



Wyoming 4-H Judge's Certification Handbook



Wyoming 4-H Ethics Statement

I will be worthy of trust, honor, and confidence.

I will respect all people, including myself.

I will be responsible, accountable, and self-disciplined in the pursuit of excellence.

I will be just, fair, and open.

I will be caring in my relationships with others.

I am aware that my actions and decisions affect others, and will be a contributing and law-abiding citizen.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Glen Whipple, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming 82071.

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What is 4-H?

4-H is an informal, practical, learn-by-doing educational program for youth. The purpose of 4-H is to help youth acquire knowledge, develop life skills, and form attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive members of society.

A 4-H member accomplishes these things over time by focusing on project areas of interest. Judges should primarily focus on the growth of the individual 4-H member more so than on the products made for the project. Through these learning experiences, youth will have the opportunity for:

Belonging



A sense of "fellowship" is important in the positive development of young people. They need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in their group. Learning environments should be both physically and emotionally safe. The relationships young people have

with caring adults is also important to the positive development of youth. Judges should always remember that the development of our young people is always the first consideration in 4-H. Projects are only a means to an end, not an end in themselves.



Independence



Decision-making, resiliency, goal setting, and critical thinking are only a few of the life skills that 4-H members have the opportunity to practice through their project work. Youth need to know that they are able to influence people and events through their decisions and actions. Youth need to learn that decisions they make need to be considered carefully and acted upon only after they have considered all options and implications of their decision. Judges are instrumental in asking the correct questions to guide youth through decision-making while still allowing the youth opportunities for self-discovery.

Generosity



Youth will have the opportunity to practice service to others, and learn that their lives have meaning and purpose. Connecting with their communities through service projects allows youth the chance to give back to their community while seeing that their efforts to help others is important and valuable. Judges are not only beneficial in helping youth to choose meaningful service projects, but they should also help youth reflect on the service project and apply it to the youth's own life.

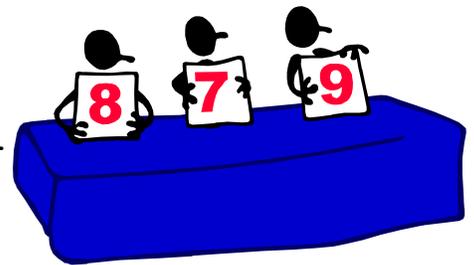
Mastery

Self-confidence is developed when youth feel and believe they are capable of being successful. It is up to judges to provide a safe environment in which youth can openly and comfortably discuss mistakes, areas in which to improve, and any other feedback related to their projects. Providing recognition for meeting personal goals, as well as encouragement to youth are extremely important aspects of mastery. Again, the project itself is a hands-on activity in which judges can provide constructive feedback in a positive manner, leaving the youth encouraged to continue to master the skills they have acquired. We are less interested in the project itself, and more interested in the positive development of the youth.

Judges should remember that the primary goal in 4-H is *always* youth development.

