



How to Prepare for a 4-H Judging Contest



4-H Judging Contests offer children and youth an opportunity to test their decision making and problem solving skills. We make many decisions everyday, both big and small. We are constantly thinking about what is the best value for my money; how can I use the next hour of my time to the best advantage; or am I being a good person if I act a certain way?

In life decisions, there may be many different choices; however in a 4-H judging contest, there are only four choices. A 4-H member makes a decision based on information provided in a problem statement.

What skills does a 4-H'er need to make good choices in a 4-H Judging Contest?

- ⇒ Learn to observe, especially details
- ⇒ Make comparisons – how are the items different?
- ⇒ Sort information – what differences are important differences?
- ⇒ Rank order the items. Which one best meets the standards? Which is the poorest choice? Which one meets some of the standards?

How does a 4-H member prepare for a judging contest? 4-H members generally judge in contests related to the 4-H projects that they are enrolled in. As they read, learn and do things in a project area, they learn about the important information in that field of study.

Where can 4-H members find information?

- ⇒ Project materials and 4-H curriculum
- ⇒ Read books, magazines, Internet articles, or Extension publications about the project
- ⇒ Examine sample products, for example, in Clothing/Textiles, how is the quality of one garment different from another?
- ⇒ Observe project exhibits at Achievement Days or State Fair. What defines quality?

How to approach a judging class:

1. Analyze the entire class. Look for something – good or bad – that stands out. The top choice or the bottom choice may be easy to pick out.
2. Examine each of the four items more closely.
3. Review the standards given in the problem statement.
4. Make your decision on the ranking or placing. Does your top choice meet all, or almost all, of the standards?
5. If this is a REASONS Class, be sure to note the important features that make items different from one another.
6. Mark the judging card

Decision-making is a life skill that can be practiced through a 4-H judging contest.

Participate in 4-H judging contests to develop your decision-making and problem solving skills for all the areas of your life.