

Charge for Judges

You are looking for good research and the use of the Scientific Method. However, Engineering, Computer Science, Mathematics, and some Theoretical Physics projects do not follow the Scientific Method and use different criteria. Both approaches are equally valid for projects.

Judge the project compared to the other projects on the floor and not to an outside standard. Each category must have a single first place winner. There has to be a single project better than the rest. From there, you can award 2nd, 3rd, and Honorable Mentions. You must avoid ties!

If you see a project that's "been done before," remember, not for them.

Avoid thinking: "That project is too sophisticated or too ambitious; a middle or high school student couldn't possibly do that." Don't be so sure! Some of these students are very capable and will surprise you. Use your interview questions to clear up any doubts.

With projects that have been continued over a number of years, judge this year's work only. Do not penalize continuous work. Many of them are continuing because of judges' suggestions from the year before. On-going research is a good thing! Ask to see their **Form 7**.

Do not penalize work that has been done in an outside lab or institution. These kids are using the resources that are available to them. This should not be viewed as an unfair advantage. The interview is a good time to discover how much the mentor did. You will find that most kids who reach this level have worked independently. Ask to see their **Form 1C**.

Please keep your interview time the same for each student (5 to 10 minutes). Try to be consistent. Also remember this is an interview, not just the student(s) giving a presentation.

Board size and the "Rules" are not your concern. The Display and Safety Committee and the Scientific Review Committee (SRC) have already reviewed and approved the projects. You are judging what they learned and their results!

Most of the time, the students chose the category. If you feel that the project is in the wrong category, then ask them why they chose that category and rate them accordingly.

For team projects – each member should have a key role in the work, be able to articulate what they did, and be familiar with the work of the others.

The point system is to be used as a guide only. The consensus method is the best way to "Select The Best" (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Honorable Mentions).

If you know a student or have seen the project before, please see your Fair Coordinator ASAP and you will be put into another group.

Most Importantly – Our goal is to have the students leaving knowing more than when they arrived. We want them to feel good about themselves and their project. This should be a positive experience for them. Bear this in mind when offering constructive criticism. Picking a 1

st, 2nd, and 3rd is secondary to guiding and teaching.

Please take the time to ensure every student receives a completed a Comment Sheet, either filled out as a group or individually. Comment Sheets should be given to the Fair Coordinators. If at all possible, please ensure there are more positive comments than negative. It's almost certainly going to lessen the chance this student will remain positive about science if there's more negative check marks than positive and nothing but negative sentences at the bottom.

Finally, please be aware of the student's "personal space" and avoid inappropriate touching. Also, to prevent any kind of perceived bias, do not give items (even business cards) or make any "personal contact" with students you might know.

Thank you for your time and effort in improving science education in our area!