

Presentation and Evaluation

Your teacher may require that you give an oral presentation of your project for your class. Make it short but complete. Presenting in front of your classmates may be the hardest part of the project. You want to do your best, so prepare and practice, practice, practice. If possible, tape your practice presentation on a tape recorder or have someone videotape you. Review the tape and/or video and evaluate yourself. Review your notes and practice again.

Practicing an oral presentation will also be helpful for the science fair itself. The judges give points for how clearly you are able to discuss the project and explain its purpose, procedure, results, and conclusion. The display should be organized so that it explains everything, but your ability to discuss your project and answer the questions of the judges convinces them that you did the work and understand what you have done. Practice a speech in front of friends, and invite them to ask questions. If you do not know the answer to a question, never guess or make up an answer or just say, "I don't know." Instead, say that you did not discover that answer during your research, and then offer other information that you found of interest about the project. Be proud of the project and approach the judges with enthusiasm about your work.

You can decide on how best to dress for a class presentation, but for the local fair, it is wise to make a special effort to look nice. You are representing your work. In effect, you are acting as a salesperson for your project, and you want to present the very best image possible. Your appearance shows how much personal pride you have in yourself, and that is

the first step in introducing your product, your science project.

JUDGING INFORMATION

Most fairs have similar point systems for judging a science fair project, but you may be better prepared by understanding that judges generally start by thinking that each student's project is average. Then, he or she adds or subtracts points from that. A student should receive more points for accomplishing the following:

1. Project Objectives

- Presenting original ideas
- Stating the problem clearly
- Defining the variables and using controls
- Relating background reading to the problem

2. Project Skills

- Being knowledgeable about equipment used
- Performing the experiments with little or no assistance except as required for safety
- Demonstrating the skills required to do all the work necessary to obtain the data reported

3. Data Collection

- Using a journal to collect data and research
- Repeating the experiment to verify the results
- Spending an appropriate amount of time to complete the project

4. Data Interpretation

- Using tables, graphs, and illustrations in interpreting data
- Using research to interpret data collected
- Collecting enough data to make a conclusion
- Using only data collected to make a conclusion

5. Project Presentation (Written Materials/Interview/Display)

- Having a complete and comprehensive report
- Answering questions accurately
- Using the display during oral presentation
- Justifying conclusions on the basis of experimental data
- Summarizing what was learned
- Presenting a display that shows creative ability and originality
- Presenting an attractive and interesting display

DO'S AND DON'TS AT THE FAIR

Do bring activities, such as puzzles to work on or a book to read, to keep yourself occupied at your booth. There may be a lengthy wait before the first judge arrives, and even between judges.

Do become acquainted with your neighboring presenters. Be friendly and courteous.

Do ask neighboring presenters about their projects, and tell them about yours if they express interest. These conversations pass time and help relieve nervous tension that can build when one is waiting to be evaluated. You may also discover techniques for research that you can use for next year's project.

Do have fun.

Don't laugh or talk loud. This may affect the person nearby who is being judged.

Don't forget that you are an ambassador for your school. This means that your attitude and behavior influence how people at the fair think about you and the students at your school.