



## Blocks Rock!

A 4-H Art and Architecture Event

Imagine *The Leaning Tower of Pisa* made entirely from toy building blocks. How about your county courthouse...a wedding cake...or your family dog?

Lego's<sup>®</sup> and other building blocks are a great way to learn about construction, engineering and architecture – and a great way to express your artistic interests.

### Blocks Rock! lets you:

- Show off your creativity.
- Share your design abilities.
- Use your skill as an architect, artist and craftsman.
- Plan, organize and carry through on a challenging project.

### What You Will Learn

- **Blocks Rock!** will help you learn the basics of good design.
- **Blocks Rock!** will help you learn to recognize and practice good art and construction techniques.
- **Blocks Rock!** will help you learn to explore your own personal design preferences, making decisions and choices.
- **Blocks Rock!** will help you learn and practice skills that will be useful in an array of careers.

### Who Can Participate

Any Alabama young person may participate in any 4-H competitive event. However, you must be a member of an Alabama 4-H Club. It's easy and quick to join – just call or e-mail your county Alabama Cooperative Extension System Office for information (for contact information, go to [www.aces.edu/counties](http://www.aces.edu/counties)).

If you and your friends are interested, you might start a 4-H Project Club. It could focus on Art and Architecture. Or it might be all about Construction, Making and Selling Crafts, Folk Art, or Computer-Aided Design. For information, see **Starting a 4-H Club** ([www.Alabama.com](http://www.Alabama.com)).

**Blocks Rock!** is a Junior, Intermediate and Senior 4-H Event. Your local Extension Office has information on local and regional 4-H arts events and other 4-H activities.

### Levels of Competition

Look at **General Event Policy for eligibility.**

[http://www.aces.edu/fourh/docs/programs/General\\_Contest\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.aces.edu/fourh/docs/programs/General_Contest_Policy.pdf)

Check the **Alabama 4-H Age and Eligibility Chart to determine the divisions of 4-H Membership.**

[http://www.aces.edu/fourh/docs/programs/Eligibility\\_Chart.pdf](http://www.aces.edu/fourh/docs/programs/Eligibility_Chart.pdf)

### A Celebration of Creativity!

The most creative, best-built Blocks Rock! art will be displayed in locations across the state. Do a great job, and you'll become famous!

### The Rules for Blocks Rock!

- Compete by yourself or on a two-person team. Youth on teams should be the same 4-H age level (e.g., Senior Level II).
- The entire **Blocks Rock!** art must be constructed from Lego's<sup>®</sup> or other toy building blocks.
- **Blocks Rock!** cannot be larger than 18 inches x 18 inches x 18 inches. This includes the board or plywood that is used to transport the entry to competition. HOWEVER, for stability of the entry, it is recommended that it not be wider than 12 inches x 15 inches or taller than 16 inches.
- Your art will be placed on a table and viewed from all sides.
- It must be transported on a firm, flat surface like foam board or plywood. Consider gluing or temporary attachment of tape to keep the structure secure.
- You must do all the construction yourself.

### Parents' and Volunteers' Guide

Like all 4-H projects, this activity is just for young people. It is expected that the young person create an original presentation. The role of adult helper is to support and encourage youth in their efforts, to ask and answer questions about the project, and to help youth learn specific techniques that they might use in their project.



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A & M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.

## Rockin' and Blockin'

### **Thinking About Design**

What does **design** mean? **Design** is how a piece of art or a product (anything from a toothpick to a skyscraper) is arranged and put together. Think about the hottest sports car or the coolest piece of technology. Good **design** makes it attractive to look at and easy to use. **Design** combines artistic awareness and knowledge of the materials (such as metal or plastic) used in putting the object together.

### **Where Do I Start?**

There are many different ways to decide what you want to build. If you have a clear idea in mind, you might just start building. If you like to use a computer, you might start playing with a design program like Sims or the free 3D graphics software, **Design Workshop Lite** ([www.artifice.com/dw\\_lite.html](http://www.artifice.com/dw_lite.html)).

Or you might try the approach we have written out here.

Let your imagination flow. Look at the world-class masterpieces that other artists have created. Alabama's own Eric Harshbarger ([www.ericsharshbarger.org/lego/portfolio.html](http://www.ericsharshbarger.org/lego/portfolio.html)) is a master of the craft.

Look at examples of great architecture ([www.greatbuildings.com](http://www.greatbuildings.com)). Visit some museums like the Museum of Modern Art ([www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)) or the Spanish Guggenheim ([www.guggenheim-bilbao.es/ingles/home.htm](http://www.guggenheim-bilbao.es/ingles/home.htm)). Go to your school or community library and start thumbing through art and architecture books.

Begin roughly sketching out your design ideas. Start thinking about how many blocks you need, what sizes are required, what colors you will use. What will you use as your base?

### **The Day of the Big Event**

Each county or region will schedule its own **Blocks Rock!** competition. It may be part of a County Round-Up or Regional/Area Congress. Some places may have the event as part of a 4-H arts festival or a community fair. Some may have workshops that help young people build their artistic skills and meet other artists and crafters.