Judging Youth Projects

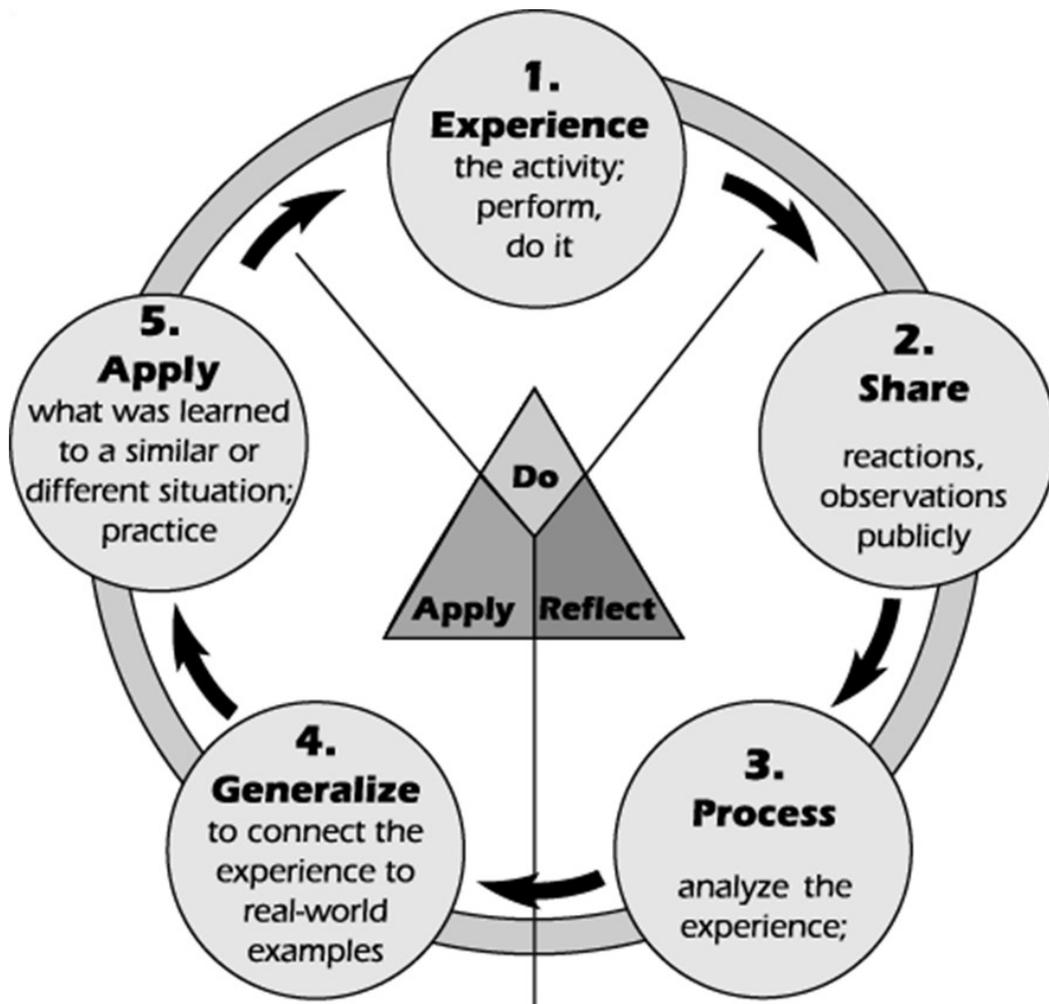
Projects are the useful tasks that challenge youth and the process through which growth occurs. Good project work provides members with knowledge and skills contributing to self-esteem, self-respect, and self-confidence. Members need opportunities and incentive to improve their work. Helping a member evaluate their project work provides incentive and points the way to personal growth. Judges should remember that the primary goal in 4-H is always youth development.



Experiential Learning

An interactive, hands-on learning environment in which youth are given the freedom to explore and discover is the ideal environment in 4-H. It is the responsibility of the judges to guide youth through the learning process; not by giving answers, but by asking questions. Experiential learning takes place when youth are involved in a project or activity and then given the opportunity to look back at their experiences critically, determine what was useful or important to remember, and then use this information in real life situations. This process encourages thinking, working harder and ultimately learning more thoroughly than just showing or telling.

Experiential Learning Model



Do—Youth will do the activity prior to arriving at the fair with their project.

Reflect—During interview judging, youth will answer questions that will help them to reflect on their project. Questions such as “What did you do?”, “What did you learn?”, and “What did you learn about yourself?” are all appropriate to help youth reflect on their experience.

Apply—Judges will also help youth apply what they learned to something bigger than their project. Questions such as “What similar experiences have you had throughout this project?”, “Where have you faced similar challenges in your life?”, and “Where might this situation occur in the future?” are all appropriate questions to help youth apply what they have learned.

4-H recognizes the experiential learning model as an essential part of positive youth development.

See *Questions for Guiding Experiential Learning* field guide for additional questions to ask in each stage of experiential learning. This field guide may be purchased by visiting <http://shop.extension.umn.edu/PublicationDetail.aspx?ID=1741>

Learning Pyramid

People will retain only 5% of what they hear in a lecture. By giving a demonstration people will retain 30% of what they learned. By teaching someone else, people retain 90% of what they learned. Judges can help youth retain more information by working toward the top of the pyramid.



