

Linda Reece,  
Extension  
Specialist for  
Home  
Furnishings

# Home Environment Project



## Unit 3: Where I Live

## Note To Parents & Leaders

*Home Environment 3—Where I Live* – builds on the skills and concepts 4-H'ers learned in *Unit 1, Exploring Your Home*, and *Unit 2, Living With Others*. If some of your members have not completed these units, it would be extremely helpful to them to review the materials in order to learn some of basic concepts of design.

As in the previous units, 4-H'ers will need some help as they go through this unit. Some activities, such as the concepts of design, can best be learned in a group so that there will be opportunities to share ideas and exchange examples of the application of various elements and principles. They may also need help with other project activities, such as hanging pictures and refinishing furniture, although these can be either individual or group learning experiences.

As in all projects, 4-H'ers are encouraged to expand their projects beyond the item they will make and exhibit. Although exhibiting their work is an important part of the total experience, the major goal of this project is to help members learn how to make their home environment one that is pleasant for themselves and their families.

After each new experience or when a project is completed, help members evaluate what they have done. Ask them questions and discuss what they have done well and what they need to improve. Encourage and help members to see how their efforts are improving their home environment on whatever scale they have been working.

Enjoy *Home Environment 3, Where I Live*

## Contents

What You Will Learn .....	3
Let's Look At Design .....	3
Using Elements of Design .....	4
Using Accessories.....	8
Creativity + Design = Convenience! ....	15
Creating By Restoring.. .....	16
Recycling Old Furnishings .....	20
Outdoor Design .....	21
Sharing What You Have Learned .....	21
Exhibits .....	21
Demonstrations .....	21
Citizenship .....	22
Keeping Records .....	22
Project Record Sheet .....	23

## Introduction

In the first home environment project you learned how to care for your room, how to select colors and textures you like and how to be a responsible family member. In the second project you learned ways to share your home, ways to share tasks and how to use some of the tools of design to improve your home. In both projects you completed a project item.

In this third project you will learn some guidelines for using the design elements. You'll learn how rhythm, balance, scale and proportion, emphasis and unity work together to make every project more attractive. You will have the opportunity to apply what you have learned while working on various projects and activities in and around your home.

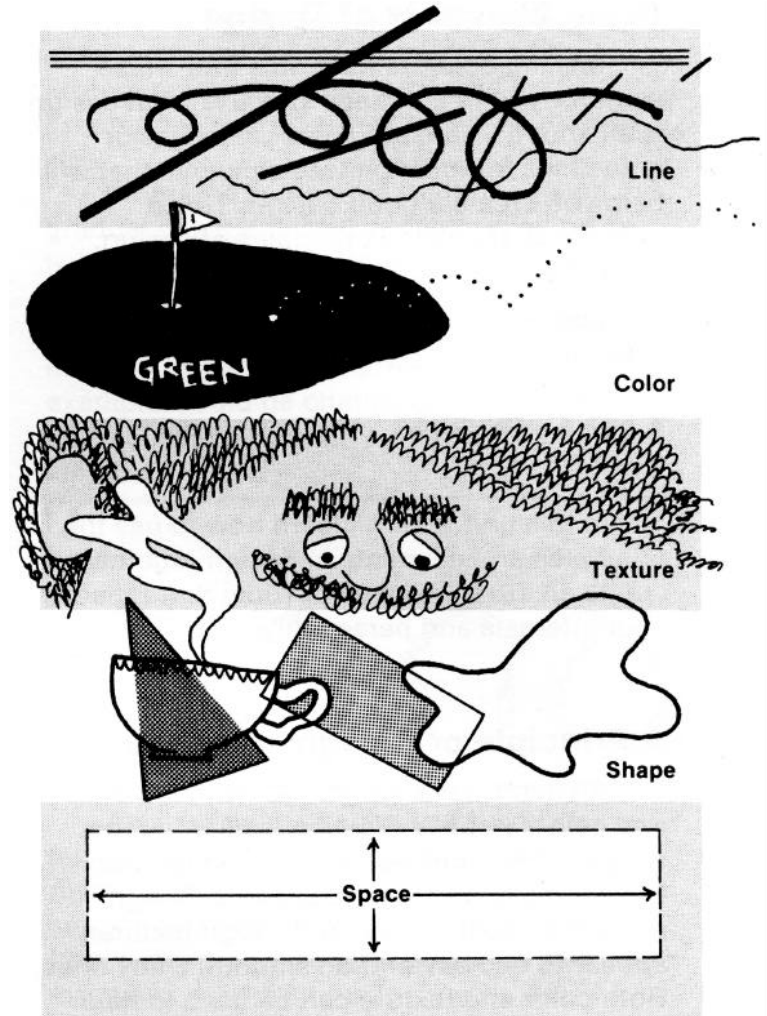
Some activities you can do by yourself. Other things you may want to do with other members of your family, your project leader or other club members.

Talk to your project leader and parents about exhibit ideas. They will answer questions, help you shop for any supplies you need and help you with any problems as you work on your exhibit.

Appreciation is expressed to **Karen H. Hicks**, *4-H Program Specialist*; **Patricia P. Schrader**, *Extension Information Specialist, 4-H*; **Dennis Duross**, *Graphic Artist*; and **Mary K. Herman**, *Typesetter*.

## What You Will Learn

- How to use the principles of design in making and arranging items for your home
- How to use principles of design in table settings
- How to plan and create storage centers for your home
- How to restore an old piece of furniture
- How to improve the outside environment of your house
- How to plan and give a demonstration on something you have learned this year
- How to evaluate what you have made and learned
- ... and many other things



## Let's Look At Design

You've already learned a lot about good design. In the first two units of home environment, you learned about elements of design that are found in every item, including furnishings, fabrics and rooms. However, you may want to refresh your memory by reviewing the following:

**Line.** Lines are good if they are simple and related to the overall shape of the object. Look for lines that:

- have variations of one line or a few lines repeated;
- add to the usefulness and attractiveness of the object;
- carry the eye easily from one point to another and around the object.

**Color.** Color can be an eye-catching feature. For example, accessories are usually small, so they are often suitable in brighter colors than would otherwise be used in a room.

Color should suit the mood of the item or object. For example, clear vivid colors are often suited to contemporary or primitive objects while pale, soft colors may be more suited to historical or older designs and softer shapes.

**Texture.** Texture is good if the properties of the basic material are used naturally. For example, plastic is not naturally textured to look like wood. Objects should also have surfaces that can be cared for or maintained with reasonable ease.

**Shape.** The shape is good if shapes within the object are in good proportion to each other. Look for:

- shapes in different parts of the object that are related by repetition or an interesting variation;
- shapes that serve the purpose for which the object is intended.

**Space.** Space is important in planning a design. It is the amount of room we have. Too little space for a particular room makes it seem cramped. The amount of space in a room helps you decide on the number and size of items you will use.

## Using Elements of Design

Making *color, texture, line* and *shape* work for you in a defined *space* is what design is all about. There are some principles or guidelines for mixing these elements that will help you create a good design. These guidelines are called principles of design. They are:

- **Balance**
- **Rhythm**
- **Emphasis**
- **Scale, proportion**
- **Unity**

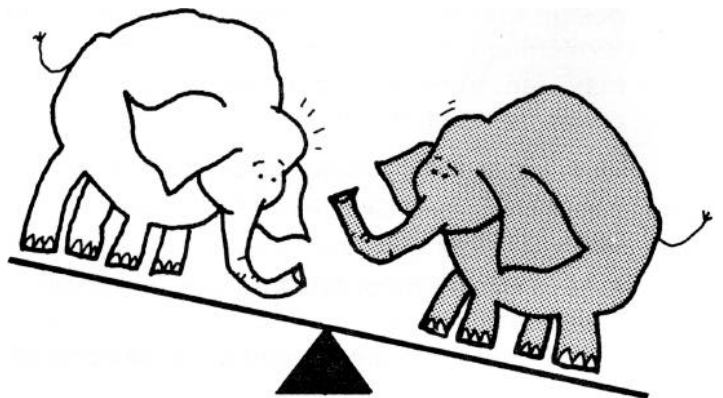
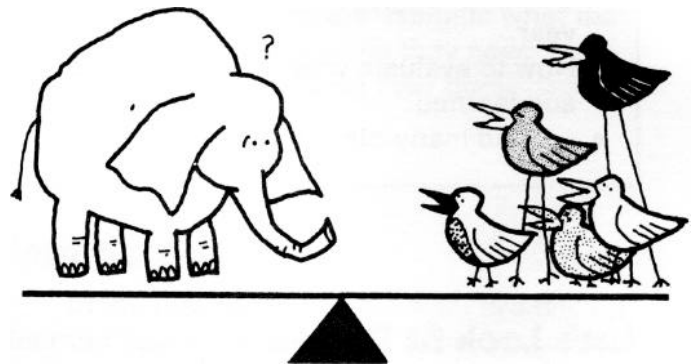
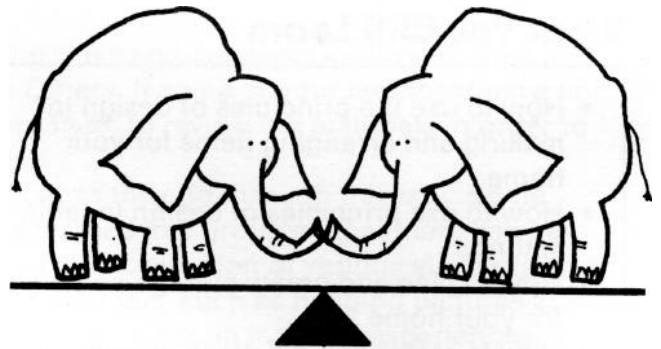
In this unit you will learn how to use the principles and elements of design together to create an attractive area or room that reflects your interests and personality.

### A Principle of Design: Balance

All items have weight. Some materials and colors *visually* create a *feeling* of more weight while others seem to be weightless. For example, dark colors *seem* to “weigh” more than light colors. And rough textures *appear* to be heavier than smooth, shiny ones. Both color and texture can be used to help achieve visual balance. **Balance** is the placement of visual weights. It creates a *feeling* of steadiness, of things looking as if they belong where they are.

There are two kinds of balance in design. **Formal balance** means that one side is like the other. Think of it as a seesaw. Draw an imaginary line through the middle. Balance one large object on one end by another of equal size on the other end. Each side is exactly alike and are of equal visual weight.

