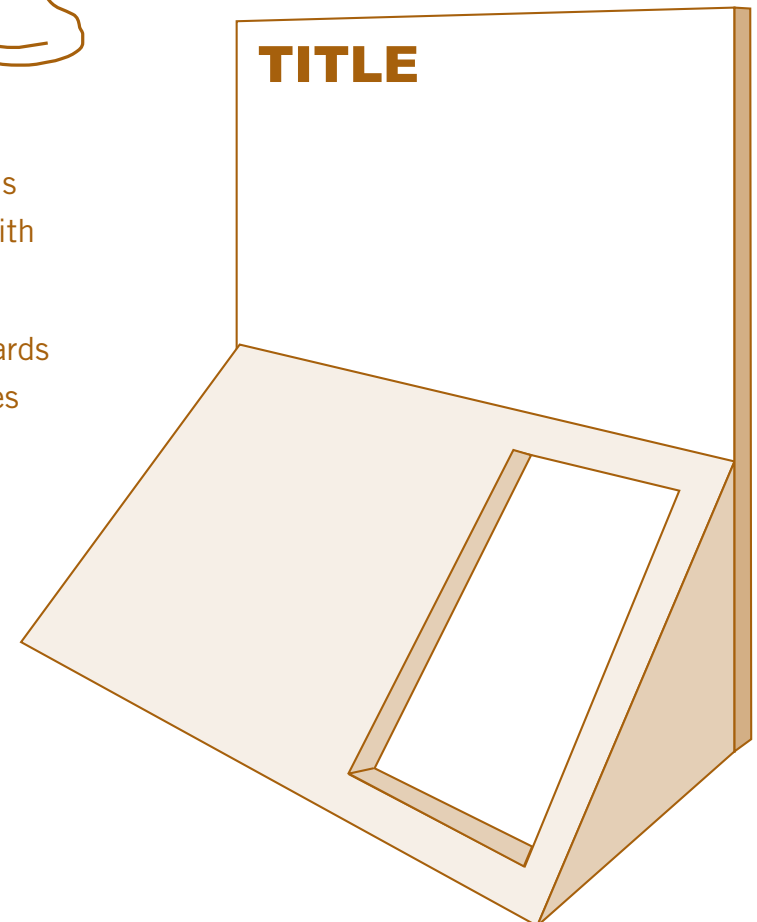
Projects selected for the Historica Fairs Program must have display backboards that do not exceed 100 centimetres (39.37 inches) high by 150 centimetres (59.06 inches) wide by 80 centimetres (31.5 inches) deep.

Students must understand that their exhibit needs to be:

- well-researched
- historically accurate
- educational
- clear and organized
- visually appealing
- free of clutter and confusion
- lightweight, portable and freestanding



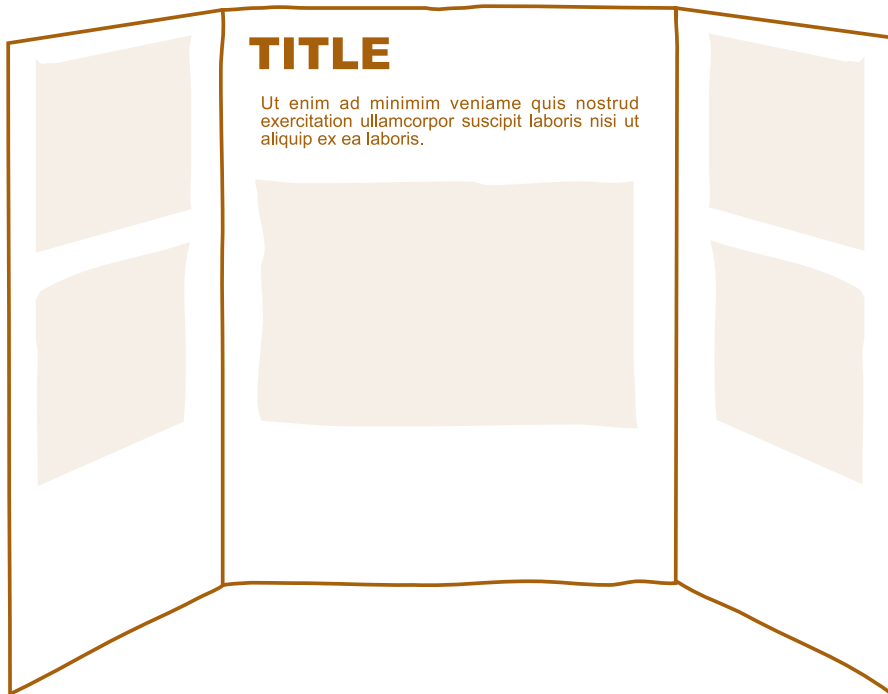
*A sloped surface creates a larger display surface and could also allow for a shallow inset display case*



