

GUIDELINES FOR JUDGING THEMATIC PHILATELY EXHIBITS

Article 1: COMPETITIVE EXHIBITIONS

In accordance with Article 1.4 of the General Regulations of the FIP for the Evaluation of Competitive Exhibits at FIP Exhibitions (GREV), the Special Regulations (text in italics) have been developed to supplement those principles with regard to thematic exhibits.

These Guidelines are issued by the FIP Thematic Commission to give practical advice on how to apply the GREV and the Special Regulations for the Evaluation of Thematic Exhibits (SREV), which were approved by the 54th FIP Congress in 1985 in Rome (Revised at the 61st FIP Congress in 1992 in Granada and in Jakarta 2012).

The Guidelines have been developed to assist exhibitors in the preparation and judges in the evaluation of thematic philately exhibits. They are intended to provide guidance regarding mainly:

1. The definition of appropriate philatelic material to be used
2. The principles of exhibit composition, and
3. The judging criteria of exhibits of thematic philately.

Article 2: COMPETITIVE EXHIBITS

A thematic exhibit develops a theme according to a plan, as defined under 3.2.1, demonstrating thematic and philatelic knowledge through the items chosen.

Such knowledge should result in the best possible selection and arrangement of the material and the accuracy of the relevant thematic and philatelic text.

Article 3: PRINCIPLES OF EXHIBIT COMPOSITION

A thematic exhibit uses the widest range of appropriate postal-philatelic material (ref. GREV Art 3.2).

3.1 Definition of Appropriate Philatelic Material

A thematic exhibit uses the widest range of appropriate postal-philatelic material (ref. GREV Art 3.2.) The appropriate postal-philatelic material is that which, for the purpose of transmitting mail or other postal communications, has been issued, intended for issue, or produced in the preparation for issue, used, or treated as valid for postage by governmental, local or private postal agencies, or by other duly commissioned or empowered authorities.

Covers and other sort of mail usually have several characteristics: stamp(s), postmark(s), labels and

markings indicating the special treatment of this mailing, and sometimes indications for postage privileges. These are the elements of postal origin and/or significance, which can be used for thematic treatment. Other characteristics of the same mailing, like sender's name and address information, decorative printings or illustrations on the envelope / card, or the message and other parts of the content, are the non-postal (= private) elements which cannot be used for thematic treatment.

This distinction between postal elements and private elements (maybe on the same item which went through the post) is the one and only rule for defining appropriate philatelic material in thematic philately. Therefore, it is fundamental for understanding the nature of "postal-philatelic material" in thematic philately, in contrast to social philately and open class, which both allow for the private elements of a mailing to be used in treatment.

All other listings in this section of the guidelines are explanations of this rule. They show the typical range of postal-philatelic material as it occurs in the leading thematic exhibits and gives some warnings in those cases in which exhibitors try to stretch the definition of appropriate material. The following lists document the very wide range of material, which is appropriate for thematic development, given that the thematic treatment refers to the mentioned elements of postal origin and/or significance.

Type of material

- Postal franking items (stamps, stamp booklets, postal stationery, franking meters, computer generated postage e.g. FRAMA labels, SmartStamps etc.)
- Modifications applied to postal franking items (e.g. overprints, surcharges, and punch-perforations, as shown by "perfin"). However, modified items are not to be included if the modification distracts from the original theme (e.g. by making it no longer visible); they may be used for the theme(s) related to the modification.
- Postal cancellations (ordinary, slogan, commemorative and other special postmarks)
- Stamps, cancellations, marks and/or cards indicating a postage privilege (e.g. authorities, military)
- Other items used in the postal operations, such as registration labels, postal route labels and markings, supplementary labels or markings (e.g. censorship, disinfection, crash mail), mail delivery docket, reply coupons, forwarding agents markings, postal automation markings and labels, etc.; where applicable, these items should be on the relevant document.
- Items "intended for issues, or produced in the preparation for an issue", e.g. sketches, proofs
- Varieties and errors
- Revenue stamps. They are admitted as long as they are postally used or have postage validity. Revenue stamps for fiscal purposes are admitted in exceptional cases, when they are the only mean to describe an important thematic point.

Time frame

Postal material from the pre-stamp era, through the classic period, to the present day.