Now balance one large object on one side by a group of smaller ones on the other side. Each side is different but can be of equal interest and visual weight. If it is not visually balanced, the seesaw will seem to tip to one side. When both sides are different, but of equal visual weight, the balance is called **informal**.

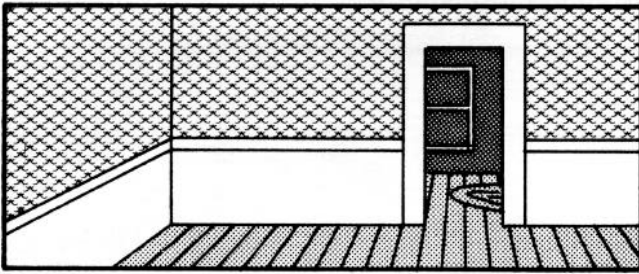


Experiment with different objects by arranging them on a mantel or bookshelf. You'll find that size, color and texture all make a difference in visual weight. A group of smaller items can balance a larger one. Smaller items of dark values or bright accent colors can balance a larger item in a light value or color. A heavier object can be moved closer to the center of the seesaw and the lighter object farther away. Think of some ways that both formal and informal balance is used in a room.

## A Principle of Design: Rhythm

When the elements of design are arranged to make the eye travel from one part to another, the design has movement. If the eye moves smoothly and easily from one part to another, the motion is rhythmic. The principle of rhythm is important in producing a feeling of unity in a design or a roomful of furnishings. There are several kinds of rhythm that can be used in a design.

**A continuous line** will control the movement of the eye. Moldings, borders and chair rails are examples of continuous lines in a room. Wallpapers, fabrics, and rugs often have dominant line directions that carry the eye around the room.



**Repetition** creates a feeling of movement and rhythm. Repeating the same line, color, shape or texture can direct the eye from one point to another. A bright color or patterned fabric used in two or more places in a design or a room will help the viewer to look from one spot to another.

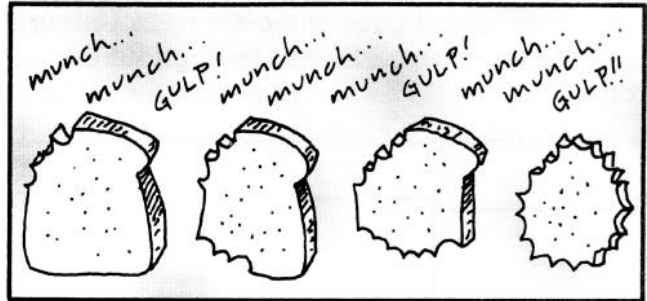


**Gradation** is another technique for creating a feeling of rhythm. This principle may be used with lines, shapes or colors and

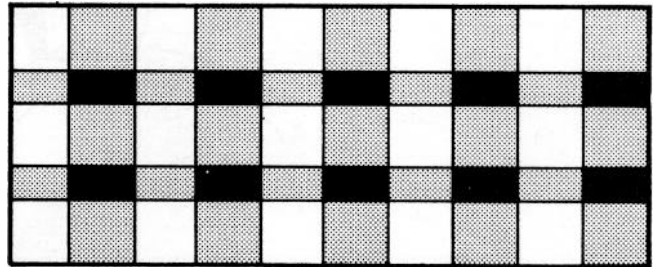


repeats the same feature from small to large or large to small. An example would be an arrangement of candles arranged in a grouping from the largest to the smallest in size.

**Progression** refers to rhythm created in a gradual change in shape, color, spacing or texture from one idea to another. An example would be a mixture of striped designs used together with some in wide stripes, some medium and some in narrow stripes. Another example would be changing a square to a circular shape through a series of four or five steps.



**Alternation** of shapes, lines, colors, textures or spaces is another way to create rhythm. Checkerboard and checked fabrics are good examples of alternation of color from light to dark squares. Can you find other examples in your home?



Another form of rhythm is **radiation**. This means that the eye moves from a central point outward and back again. Examples of radial design include a clock, spokes on a bicycle wheel, certain light fixtures and seeds on a dandelion. Can you think of other examples?



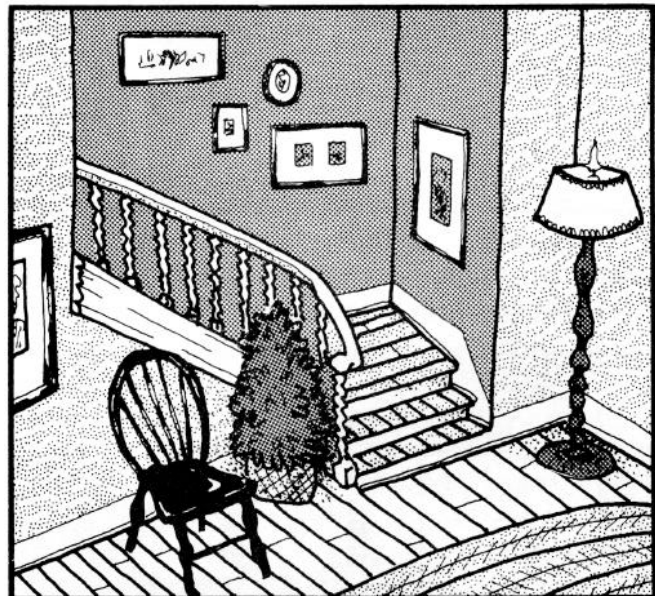
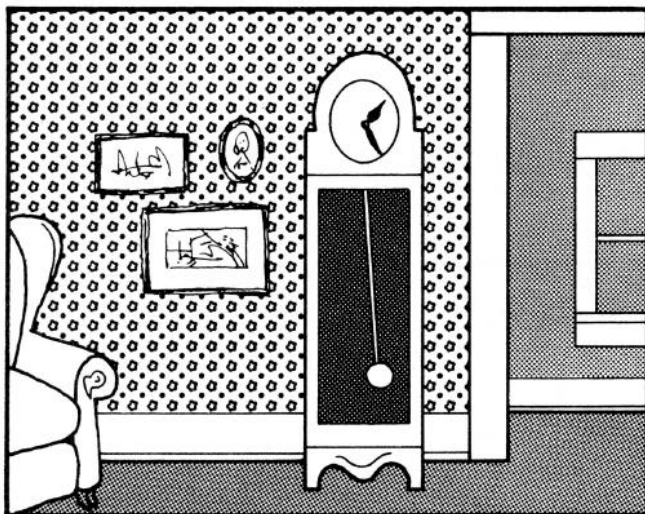
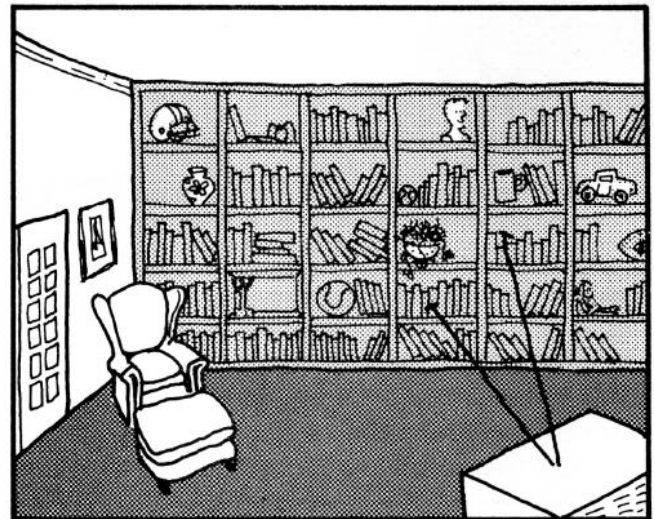
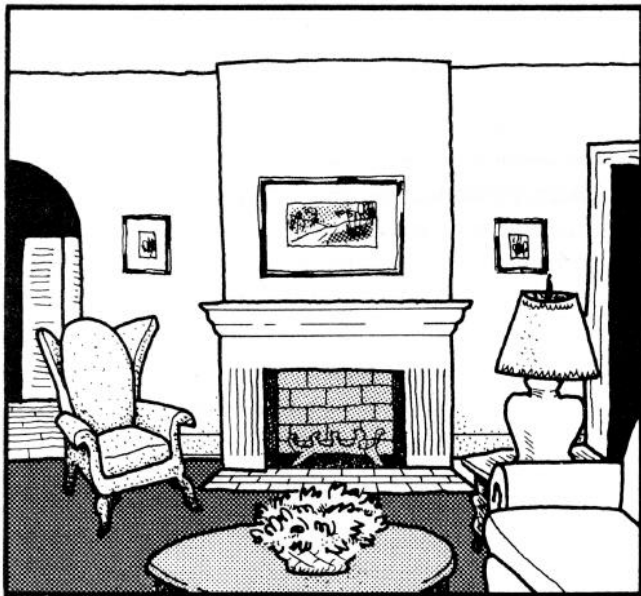
## A Principle of Design: Emphasis

**Emphasis** refers to the center of interest in a design—the one main focal point. A center of interest will call attention to itself because of its size, contrast of color or texture, or addition of something different. Other parts of the design should complement the center of interest. (Too many areas of emphasis in a room can be confusing or irritating and may, in fact, result in no emphasis.) For example, you might use an area rug with bright colors and interesting patterns as the point of emphasis in a bedroom. You would repeat the colors in the rug using *solid* fabrics and *plain* walls (rather than adding more *patterns*) throughout the room.

Each design and grouping should have emphasis. Sometimes an architectural feature such as a fireplace, built-in bookcase or china cupboard, or an open stairway is the major point of emphasis in a room. In this case, emphasis doesn't involve *creating* so much as it does *not getting in the way* of an element of design that is already established. The furnishings you select should complement that feature.

Which rooms shown below have strong architectural emphasis?

Which of these rooms have emphasis from the furnishings?