On the day of the event, allow yourself **plenty** of time to set up. Be prepared to put loose blocks back together if they get damaged in transportation.

And be ready to **informally** answer some questions from the judges. These questions might be things like:

- "How did you create your design?"
- "Why did you use the colors you selected?"
- "What would you do differently?"
- "Could you use your design to make a real building or real sculpture?"

### **Advancing Through Competition**

Congratulations! If you make it to Regional/Area or State, you are among the best in Alabama! The judges recognize that you have come up with a really good design and made great choices. Your hard work and your skill created something wonderful.

**4-H Regional/Area Awards** will be determined by the planning committee for that event. Notice will be sent to each county involved.

### **State Competition and Awards**

Each county may register one Senior Level I and one Senior Level II individual in each event that is offered.

On the state level, ribbons will be awarded to 50% of the participants in a contest using ordinal rankings up to a tenth place ranking. **Example:** If there are 10 participants, first place will receive the Alabama State Trophy and a first place ribbon; placing ribbons will be awarded for the next four ranked participants for placing of second through fifth. The other five participants will receive honorable mention ribbons.

### **Disqualification in Blocks Rock!**

- >Larger than the size dimensions
- >Not using "connectors" for the design

### **Identification of Entry**

Name(s), county and level of participation should be displayed with each entry. 4-H Project Exhibit cards are available, but not required

### **Team Block-Hedz**

**Team Block-Hedz** uses the same rules and guidelines as individual competition. Team constructions are judged against individual constructions and are part of the same event.

However, the design and construction are undertaken by teams of 2 young people within the same 4-H age level (for example, Senior Level II).

It can be fun and educational to work with others on a challenging project. Each team member may have special skills or better ideas.

Besides the other great stuff you learn through **Team Block-Hedz**, **Team Block-Hedz** helps teach teamwork, communications, leadership, and cooperation.

Each team member should be fully involved in the process, from start to finish, and should be fully prepared to answer any questions about how the design was developed and the piece constructed.

### **Judging Guidelines**

The selection of the judges is important to the success of the event. The ideal judge knows about art and design and can easily chat with young people. The selection of an architect, art teacher, and working artist or crafter provides a perfect judging panel.

On the day of the event, each individual or team enters the judging area in a designated order. The facilitator will introduce the participant to the judges. The judges will talk informally with the participants about the design and construction techniques. Judges are encouraged to positively offer their comments on the originality of the design, what was most effective in the construction, and suggestions for improvement.

### **Career Connections**

Skills that are developed through this project have direct connections to a number of exciting and rewarding careers. These include: Architecture, Construction, Fine Art, Art Therapy, Advertising, Fashion Design, Theatre Design, Craft, Graphic

Design, Illustration, Teaching, Industrial Design, Interior Design, and Museum Display.

Further career-related skills are developed in the Above and Beyond section and through **Team Block-Hedz**. These include planning, leadership, and organization.

### **Above and Beyond**

All 4-H projects can be taken "above and beyond" just being a short-term activity. Awards and recognition throughout Alabama 4-H are not based on how well you do in competitive events; they are based on your all-round community service, leadership, and project work.

Here are some ideas for taking your interest in Art and Architecture to a level where you can both grow as a person and have an impact on the lives of others:

- Hold a different kind of competition: divide your club, your youth group, or your friends into teams and provide each team with a bucket of blocks. Give them a set amount of time. See whose design is best.
- Organize a community show of **4-H Blocks Rock!** and other art projects.
- Explore making sculpture or small buildings with other media such as wire, clay or folded note cards.
- Create a web site with photos of the **Blocks Rock!** art.
- Talk with a builder or architect about the training that is required to build real buildings.
- Teach younger kids to make **Blocks Rock!** art.
- Make a video about your project or use it in an animated story.
- Take photographs of your project.
- Create a 3-D model of your **Blocks Rock!** art using CAD (Computer Aided Design) software.
- Invite an architect or designer to provide a workshop.

August, 2009

**Blocks Rock! Score Sheet**

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Level: \_\_\_ **Junior** (Ages 9-13) \_\_\_ **Senior I** (Ages 14-15) \_\_\_ **Senior II** (Ages 16-18)

Please remember that the sole purpose of this event is to provide young people with an opportunity for self-expression and to learn more about design. Competition and judging should emphasize creativity and the development of knowledge and skill.

CATEGORY	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Points Received	Comments
<b>Quality of Construction 30 Points</b>  The project shows considerable attention to construction. It is solidly crafted and well put together.					
<b>Design – 30 points</b>  Project is appropriate size and interesting shape and is arranged well. Project is attractive and well proportioned.					
<b>Creativity – 40 points</b>  Blocks used in the project reflect an exceptional degree of creativity in their arrangement and display.					
<b>Total Score – 100 pts</b>					

- Disqualifications:** Check the appropriate box.
- Larger than the size dimension of 18" x 18" x 18", including the board/structure used to transport.
  - Not using "connectors" for the design.