Postal Services

- Normal transmission of mail, including
 - (postage free) service- and military- post (including Airgraphs and V-mail);
 - maritime mail,
 - railway mail of any type
 - air mail of any type
 - prisoner-of-war and concentration camp mail
 - packet, parcel post and freight post
- Postal payment service
- Private post, authorised or tolerated by the official authorities, or active in total absence of an official post
- Other postal communications, including
 - pneumatic post
 - telegrams
 - electronic mail (i.e. message sent electronically to a Post Office where it is printed out and delivered to an addressee)
 - other similar forms of postal services

Border-line material

The variety of postal services and regulations in different countries and their evolution over time make it impossible to define a list encompassing all possible situations. Some items only follow to a certain extent the above definitions of appropriate or inappropriate material; therefore they should be used mainly when no other material is available to describe a specific thematic detail. When included in the exhibit, they should always be supported by a *thorough philatelic justification*.

Items belonging to the specific philatelic culture of a theme, a country or a region can be tolerated as much as they are justified and their number is proportional to the degree of elaboration of the exhibit.

The jury team shall evaluate borderline material primarily with regards to its thematic significance, so it should never be shown solely for its rarity.

Inappropriate Material

The following items and the information made available by them should not be used for thematic development:

A)

- fantasy issues from non-existent postal territories
- issues of exiled governments
- issues of organizations without postal services
- abusive, illegal and undesirable issues, as defined by the UPU and the FIP Philatelic Congress of 1976 (and available on the website of the FIP Fight against forgeries commission)
- picture postcards, unless they are postal stationery produced by a Postal Authority

- privately printed or manuscript annotated military postcards and lettercards (e.g. Feldpost), unless accepted or authorized by Postal authorities as admitted to the postal privilege without other official markings

B)

- private additional cancellations and cachets applied by a sender or a supplier before mailing the documents
- private additional prints on postal stationery (also known as “repiquages”)
- administrative marks (not postal), when they do not give any postal privilege
- private decorations and decorative overprints on envelopes and cards
- private vignettes (advertising labels), whatever the purpose of their use

Aspects of category “B” are usually parts of mailings that bear postal elements like stamps and postmarks. However, these are the typical “private elements” of such mailings, which are usually not admitted for thematic treatment, as explained above.

In exceptional cases (see also 3.2.2), where no postal-philatelic material for important aspects of the theme exists, the items under B) can be considered as acceptable items as long as they present a significant thematic connection and are supported by a thorough philatelic justification.

Thematic Information

Each item must be connected to the chosen theme and present its thematic information in the clearest and most effective way.

The thematic information used to illustrate the theme or, better, tell a story in a thematic exhibit is derived:

- directly from
 - the purpose of issue (or of use)
 - the design of an item,
- indirectly as
 - a result of a deeper analysis that enables the use of items that, at a first glance, do not show any connection with the theme.

Thus, the thematic information can be drawn from:

- the purpose of issue:
 - those which follow changes in political situations
 - those which document a particular period
 - the design of the item, along with everything which is depicted or written on a stamp, postal stationery, postmark or other appropriate postal philatelic material.
 - the text, art style of illustration and similar
 - the material on which the item is printed, e.g., granite (silk thread) or banknote paper, war maps

- the watermark design
- the perforation (e.g. "perfins")
- the text or illustration of margins, gutters, tabs, cover and interleaving of booklets, etc.
- functions of the postal service, which have a thematic significance (e.g. railway, telegraph, newspaper stamps, official service postal stationery, pigeon post)

The thematic information described above must be:

- initiated by the postal service, or
- introduced or added by the postal service, or
 - (e.g. advertising appendices, marginal descriptions, postal stationery illustrations)
- approved by the postal service
 - (e.g. postal stationery to private order).

Printing or surcharges added privately after the sale of the items do not fulfil this requirement.

Generic cancellations can be used because of

- the specific meaning of a place name, or
- the reason a place exists.
- Alternatively, they must contain adequate thematic information (e.g. advertising text, illustration), in addition to the data concerning the place and/or the date.

A postmark, even if of the pre-philatelic period, does not document the birthplace of a person.

The postmark date and place, when related to a special event, which happened on the same date and place, is relevant only if

- other thematic elements help to illustrate the theme, or
- it has a specific thematic significance from a postal history standpoint; in the latter case it should only be used when it refers to an important detail of the theme.

