

BEGINNERS EXHIBITING MANUAL

This manual was compiled by Karen Weigt sometime in the late 1980s to early 1990s. The content is from a variety of sources of which cannot be specifically recalled. It's likely some came from Randy Neil's first "Philatelic Exhibitors Handbook." The "Checklist for Exhibitors" originated from Nancy Zielinski Clark. MaryAnn Bowman contributed counsel and some of the text.

BEGINNERS EXHIBITING

MATERIALS NEEDED

Your Exhibit Items

Plain White 8 1/2" x 11" Paper

Ruler (for measuring margins and to aid in placing items straight on your pages)

Stamp Hinges (for attaching cancelled stamps to your pages)

Clear Stamp Mounts (correctly fitted to each of your unused stamps for attaching them to exhibit pages)

Corner Mounts (for attaching covers to exhibit pages)

100-lb. White 8 1/2" x 11" Card Stock (placed in back on your exhibit pages to serve as a stiffener)

8 1/2" x 11" Page Protectors (to hold exhibit pages and card stock pages together)

Typewriter or Computer (for text — may be hand-printed in black, but only if printing is very legible)

Books on your Exhibit Subject (reference and non-fiction)

THE SUBJECT

Decide on a subject for your exhibit and whether your exhibit will be a traditional exhibit or a thematic exhibit.

Traditional exhibit — This is an exhibit on stamps and/or covers that were issued by a *specific country* (for example, the United States); a *group of countries*, such as the British Colonies; or a *type of stamp* (commemorative, definitive, airmail, etc.). The write-up portion of the exhibit concentrates on why the stamps were issued, what purpose they served, the printing process used to produce them, etc. This could be very challenging since you should show all the stamps in your subject, either mint or used. You'll need to find any varieties and stamp-format varieties. The exhibit also should include your stamps on cover, which are postally used.

Thematic exhibit — A thematic exhibit contains stamps and philatelic material about a specific topic or theme. The write-up portion of the exhibit concentrates on the subject portrayed on the exhibit items. Overall, the exhibit is a story in report form, with philatelic material being used to illustrate facts.

A big mistake most first-time exhibitors make is to choose too broad a subject. Pick a specific subject so you can make your exhibit as complete as possible.

A traditional exhibit subject might be narrowed down by choosing to exhibit for instance, U.S. commemorative stamps of 1963, the U.S. Transportation series, or U.S. airmail stamps 1950-60.

The thematic exhibitor often gets into trouble with subjects such as Olympics, space, birds, transportation, animals, etc. Your attempt at exhibiting will be more rewarding if you select, for example, "Figure Skating" instead of Olympics, "U.S. Space" instead of space, "Penguins" instead of birds, "Trains" instead of transportation, "Tigers" instead of animals, etc.

CONDITION

Next, when picking out stamps and/or covers you might want to exhibit, pay good attention to what condition these items are in. Take a look at that stamp you like that has been heavily canceled. It just may be that the stamp's cancel is too heavy for the viewer to see and appreciate the stamp. You might want to look for an example of it in better condition, more lightly canceled. The condition of your material counts very much in a philatelic exhibit.

THE PLAN

Develop a plan for your exhibit. Get together everything you have on your subject and figure out how you will show it. Your exhibit needs to be organized in some easy-to-understand order. A good stamp exhibit has a beginning, a middle and an ending.

For instance, if your subject is automobiles on stamps, it may be logical to show the automobiles according to when and where they were made. First, a page on early American cars. Then

one on later model American cars. Next, a page on early European racing cars . . . and so on.

It's helpful to prepare a list of all your items in outline form. For a thematic exhibit on horses, your outline might look like:

- A. Horse Breeds
 - 1. Arabian
 - 2. Morgan
 - 3. Quarter Horse
 - 4. . . .
- B. Horses in Art
 - 1. paintings
 - 2. sculpture
 - 3. . . .
- C. Horses at Work
 - 1. pulling plows
 - 2. police horses
 - 3. war horses
- D. Horses in Sports
 - 1. Olympics
 - 2. other sports

EXHIBIT ELEMENTS

Ideally, exhibits should include several philatelic elements related to the subject, e.g., single stamps, a booklet pane, a first-day cover, a pictorial cancel, etc. This shows that the exhibitor has done some research to find out about more than just the stamps related to the chosen subject. It also helps to produce more eye-appealing pages. A list of suggested elements is included in this packet.

