

TOPICAL CLASS – EXPERIMENTAL RULES

The topical class is an Australian Philatelic Federation (APF) experimental class which may be included at Australian national philatelic exhibitions. The aim of this class is to give collectors an opportunity to exhibit a variety of philatelic items that illustrate a specific topic or subject

The subject of a topical exhibit can be almost anything, from birds, trains, bridges and famous people on stamps, to events such as Olympics or World Cup or the history of organisations such as the Red Cross. A topical exhibit is organised in a logical way using a classification that helps the reader understand the topic.

All items used in the exhibit should be philatelic and acceptable in any of the other exhibiting classes excluding Open, Picture Postcards and Cinderellas. (Exhibitors wishing to include non-philatelic material, picture postcards and cinderellas should consider entering the Open, Picture Postcard or Cinderella Classes.)

Stamps, postal stationery and covers can be included as well as postmarks, stamp booklets, meter material, revenues, commercial mail and first day covers with special cancels showing the subject. Complete stamp sets should not be shown together unless all stamps are relevant. Material should come from a wide time period and should include a variety of philatelic material. Traditional, postal history and postal stationery material should dominate.

All items should illustrate the specific topic or subject. For example, a topical exhibit of motor cars could be arranged by make, model and year. It would include philatelic material depicting cars, but it would not usually include items showing car manufacturers and designers, factories, road safety, roads or petroleum.

JUDGING OF TOPICAL EXHIBITS

1. Treatment (including Title, Plan and Development)		35
2. Knowledge, Personal Study and Research		30
Philatelic knowledge	15	
Subject Knowledge	15	
3. Condition and Rarity		30
Condition	10	
Rarity	20	
4. Presentation		5
Total		100

GUIDELINES

TREATMENT

Treatment is the way the topic is structured and developed throughout the pages of the exhibit. Instead of a story, the treatment of a topical exhibit is usually based on a classification or categorisation that helps the reader understand the topic. Some examples of classifications are:

- scientific or taxonomic classifications for classes of minerals, gems, plants or animals
- an organisational classification for topics such as Rotary or Red Cross
- event-related classification for topics such as Olympics
- form or style for topics such as bridges or cars

Title and Plan

The title page of the exhibit should show: the purpose, the scope, the plan and structure to guide the viewer through the exhibit. It should include the key literature and references for the topic. It should say how rare or important items are identified, for example, by using a border of different thickness or different coloured matting.

There needs to be a consistency between the title and the plan (classification). The plan should show coverage of the major aspects necessary to develop the topic. The sequence of the chapters and their subdivisions should be logical.

Development

The exhibitor should be able to show a balanced exhibit in the pages available. The exhibit pages and the material must reflect the topic stated in the title and should be developed in accordance with the plan. The text should be clear and concise. The classification, as outlined in the plan, should be developed on the exhibit pages. The main divisions and subdivisions should be balanced in relation to their importance, significance or relevance to the exhibit's subject.

The material selected and the philatelic and topical write up are part of treatment. A variety of different philatelic elements should be shown. Usage showing the correct use of philatelic material by way of commercial material should be included. The topic needs to be shown on each item throughout the exhibit.

KNOWLEDGE, PERSONAL STUDY AND RESEARCH SHOW YOUR PHILATELIC KNOWLEDGE

Philatelic Knowledge:

Philatelic knowledge is demonstrated by the items chosen and their descriptions. A broad representation of the topic with a wide range of material from all facets of philately is expected. Items that are not obvious to the judge, should be explained close to the item (rates, errors, types, etc). Philatelic knowledge is demonstrated by:

- the choice of philatelic items reflecting knowledge of the chosen area and the use of different types of philatelic items
- appropriateness and correctness of the philatelic text
- presence of philatelic studies and skillful use of important philatelic material
- Rarity statements such as "One of X recorded" should mention their source. Descriptions such as "Scarce" or "Very rare" should not be used.

Subject Knowledge:

The exhibitor should demonstrate a good knowledge of the topic with a balance of information on each page. The text is secondary and should not overpower philatelic material on each page. Subject Knowledge including Personal Study and Research is demonstrated by:

- a demonstrated understanding of the chosen topic
- appropriateness, conciseness and correctness of the text
- use of philatelic material that best represents the topic
- appropriate use of existing literature about the topic

CONDITION

All items should be in the best possible condition.

- rare material that is not in fine condition can be shown, but common items must be in perfect condition.
- cancellations should be clear and complete and should allow the stamp design, where relevant, to be clearly visible
- If an item has been restored or manipulated, it must be described as such

RARITY

Rarity is related to the relative scarcity and difficulty of acquisition of the material shown. Rarity is not the value as items can be inexpensive but difficult to obtain. Items that, despite being very rare, have little or no sufficient relationship to the topic, will be ignored by the judges. The rarity of the exhibit is evaluated on:

- the difficulty of obtaining the material shown
- the presence of rare items appropriate to the topic
- the difficulty in duplicating the exhibit

PRESENTATION

The presentation and the text should be simple and well balanced. The arrangement of the items and the text on exhibition pages should clearly communicate the topic and highlight the philatelic material in an attractive way.

The presentation of the exhibit is evaluated on:

- Good balance in the frames and the individual pages
- Good use of the page, with not too much white space
- The write-up is clear and concise
- Any photocopies/scans are a minimum of 25% different in size from the original
- Careful and neat mounting

The text can be 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.

Understanding Differences between Topical, Thematic and Open Exhibits

	Topical	Thematic	Open
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Treatment

Title page with scope, plan and references	Essential	Essential	Essential
Plan	Classification	Story	Story
Balance	Sub-classifications and elements	Story line & chapters	Story line & chapters -
Philatelic Material	Valid in another class, all material to depict the topic	Valid in another class, material depicts story text	Any Philatelic material is dominant.
Non-Philatelic Material	None	None	Any artefact and ephemera, picture postcards and borderline philatelic material such as illustrations on covers

Philatelic Knowledge	Item choice, philatelic descriptions, range of item types, countries and time periods	Item choice, philatelic descriptions, range of item types, countries and time periods	Item choice, philatelic and non-philatelic descriptions, range of material appropriate to elements used
Subject Knowledge	Topic knowledge, classification & element choice, topic text	Story knowledge, thematic text	Story, balance of philatelic and non-philatelic, story text

Condition	Best possible, damaged or altered items noted, legibility of cancels	Best possible, damaged or altered items noted, legibility of cancels	Best possible, damaged or altered items noted, legibility of cancels
Rarity	Appropriate to scope, clearly identified, quantified, difficult to duplicate	Appropriate to scope, clearly identified, quantified, difficult to duplicate	Appropriate to scope, clearly identified, quantified, difficult to duplicate
Presentation	Aesthetic appeal, write-up clear, concise & relevant, no overcrowding	Aesthetic appeal, write-up clear, concise & relevant, no overcrowding	Aesthetic appeal, write-up clear, concise & relevant, no overcrowding