



Conference Judging Information for the 4-H Family

About 4-H

We are excited to have you as a member of our programs. 4-H is a positive youth development program. As part of 4-H, we hope you feel a sense of belonging and are gaining some independence. We also hope you are developing skills through project work and practicing generosity through community service.

Conference Judging

In 4-H the technique, “conference judging,” brings a 4-H member and a volunteer judge together to evaluate project exhibits. It involves one-on-one, face-to-face conversation in which the volunteer judge and exhibitor talk directly with each other. Typically, it is no longer than 5 to 10 minutes.

This technique provides a unique opportunity for 4-H members to learn from their experiences and from the knowledge of the volunteer judge. Volunteer judges are often experts in that particular field or they have a passion that they have followed.

We want you to share what you have learned with the volunteer judge, and we want the volunteer judge to offer you encouragement and positive feedback. That does not mean they will not offer constructive criticism. You want that too! It helps you strive to learn more and grow in your 4-H project work.

Remember, the 4-H Show exhibit is not the final statement of your effort, nor does it encompass everything you have learned in that project area.

What will the judges ask?

Here are some questions to practice answering:

- Tell me about your project.
- What interested you about this project area?
- How many years have you been doing this project?
- What did you learn while working on this project?
- What would you do differently next time you do this project?

Each judging experience is unique. Your judge may:

- Ask additional follow-up questions to learn more about you and your project.
- Want to know what tools or equipment were used for your project.
- Talk through your scoresheet with you, or your judge may fill it out after you leave.
- Tell you the project rating you earned, or you may have to wait until all judging is complete.
- Share ways to grow in the project area.
- Ask you to leave your project with them.

To Do

Well before the event, check to make sure you are following all the guidelines outlined in your 4-H show book. Ask the 4-H staff to clarify anything you have questions about.

Check in at the Show with a 4-H staff person or volunteer superintendent as directed in the show book or 4-H communications. Bring completed projects and other required materials for the exhibit.

Patiently wait for your turn. The judge wants to provide a worthwhile experience for every exhibitor. You may be asked to hold your project until your judging time.

The judge will keep the scoresheet at the end of your individual judging. You will receive it at the end of the show or project judging event.

Ribbons

A blue ribbon means you met the standards; a red ribbon means you met most of the standards but need some improvement; and a white ribbon means you met the standards but need much improvement.

Judging Tips

- Greet the judge with a smile and a firm handshake if a hand is offered.
- Introduce yourself and give the judge a little information, like the club you are in or how many years you have been a 4-Her.
- Keep eye contact with the judge while they are speaking with you.
- Provide information on your project and answer questions with appropriate details.
- Pay attention and listen to the judge and accept their feedback graciously.
- Know your project process and be prepared to share your project experiences.
- Be sure to thank the judge at the end of your time together.
- Have fun and show pride in your work!

This is YOUR project

One final thought...the conference judging experience is between the 4-Hers and the volunteer judge. Parents are not allowed to be present with the 4-Her during the process (except for Cloverbuds, aged 5-7). This is your project, and you are the one sharing what you have learned. We hope that you have learned a lot and that you have had fun in the process!

Thank you for your time and participation in 4-H. We hope that you are enjoying your experience and go home after the show having learned something from the conference judging process! If you have any questions, please contact your local Extension Office.

Good luck!



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