Sender and addressee data represents insignificant information, unless

- the document shows a special postal privilege (e.g. reduced or free postage) as a result of the position, condition or status (e.g. military, government or other official mail) of one of the parties. The indication of reduced (or free) postage or the service postmarks, or equivalent markings of the postal route, provide sufficient evidence.
- In some instances sender and/or addressee data may be helpful as complementary thematic information, in combination with the postal elements of the document.

3.2 Thematic Treatment

The treatment of a thematic exhibit comprises the structure of the work (title and plan) and the elaboration of each point of that structure (development).

A thematic exhibit illustrates the theme chosen by the exhibitor, or better, tells a story related to this theme. The theme or story is presented in the thematic text and illustrated with appropriate philatelic material (see Article 1).

In thematic philately the plan represents the concept, as defined by the GREV. The two subdivisions Title and plan and Development represent the two aspects of an interlaced process, based on personal study and research by the collector on both the theme and the material:

- A deeper knowledge of the theme enables one to increase the number of facts and details described in the story and to look for additional items to illustrate them.
- A better knowledge of the material allows one to identify new pieces, which often must be justified through further study of the theme, which could result in a more elaborate plan.

The pages of an exhibit ought to present the chosen theme, as presented by the title and detailed in the plan, in its entirety, i.e. important parts of the chosen theme must not be omitted.

Innovation is the personal approach of the exhibitor, highlighting the results of his/her ability to create an interesting story and illustrate it with the best material available.

3.2.1 Title and Plan

The title with any subtitle defines the scope of the exhibit. The title and the plan represent a meaningful entity and reflect the specific characteristics of the chosen theme. Hence, different titles originate different plans.

The title represents the synthesis of the exhibit. Therefore the title and the contents of the pages have to match and the sequence of the philatelic items mounted on the pages should give the full details of the story implied by the title. Boosting titles to make the exhibit more attractive can be misleading if they deviate from the plan and its development on the pages.

The plan defines the structure of the exhibit and its subdivisions and covers all major aspects relevant to the title. It should be entirely structured according to thematic criteria. The order of the main chapters and their subdivisions should demonstrate the development of the plan rather than list its main aspects.

The plan should, as much as possible, present the synthesis of the story told by the exhibit. It should not be a mere list (e.g. lexicon approach). The plan provides a clear and intelligible insight into all major aspects of the theme. It may:

- be freely chosen in order to detail all the main aspects of a theme or an idea, or
- derive naturally from the theme.

The structure of the plan may follow:

- a time-related classification (historical, evolutionary), or
- subject-related criteria (scientific, systematic, organisational, economic, etc.), or
- other subdivision criteria, in the case of themes related to Organisations and Institutions (e.g. Red Cross, League of Nations, Council of Europe), repetitive events (e.g. Stamp Days, Olympic Games), etc., such as:
 - their structure,

- their type of organization
- individual events following thematically time- or place-related classifications.

Themes developed within an organisational or chronological framework should clearly show the historical background, the aims, tasks, results and effects of the activities of such organisations or events.

The plan consists only of thematic divisions and subdivisions, with no generic chapters (e.g. "Miscellaneous", "Appendix"). Subdivisions by date of issue, issuing country, type of material (e.g. "Meters", "Postal stationery"), or purpose of issue (e.g. "Anniversaries") are to be avoided. Such items are best used according to their thematic information. The same applies to special philatelic studies (ref.: 3.2.3).

The plan is supposed to present the content of the exhibit in a logical order of chapters (and subchapters) allowing the study of the entire exhibit without disturbing breaks between the different chapters. Ideally the beginning of the following chapter has a logical link with that preceding. This helps to create an interesting story instead of an unconnected "list of contents". The best is when the chapters (and subchapters) themselves are structured like a story.

An effective plan covers the largest scope compatible with the title. In this respect, unless specifically stated in the title, the plan should not be limited by time or by geography, as far as the chosen theme allows it.

The different chapters should have a good balance, according to their relative thematic weight within the scope of the theme as defined by the title rather than by the quantity of material available.

The construction of an innovative plan is considered a prerequisite for an innovative development.

The Plan Page

The title and the plan must be presented on a page at the beginning of the exhibit, written in one of the official FIP languages.