THE PREVIEW ARRANGEMENT

Place your stamps, covers, other exhibit items, on pieces of 8 1/2" x 11" paper, then move them around to make pleasing layouts and arrangements. Try to get at least two elements on a page. This is the place to preview your exhibit pages and will tell you if a page will be too full, too empty, or unappealing. It also will give you an idea of how much space is available for your write-up, or exhibit text.

PAGE SEQUENCE

Once you've made your preview pages, you can quickly see if you have enough material to make a 4-page, 8-page, 12-page, or 16-page (or more)

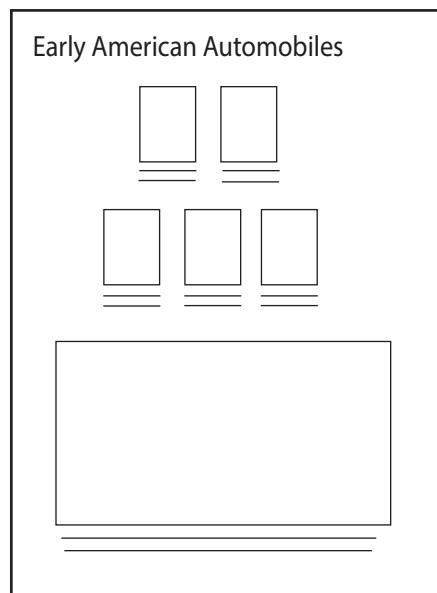
exhibit. Keep in mind that your exhibit will tell a story. Therefore, your pages must be placed in a logical sequence and you can move your preview pages around.

Keep in mind that page location in the frames is important too. Pages with like elements should not be placed next to each other. Also, pages with your best philatelic materials should be given top priority on the first and second row (eye-level) of a frame so they can readily catch the judge's attention.

THE WRITE-UP

What are you going to say about the items in your exhibit? An exhibit really becomes an exhibit when the items on your pages are explained with short written descriptions. This is one time in life that you are not writing a report and need to fill the gap of 500 words or more. Your text should be brief and include only what is of the greatest importance to your philatelic material.

As you look at your preview pages, you can see the places where your write-ups can go. You might, for instance, want a heading at the top of your page, like "Early American Automobiles." And let's say, on that Early American Automobiles page, you will have five stamps mounted in a nice arrangement (perhaps two stamps at the top, three stamps in the middle, and a cover at the bottom).



Now take some little slips of paper and write a bit of text about each automobile on them, then place each slip beneath the appropriate stamp. Suddenly, you can now look down at your exhibit page and see the stamps and write-ups at the positions you will finally want them on your actual exhibit page. You might want to shift them around a little more to see if you can come up with a better page layout.

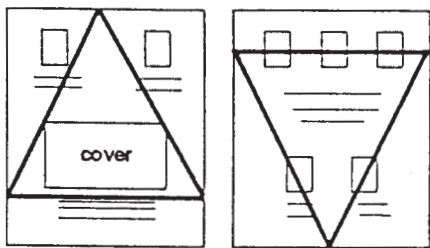
THE LAYOUT

Keep ample even margins on each page: a minimum of 3/4". This is important so no material or writing is covered when the pages are mounted in stamp frames for viewing by the public.

Emphasize your material and not the extras. Maps, arrows, drawings, and such collateral items should not overpower the philatelic items. Remember throughout preparation that this is a philatelic exhibit.

The best layouts result when the viewer's eye immediately focuses on key items on the page. The text should be minor as compared to the size and volume of the material shown. Exhibit page layout also is dependent and influenced by the adjacent exhibit pages, the row itself, and finally, the entire frame.

