When 4-H members make and take their projects to the fair, they are practicing skills …

- problem solving
- decision making
- project management
- communications
- public speaking

Help members prepare for individual conference or face-to-face judging through role play.

Get Acquainted – The judge will usually invite the member to sit and then will introduce him/herself. H/she will ask some basic get-acquainted questions: • What is your name? • What grade are you in school? • What got you interested in this project?
Exhibitors should make eye contact with the judge and answer questions as clearly as possible, with enthusiasm. Coach them to hold their heads up and avoid answering with a nod or a shake of the head. Encourage them to SMILE.

Share – The exhibitor shares information about the exhibits h/she’s brought for judging. • Tell me about this exhibit. • Where did you make this exhibit? • How did you . . . ? • When did you . . . ? • What type of tools or equipment did you use?
If the member has more than one exhibit item, the judge may ask which is his/her favorite item, and why. If there is only one item, the judge may ask the member his/her favorite part of preparing the exhibit or completing the project, and why.

Process – The member analyzes what h/she did and reflects on what’s important. Examples of questions a judge may ask: • How much did your exhibit cost? • What problems did you have? • What worked and didn’t work? • What was the most difficult part?
• Why is it important to . . . ? • Where did you find the information on . . . ? • Where did you get the idea for . . . ? • Do you have someone at home or a project leader or helper in your club that gives you advice on your project? Have you had any project meetings or field trips? • If you could make this exhibit again, how would you change it?

Generalize – The exhibitor will generalize what h/she has learned and connect the learning to other situations. The judge may talk about the best things h/she sees in the exhibits and some ways to improve the things that need work. Encourage the member to really listen as the judge gives reasons for his/her placings. • Where/how did you learn to make this kind of exhibit? • What are some new things you learned by making these exhibits? • What was the most important thing that you learned? • I wasn’t quite sure about . . . Could you explain . . . ? • That’s coming along nicely. What if you tried this? What would happen?

Apply – The exhibitor can reflect on what h/she learned and think about how to apply it in the future. • What are some new things you could learn in this project in the future? What else would you like to learn? • What are you planning to make or exhibit next in this project? • How might you use your new exhibit or project skills to help your 4-H club? Your family? Your school? Your community? • How could you help someone else learn your project skills? • What exhibits will you enter in next year’s fair?
Wrap up – Usually, the judge will end on a positive note. A smile, a call for final questions, a thank you and a word of encouragement to enter again next year usually work. This helps to leave the exhibitor feeling good about the judging experience.

Source: https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/dane4hyouth/files/2012/12/Preparing-for-Exhibit.pdf (Find additional questions in the document.)

Things to keep in mind…about Judges and the Judging Process

What if you were the judge? What rating would you give your project if you were judging it? Be honest!

If you have done your best work on your project, it’s disappointing not to get the rating you were expecting. Remember – the judge’s opinion is simply one person’s opinion at one point in time. A different judge may have given you a different placing. Even if you don’t agree with the judge, it’s worth paying attention to what h/she has to say about your project. You could get some great ideas for how to do even better next time. Here are some tips about feedback:

- Pay attention to what the judge liked instead of getting upset about what he or she didn’t like. Even if there were some negative comments, there were probably just as many positive ones!
- Don’t be nervous about face-to-face judging. Relax so you can be your friendly, natural self when the judge meets with you. And if you don’t understand something the judge says, be sure to ask questions.
- Think about how you can use the judge’s feedback. What can you do differently if you intend to keep working on this kind of project? What will you want to do the same way?

Source: https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/shawano4h/fair-information/shawano-county-fair-judging/

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