On the plan page all major subdivisions of the plan, or parts of the story told, are described; finer and more detailed subdivisions are presented, in principle, only on the individual pages. The plan cannot be replaced by a literary description or by a generic introductory statement.

An adequate plan page will ensure that the public and the jurors do not have to "reconstruct" the plan by browsing through the pages of the exhibit. The obvious difficulties caused by having to do so might be reflected in the understanding and the evaluation of the exhibit.

A numerical classification (e.g. decimal, legal systems) is recommended, since it helps to make the exhibit easier to understand. It should be limited to major divisions of the plan. Experience has shown that a two/three digits/letters system is sufficient.

In addition to the plan page, an introductory title page may highlight the theme.

The official FIP languages in which the title, the plan and any other introductory statement have to be

presented are English, French, German, Russian, and Spanish.

3.2.2 Development

The development means to elaborate the theme in depth, aiming to achieve an arrangement of the material fully compliant with the plan.

The analysis of both the theme and the appropriate material, based on a thorough thematic and philatelic knowledge, is a prerequisite for the best possible thematic development. This enables the skilful selection of each item and its correct positioning and sequence, as well as a connecting description. This is necessary to ensure a proper understanding of the relationship between the item and the theme.

This is shown by:

- the selection of the most suitable items for each thematic detail described.
- the balanced utilisation of the items according to the significance of the thematic detail they support. The number of philatelic items available for the same detail should not be the basis for their inclusion.
- the accurate thematic arrangement of the items shown on the same page according to the sequence of the “story”. The correct sequence takes priority over the best appearance of the page.

Therefore, the simple classification of the philatelic pieces related to a subject is necessary but not sufficient to achieve an advanced degree of elaboration.

The Thematic Text

The thematic text ensures the necessary thematic links and to provide thematic details, whenever needed. It:

- illustrates the logical sequence of the development, by connecting the items shown. A good connection is effective and concise, without unnecessary information. This requires that the text be fluid enough to demonstrate the thread of the development.
- explains the thematic qualification of an item, if required (Ref. 3.3 below)
- gives appropriate information of the thematic details of stamps and documents.

Any thematic explanation has to be closely related to the material shown, and any given statement must be supported by thematically appropriate philatelic items, otherwise, it weakens the thematic development.

Even if FIP languages are not compulsory for thematic and philatelic text, exhibitors who intend to show frequently at international exhibitions are strongly advised to present their exhibit in one of those languages, to help in the understanding of their work (Ref. GREV 3.3).

3.2.3 Innovation

Innovation is shown by the:

- *introduction of new themes, or*
- *new aspects of an established or known theme, or*
- *new approaches for known themes, or*
- *new application of material.*

Innovation may refer to all components of Treatment. The exhibit is supposed to show the personal creative work of the exhibitor, highlighting the results of his/her ability to innovate. This requires personal effort by study, research and imagination and cannot result from the simple mechanical duplication of existing works. Exhibitors can take advantage of all sources available on the subject (e.g. thematic and philatelic literature as well as other collections) to push their research forward.

3.3 Qualification of Philatelic Material

The material displayed should be fully consistent with the subject chosen. The selection should show the appreciation of the exhibitor as to what is available in the context of his chosen subject. It should also include the fullest range of relevant philatelic material of the highest available quality (GREV, Art. 3.4).

The connection between the philatelic material and the theme must be clearly demonstrated, when it is not obvious.

A short thematic description is necessary whenever the connection between the item and the theme is not self-explanatory. Items without a demonstrated relationship with the theme should be excluded.

When selecting qualified material for the exhibit, preference and greater importance has to be given to:

- types of items that are the cornerstone of philately (i.e. stamps, postal stationery, cancellations and postmarks) as opposed to items with a lower postal connotation, even if their issue or use has been duly authorised by the post
- issues which have information whose contents bear a direct relation to the issuing country from a political, historical, cultural, economic and/or similar standpoint. Avoid speculative issues, which exploit the "fashion trends" in thematic philately (these dubious items ought to be in principle totally excluded), with special reference to issues not following the code of ethics of the UPU
- normal issues, as opposed to additional parallel imperforate issues (stamps and souvenir sheets)
- genuinely cancelled items, as opposed to items cancelled to order
- genuinely carried commercial mail with relevant cancellations, as opposed to mere souvenir documents and any similar items which were created to please collectors, e.g. decorated FDCs (even when issued by the postal service), and maximum cards