Based on National Training Laboratories, Bethel, Maine.

Understanding Ages & Stages of Youth

Judges that have an understanding of the developmental needs of youth at various ages will be best prepared to evaluate their work.

	Juniors Age 8-10	Intermediates Age 11-13	Seniors Age 14-18
Interest Span	Varied and many times quite short	Lengthens with experience	Almost adult if self-motivated
Motor Skills	High interest and poor coordination	Interested in skills for specific use—may tackle difficult jobs	Highly skilled
Mental Growth	Peak of interest and limited experience	Increased depth and scope	Continued increase related to experience—can see relationships
Ability to Plan	Limited ability because of limited experience and judgment	Can plan better than execute	Have need and ability to plan
Relation to Age Mates	Boys to boys and girls to girls	Interested in the opposite sex; interest in group acceptance	High interest in groups, but also in couples
Relation to Adults	Accept leadership easily	Need and want guidance but reject domination	Want leadership on adult level

Evaluating Exhibits



Self-directed goals are the center of the learning experience for 4-H members. The starting point for any exhibit should be the goals that the youth has set. By sharing the goal with the judge, the 4-Her communicates the standard the judge will be evaluating against. These goals should be emphasized throughout the judging process. Youth will feel good about this experience and will benefit by gaining knowledge about the exhibit and him/herself, be empowered to do self-evaluation and set new goals, and receive recognition for their efforts in meeting their goals.

Judging Criteria

There are three major criteria to consider when evaluating youth and projects:

1. Learning involved

Decision making process used, how problems were solved, new skills developed, how gathered information was used, etc.

2. Workmanship and techniques

A. *If the exhibit is an actual product* - construction suitable for intended use, directions/guidelines followed appropriately, suitability of materials, an appropriate finish, etc.

B. *If the exhibit is sharing an idea* - accurate information, complete, organized, original, creative, practical, clearly communicated, etc.

Remember, we are not judging goals, but progress toward goals.

3. General appearance and design

Neat, attractive, application of design elements and art principles where suitable

Judging Standards

The ultimate goal is to get 4-Hers to think about and set standards based on their needs.

Youth are active participants in choosing standards for their projects through goal setting. Rather than use the same set of standards for each project presented, judges use standards that are appropriate

for each individual based on each member's goals. This emphasizes the development and growth of the youth rather than the exhibit or product. Judges should not completely forgo all standards when evaluating, but should begin with the youth's goals in mind. The member should be an active participant in this process. The ultimate goal is to get 4-Hers to think about and set standards based on their needs.

When judging state fair exhibits, the youth will not be available for an interview. Every exhibit should have a skills summary card attached to which will answer basic questions regarding the project. Because of this, it is especially important to pay attention to the interview process at the county level.

Types of Judging

Interview: The judge and the exhibitor are alone for a one-to-one discussion of the exhibit. Used extensively in 4-H to complete the experiential learning process.

Open: A judge will evaluate exhibits openly before a group. The exhibitor may or may not be present. More than one person benefits from the discussion in this instance.

Closed: This is when the building is closed and only officials are allowed in the area until the judging process is complete.

Provide Feedback



The judge's feedback will indicate how closely the exhibit comes to the appropriate standards. Remember to consider the age and experience of the youth when judging. Older members would be expected to meet more of the standards than younger members with less experience. If projects will be exhibited at a higher level, youth should have the opportunity to make improvements prior to the exhibition as part of the learning experience.

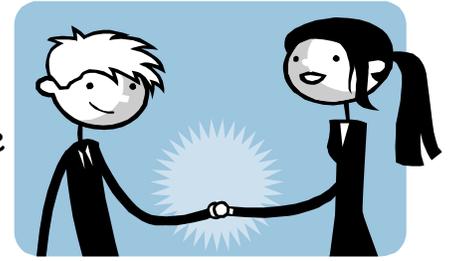
Interview Judging

Interview judging not only introduces youth to the interview process, but more importantly it is the judge's opportunity to complete the experiential learning process described previously. During the interview process it is recommended that 60% of the judges' final decision be based on the interview, with the remaining 40% based on the project itself. In instances when the youth is not available for an interview it is recommended that judges consider the youth's goals statement card. Here are several other items for the judge to consider when preparing for interview judging.