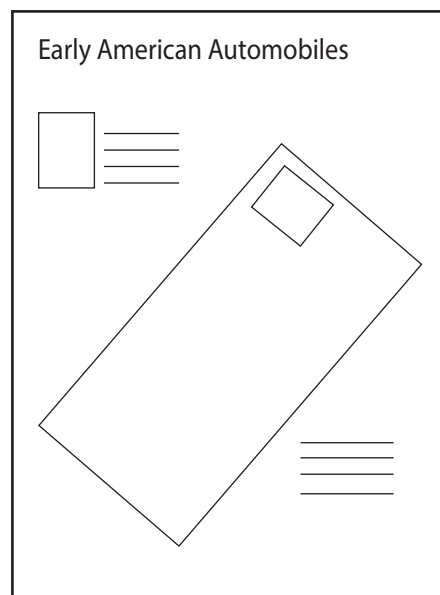
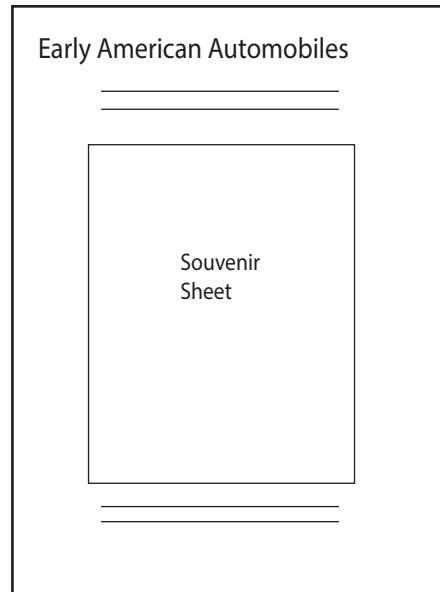
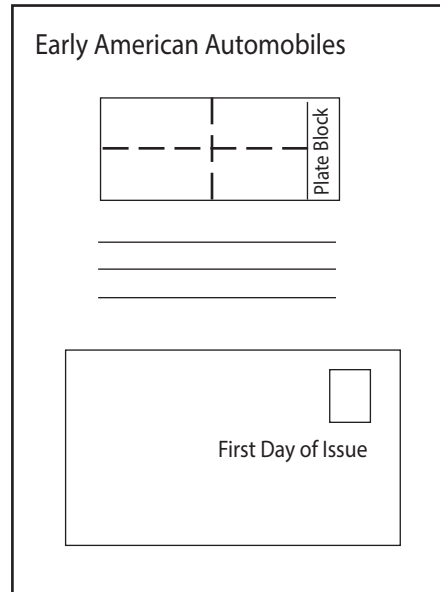
Page balance can be better obtained by keeping in mind the pyramid effect. This can also work to advantage by reversing the effect.



There are, however, no set rules, and to the right, you'll see just a few examples of other possible page layouts.

TITLE PAGE

It's best to complete the write-up of your title page last. This is when you will know the exact content and sequence of your pages, giving you a



Large covers are usually displayed diagonally.

better idea as to what the exhibit is really about. This page also must include a statement of the precise purpose of your exhibit.

Select an item for your title page that will immediately catch the viewer's attention.

FINAL DETAILS

Your name and page numbers SHOULD NOT appear on any of your exhibit pages. Your name, address, phone number, and page number MUST appear in pencil on each piece of card stock (stiffener material) placed behind each exhibit page.

SOME ENCOURAGEMENT

Creating a stamp exhibit is both challenging and fun. It can be entered in competition over and over again with continuing additions and improvements. Your goal, of course, is to receive that first-place ribbon as often as possible. There's also the excitement of learning what the judges really liked (or did not like) about your work.