- genuinely carried items with correct postage and relevant thematic cancellations, as opposed to favour cancellations, often with underfranked postage, or, even worse, cancellations on stampless covers (“blank cancellations”) unless due to a free postage privilege
- documents with individual, differing addressees, as opposed to covers and cards received by the same addressee as a result of a subscription
- correct postage frankings, preferably as multiple franking of a thematically important stamp, as opposed to overfrankings due to philatelic reasons (e.g. complete sets)
- meter frankings with correct postage, as opposed to favour cancellations (e.g. “000”), unless the latter is a "specimen" or it has a justified postal reason.

Exceptions to the above criteria may only be shown if properly justified.

The relative rarity or unusual characteristics of proofs, varieties and similar items, can increase the philatelic quality of the exhibit. Common varieties (e.g. minor colour nuances) play an insignificant role and they are likely to adversely affect the thematic development. If a variety does not clearly demonstrate the connection with the theme, the normal item should be also shown as a reference.

Common stamps and documents are appropriate if they best represent important thematic details.

The use of maximum cards should be limited to a few, significant items, mainly to enhance the understanding of the thematic information, if this is too tiny to be properly seen, on the stamp. In addition to the necessary concordance of subject, time and date, defined in the principles of Maximaphily, these items should have a theme-related cancellation.

The use of revenue stamps for fiscal purposes should be limited to a few, significant items, mainly to enhance the thematic development in very important points of the theme that cannot be covered otherwise. These items are to be properly justified.

Philatelic studies

Postal items and documents present a number of philatelic variants. If this material is of thematic and philatelic importance, then a concise and balanced philatelic study is commendable, so that this material can be properly shown.

A philatelic study follows in a systematic manner the criteria for traditional philately (e.g. development of the item, varieties), postal history (e.g. usage, routes, handling of the mail, postmarks) or any other postal philatelic discipline. A philatelic study may exploit existing sources for further personal research. In order to safeguard the balance of the exhibit, the aim of these studies is not completeness, but the presence of the most significant philatelic peculiarities. The extent of the studies is proportional to the degree of specialisation of the exhibit.

Philatelic studies, whenever included, blend with the thematic development without affecting the fluidity of elaboration of the exhibit. The thematic text has to continue in parallel with the study, so that there is no disturbing interruption.

Philatelic text

A short explanation is required only when the material is not self-explanatory or there is a need to

illustrate special research. A philatelic text can be used when a specific philatelic characteristic of the item is not easily recognizable, for documenting the use of revenue stamps, or for presenting a philatelic study. Boosting definitions, in the style of those of the auction-catalogues, are inappropriate.

3.4 Presentation

The presentation and the accompanying text of the exhibit should be simple, tasteful and well balanced. It should add information to that provided by the material and show the level of understanding of the subject and the personal research of the exhibitor (GREV Art. 3.4).

See Art. 3.5 for hints on how this criterion is evaluated.

3.5 One Frame Exhibits

A One Frame exhibit of Thematic Philately is intended to be an exhibit with a very narrow theme that fits into one frame. If a theme can be shown in more than one frame, it is not suitable as a theme for a One Frame exhibit.

A selection of items from a multi-frame exhibit may be suitable only if the selection can completely treat a natural sub-theme of the exhibit within one frame. An extract of a multi-frame exhibit showing only the best items ("cherry picking") from a multi-frame exhibit is not appropriate as a One Frame exhibit.

ARTICLE 4: CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The general criteria, as specified in GREV Art. 4, are adapted to the peculiarities of the thematic class.

The thematic jurors must complete an evaluation form in order to be guided towards a thorough, unbiased and consistent judging.

In order to help consistent judging, within all of the following evaluation criteria, except for Presentation, there is a distinction between Basic requirements and Achievements.

Basic requirements. When all of them are fulfilled a score equal to 80% of the maximum is assigned. When any of them is not fulfilled, a mistake occurs and the 80% score is reduced accordingly.

Achievements. These requirements are gradual goals on the road to make the exhibit outstanding. They are worth >80% of the maximum and the fulfillment of all of them implies the top score.