How did you get the idea for your project and what do you like best about it?
What tools did you use and what skill(s) did you use or learn in making your project?

1. Build Rapport

Set a positive atmosphere by using the youth's first name, maintain eye contact, and if possible sit on the same side of the table. Try to be a friend rather than an authority figure.



2. Gather Information

Ask open ended questions such as "What were your goals?", "How did you go about working toward your goals?", and "What were the most important things you learned?". Listen carefully, and develop questions based on the information the youth gives. Ask questions based on the age and experience level of each individual.

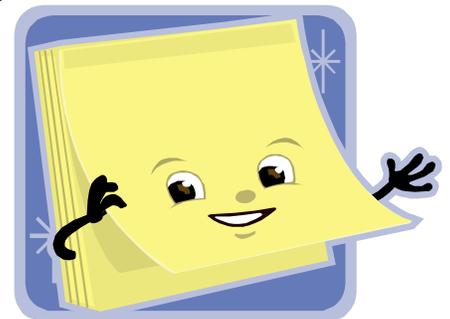
3. Encourage Self-evaluation and Reflection



This is a learned skill, and some youth will need more guidance than others. Youth will begin to measure their own progress and take on more responsibility for their own learning. Allow the youth to talk about the criteria and their own goals. Ask what they learned about themselves as well as the project.

4. Provide Specific Feedback

Provide supportive and corrective feedback. Supportive feedback will reinforce those things that are done well. These are things the member should continue to do. Corrective feedback are those things in which a change in behavior is appropriate. The purpose of all feedback should be to assist youth in maintaining or enhancing their current skills. Be attentive. Use the sandwich method when delivering feedback. Start with positives, then move into areas that can be improved, and end with more positive aspects and lots of encouragement. Be specific. Give rationales as to your observations. Be open to ideas from youth, and offer constructive alternatives as needed. Thank the member and supply written feedback.



5. Look to the future



Provide the youth opportunity to set some new goals for the future, that may or may not be used in 4-H work. Keep in mind the age of each exhibitor. Older members will be more capable of setting long-term goals than younger members.

Tips for Parent Interaction

All fairs are organized differently, and so circumstances around interview judging are different. Here are a few tips to keep in mind during the interview judging process related to leaders and parents.

- This is the youth's time to show the judge what has been done throughout the year. When possible, ask the youth to attend the interview without a parent or leader.
- In some areas parents and leaders are welcome to attend the interview. In order to ensure that this time belongs to the youth, try putting extra chairs well away from the table, allowing room for only the judge and the youth at the chairs close to the table.
- Set the stage right away by explaining that this time is for the youth and the judge. Adults are expected to refrain from being involved until after the interview.
- Tell adults that there will be time for any additional questions they may have at the end of the interview. Until that time they should refrain from comments, questions, etc.
- In an instance where an adult still attempts to talk over the youth, it may be necessary to involve either the superintendant or Extension Educator.

Recognizing the 4-H Member

Recognition is an acknowledgement and affirmation of the personal growth in an individual. It can be within the individual or pro-

The purpose of recognition in 4-H is to help youth become self-directed learners.

vided by others. Recognition in 4-H is the encouragement and support for learning. It comes as a result of participation in educational experiences. There are several purposes for recognition in the 4-H program.

- Recognition can be motivator for some young people to excel and take risks.
- Recognition can foster self-appraisal skills, providing a strong foundation for each young person to engage in self-reflection and self-praise without the need for external rewards.
- Recognition can encourage and support the efforts of young people as they engage in individualized learning, peer competition or cooperation.
- Recognition, used in all its forms, can provide balance to the recognition young people receive as they move through our educational programs to increasingly difficult challenges.

