Science Fair Judging Guide

My lead judge: _____

I'm judging these projects:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Thank you for judging at a school or the Yukon/Stikine Regional Science Fair! This guide will help orient you and provide some ideas to make your judging go smoothly.

Main Principles:

- Ensure that every participant has a positive experience.
- Select the most scientifically meritorious projects as the winners.
- Provide useful feedback to the participants.

Judges Responsibilities:

- Help make the Fair a positive experience for the students so they are encouraged to return next year!
- Carefully inspect each project without the students present.
- Interview the students (typically 7-10 minutes per interview) and listen carefully to their responses.
- Offer constructive criticism and suggestions that would improve their project.
- Collaborate with other judges at your grade level to determine the winning projects in each grade.

Judging Forms:

- The judging forms are used as a framework only. For example, you may “score” two projects on the forms but feel the one with the lower score is clearly a better project. Trust your instincts; the scoring mechanism is not the final word.
- Remember that the "score" you derive at the end will generally not be comparable to scores generated by other judges. Some judges are consistently harder markers than others.
- Judging Forms are **NOT** returned to the Students!
- Comment Forms **ARE** returned to the students.

Let’s keep the SCIENCE in Science Fair projects:

No one is expecting to see Masters level dissertations at a Science Fair. However the projects should exhibit some awareness of the scientific process, such as:

- The project addresses a clearly stated hypothesis, problem or opportunity. The conclusion should reflect directly on the original statement. (Sometimes students lose track of the original purpose.)
- There are three categories of possible projects: classic scientific Experiments which should embrace the scientific method, engineering Innovations that should provide a practical solution to a real-world problem, and scientific Studies that seek to increase understanding of a subject through research and data analysis.
- There are different criteria to consider for each category of project. Use the most relevant criteria from the Judging Form for each project you judge.
- Beware of flashy computer displays and computer generated plots. A project can look great and have no scientific merit at all.
- A simple project can be better than a complicated project if it produces a convincing result.

Parental Involvement:

Some people worry about how much the parents were involved in the projects. Parental Involvement in a child’s education is hardly something to be discouraged! The bottom line: if the student can answer questions about the project and is comfortable describing what they did and why, then they understand the project.

Getting Started:

Do a quick tour of the whole Science Fair first. This can be followed by a more observant walk through of all of the projects in your grade level. All the projects in your grade should be close together except projects requiring power, which will be at the periphery of the gym. Remember that the organizers, head judge and other judges are there to help you out! If you need help or something seems amiss with a project, let us know.

Interview Tips:

Kneel, sit on the floor or grab a chair to get down to the kid's height. This reduces any nervousness and shows you're really interested. If two students have worked on the project, have both of them to participate and do not let one dominate the interview. Here are some questions that seem to help break the ice:

- "*What can you tell me about your project?*" (prompts them to start a prepared spiel)
- *"Where did you get the idea for your project?"* (see if it is straight out of a Science Fair Project Book with no modification)
- *"Did you have fun doing your project?"*
- *"What did you learn from doing this project?"*
- *"If you were going to do this project over again, is there anything you would do differently?"* (to see if they managed to identify any flaws in their project)
- *"Who helped you with this project?"* (students are usually very honest)

General Regional Science Fair Schedule for Judges:

Time	Students	Judges
8:30 am – 9:00 am		Orientation, coffee & snacks in the Trades Area (T1090) enter from Gymnasium doors
9:00 am - 10:00 am		Judging without the students present
9:45 am	Group A arrives & prepares for judging – will enter Gymnasium	Prepare for students
10:00 am - 11:30 am	Science activities in the College & interviews with judges	Interviews with students in two groups: Group A: 10:00 am - 10:30 am Group B: 10:45 am - 11:15 am
11:15 am	Prepare for public viewing	Wrap up judging with students
11:30 am - 12:45 pm	Public viewing & judging for Student Choice Award	Judges decide on First, Second, Third and possible honourable mentions for their grade. Results must be submitted to chief judge before 12:30 pm. Judges are not required to stay after results are signed off. If you have to leave - Thank You!
1:00 pm – 1:25 pm	Science show in gymnasium	You are most welcome to attend.
1:30 pm - 2:15 pm	Awards ceremony in gymnasium	You are most welcome to attend.
2:15 pm - 2:30 pm	Project teardown	You are welcome to help in clean up.

Each student has a detailed schedule for their activities.
Full schedule on www.scienceadventures.ca

Science Adventures
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