

## The Title Page - telling everyone about your exhibit By Sheryll Ruecker and Tony Wawrukiewicz

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Exciting times lie ahead! Your exhibit has been entered in the stamp show and you can't wait for everyone to see it. Even your neighbors are going to come along! Will they understand what you are going to show, you wonder. It may all depend on your **title page**.

**Note:** The advice given in this article represents the opinions of the authors. As you consider it, be assured that the concepts stated here have a sound basis because they represent the thinking of a significant number of judges for whom we have the highest respect. Keep in mind, however, that these concepts are evolving over time as new and valuable insights come to light.

In our opinion a good title page consists of:

1. an unambiguous **title** that covers the entire exhibit and nothing else
2. immediately followed by a clear and brief statement about the **type, purpose and scope** of the exhibit
3. a **plan** or **outline** of how your story is organized
4. an appropriate **item** that represents the exhibit or begins the story (optional)
5. a short statement of **background information** or **historical context** (optional)
6. a **note** on how you will **highlight** significant items in the exhibit

Succinctly explain what you are showing and how you are showing it (**type** of exhibit and its **purpose**) and define the boundaries of the exhibit (**scope**). Use your **purpose** statement as your exhibit description on your entry form, for inclusion in the show's program.

The **plan** or **outline** is essential for helping the viewer find his or her way from the beginning to the end of the exhibit. That is, it tells the viewer how you have organized your exhibit. An effective plan can be used as a list of the headings displayed throughout the exhibit. Your neighbors should be able to follow it, just as easily as the judges.

If you have space available after you have done everything above, display an **item** (not necessarily philatelic) that captures the essence of what your exhibit is about as a visual way to get your message across.

You may also need to add a short paragraph of **background information** or **historical context** to set the scene, but only if it is necessary and you have room after all the above has been added. If you find yourself going on and on here, then put this information in the synopsis (ancillary notes for the judges) instead.

Let the viewer know your method for **highlighting** items that are rare or hard to find. These are the items you have bragged about in your synopsis and the judges will be looking for them, so make it easy for them to find your gems. Here are some ideas:

- boxes (thicker, double-lined or colored lines around your highlighted items if you have drawn boxes around all your material)
- dots or diamonds (possibly colored)
- matting (possibly in a stronger color around the highlighted items, even double matting, if your whole exhibit is matted)

Keep in mind that the title page is the most important page of your exhibit. It needs to be the **first** page you make and the **last** to be edited, as that is where you are defining your exhibit.