It is the responsibility of the judge to recognize the efforts of the youth based on the goals the youth has set. Use supportive feedback to recognize the youth's achievements. Be supportive and friendly when giving corrective feedback so the youth will feel encouraged to continue in the project.

Ribbon Systems

The interview itself is as important, if not more so, than the project itself. It is recommended that 60% of the emphasis be placed on the interview with the remaining 40% placed on the project itself. In instances when an interview is not possible, refer to the goals statements cards to obtain information related to the learning process of the youth.

Danish: An unlimited number of ribbon colors can be awarded. Ribbons are given based on youth's achievement of self-directed goals as well as quality measured against product standards. Each product stands alone, and is not judged against another product.

Purple Ribbon—The exhibit exceeds goals, standards, requirements. Outstanding interview with youth answering questions exceeding expectations.

Blue State Ribbon—Exhibit meets or exceeds goals, standards, requirements. Outstanding interview with youth answering questions exceeding expectations. These exhibits may have one or two minor things that need to be improved prior to state fair.



Blue Ribbon—meets or exceeds goals, standards, requirements. Overall work is high quality. Interview is good, with the majority of questions answered satisfactorily.

Red Ribbon—meets minimum goals, standards, requirements. Overall work is average quality. Average interview with some questions unanswered.

White Ribbon—Serious or considerable deficiencies in meeting goals, standards, requirements. Poor interview with youth answering very few questions.

American: A rank-order system in which exhibits are placed 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. Though this system uses product standards, it is based primarily on competition among exhibitors, and each product is judged against the others.

Participation: This system recognizes an exhibitor's participation in a category, usually without regard to the quality of the exhibit or competition among exhibitors.

Each county fair will have its own ribbon system as well as specialty awards. Judges are encouraged to have a conversation with the superintendent or Extension Educator regarding the ribbon system that will be used prior to judging, as well as any specialty awards that should be given.

"We learn more from welcoming criticism than rendering judgment."

~Jiri Jelinek

Tips for Judges

Be Professional

- Be well groomed, and maintain a good appearance.
- In order to concentrate on the job, be rested and alert.
- Be prompt, and report to the superintendent upon arrival.
- Do not be a clock watcher. Be willing to judge later than originally expected as unexpected delays do happen.
- Attitude is extremely important. Do not let scheduling problems or delays affect your attitude.
- Have a sense of humor, but remember that this is a serious event for the exhibitor.
- Be tactful and mindful of the exhibitors feelings.
- The educational value for the member always comes first. Offer constructive criticism.
- Avoid showing personal likes or dislikes.
- Make decisions quickly and firmly.
- Do not carry tales from one exhibition to another.
- Do not ask youth what ribbon they think they deserve—this is your decision as a judge.
- See attached sheet on judging State Fair exhibits



Be Informed

- Be familiar with requirements for the projects you will be judging.
- Understand the capabilities of the age group being judged.
- Keep up-to-date on changes that have been made in project requirements.
- Give reasons for the decisions made, not opinions. A clear explanation and factual statements are expected.

- Be consistent!
- Personalize remarks about the exhibit. Members will compare what the judge told them, so don't say the same things to all members.
- Don't be afraid to consult a superintendent to clarify your understanding of project requirements.
- Know if there are local standards that must be considered in evaluating exhibits.
- Give the exhibitor the benefit of the doubt.
- Be able to take constructive criticism as well as provide it.
- Leave a list of suggestions for improvement for the judging process with the superintendent.
- Make a summary of what you observed in exhibits during the judging process, such as problem areas that you repeatedly observed. This information can then be passed on to leaders and Educators who work in the project areas.