SUGGESTED PHILATELIC ELEMENTS

Stamps

- Singles
- Pairs
- Multiples - strips or blocks
- Plate Numbers - strips or blocks
- Coils
- Booklet Panes
- Souvenir Sheets
- Miniature Sheets
- Full Sheets
- Marginal Inscriptions

Stamp Varieties

- Paper
- Perforation
- Watermark
- Gum
- Tagging
- Self-adhesive
- Color
- Plate

Stamp Types

- Definitives
- Commemoratives
- Airmails
- Officials
- Postage Dues
- Revenues
- Other Back-of-the Book Items
- Perfins
- Precancels
- Revalued
- Overprinted
- Surcharged

Postal Stationary

- Postal Cards
- Envelopes
- Aerogrammes
- Wrappers

Cancellations

- Machine
- Hand
- Meter

Cancellations (continued)

- Slogan
- Pictorial
- Early Fancy
- Spray-on
- Purple/Red Colors
- Highway/Mobile/Railway
- Military - APOs
- Socked-on-the-Nose

Covers

- Commercially-used (preferred)
- First-day
- Airmail
- Domestic/Foreign Destination
- Registered
- Certified
- Insured
- Special Delivery
- Censored
- With Other Auxilliary Markings
- Maximum Card
- Early Usage
- Unusual or Under-franked
- Souvenir
- Autographed
- Free-franked
- First Flight

Other Items

- Labels/Seals
- Cinderellas (Promotional Labels)
- Charity Stamps (Christmas Seals)
- Propaganda Stamps
- Errors/Freaks/Oddities
- Fakes/Forgeries

Designs - Artwork

- Drawings (Drawings and sketches related to your subject are usually found only on the title page. They may include maps, diagrams, etc.)
 - Essays/Proofs (These are trial designs and test printings of a stamp.)

CHECKLIST FOR EXHIBITORS

This listing is to help you review your exhibit in the same way the judges at a stamp show will. By using this checklist, you can make corrections before you show your exhibit.

Use this checklist as a reference when putting your exhibit together — and then again when you are done to make sure you have included everything.

When working with this checklist, don't put a checkmark in any boxes that you think need to be re-worked and go on to the next question. When you have done the entire list, go back to those areas you didn't mark and fix them in the exhibit. When you finish your corrections and/or improvements, that box can be checked.

Presentation

1. Looking at your pages from a distance (spread out on a table or bed in the same order and format they will appear in exhibit frames), look for the following:

Are the margins roughly equal? (top/bottom, left/right)

Do the pages look balanced? (Do they look too much alike? Is there a lot of material on one page, almost nothing on others? Are the larger items offset with enough smaller items to make it look equal? Is the overall impression interesting but yet consistent?)

Do you have a good mix of philatelic elements?

2. Looking at your pages up close and one at a time, see how you are doing . . .

Is your writing/typing/font easy to read?

Have you checked for spelling errors?

Are your pages neat? (No obvious erasures, crossed out words, crooked margins)

Is your philatelic material mounted straight on the pages?

Are your mounts cut straight/lines neatly drawn?

3. Time to check your format . . .

Have you used the same paper and method of writing for the entire exhibit?

Have you been uniform in mounting your philatelic materials?

Do you clearly state the title/name of your exhibit on the first page?

Do you have a clearly outlined plan page to act as a table of contents for the people who look at your collection? (There must be a clear "storyline" to act as the thread which holds the exhibit together.) NOTE: A "Plan Page" is optional for beginning exhibits.

Are your philatelic items emphasized?

Do your pages appear neither too full nor too empty?

Content

Are you sure of your facts?

Did you communicate the necessary information in the least possible words?

Are your philatelic materials arranged in such a way that, even if you could not read, the logical progression is clear? (Whatever story you are telling, it is the stamps, cancellations, covers, etc., which should be the storytellers.)

Did you use clear language and interesting facts?

Material

Are your stamps in good condition? (Have you chosen the best examples you own, with the stamp design well centered, perforations intact, etc.?)

Are your cancellations clear? (not heavy or smudged).

Do you have enough philatelic material to cover the scope of your subject?

Are your covers clean? Are their corners complete and uncreased? (unless you are working on mail that has been forwarded, been in a crash, or disinfected!).

Have you used a variety of philatelic elements to tell your story?