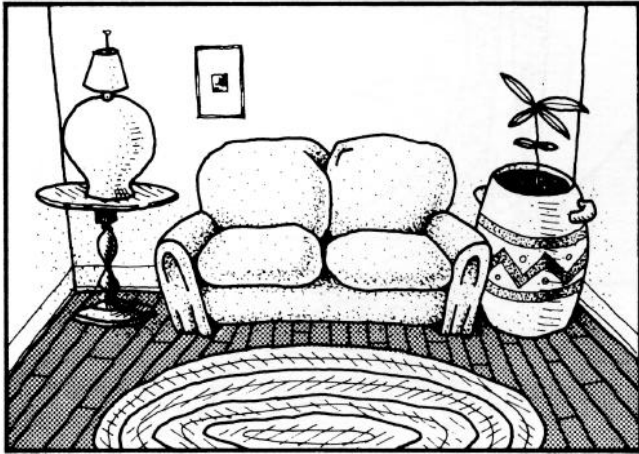


## Principles of Design: Scale & Proportion

**Scale** refers to the size relationship of objects *to each other and the space they fill*.

**Proportion** refers to the relationship of parts *within an item*.

Look at the room diagram shown below.



As you read through the following points, circle those items that are out of scale or proportion in the diagram. When you have finished, check your answers with the diagram key shown below.

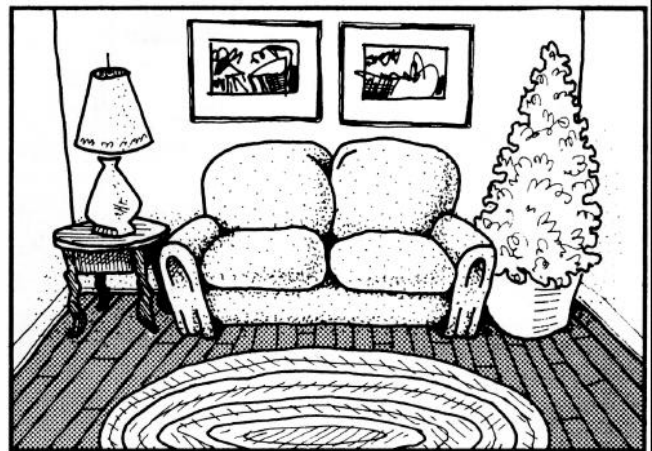
- Look at the sofa. Do the legs seem sturdy enough to hold the sofa or does the sofa seem top heavy? (This is checking for pleasing proportion-the relationship of the various parts on one item.)
- Look at the lamp. Is the shade in pleasing proportion to the base? Look at the table on which the lamp is placed. Are the legs, table top, and height all in pleasing proportions with one another?
- Look only at the picture above the sofa. Are the frame and mat pleasing with the size and the items within the picture?

Now that you have checked the proportions on each item in the picture, study the scale of the furnishings used. In considering scale, you will need to compare the sofa, lamp, table, picture and rug with each other for pleasing size relationships. For example, how does the size of the lamp look with the size and style of the table? Does the

size of the sofa “fit” with the size of the lamp, table, picture and rug? Also check the furniture grouping with the size of the wall space and the amount of total space in the room. Does the sofa grouping look too big or too small? If so, how might this be solved? Consider these ideas.

1. Move grouping to another area of the room.
2. Move grouping to another room that is larger or smaller.
3. Cover a large sofa in fabric the same or close to the color of the background wall. The sofa will blend in with the wall and will not seem as large. Cover a smaller sofa with a bright contrasting fabric to give it visual weight and emphasis.
4. Use different furnishings with sofa, such as a different table and lamp.
5. Do you have any other ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

Now, compare the first room shown above with the improved room diagram below.

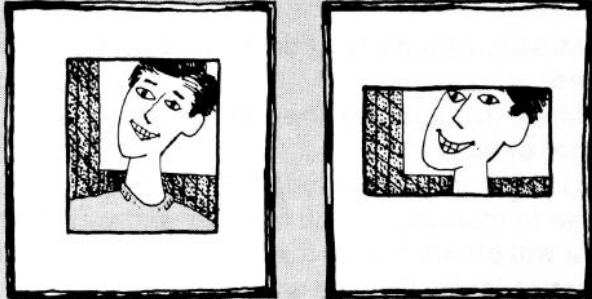


This diagram shows better scale because:

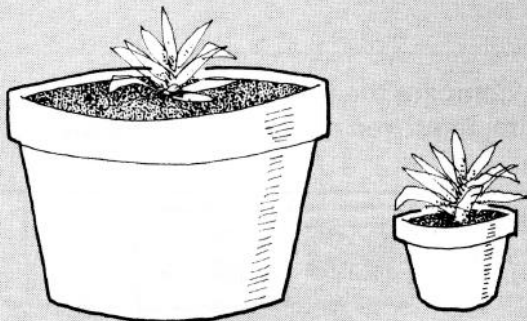
1. The table provides a better base for the size lamp used.
2. The plant is a good height with sofa and pictures.
3. Two larger pictures are better for the size of sofa.

Study the following examples for the use of proportion and scale.

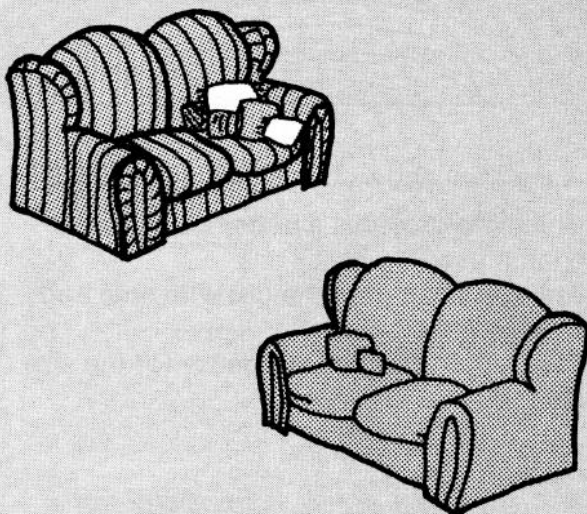
Which mat and frame show better proportion for the picture used?



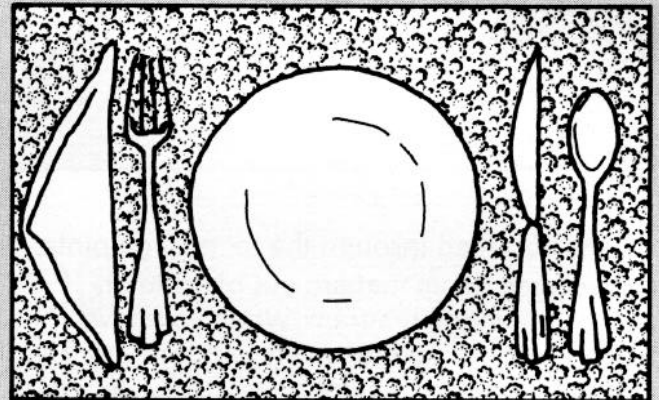
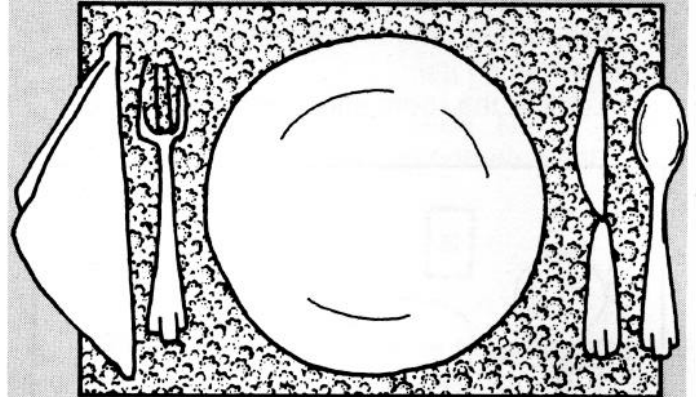
Which container is a better size for the plant?



Which illustration shows better use of pillows for size and emphasis?



Which table setting and place mat show better scale?



## A Principle of Design: Unity

**Unity** is the feeling that all parts *belong together*. Unity occurs when color, texture, line, shape or form, rhythm, emphasis, scale and proportion have been combined to *create a unified space—a visually balanced environment*.

It takes time and experience to develop the ability to use the elements and principles of design successfully. This project provides many opportunities to try different combinations and discover what works best in your home. You can also learn from the other members in your group.

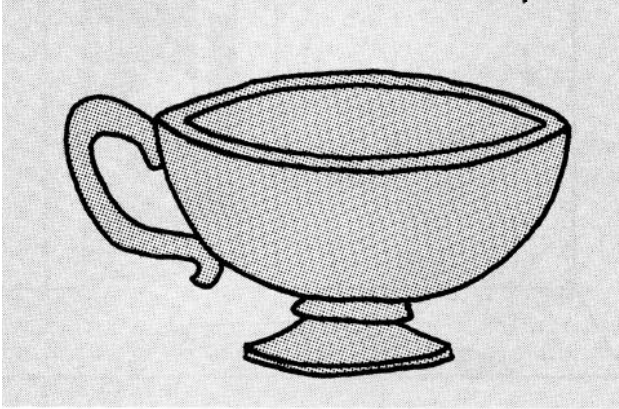
## Using Accessories

Accessories are a vital part of your home environment. They are vital to the design of a room—and they are often functional. Whether they are functional or for aesthetic purposes, they should be carefully chosen.

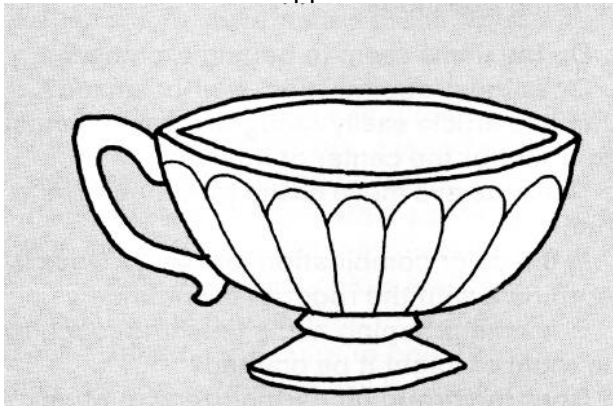


## Selecting Well Designed Accessories

Many fine and beautiful objects are quite plain, taking their beauty from the characteristics of the materials and the structural lines or construction of the piece.