Questions to Ask Before Being Hired

- Will I be getting a written contract?
- What compensation and accommodations are offered as part of being hired for your fair? Who makes the arrangement for the hotel?
- Will meals be provided?
- Where will the judging take place? Upon arriving, where exactly should I check in?
- What is the name of the person I should be checking in with once I arrive?
- Where do I hand in the required documentation needed for travel, motel, etc?
- What will I be responsible for judging? Will I be receiving a copy of the fair book/classes I will be judging?
- Does your fair use the Danish or American System of awards, and are there any special awards/premiums I need to be ready to identify? Which ribbons are eligible for entry at State Fair?
- Do I need to bring anything or will everything be provided? (i.e. utensils for foods judging)



- What are your expectations of me following the judging? (i.e. am I to help display the exhibits, etc.)
- Will there be someone there to help as a clerk, or will I be my own clerk?
- Is there a judges and clerks training prior to the judging?

Sample Interview Questions

It is the responsibility of the judge to establish the positive atmosphere essential to successful interview judging. Youth will be bringing projects that they have spent a lot of time on, and it is up to the judge to make this a positive experience for the youth. Youth do expect to be critiqued, and expect to get some feedback as to how they can improve, but the manner in which the critique takes place can mean the difference between a positive and negative experience.

"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."

~Franklin D. Roosevelt

Remember the "sandwich" technique. Begin by recognizing the things that the youth has done well. Ask what they feel they have done well or their favorite part of the project. Then ask the youth to identify areas they feel they could improve. Discuss techniques or ideas that could be used in the future that will help the youth improve. Finally, end with positive comments, encouraging comments. Ask the youth what projects they are considering in the future. By "sandwiching" the negative comments between two sets of positive comments youth will leave the interview feeling that they have done a good job, learned a few things, and will be excited to try out what they learned next year.

Here is a list of possible interview questions that could be asked:

1. Why did you take this project?
2. What do you think you might learn from taking this project?
3. How much experience did you have before you started this project?
4. What did you like the most about the project?
5. What did you like least about the project?

6. What did you do for the first time in this project?
7. Did anyone help you decide what your project would be?
8. Did anyone help you with your project?
9. What new things did you learn?
10. How will you use what you learned?
11. What would you like to learn next year?
12. If you were to do this project again, would you do anything differently?
13. How do you feel your project could be improved?
14. Did your project turn out as you planned? If not, how did it differ?
15. How do you plan to use what you made?
16. What was the most difficult part of the exhibit?
17. Do you plan to take the project again?
18. How much time did the exhibit take?
19. What other things did you do in this project?

Notes

References

http://www.colorado4h.org/events_opportunities/state_fair/score_sheets/index.shtml

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The 4-H Youth Developmental Ideals, National 4-H Headquarters, USDA—Building Leaders of Tomorrow.

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Implementing 4-H Project Experiences: Preparing for Exhibit, University of Wisconsin Extension. 2007.

Questions for Guiding Experiential Learning, University of Minnesota Extension Service. 2005.

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CD Contents

Information related to these specific projects can be found on the CD:

- Arts & Crafts
- Cake Decorating
- Clothing (Including Fabric & Fashion Judges Sheets)
- Engineering & Mechanics
- Entomology
- Foods
- Horticulture
- Interior Design
- Leathercraft
- Needle Arts
- Photography
- Scrapbooking
- Woodworking

Educational Exhibits

Some projects may not lend themselves easily to a standard exhibit entry at the fair. Examples may be wildlife, safety, leadership, and health. An educational exhibit or display may convey ideas learned from participation in the project area. Each fair may have specific guidelines for size, etc., so be sure to check with the division superintendant before judging.

The following criteria may be helpful when judging educational exhibits:

General Appearance

- Artistic, neat, well balanced
- Pleasing colors
- Proper amount of materials
- Effectively lit (if applicable)
- Balanced proportions

Plan of Action

- One central idea or theme
- Key items are displayed
- Is information accurate and factual?
- Does exhibit instruct/teach/promote/call for action?

Ability to Attract and Hold Attention

- Does it arouse and hold interest?
- Does it tell a coherent, clear-cut story with a logical sequence of thought?
- Are title and caption effective in conveying message?

Effectiveness in Telling a Story

- Current interest
- Idea grasped quickly and easily by viewer
- Idea shown simply and clearly
- Subject matter accurate and worthwhile
- Educational value—evident that 4-H'er learned from the project experience? Is information passed on the viewer?