4.1 Thematic Treatment

Treatment will be evaluated according to the title and the plan, the development, and the innovation shown in the exhibit. [SEP] Treatment is the presentation of the story for the theme chosen and its development throughout the pages, both showing an innovative approach.

In assessing treatment judges are looking for:

- A logical development that is easy to follow
- A clear and concise write up
- A balanced exhibit for the theme chosen
- The degree to which the plan tells a story

They will check that the exhibit:

- Reflects the theme implied by the title
- Is developed in accordance with the plan
- Has new aspects and new approaches for known themes

4.1.1 Title and Plan

The title and the plan will be evaluated considering the:

- *consistency between the plan and the title*
- *presence of the plan page*
- *adequacy of the plan page*
- *correct, logical and balanced structure (divisions and subdivisions)*
- *coverage of all major aspects necessary to develop the theme.* [SEP]

The title defines the overall concept, which then is structured through the plan. Inconsistencies

between the title and the plan indicate either an inadequate breakdown in the plan of the title or an inappropriate synthesis of its structure in the selected title.

The plan page, that provides an insight into the theme, has to be shown at the beginning of the exhibit. Failure to do so will result in the automatic loss of three points.

The requirements for a correct, logical and balanced structuring into divisions and sub-divisions are defined as follows:

Correct: The plan should be accurate, scientifically reliable and sound

Logical: The sequence of the main chapters and their subdivisions must follow a rational order, without superfluous or misplaced chapters

Balanced: The same importance should be given to the different sections in accordance with the thematic significance and the available material coverage of all major aspects necessary to develop the theme.

The best plans are those in which the chapters (and subchapters) themselves are structured to tell a story and are evaluated much higher than those structured like a “list of contents”.

Title and plan will be evaluated considering the:

Basic requirements

- presence of the plan page
- adequacy of the plan page
- consistency between the plan and the title
- correct, logical and balanced structure (divisions and subdivisions)
- coverage of all major aspects necessary to develop the theme

Achievements

- degree to which the plan tells a story

4.1.2 Development

The development will be evaluated considering the:

- *correct assembly and positioning of the items in conformity with the plan*
- *connection between the items and the thematic text*
- *depth, shown through connections, cross references, ramifications, causes and effects*
- *balance, by giving to each thematic point the importance corresponding to its significance within the theme*
- *elaboration of all aspects of the plan.*

The storyline as presented by the plan should be developed on the single pages and written as a continuous story flowing through each page and through all pages. It should be read as in a book

from top left to bottom right.

For an easy-to-follow development each page should have on top the numbered chapter or subchapter that indicates which part of the plan is being developed on the page. An additional page title summarizing the content of the page is also helpful.

The correct assembly and position of the items, including the individual ones on each page, is demonstrated by a well understood, correct, and fluent thread of development. Misplaced items make development confused and hard to understand. Items should be placed near the thematic text related to them.

The balance is demonstrated by giving the appropriate depth and size to the various thematic details, according to their significance within the theme. This also applies to philatelic studies.

Development will be evaluated considering the:

Basic requirements

- correct assembly and positioning of the items in conformity with the plan
- connection between the items and the thematic text
- elaboration of all aspects of the plan
- presence of a “red thread” that connects the single pages and chapters into a continuous story

Achievements

- balance, by giving to each thematic point the importance corresponding to its significance within the theme
- depth, shown through connections, cross references, ramifications, causes and effects

4.1.3 Innovation

Innovation will be evaluated according to Art. 2.1.3.

4.2 Knowledge, Personal Study and Research

The GREV considers “philatelic and related knowledge”, that can be seen as the result of two components:

- A “concept” related knowledge. In almost all classes is of postal and philatelic nature: issues, usages, printing processes, rates, routes, services, and so on. In thematic philately this “concept” is of a thematic nature: cars, bridges, history, nature, sport, etc.; hence “thematic knowledge” is that which is based on personal study and research and sound knowledge of the theme studied.
- “Philatelic knowledge”, that relates to the material used to support the concept. This component is common to all classes.