## Helping students prepare a research paper

The research paper is the student's record of work done to prepare the exhibit. Here is what the student should include:

- title page
- name, grade and school
- research questions
- table of contents
- written and visual information
- graphs, tables, and charts
- glossary (if necessary)
- bibliography and acknowledgements
- topic conclusion and interpretation
- one page "personal reflection" which addresses three important learning attributes:
  - What has the student learned?
  - How has the student's project skills applied to his/her daily life?
  - Why is the topic still important in today's world?



## Advising students on assembling their heritage fair exhibits

Caution students to be careful not to overwhelm their exhibits with glitz. A simpler style is often the better approach. What follows are tips to use in helping students create a good backboard exhibit.

### A. Produce a preliminary display to tell a story:

- draft the exhibit components on lined paper
- construct a mini-display board from heavier paper
- cut out the exhibit components and place them on the paper
- adjust the pieces until you are satisfied with the way it looks

### B. Gather supplies for use in building the actual exhibit. Here is a list of useful items:

- white and coloured paper
- invisible tape
- ruler
- glue stick
- scissors

*Never use original photographs, maps or other archival material. Always make copies, either photocopies or scanned copies from a computer.*



- coloured markers and spray paint (use spray paint only under adult supervision)
- pens and pencils
- push pins
- coloured Velcro dots
- peel and stick coloured dots and labels
- assorted sized boxes for display props

*Use only artifacts that can be handled.*

*Help the student select appropriate objects for the display and give the student some basic training in handling collections.*



### C. Some elements of an effective exhibit:

#### *Orientation*

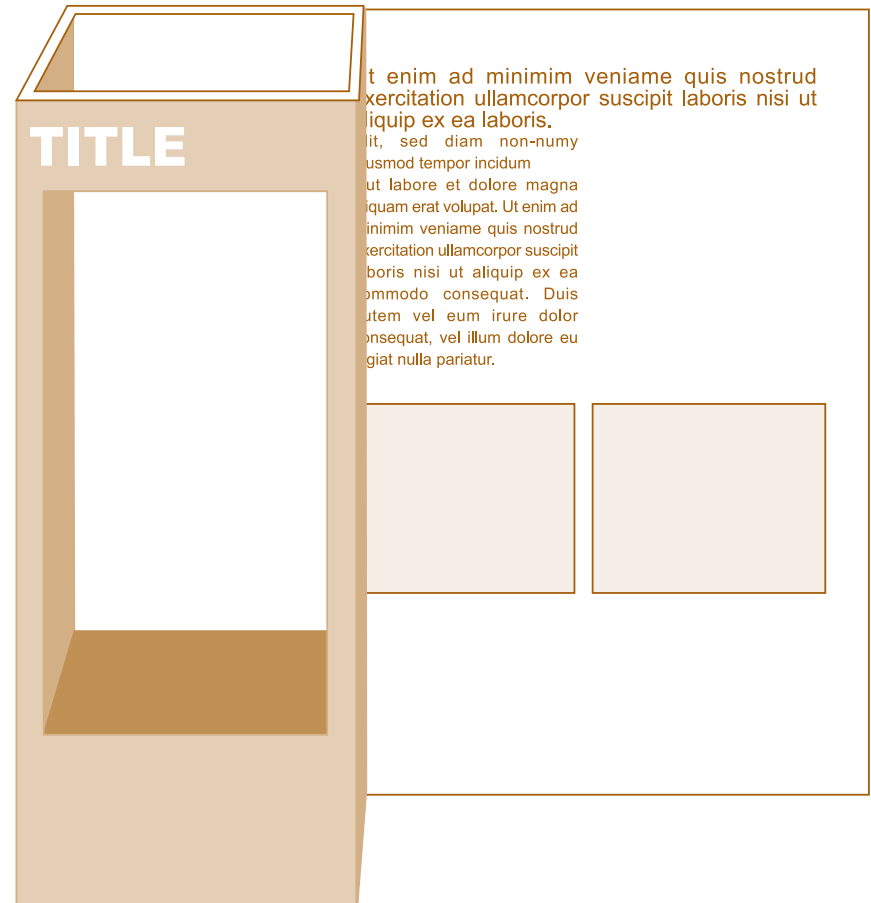
- ensure the title and subtitle of the topic are prominent
- place the topic title in the centre panel
- make the main idea clear to the viewer

