



GETTING READY FOR COUNTY FAIR

Are projects and exhibits the same thing?

No, however many people use these terms interchangeably.

Projects are the broad categories that 4-H'ers enroll in at the beginning of the 4-H year. Examples of project areas are: Woodworking, Electricity, Welding, Home Improvement, Visual Arts, Foods and Nutrition, Personal Development.

Exhibits are the items you bring to the fair that showcase what you have learned in your project area during the 4-H year. Examples include a table that your refinished, bread, an article of clothing, a lamp, etc.

How do I answer those four questions on the goal card anyway? What is the judge looking for?

1. What was your exhibit goal(s)? This should be a learning goal not really a product goal. What were you hoping to learn instead of what did you want to make? Ex. Instead of saying, "I wanted to learn to make good chocolate chip cookies," say "I wanted to learn to measure ingredients properly to make chocolate chip cookies." Consider learning new techniques, comparing techniques/methods/products, or identifying critical elements of a specific process. Remember, this goal is supposed to be specific to the item you're exhibiting not the overall project area. Ex. "I wanted to learn to draw a person's face" and NOT "I want to learn to draw." Ideally your goal includes an action, result and timetable. Most judges will be satisfied with your action and result and assume the timetable is to have it completed by the fair. Also, keep your goals something you can control NOT, I want my cookies to go to the state fair. That is the judge's decision.
2. How did you go about working toward your goal(s)? What steps did you take to achieve your goal? What was the first thing you did? After that, then what did you do next? And so on. You don't need to re-list the method of preparation. Think big picture – ex. For a goal to make curtains for my bedroom:
 - a. I learned about different style options.
 - b. Selected a style that fit the atmosphere of my room.
 - c. Selected a fabric that worked well with the colors in my room.
 - d. Made the curtains.
 - e. Hung them up.

Include how many times you might have practiced. Be sure to include where your idea came from or where you got your information. This can be a list of key steps numbered or bulleted. It's not necessary to have paragraphs or a lengthy description.

3. What were the most important things you learned as you worked toward your goal(s)? What did you find most challenging? What did you learn accidentally, or what surprised you? What did you learn about your goal? What would you change if you were to start all over? It is okay if it didn't turn out the way you expected or wanted as long as you learned why. What problems did you encounter and how did you deal with them? You can include cost of your exhibit here or in question two.
4. What would you like to do in this project (not exhibit) area next year? As you worked on this exhibit, what other things might you have wanted to learn -- a technique, a comparison, a career exploration? What was fun about completing this exhibit? How could that lead you to learn something new? How did your family react?
5. Check for additional requirements in exhibit classes for food and nutrition, photography, visual arts, home improvement, clothing, Family and Heritage, and Go the distance. Make sure you have:
 - Included design elements and art principles, if required.
 - Identified the source of any recipe.
 - Checked for the number of items you are to bring, esp. horticulture.
 - Prepared any special labels required, esp. food preservation and photography
 - Not violated any copyright rules. Sample copyright permission letters are available at your local ISU Extension office.
 - If bringing food, reviewed the Inappropriate Food Exhibits for Iowa 4-H Fairs, <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/4H3023.pdf>

Which class should I enter my exhibit in?

1. Begin by checking to see if your county requires enrollment in the project area in order to exhibit in it.
2. What was your goal? What did you hope to learn?
3. What aspects (parts) of this exhibit do you want to be judged on? Ex. Construction, artistic value, how it fits with your room or home décor? A woodworking judge will place emphasis on the construction and finishing of your exhibit. A visual arts judge will look at your exhibit with an artistic eye. A home improvement judge will look at how the exhibit will accent your home/room. A clothing judge will emphasize construction techniques, if sewn. A personal development judge will look at how you have grown as an individual as a result of this exhibit. There are some specific and clear rules like: Refinished items are

to be exhibited under home improvement and not woodworking. Self-determined is not an exhibit category for items you just don't want to write design elements and art principles for. It is designed for exhibits which clearly don't fit in any other project area. If you have used a kit for your exhibit, do not enter it under visual arts. It may be entered in a kit class, if your county has one. Or, it may possibly fit under home improvement.

Example: A quilt may be entered under Clothing and evaluated on design and construction. In Home Improvement, it would be evaluated on design, construction and how it fits where it is to be used. If self-designed, the quilt could be exhibited in Visual Arts. It could be Personal Development if you learned about your determination to get it finished. Enter it in Family Heritage if Grandma taught you how to piece or quilt the items and the focus of your learning is family.

It's my first year exhibiting at the fair, what should I expect on non-livestock or static exhibit day?

1. Many counties have a check in table where 4-H'ers will pick up their entry form. If one is available start there. If not, find your club booth and work with your club's leader.
2. You will likely be in a large room with several tables set up as judging stations. You may also see an information area and if judging takes place at the fairgrounds you will also likely see club booths.
3. Your club will have an assigned time frame for your exhibits to be judged. If you can't make that time work for your family, contact the Extension office to arrange a better time that day. If you aren't able to attend at all, many counties will still allow you to exhibit if you have someone else bring your exhibits that day. In that case, you may want to write more personal notes about your exhibit than normal. A judge will examine your exhibit and usually someone will write the judge's comments on a note for you.
4. Exhibits are judged in project areas with judges that specialize in that area. There may be an age split also in certain project areas and some counties have judges for just 4th graders. Before you come, know what project areas you are exhibiting in. Some judging areas will be a combination of several project areas and others will be very specific. Typical judging categories are: Ag & Natural Resources, Science, Mechanics & Engineering, Personal Development, Food & Nutrition, Visual Arts, Home Improvement, etc.
5. Look to see which lines are the shortest for the project areas you are exhibiting in. Take all of your exhibits for that project area to that judging table. Stand in line, if appropriate, and sit next to the judge when it's your turn.
6. Smile and relax as you visit with the judge. Remember the judges are people too and most are past 4-H'ers, moms, leaders and volunteers. Share important information about what you learned while completing the exhibit. Remember, the judge's job is three-fold: Evaluate, Educate, and Encourage. So don't be

- discouraged if the judge offers suggestions or gives you tips on a technique – that is their job. All of us can learn more about what we do!
7. When finished with that judge, repeat steps five and six (5 & 6) above until all your exhibits have been judged.
 8. If appropriate, turn your entry form back in at the check in table.
 9. Leave exhibits (or a sample for food and nutrition) in your club booth, unless they are being considered for special recognition. Some counties may have a bake sale for extra food.
 10. Offer to help display items in your club's booth.
 11. Come back during exhibit release time to pick up your exhibits, or arrange for someone else to do this if you cannot be there.

Written by Lisa Berkland, 4-H Youth Development Specialist, Iowa State University. August 2008.