4.2.1 Thematic Knowledge, and its related Personal Study and Research

Thematic Knowledge, and its related Personal Study and Research will be evaluated considering the

- *appropriateness, conciseness and correctness of the thematic text*
- *correct thematic use of the material*
- *presence of new thematic findings for the theme.* [SEP]

Thematic knowledge refers to the general knowledge of the theme as shown in the choice of the items, their mutual relationship and the degree of appropriateness of the accompanying text; the correct thematic use of material is reflected by the degree of appropriateness to cover specific thematic details.

Thematic knowledge assumes the absence of thematic errors and avoids excuses for showing material, that is not directly connected with the theme or doubtful, or unnecessary borderline items.

Thematic knowledge is also demonstrated by the use of “surprising” material, that is thematically appropriate, even if not immediately seen from the material alone, but whose appropriateness was discovered by the exhibitor.

The level of thematic study and research is evaluated by taking into account the availability of previous studies of the theme, in order to assess how much the treatment took advantage of available thematic and philatelic literature, catalogues and documented research. This will then be compared with the personal research and study shown in the exhibit.

Basic requirements

- appropriate, concise and correct thematic text
- correct use of thematic material

Achievements

- thematic details in text and material
- presence of new thematic findings for the chosen theme
- “surprising” material (which does not belong to the subject, but thematically fits into the story of that page)

4.2.2 Philatelic Knowledge, and its related Personal Study and Research

Philatelic Knowledge, Personal Study and Research will be evaluated considering the

- *full compliance with the rules of postal philately*
- *presence of the widest possible range of postal-philatelic material and its balanced use*
- *appropriateness of postal documents*
- *appropriateness and correctness of philatelic text, when required*

- *presence of philatelic studies and related skilful use of important philatelic material.*

The full compliance with the rules of postal philately concerns, for instance, the presence of items that are unsuitable for collecting purposes because of their state (e.g. cut stamps or cut postal stationery, improper maximum cards).

Postal-philatelic items (e.g. stamps, postal stationery, proofs, sketches..) should be shown in their entirety. Overlapping is allowed when showing varieties of postal stationery, in a way that the detail with the variety itself is clearly visible. Windowing of cancellation and imprint on a postal stationery is allowed when the thematic text refers to the cancellation. Windowing or folding is allowed for very large items such as large telegrams, complete sheets of stamps etc.

The presence and balanced utilisation of all the different philatelic types of material should be obtained by presenting items of all periods and from the largest number of countries, within the possibilities of the chosen theme.

The suitability of the postal documents considers their philatelic appropriateness, as well as the selection of items of real philatelic significance rather than of extravagant pieces.

Very limited exceptions (at most one per frame on average) to this general rule are admitted, when the selected philatelic material significantly enhances the relation to the thematic text or is the only way to illustrate it. This refers to the inclusion of both borderline items or items of non-postal nature (e.g. commercially used old *repiquages*, revenue stamps, covers with addresses sent to personalities subject of the theme, private prints, marks, vignettes and other similar material, if on postally travelled cover or document). In such cases the items must be fully justified as exceptions, thus proving the philatelic knowledge of the exhibitor.

Personal philatelic study and research are demonstrated by the presence of:

- material which has not yet been researched for that theme, or where there has been very little research
- philatelic studies presenting a true, well documented, philatelic in depth analysis and which are not just an excuse for showing an accumulation of more pieces without any serious philatelic foundation.

Basic requirements

- Full compliance with the rules of postal philately
- Appropriateness of postal documents
- Appropriateness and correctness of the philatelic text, when needed
- Presence of good range of postal-philatelic material throughout the exhibit and on single pages

Achievements

- Presence of widest possible range of postal-philatelic material and its balanced use

- Presence of material which has not yet been researched for that theme, or where there has been very little research
- Presence of philatelic studies and skilful use of important philatelic material

4.3 Condition and Rarity

The criteria of "Condition and Rarity" require an evaluation of the quality of the displayed material considering the standard of the material that exists for the chosen subject, the rarity and the relative difficulty of acquisition of the selected material.

4.3.1 Rarity

The rarity is based on objective criteria such as recognised absolute scarcity and difficulty of acquisition.

It is essential that varieties, proofs, essays, are more rare than the issue itself, in order to increase the philatelic level. The same applies to blocks, strips, etc.

It is obvious that items which, despite being very rare, have no or insufficient relationship to the theme, should not be included in the evaluation of this criterion.