#### *Segmentation*

- use a timeline to organize a chronology of the topic
- organize the exhibit into subtopics
- compare, contrast and explain related detail on side panels
- place assorted sized boxes on the display table to showcase important props and artifacts

#### *Explanation*

- include at least three appropriate visuals
- visuals can be computer-generated, hand-drawn, photographs or cut outs
- materials enhance displays and must be labelled and described:
  - artifacts (make sure students get permission and handle them with care!)
  - posters



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*Display boxes can be made to protect objects. Use a thermoplastic window sealing kit and follow the manufacturer's directions to stretch it tight using a hair dryer.*

*Leave the top open to allow room lighting to illuminate the contents. It is safer than trying to have the display case lit from inside.*



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## TOPIC IDEAS:

*How Telephones Have Changed*

*Making Butter*

*Sturgeon*

*Railway Cabooses*

- crafts
- maps, dioramas and diagrams
- artistic displays
- collections
- caricatures
- models, props, costumes and food
- demonstrations
- photography
- short stories
- interviews
- diary entries
- research material

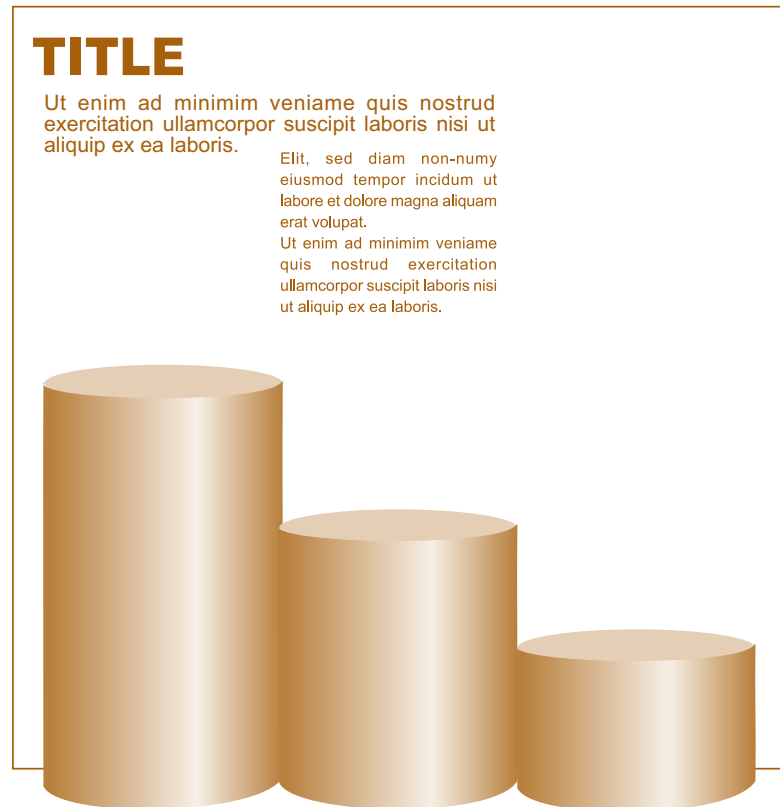


### Advice to give students on writing and design for their exhibits:

- consider making labels on a computer to guide viewers through the exhibit
- use regular type styles with body text because it is easier to read and understand
- make captions stand out by using lettering placed on lighter coloured paper
- avoid fancy typefaces that are hard to read unless their design reflects the topic
- keep readability in mind and limit use of bold, italics, fancy fonts or coloured type
- over-designing your exhibit can draw attention away from your message
- ensure the title is larger and stands out from captions
- use subheadlines to guide the viewer around the display
- keep captions concise so viewers can get the message quickly
- introduce and attract the viewer's interest with the main title
- break down the topic into smaller parts with subtitles
- use common language and avoid jargon words that many people will not understand
- sentences that average 10 to 15 words are easier to read than excessively short or long sentences
- always use a ruler for straight lines and hand-lettering

*Coffee cans or sonotube (a cardboard tube used for making concrete pilings, usually available at a lumber store) can be used to display objects.*

*Cover them with paper or cloth.*



- display a time-line log or journal of all research activities and sources of information
- consider including your rough research notes as part of the display
- arrange content logically using:
  - headlines – about five to seven words of letters two or three inches high (144 to 216 points)
  - subheads – 12 to 15 words with letters about one-third as high as headlines (48 to 60 points)
  - story labels – 150 words of easy-to-read sentences averaging 10 to 15 words long and smaller type than subheads (24 to 36 points). Break into separate paragraphs if text needs to be longer than 150 words
  - captions – short explanations of illustrations, photos, charts, maps and similar contents (20 to 24 points)

