



UNIVERSITY OF
ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY

Presentation and Material Guidelines

A Guide to Preparing High-Quality Calligraphy Submissions

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Academic Documents

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Introduction

The presentation of Arabic calligraphy is as significant as the calligraphy itself. High-quality materials and thoughtful presentation not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of your work but also demonstrate respect for the art form. This guide provides comprehensive instructions on selecting materials, preparing your workspace, and ensuring professional presentation for competitions, exhibitions, and evaluations.

Purpose:

To help calligraphers and students present their work in a professional and polished manner while using the appropriate materials to enhance the quality and authenticity of Arabic calligraphy.

Materials Selection

1. Paper

Choosing the right paper is critical for ink absorption, stroke clarity, and overall visual appeal.

- **Traditional Handmade Paper:**
Ideal for authentic compositions. Treated surfaces help maintain ink consistency.
- **Hot-Pressed Watercolor Paper:**
Smooth and durable, suitable for crisp lines and sharp edges.
- **Bristol Board:**
Perfect for intricate scripts, providing a smooth and resilient surface.
- **Avoid:**
Low-quality paper that may absorb ink unevenly or tear easily.

Preparation Tips:

- Treat the paper with *ahaar* (starch coating) for ink flow control.
- Ensure the paper is cut evenly, with no frayed edges.

2. Pens (Qalam)

The choice of pen affects stroke precision and style execution.

- **Reed Pens:**
Best for traditional scripts like Thuluth and Naskh due to their natural angles.
- **Bamboo Pens:**
Ideal for finer scripts like Ruqaa and Naskh.
- **Metal Nib Pens:**
Suitable for modern adaptations or precise details.
- **Brush Pens:**
Used for experimental or large-scale calligraphy.

Preparation Tips:

- Sharpen reed or bamboo pens to the required width and angle.
- Ensure the pen nib is smooth to prevent ink blotting.

3. Ink

High-quality ink ensures vibrant, consistent, and durable strokes.

- **Traditional Inks:**
Hand-mixed inks made from soot and gum Arabic offer depth and smooth flow.
- **Modern Calligraphy Inks:**
pre-mixed inks available in a range of colors.
- **Waterproof Inks:**
Ideal for outdoor displays or works requiring longevity.
- **Avoid:**
Low-quality or excessively diluted inks that may fade or bleed.

Preparation Tips:

- Strain handmade ink to remove impurities.
- Test the ink flow on a sample sheet before starting.

4. Workspace Setup

An organized and comfortable workspace enhances focus and precision.

- **Desk and Chair:**
Use an angled desk to maintain posture and ensure proper pen angles.
- **Lighting:**
Ensure sufficient, even lighting to avoid shadows on your work.
- **Tools at Hand:**
Keep pens, ink, rulers, and erasers within easy reach.
- **Avoid:**
Cluttered or unstable workspaces that hinder movement.

Presentation Guidelines

1. Layout and Composition

Your layout should showcase the script in a balanced and aesthetically pleasing manner.

- **Margins:**
Leave consistent margins around the text for framing and balance.
- **Spacing:**
Maintain even spacing between letters, words, and lines.
- **Alignment:**
Ensure text alignment follows the traditional style of the script.
- **Borders:**
Decorative borders can enhance the composition but should not overshadow the text.

2. Mounting and Framing

Proper mounting and framing protect your work and add a professional touch.

- **Mounting Options:**
 - Foam Board: Lightweight and durable for competitions.
 - Canvas: Ideal for exhibitions or displays.
- **Framing Materials:**
Use non-reflective glass or acrylic to prevent glare.
- **Backing:**
Acid-free backing materials ensure long-term preservation.

3. Finishing Touches

Final details can elevate your work from good to exceptional.

- **Signature:**
Include a discrete signature that does not distract from the composition.
- **Date and Labeling:**
Add the date of completion and a brief description, if required.
- **Cleaning:**
Remove any pencil guidelines or smudges carefully.

Submission Standards for Competitions and Evaluations

1. Size Requirements

Ensure your submission meets the size specifications outlined in the competition rules. Common sizes include:

- **Small Works:** A4 (21 x 29.7 cm)
- **Medium Works:** A3 (29.7 x 42 cm)
- **Large Works:** Custom sizes for exhibitions.

2. Digital Submissions

For competitions accepting digital entries:

- **High-Resolution Scans:** Minimum 300 dpi.
- **File Format:** PDF, PNG, or JPEG.
- **File Size:** Ensure the file is not compressed to preserve quality.

3. Packaging for Physical Submissions

- **Protection:** Use acid-free paper or tissue to cover the artwork.
- **Sturdy Packaging:** Ensure the work is not bent or damaged during transport.
- **Labeling:** Clearly label the package with your name, competition details, and contact information.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. **Inconsistent Materials:** Mixing poor-quality materials with high-quality ones can detract from the final piece.
2. **Smudges and Ink Blots:** Always test your ink flow and clean your workspace to avoid smudges.
3. **Improper Alignment:** Ensure your text aligns with the intended baseline or curve.
4. **Over-Decoration:** Borders or embellishments should complement, not overpower, the calligraphy.

Tips for Excellence

- **Plan Ahead:** Sketch your layout and test your materials before starting.
- **Practice Precision:** Work slowly to maintain consistency in strokes and spacing.
- **Seek Feedback:** Share your work with mentors or peers for constructive critique.
- **Focus on Cleanliness:** Regularly clean your pen nib and hands to avoid smudges.

Conclusion

The presentation and materials used in Arabic calligraphy are as essential as the script itself. By following these guidelines, you can ensure that your work reflects professionalism, artistry, and respect for the traditions of Arabic calligraphy.

Contact Us

For inquiries or further guidance, contact:

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