Judges will primarily be looking for:

- rarities of general significance in philately, if available for the theme
- rarities of specific significance for the chosen theme known to exist
- how easy it is to duplicate the exhibit

Judges will also be looking for:

- scarce and uncommon items, particularly from traditional philately, postal history and postal stationery

Basic requirements

- Normal and modern material plus unusual and scarce items

Achievements

- Presence of rare items

4.3.2 Condition

The condition is based on the usual overall criteria for evaluation in philately and is related to the degree of rarity of the items present in the exhibit.

All items should be in the best possible condition. The condition of items is evaluated as if they were stamps: No tears, no missing corners, no bends, no stains, no missing perforations (if present), etc.

- The condition of common material should be impeccable.
- Exhibitors are encouraged to show unique or very rare material that does not occur in fine condition, but are cautioned from including other items in a condition that may reduce the perceived overall condition of the exhibit.
- It is important to remember that the actual condition obtainable will vary according to the country and period.
- Commercially used items are to be preferred to philatelic produced ones.
- Cancellations should be as clear as possible with all essential wording complete and allow the stamp design, where thematically relevant, to be clearly visible.
- Booklets should be presented complete with stamps.
- If an item has been restored or manipulated, it must be described as such.

Basic requirements

- Normal and modern material in excellent quality, plus all unusual in good quality and rare material in average condition

Achievements

- Rarities in above average up to best quality

4.4 Presentation

The criterion of “Presentation” requires an evaluation of the:

- *clarity of the display*
- *clarity of the text^[SEP]*
- *the overall aesthetic balance of the exhibit.*

The method of presentation should show the material to the best effect and in a balanced way. The efforts of the exhibitor are demonstrated by the arrangement of the items and the text on appropriate exhibition pages in order to effectively communicate the story and to highlight the philatelic material in an attractive and aesthetic way.

The presentation of the exhibit is evaluated on:

- Overall aesthetic balance on the frames and the individual pages
- Good use of the page – with not too much white space on the pages
- The write-up is clear and concise, i.e. sufficient write-up – but not too much text
- Any photocopies/scans must be a minimum of 25% different in size from the original

- Careful and neat mounting

Other factors:

- No advantage or disadvantage shall apply as to whether the text is handwritten, typewritten or computer printed.
- Brightly coloured inks and coloured album pages should be avoided.
- Mounting of long covers at an angle should be avoided.

ARTICLE 5: JUDGING OF EXHIBITS

5.1. Thematic exhibits will be judged by the approved specialists in their respective field and in accordance with the section V, Art. 31 to 46, of the GREX (ref.: GREV, Art. 5.1).

The thematic jurors must complete an evaluation form in order to be guided towards a thorough and consistent judgement.

5.2. For thematic exhibits, the following relative terms are presented to lead the Jury to a balanced evaluation (ref.: GREV, Art. 5.3).

1. Treatment	35
Title and Plan	15
Development	15
Innovation	5
2. Knowledge, Personal Study and Research	30
Thematic	15
Philatelic	15
3. Condition and Rarity	30
Condition	10
Rarity	20
4. Presentation	5
Total	100

The presence of faked, forged or repaired items, which are not clearly marked as such, will cause the downgrading of the exhibit by the Jury, according to the report of the special Expert Team appointed at each exhibition.

Reprints must be presented as such. Weak or faded postmarks must not be redrawn on piece; instead a copy of the postmark should be redrawn and presented next to the original.

Collectors are therefore recommended to have any doubtful item expertised before selecting it for the exhibit and the original of the certificates should be included behind the sheet, in the same transparent protective cover. In case a photocopy is used, the same has to be certified by the Federation. Alternatively, the commissioner may bring the original certificate for use if needed. Irrelevant of how the certificate is made available, at the end of the philatelic text concerning the item certified should be put the abbreviation “e” in bold thus (e).

ARTICLE 6: CONCLUDING PROVISIONS

6.1 In the event of any discrepancies in the text arising from translation, the English text shall prevail.

6.2 These Guidelines were approved at the FIP Thematic Commission Meeting during the FIP Exhibition THAILAND 2018 in Bangkok, Saturday 1 December, 2018 at 11-13 pm and approved by the FIP Board in Buenos Aires 28 August, 2019, and ratified at the 76th FIP Congress on 9 August 2022.