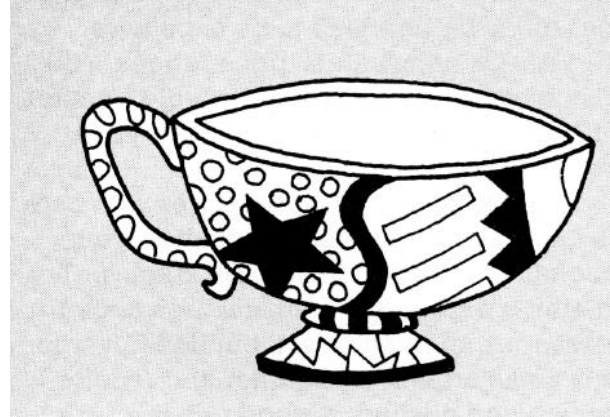
Other objects used in designing the interiors of our homes have applied decoration.



Applied decoration is surface enrichment or ornamentation of a structural design. Applied decoration is not essential to the object, but it can often be a handsome addition. However, it may also be a cover-up for poor design.



Some objects have good structural design, size, fine, form, color, texture, but may be spoiled because of poor *applied decoration*.



When applied decoration is used, it should:

- 1. Follow the structural lines of the object.** For example, plates, cups or other items used every day are easier to live with when the decoration follows the lines of the object rather than when it is unrelated and appears “splashy” and superimposed on the surface.
- 2. Strengthen the shape of the article.** If the surface to be decorated is flat, the applied or decorative design should preserve that two-dimensional quality by appearing to be flat.
- 3. Be suited to the purpose of the article.** For example, flowers on fly swatters are not related to the purpose of the fly swatter. They may appear to be “cute” at first, but often become uninteresting and unattractive.
- 4. Cover the surface “quietly.”** Large and gaudy patterns most often appear “spotty.”
- 5. Be as simple as possible.** Simple objects with little or no applied decoration often can serve many purposes. When an accessory is arranged with other objects and is part of a total effect, simplicity of decoration becomes even more important.

Gather together some accessories for the home and apply what you have learned about design. Which items are well designed? Of those items having applied decoration, which ones are better designed than others? Why?

Let’s look at some ways that design can be applied when making and using accessories in the home.

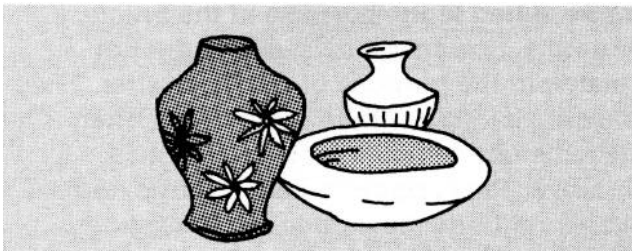
## Accessories: Your Personal Touch

Adding accessories to your home is a good way to work with design. Well-designed accessories do not need to be expensive. Good design comes in all price ranges. You can achieve good design by careful selection in the choices you make in your everyday surroundings.

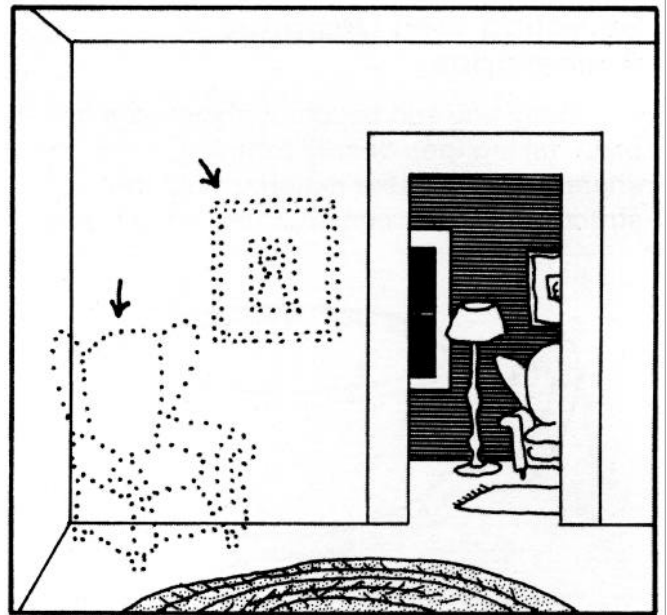
Select and arrange accessories with care. They are the room accents that show your personality and imagination. Be creative. Try something different or unusual. Use enough accessories to add interest, but don't overdo. Many small articles add clutter and require cleaning and dusting. A good rule is simplicity. *When in doubt, leave it out!* Empty spaces can add dignity and restfulness to a room.

Accessories can be used on tables, chest tops, beds and wall areas. These areas are nearest to the eye level. Accessories can also be placed on the floor or even hanging from the ceiling. Bright colors and dramatic textures can be used well in accessories since they are usually smaller than the other furnishings and are more easily changed.

Here are some guidelines that will help you in placing accessories in your home.



1. Place accessories close enough together to create only one area of interest. If they are intended to be seen in a grouping, the space between two accessories needs to be smaller than the width of either accessory.
2. Choose accessories that repeat architectural features or furnishing lines in your room.
3. Use accessories to fill a vacant spot.
4. And, of course, use accessories within a grouping that complement each other in color, texture, and line. (Refer back to the section on design elements and principles.)



As you work with combining different accessories into groupings, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do the items seem to belong together?
2. Does the grouping seem well-balanced?
3. Is one article easily recognized as the most important or the center of interest?
4. Does the eye move easily from one item to another?
5. Is the color combination pleasing? Does it coordinate with the room as a whole?
6. Does the grouping add a finishing touch to the room or might it be omitted?
7. Does the grouping harmonize with other accessory groupings in the room?
8. Is the grouping in good proportion to the space it occupies?
9. Does the grouping have one dominant element, such as shape, color, or line?
10. Is there some variety to add interest to the grouping, such as size, color, or texture?

Accessories are not just for looking at. They can be very useful. Desk sets and pin-up boards, such as those you made in Units 1 and 2, are useful in the study area of your room. You may need some other useful accessories in your room: grooming supplies, calendar, clock, lamp or other items.

Many other functional accessories can be found throughout your home. Baskets, bowls, and tableware are a few examples.

## Accessories From Nature

Nature's materials provide some of the most pleasant home accessories. There are many different possibilities to explore.

Use shells from a family trip, or arrange a display of interesting rocks found in your community.

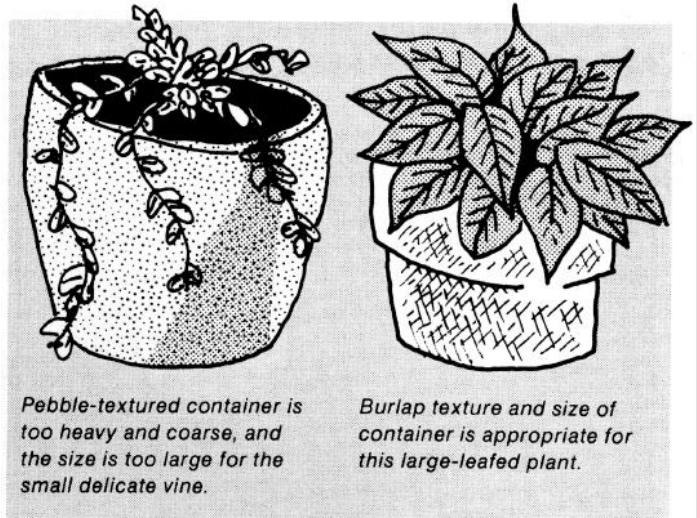
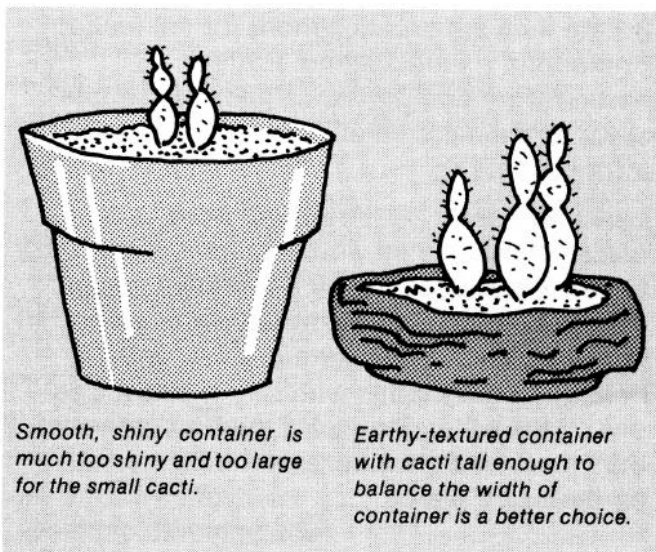
- Clean the shells or rocks with mild soapy water, rinse and dry in sun.
- Place on a table or shelf, arrange on a tray or in a basket, fill an apothecary jar, or use as paper weights.

Arrange gourds or pine cones in a wooden bowl or basket.

- Clean gourds with 1 tablespoon bleach in a pail of warm water. Rinse.
- Bake pine cones in the sun over several hot, dry days or use 200° F. oven for 1 hour to get rid of insects.
- Brush with soft-bristled brush or clean, soft cloth.

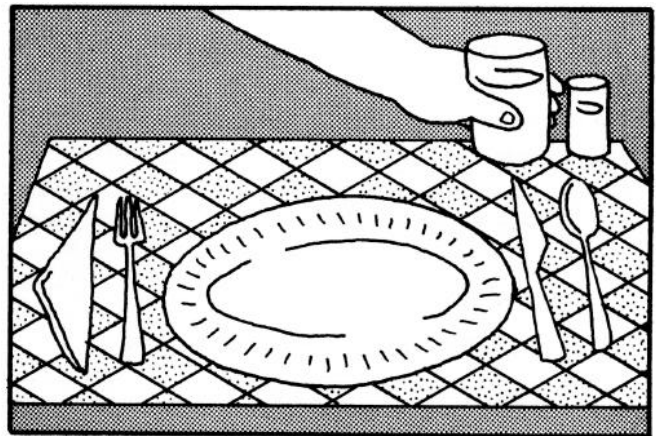
Avoid using too few or too many shells or pine cones in a container. Plan where you might use these arrangements from nature.

Plants are like any other accessory. Their form can be heavy, tall, narrow, short, or wide. They come in various colors and textures. Containers vary, too. Plan to fit the plant size, shape, texture and color to both the container and the space where it will be used. Study the following illustrations and then think of examples in your own home that show good use of plants.