Quality of Workmanship

- Easy to read, neat
- Models (if any) are well-proportioned

- Good background materials
- Perishable items (if any) are fresh

Creativity

- Original Idea
- Functional Design
- Idea Clearly defined and shows understanding of purpose and direction

Design and Mechanics

- Is there effective use of color, lighting, sound and motion?
- Are the number of items or materials used appropriate for the exhibit in that they give neither a cluttered nor a bare appearance?
- Are design, lettering, posters, figures and equipment in a relative proportion to area and shape of both?

Posters

When judging posters, evaluate according the following criteria:

Readability

- Letters should be easy to read
- Printing should be consistent with general rules for style, weight, size and case. Hand lettering should conform to a generally practiced style.
- Title should be in larger lettering than content.
- There should be sufficient space around the edges and between the areas of lettering

General Appearance

- Copy should be brief, appropriately placed and have comfortable margins (neat and clean)
- The poster should be effectively illustrated. The illustration should have appropriate impact.
- Generally the poster should be no larger than the standard size of 28"x22"
- The poster should attract attention and the color should be pleasing.
- Correct spelling and punctuation

Message

- The message should be appropriate, brief and clear to the reviewer. A single thought should be conveyed.
- The title and content should relate to each other.
- Develops one central idea that is presented clearly and appropriately.

Originality

- The idea should be presented in an original, clever and attention getting manor.

Organization

- Easy to understand
- Logical
- Central idea is clear to viewer

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Public Speaking

Effective speakers are not necessarily polished or perfect. Instead, they are energetic, direct and warm human beings who are knowledgeable about their subject matter and involved with their audiences. Good speakers are not born, they are developed. Each presentation should be a learning experience. As a judge, you can provide encouragement by commending work which is well done, and help members improve by offering suggestions for making the speech even better.

Participating in 4-H Public speaking helps you develop their ability to:

- Organize their thoughts and ideas
- Communicate information to someone else in a confident and convincing manner.
- Problem-solve and be flexible, such as in overcoming stage nerves or adapting information to different audiences and situations.
- Use resources, such as time allotted for a speech, wisely.
- Develop useful, marketable skills.
- Manage stress and feelings.
- Evaluate their work and set goals for improvement.

Criteria to consider when judging:

A. Subject

1. Is the information accurate? Is the topic narrow enough for the message to be given completely? Is the information current? Or is the information seemingly out of date, too broad to be covered completely or incorrect?

B. Organization

1. Introduction: Does the introduction catch the interest of the audience while presenting both the purpose and subject of the speech?
2. Body: Are the main points clearly stated? Does the speaker follow through with the purpose of the speech? Do ideas center around a central theme in a logical order, easily followed and understood by listeners?

Conclusion: Does the conclusion tie the main points of the speech to the

purpose in an interesting way that makes the audience remember the speech?

C. Delivery

1. **Bodily Action:** is the speaker poised and confident? Does the speaker maintain eye contact with the audience? Are movements and gestures natural, purposeful and spontaneous? If note cards are used, are they used effectively? Does the speaker present a friendly, conversational attitude, use facial expressions, eye contact and other gestures to his/her advantage?
2. **Voice:** Does the speaker vary the force of his/her voice? Is the speaker pleasant to listen to and loud enough to be heard? Is the speaker's voice clear, steady, rich and full? Does the speaker vary the pitch of his/her voice for interest? Does the speaker use the rate at which he/she speaks effectively? Are all words pronounced clearly and correctly?

D. General

1. **Personal Appearance:** As the speaker approaches the lectern and throughout the presentation, is his/her posture good? Does he/she plant him/herself solidly on the floor? Are his/her clothes (whether or not they are new or fashionable) clean and pressed?
2. **Attentiveness and Reaction of Audience:** Is the audience affected in any way? Were they stirred, enthused, saddened, amused, motivated and awakened? Did the audience get the speaker's message?

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CHARACTER



**That's What
We're Made Of**

**"A coach is someone who can give correction
without causing resentment."**

~John Wooden