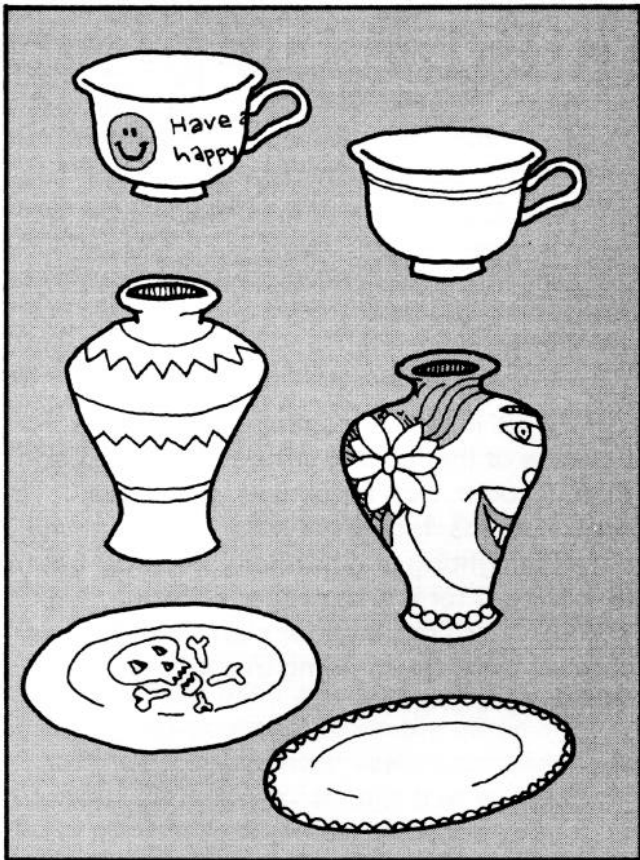
Plants make very special accessories because of the life and softness they can add to your room. But, remember, they have special needs, too. Make sure your plant will have the lighting and humidity it needs. Learn how to care for it with proper watering, too. You can learn more about plants and how to care for them by enrolling in a 4-H horticulture project.

## Accessories for Setting a Table



You do not have to have expensive tableware to set a fine table! Just use the principles of design that you are learning in this project. When selecting your tableware, take a close look at both structural and decorative design. Review the section on Design in Accessories. Then select the preferred designs in the following illustration.

Circle the better decorative design on each set of the forms below.



When you set a table for meals, the table covering, dishes, glassware, flatware and decorations should create a pleasing background for the food that is being served. The items should also fit the occasion or the type of meal. The secret of a well-designed table is to select things that blend with each other. The table will always be attractive if set with care.

Tableware includes:

- China (plates, cups, saucers, serving dishes)
- Flatware (knives, forks, spoons)
- Glassware (glasses and tumblers)
- Linen (tablecloths, napkins, place mats, table runners)
- Decoration and centerpieces

Experiment with the tableware you have at home. Try various combinations together and evaluate the effect of each setting.

Start with a table covering. You don't have to have many different coverings to set attractive tables. Either table cloths or place mats can be used for both formal and informal meals, depending upon the color, texture and pattern. Table cloths should hang down about 8 to 10 inches all around the table. Plastic and paper table coverings are practical and popular for picnics and very informal meals. Whatever type of table covering you work with, be sure it is clean and well-pressed. Also study the texture, color and pattern and how it looks with the china, flatware and glassware.

- White, cream and pastel table cloths make a good background for more formal settings.
- Brightly-colored place mats and cloths add spark to place settings of white or cream-colored china.
- Colorful china may look best with neutral linens.
- Prints and bold textures show off informal settings.
- Smooth textures, shiny surfaces and lace add elegance to more formal settings.

Next, arrange settings using different combinations of china, flatware and glassware. Keep the design elements and principles in mind as you work. Here are some things to consider.

**Color.** Choose colors that go together and complement the food being served. Colored glassware is popular but must be chosen with care to go with your china and linen.

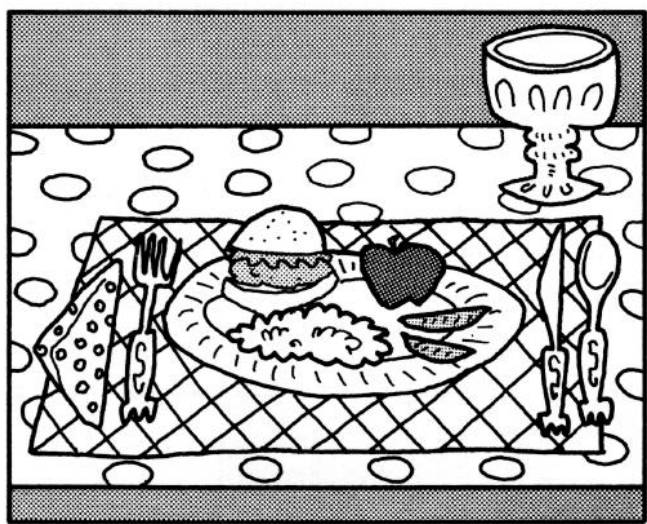
**Texture.** Fine china dishes, silver and gold designs on china and glassware and more ornate flatware create a more formal feeling or mood in a table setting. Pottery, earthenware and plastic dishes, and simple silver or stainless steel flatware are best in informal setting.

**Line and Form.** The structural lines of all pieces should be attractive to look at and easy to use. Lines used in any decorative design should complement the structural lines and fit into the overall table setting. Avoid mixing bold and heavy items with dainty ones. Use one or the other. Don't mix such extremes as thin, stemmed glassware with bold earthenware plates.

**Decorative Design.** Plain tableware has no decoration and provides the greatest opportunity to use a variety of colors and patterns in table coverings and centerpieces. Shapes and colors of food are also more appealing.

Simply decorated tableware can also offer several choices. China patterns may have a gold or silver border, a floral border or perhaps a widely scattered all-over pattern. Glasses may have a metal rim or other simple decoration. Flatware may have a simple design added on the handles.

Highly decorated tableware is harder to mix and match successfully. Avoid using china, glassware and flatware that all have highly decorated patterns. A plain table cloth is usually a better background for highly decorated china. If the table covering is patterned, plain china is best.



**Proportion.** Think about the size of the table and the dinnerware. Tiny glasses that look good with breakfast bowls might look like midgets with dinner plates.

**Rhythm.** Think about whether your eyes move easily around the table to or from the center of interest. Place settings should be evenly placed and follow the lines of the table: Shapes, colors, textures, and patterns that are repeated help to create a feeling of unity.

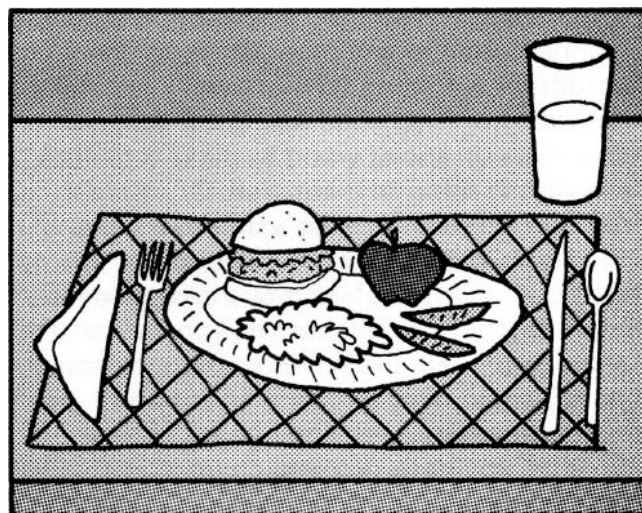
**Balance.** Good visual balance can be achieved by repetition of colors, tasteful use of patterns and textures and careful planning of available dining space.

Finish your table with a centerpiece or other decorations planned for the occasion. Add color with flowers, an arrangement of fruits or vegetables, a plant, a basket of gourds or candles. A birthday cake adds a special touch. Look around the house and see what kinds of things you have that could be used for centerpieces. Or create a special centerpiece for a party or holiday.

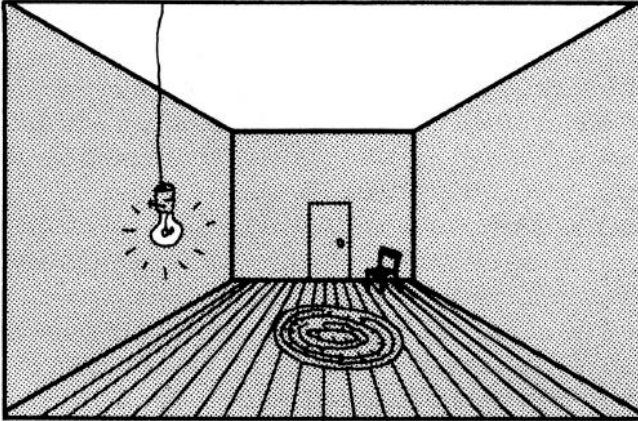
The centerpiece should not take up more than a third of the table length. Allow several inches between the decorations and the place settings. Keep the decorations low enough for people to see over them. Remember that most centerpieces are seen from all sides. Some buffet arrangements will be seen from one side only, however, and may be higher in proportion.

**Center of Interest or Emphasis.** Think about the total feel of the table and what you want people to notice first. Striking color combinations in place mats and napkins, interesting texture contrasts, repetition of a certain design or the centerpiece may provide the center of interest.

**Unity.** Table linens, china, glassware, flatware and centerpiece should all look like they belong together. They should have a feeling of harmony or oneness and should also be appropriate for the type of occasion, whether you are preparing a table for a family meal, a holiday, an after-the-game party or other special event.



## Accessories—On the Wall!



Have you been in a room without any pictures or accessories on the walls? How did it look to you? Wall accessories provide the finishing touch and help to personalize a room. They also provide the perfect place to apply what you have learned about the elements and principles of design. As you work with wall accessories, remember to select those that complement their surroundings and have meaning for the people who will be using the room.

### Deciding What to Hang

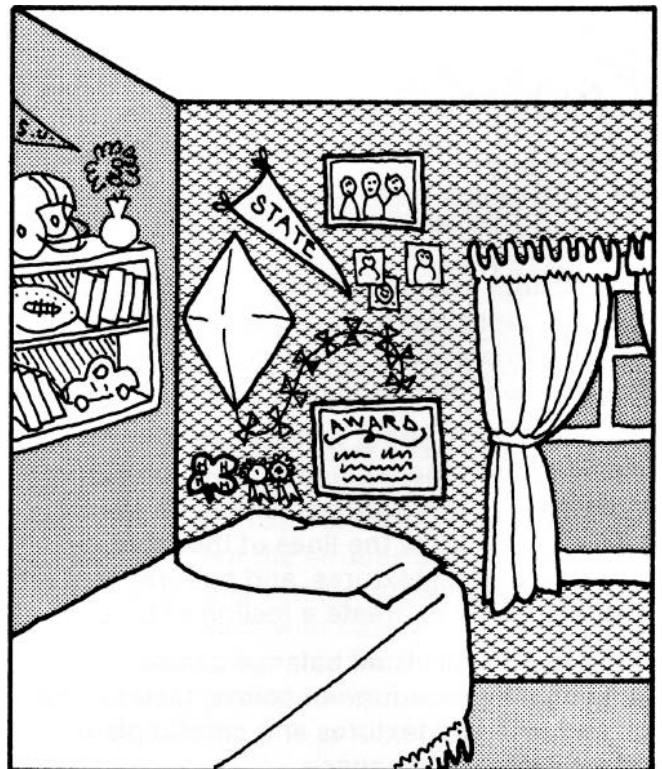
Find a wall or a room that needs new or rearranged wall hangings. Think about what kinds of accessories would be appropriate for this space. You may decide to mat and frame a painting or poster. Or a picture may simply need a new mat or new frame. A mirror can add light and sparkle to small rooms. An arrangement showing off a collection adds a personal touch to any room. Baskets, keys, photographs, folding fans or even kites make interesting wall accessories. *Show off your talent!* Use scraps of wood to make a picture or design to hang on your wall. Or, make a fiber or yarn wall hanging using macrame, latch hook, stitchery, applique or other techniques. You will find many design ideas and instructions on making your own wall hangings in craft and needlework books and magazines, at craft and yarn shops and from your leader and Extension agent.

After you have decided on your wall accessories, plan how you will use them.

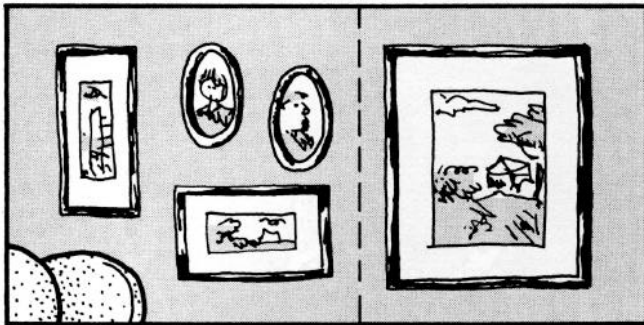
Apply what you have learned about the elements and principles of design. Consider such questions as:

- How large a space are you working with? What other furnishings need to be considered? For example, a large wall space above a sofa needs a large painting or a grouping of accessories for good balance.
- What lines, colors and textures should your arrangement have? Are some of the room colors repeated in the wall hanging? Are the lines repeating similar lines in furniture or in the shape of the wall space used?
- What is the emphasis point in the room? Does the wall hanging or arrangement complement this center of interest?

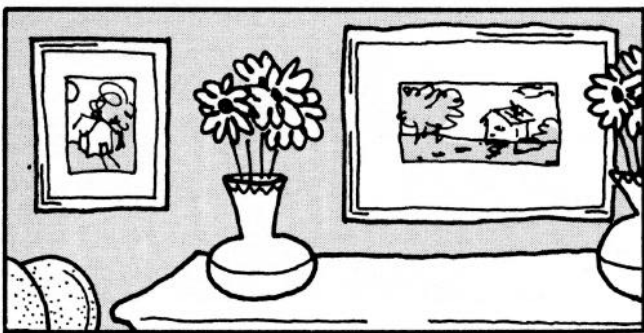
Experiment with different ideas until you find a plan that works. Wall hangings should be hung close enough to the furnishings beneath them so that they look like a total unit. Hang them at a height where most people can see and enjoy them. This is usually at eye level when people are standing or sitting. Can you think of some exceptions where wall hangings may be hung higher or lower than normally seen? What kind of a wall hanging was it? What made it work in the space where it was hung?



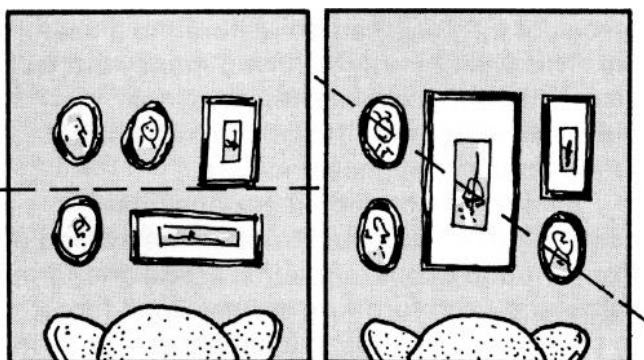
Keep in mind that pictures used in a grouping don't need to be all of one size or shape. Different sizes and shapes add interest. Just be sure your grouping is coordinated and fits well in the space you have selected. Examples of different types of arrangements are show below:



- Both halves of a wall arrangement should appear visually balanced. Larger paintings or objects can be balanced by a pair of smaller prints or one long object which takes up about the same amount of space.



- Vertical arrangements work best in vertical wall spaces and will make the room seem higher. Horizontal lines look best in horizontal wall spaces and will make it seem wider.



- Arrangements will usually look best if you can draw at least one imaginary straight line

through the arrangement. Can you find the straight lines in these arrangements? Do they appear visually balanced?

After you have decided on an arrangement, cut a piece of paper the size of the wall space you are working with. Arrange your wall hangings on this paper and draw around each item to mark its location. Also indicate the location of each hanger. Then tape the paper to the wall with masking tape and double check how each item is spaced. Think through the design elements and principles. Does the arrangement meet the guidelines? If so, you are ready to hang your accessories by driving the appropriate hangers through the location indicated on the paper.

For additional information on selecting and arranging wall hangings, matting and framing pictures and types of hangers to use, see Extension Publication H.E.4-802A, *Put It In a Frame*, and H.E.4-303, *Put It On the Wall*.

## Other Ideas For Accessories

There are many other kinds of accessories that can be used in your room. If you are making or using a rug, pillow, wastebasket, desk accessories or other accessories, remember to evaluate each item and each grouping using the design elements and principles. By evaluating your arrangements, you are training your eye to automatically recognize good design.

## Creativity + Design = Convenience!

**Design** refers to working with the design elements and principles in selecting and arranging furnishings in your home. You can use design elements and principles to establish order and create furnishings for the spaces in and around your home. The following section deals with the practical things you can do to help make your home more attractive and convenient.

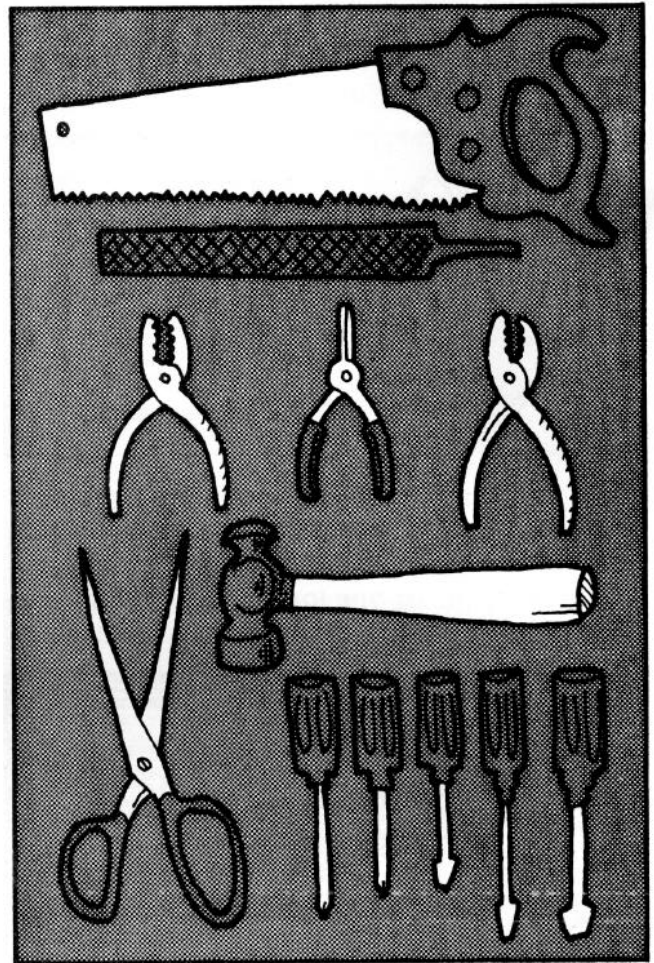
## A Place for Everything

Your room will be more attractive and convenient if there is a place for everything and everything is kept in its place. If you have trouble finding the right places for things, solve your problem by first sorting through things and discarding those items you no longer need or use. Then create a storage area for each type of item and form the habit of putting everything back in its place after you use it. Your room will look neat, and you'll be able to quickly find what you need.

Here are some ideas for storage centers that are useful in many homes. You'll find other ideas in magazines and design books. Or design your own storage center. Many items can be made at low to moderate costs. Some items can be recycled or used in new ways to fit different needs. *Be creative. Use your imagination.* Talk with your parents or your leader for help with your plans.

- A large box with casters underneath can hold many things.
- A cardboard box covered with paper or painted in an attractive color holds games and other recreational items.
- Some sports equipment can be stored on a wall.
- Two closet rods hold twice as many things in the same space as one.
- Laundry bags and shoe bags can hang on the wall.
- Wall racks are good for garden equipment, such as rakes and hose.
- Peg boards and divided drawers keep workbench tools orderly.
- A restored old trunk can also be used as an end table and storage chest.
- Sturdy cardboard boxes can be painted or covered with paper and stacked in various ways. Or use as storage bins and line up on shelves.
- Arrange cardboard ice cream containers (from a local ice cream shop) on a shelf and use to store yarns, sewing supplies, gloves and other things.
- A one-drawer file cabinet can also serve as a stool or table. Just mount plate-type casters on the bottom corners, and paint or cover it with fabric or adhesive-backed paper.

Can you think of other creative storage ideas?



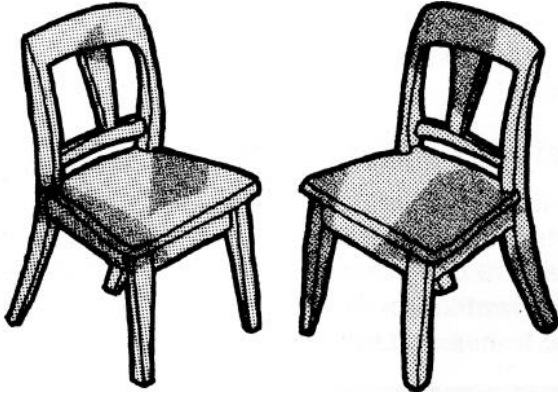
## Creating by Restoring

Creating something new for your home may be a matter of restoring something old—as an accessory or a focal point. Many old pieces of furniture can be restored to a useful life. This will not only save you money but will also give your home a distinctive look. Furniture restoration is not difficult, but it requires time, patience and care.

Many secondhand pieces of simple design and durable construction are available from antique shops, auctions, estate and farm sales and used furniture stores. Don't forget to check the want ads in local papers. Look in your own attic and basement, too. Unfinished furniture with beauty in grain and wood color is another possibility.



## Deciding What to Restore



A piece of furniture does not have to be a collector's item to give you pleasure and have value. If the wood has natural beauty, the design is pleasing, and the piece can be adapted to your purpose, restoration may be well worth your while.

Keeping in mind how you want to use the piece, look at it carefully and ask yourself:

- Can it be adapted for my purposes? Where will I place it in my home? Will it fit the space I have?
- Is it well designed with pleasing lines and proportions?
- Is it constructed from a wood with beautiful color and grain? Is it made from one or several woods? Scrape several small areas on an underside with your fingernail. Rub with moistened finger to see if refinished wood will have a rich color. Naturally beautiful woods can be given a natural finish—a clear finish that shows the natural wood color and grain with no apparent surface covering. Or color may be freshened or added with stain if necessary.
- Are any parts missing? Would they be expensive to replace? Can I replace them at home with available tools and materials?
- Is the construction sturdy? Check for loose joints.
- If the piece has poorly constructed or designed features, can it be remodeled to look better?

- Will the restored piece cost less than a new piece of furniture of equal quality? If not, it may be wiser to buy a new piece, unless it is valuable as an antique or family heirloom.
- Does the piece just need cleaning? Remember, woods and styles do not have to match other items in the room.

## Restore . . . By Cleaning!

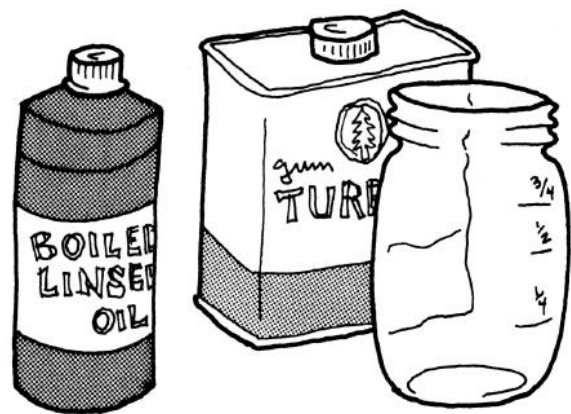
When restoring old furniture, do not attempt to make the piece look new. Part of the charm of old furniture lies in the signs of age and use that remind you of people and customs of earlier days. Overrestoration can ruin a fine old piece.

Many old pieces of furniture need only to be cleaned. If the original finish is smooth, do not remove it. Removing the original finish of a valuable piece, if it is in good condition, would destroy much of its value and character. However, if the finish is cracked (alligatored), it is best to remove it.

You can make a furniture cleanser-conditioner that will clean wood, restore natural grain and color, disguise scratches, remove dullness and remove numerous layers of wax and polish.

## Making Furniture Cleanser-Conditioner

Fill a glass container 1/4 full of gum turpentine (not steam-distilled) and 3/4 full of commercially prepared boiled linseed oil. (*Do not attempt to boil linseed oil at home.*) Cover tightly. You can store this mixture indefinitely.



## Getting Ready!

1. Spread thick layer of papers on floor and ventilate the room well.
2. Assemble the following equipment on a tray:
  - Cleanser-conditioner
  - Cup or small can
  - Saucer or small pie tin
  - Metal container and lid in which to put discarded mixture
  - Three old soft cloths
  - 3/0 and 4/0 steel-wool pads
  - Old toothbrush
3. Heat some water and pour into the cup or small can placed on a saucer or a small pie tin.
4. Shake cleanser-conditioner and pour enough into cup to cover surface of water. Do not stir, let the mixture float on top.

## Applying Cleanser-Conditioner

1. Dip cloth into oily layer floating on surface of hot water.
2. Apply dampened cloth to a small area at a time. Keep excess moisture away from joints to prevent glue from softening. Use a toothbrush on carvings and grooves.
3. Dip 3/0 steel-wool pad into oily layer and rub lightly with grain to remove dirt, if necessary.
4. Dip a clean cloth in clean, warm water. Wring cloth and wipe the wood surface. Wipe dry for shellac surfaces.

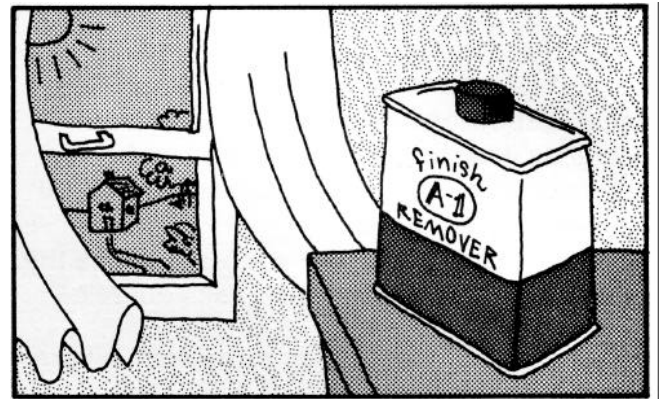
**Caution:** Since water, alcohol and heat damage shellac finishes, use cleanser-conditioner sparingly. To find out if a finish is shellac, sponge a spot on the underside of the piece of furniture with denatured alcohol solvent. The finish will soften and come off if it is shellac.

5. Wipe surface with dry cloth.
6. Discard mixture when cold. Do not reheat. It is flammable and will become gummy if you try to reheat it.
7. After cleaning, apply a greaseless furniture cream containing beeswax to replenish moisture and natural oils OR a paste wax applied with 4/0 steel wool. On furniture that is not dried out, apply a greaseless, emulsified

furniture cream polish, such as Guardsman or Wieman, OR a lemon-oil polish OR a thin-type mineral oil. On high-luster finishes, use one that dries to a high gloss, such as Pledge.\*

## Restore By Refinishing!

If your piece of furniture needs refinishing instead of cleaning, you will need a place to work that has ample light. **Provide cross-ventilation of air to prevent breathing toxic fumes and to reduce danger of fire.** Try



to arrange a work area where furniture and equipment can remain undisturbed during the refinishing process. Spread a thick layer of papers on the floor and work surfaces before starting. Here are the usual steps in refinishing wood furniture.

1. Remove hardware, table leaves, doors, caning and upholstery. Wood surfaces are easier to work with and the removed parts are protected from damage during the refinishing process.
2. Remove old finish. Use a good grade of commercial finish remover that is suitable for the type of finish you need to remove. Semipaste and paste are easier to use than liquid since they will cling to the surface without running off or dripping. Do not use lye to remove wood finishes. Lye burns the wood and is difficult to remove. The new finish often remains sticky and does not dry when lye is used.

*\*Brand names and products used for purposes of examples for illustration only. Endorsement of these brands or products is not intended or implied. Nor is any discrimination against those not mentioned, shown or used intended or implied.*

Commercial refinisher solutions, such as Formby, Cook and Hope, can be used with success on old finishes that are in fairly good condition. Lacquer and shellac finishes can be removed with lacquer and shellac thinners. The finish is lacquer if it is crystal hard and chips easily. Lacquer thinner will soften and remove it. The finish is shellac if denatured alcohol solvent or shellac thinner softens and removes it. The finish is varnish if gum turpentine does not soften it. A commercial varnish remover must be used when removing varnish finishes.

3. Apply the remover as directed on the container.

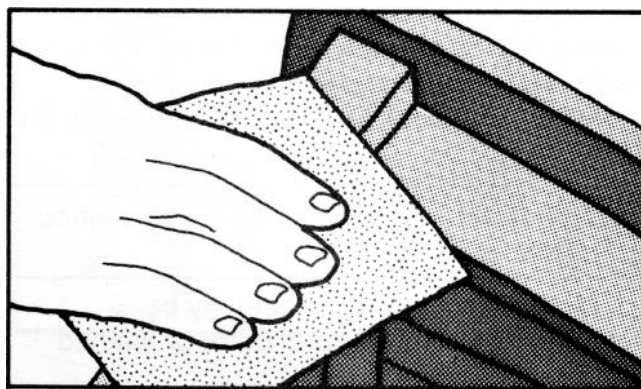


4. Counteract remover by scrubbing the surface with 2/0 or 3/0 steel wool dipped in denatured alcohol solvent. Wipe with clean cloth dipped in fresh alcohol. All remover must be cleaned off or the new finish will be sticky and will not dry.

5. Examine the wood after removing finish.

- Is the surface sticky? If old finish remains, apply remover again to the entire section.
- Is the surface smoky? Wash section again with alcohol.
- To remove old glue in crevices and joints, apply hot vinegar.
- Do joints need regluing? If you are using a penetrating seal or oil finish, apply two coats of finish before gluing. If using a polyurethane finish, one coat of finish before gluing.

6. Prepare the bare wood for finish by removing dents, bruises, grease spots and stains or freshening wood color. Refer to H.E. 5-232B, *Care and Repair of Wood Furniture*, for more information.



7. Smooth surface with abrasives (sandpaper or steel wool). A satin-smooth surface is essential for a beautiful natural finish. Smoothing brings out the beauty of the grain and color and removes hair grain from soft woods. It also permits stain and finish to penetrate the surface evenly.

When humidity is high, it is important to smooth the wood just before you apply the stain or finish. On humid days, if wood stands as long as 10 to 12 hours after smoothing, the moisture in the air will raise the wood fibers again.

Finish the smoothing process with 3/0 steel wool. Many professional refinishers prefer to use steel wool altogether rather than starting with sandpaper. (Silicon carbide abrasive finishing paper is recommended if sandpaper is used.)

8. Wipe surface with dry cloth and then with a tack rag. (Directions for making a tack rag are in 4-H 1417, *Home Environment, Unit I: Exploring Your Home.*)



9. Stain wood if necessary. Woods with natural beauty of grain and rich color usually do not need stain. Staining is needed when wood has no natural beauty in color or grain, appears faded or grayed, or has been stained previously. Although some variations of color within a piece of wood add interest, some pieces made of several types of wood may look better if uniform in color.

Check the natural wood color by observing the surface while it is wet. Check it either as you are washing the piece with denatured alcohol solvent, after removing the

old finish, or by moistening a spot with water. The following chart will help guide you in whether to stain or not.

Woods with no color that may be stained or painted are:	Basswood Poplar Gumwood White Pine
Light-colored woods that may be finished in their natural color or stained include:	Ash Beech Elm Birch Maple Oak Chestnut Philippine Mahogany
Stain is not usually used on veneers or woods with natural beauty and rich color, such as:	Cherry Maple Teak Mahogany Rosewood Walnut

10. Apply finish. To bring out the quality of beautiful wood, use a natural finish that does not appear obviously finished but becomes a part of the wood, as in a sealer or oil finish. Refer to H.E. 4-602, *How To Refinish Furniture*, for more information in selecting and applying a wood finish.

After you have applied your finish, check over the following information to evaluate your job. You have done a quality job if your finished piece:

- Has an even satin finish and overall luster.
- Has a smooth surface showing that it has been well-sanded and prepared; is free of dust specks, bubbles, dull spots, blisters and drippings of finish.
- Is hard and dry, not sticky, and has sufficient body for good service; is not cloudy.
- Is appropriate in color for the wood and style of furniture.
- Is free of old finish and glue in crevices and joints.

## Recycling Old Furnishings

Some furnishings can be useful again by repairing or recycling (putting together or using in a new way). Here are some ideas for reusing furnishings. Can you think of others?

- Floor register made into table top
- Old silverware flattened and made into wind chimes
- Left-over wood pieces from workshop made into wall hanging
- Parts from two damaged bentwood chairs made into plant stand
- Old lace doily placed on velvet, framed and hung
- Old wash tub, repainted and used as outdoor planter
- Recovered or repaired lawn furniture

When recycling furnishings, consider the design elements and principles, potential usefulness of the finished item, amount of time and skills required, and the cost of the project.

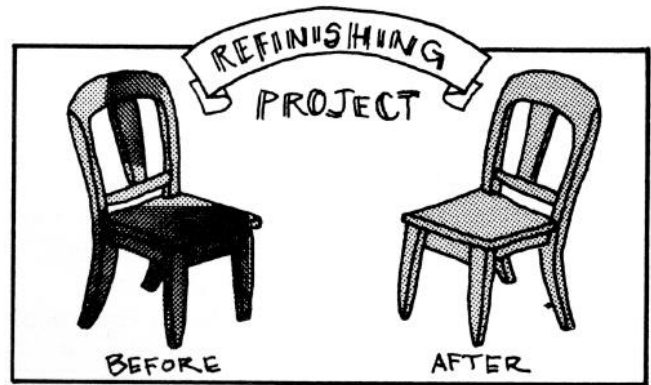
## Outdoor Design

You have been working with design inside your home, but now consider the living area around your home. The outside of your home greets your friends and guests, so you will want to keep it looking good. Think of ways you can help to maintain a look you can be proud of. Remember, your home will be more attractive just by mowing the lawn or planting some colorful flowers. Keep bicycles and sports equipment put away when not in use, so the yard does not look cluttered. An attractive outdoor living area makes family members feel good about where they live.

Plan an outdoor cook-out or party for your family or friends. Look around your home grounds. Are outdoor accessories such as planters and bird baths attractive, well proportioned and appropriate for the area? (Sometimes nothing is better than the wrong thing.) Is an unsightly garbage can in view? Can it be hidden? Is the grass freshly mown and the grounds uncluttered? Is the front entrance attractive and inviting? Could you add a special decoration to give your party theme a festive touch? Are the party items and lawn furniture in good condition? If you can answer yes to these questions, you are ready to greet your guests. Feel proud of your home and have fun at your party.

## Sharing What You Have learned

You have learned many skills in this project. Look for opportunities to share this knowledge with other people. Talk about what you have learned and discuss your projects with other family members and friends.



## Exhibits

Part of the fun of 4-H is making an exhibit. Start early to plan what you will do.

- Make an accessory for your home. Include information on how it will fit in with the other furnishings and colors in your home.
- Plan a table setting around a party or special event. Include an imaginative, creative centerpiece. Coordinate colors, textures and other design factors when combining dishes, linens and centerpiece.
- Restore a wood item. Include a "before" picture with your exhibit, if possible, to let other people know what the item looked like before you refinished it.
- Recycle or create a low cost item for your home. Include information that tells what you did, the time and costs involved in completing your project and the finished use for the item you made.

## Demonstrations

Plan to give a talk or demonstration. Here are some ideas for topics. You will probably think of others to add.

- *Applying Good Design in Floral Arranging*
- *How to Plan a Party*
- *How to Arrange and Hang Pictures*
- *Selecting Well Designed Tableware*
- *Creating Centerpieces for Party Themes*
- *How To Refinish Furniture*

After you have prepared your demonstration, present it at a garden club, homemaker club meeting and local 4-H club meeting. After all this practice, you'll be prepared and ready for the county demonstration contest.

## Citizenship

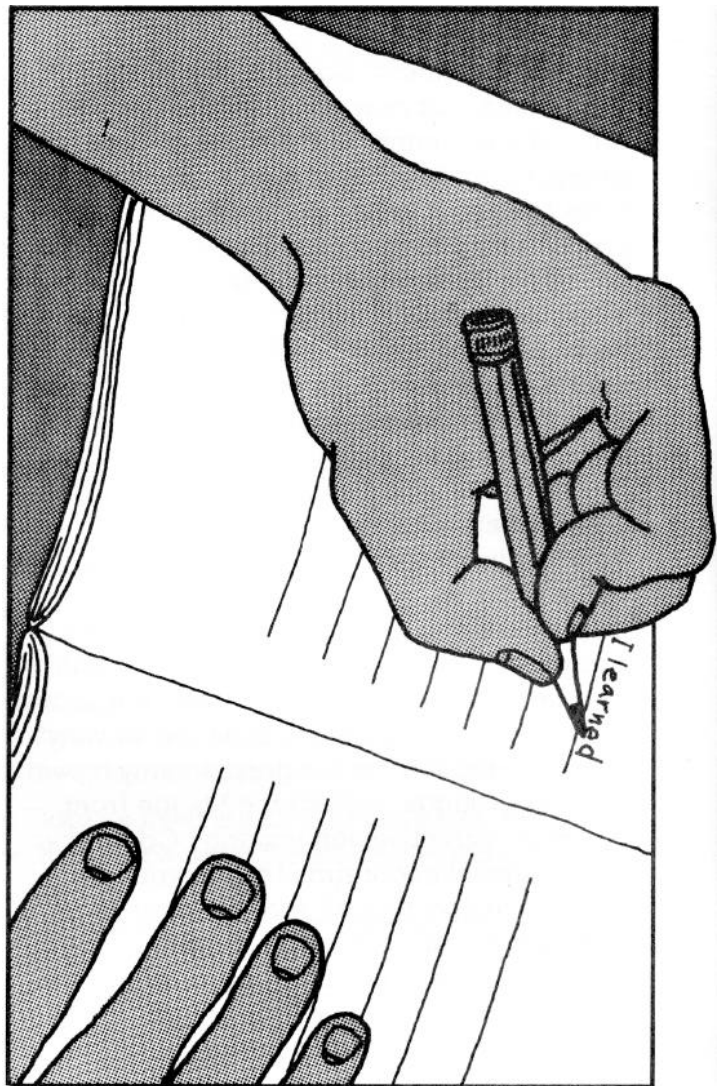
Is there an unpleasant view from any side of your house or another club members home? If so, perhaps your 4-H club may want to organize a 4-H Community Pride Project and have a clean-up, paint-up or fix-up campaign. Talk with your leader or Extension agent for more information on how to organize the group and plan the project.

## Keeping Records

Records are important because they show your progress throughout the year and from one year to the next. Keep a complete record of your activities and projects by jotting them down throughout the year. This doesn't take much time and keeps you from forgetting things you should include. Photos of what you have done add to your achievements. If you refinish or recycle furnishings, be sure to include a "before" and "after" picture.

As you accumulate yearly records, look back over them and feel proud of what you have learned in the 4-H home environment project. These complete, well-written yearly records will provide the basis for and make your over-all 4-H story easy to write.

*Congratulations on completing your third year in the 4-H home environment project.*



# Home Environment III

## 4-H Project Record Sheet

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Club \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Years in 4-H \_\_\_\_\_

This is what I made:

This is how much it  
cost (as well as I can  
figure it):

This is how much I  
saved by making (or  
refinishing) instead  
of buying the item:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

These are some special things I learned:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I enjoyed this project because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Include pictures of your project activities or samples of fabrics or other materials used on a separate sheet of paper.

### Home Environment Project Story

Write your home environment project story on a separate sheet of paper and attach it to your record.

I gave the following demonstrations:

Topic or Title	Place Given (club, fair, etc.)	Date Given
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

I plan to and/or have exhibited home environment project(s) at:

Local 4-H Rally	_____	State Fair	_____
County 4-H Rally	_____	Other events	_____
County Fair	_____	_____	_____
Area Events	_____	_____	_____

This is how I have helped others with this project:

What I did	Number Reached
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

These are the awards I have won:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Leader's opinion of participant's progress:

Excellent \_\_\_\_\_

Good \_\_\_\_\_

Would have been better if \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

*Project Leader*

*Parent*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*County Extension Agent*

The College of Agriculture is an Equal Opportunity Organization with respect to education and employment and authorization to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age and handicap. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and other related matter should be directed to Equal Opportunity Office, College of Agriculture, University of Kentucky, Room S-105, Agricultural Science Building-North, Lexington, Kentucky 40546.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, C. Oran Little, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Lexington, and Kentucky State University, Frankfort.

Issued 11-86,4M; 3M—1-90