

Southwest Field 4-H Table Setting Contest Guide

Southwest Field Table Setting Contest Cass County Community Center

The Table Setting Contest is a fun way to learn how to properly set a table, plan nutritious meals, express originality and creativity in choosing a theme, present to a judge, express knowledge of food, nutrition and food safety, and have fun in planning a special occasion meal for entertaining.



1. Participants in the Southwest Field 4-H Table Setting Contest must have won the category (casual/formal) in their age division (Junior/Intermediate/Senior) at the county fair they are enrolled as a 4-H member in or be sent as a reserve champion alternate, if the champion is unable to attend.
2. Southwest Field county winners will advance to the Southwest Field 4-H Table Setting Contest, held at the Cass County Community Center in Atlantic, Iowa on Saturday, August 5, 2023.
3. Table Setting participants may only compete in one category.
4. Participants are to display one place setting, including table covering, dinnerware, stemware or glasses, flatware, centerpiece and menu. Participants should choose to wear clothing that will match the theme/occasion of their table setting.
5. Members may work as an individual or a team of two members with the age division of the older member and follow all [contest rules](#).
6. The winner of each category and age division will be given information & registration forms about the Southwest Field 4-H Table Setting Contest by their County Extension Office.
7. Youth will be responsible for communicating with their County Extension Office on intentions to participate in the Southwest Field Contest and completing an online registration form by listed deadlines.
8. Youth who register for the Southwest Field Contest will then be emailed a letter with judging details by the Southwest Field 4-H Table Setting coordinator.



Table Setting Terms to Know

Centerpiece—décor you choose to put in the center of your table to tie your theme together

Cover—space needed for each person's dishes and contains the dinnerware and flatware for the meal being served

Dinnerware—plates and possibly bowls that will be used for eating

Flatware—knives, forks, spoons, and other eating utensils

Stemware or glassware—cups, goblets, glasses, cups, saucers, or mugs that you use to drink liquids in the meal

Table Appointments—any item used to set a table: tablecloth, placemats, dinnerware, glassware, flatware, centerpiece

Contest Categories

Casual—themed place settings could be planned for indoors or outdoors using any type of table cover, (tablecloth, blanket, or paper) and any type of table service.

Formal—themed place settings would include more than three pieces of flatware, along with china, tablecloth and/or mats and cloth napkins.

Table Setting Set-up

Each participant must bring their own structure that functions as a table for the display, unless being seated on the floor fits with the theme (example: picnic). In this case, an appropriate covering may be placed on the floor. All table settings must fit in a 4 1/2' x 4 1/2' space. When you arrive at the Southwest Field 4-H Table Setting Contest you must check in where you will be directed to your judging spot. You may begin setting up your table right away and must be at your table ready for judging 10 minutes before your scheduled judging time.

Table settings should stay in place until after awards have been received, for judges to reference back to.

Table Setting Judging

Exhibitors will present the table setting to the judge by inviting them to view their table, introduce themselves, share their menu, and tell them about their ideas and why they chose the particular theme. Youth should view themselves as a host and the judge as the guest. Youth should extend a welcome to the guest and present their ideas behind the theme, choice of menu, food preparation and food handling for the meal. Be prepared to answer questions the guest (judge) should have. All exhibitors will be asked age appropriate questions regarding recipes for the provided menu and food safety practices. Safe food practices can be found at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety>.

Exhibitor Report Form

Exhibitors will complete the [Exhibitor Report Form](#) and bring to submit at Table Setting Contest check in, prior to judging. The Exhibitor Report Form questions are good practice questions for youth to be ready to discuss with the judge. Exhibitor Report Forms can be typed and printed or printed and handwritten.



How to Create your Table Setting

Theme

What is the occasion... a family dinner, a holiday, or lunch with friends? Select a theme which fits the occasion. Possibilities can run from a fishing party sack lunch to a formal Mother's Day dinner.

Table Appointments

These include any item used to set a table: tablecloth, placemats, dinnerware, glassware, flatware, and centerpiece. Choose table appointments to fit the occasion and carry out the theme. Paper plates, plastic ware and paper napkins may be used for a picnic, but they would not be appropriate at a formal dinner. Flatware and dishware must be safe to eat from (i.e. no glitter, glue, chipped plates, or glassware, etc. is to be used on eating surfaces).

Table Covering

This is the background for the food and table appointments placed on it. It protects the table and makes for less noise. Placemats and/or tablecloths may be used. Sometimes the table is left bare. Choose a covering which is appropriate for the occasion and the other table appointments. You may match or blend colors and textures in the dishes—or use something quite different for contrast.

Place Setting

Allow at least 20 inches for each person's dishes. This is called the cover and each cover is set the same. A cover contains the dinnerware and flatware for the meal being served. When selecting your cover, include a dish for each course. Placement may vary according to how and when food is served.

- Put the plate, china, pottery, paper, glass, etc. in the center of the cover about one inch from the edge of the table. If a table is not used at the event, placement may vary.
- Place knives and spoons on the right side, forks on the left about one inch from the plate and one inch from the edge of the table. Turn the cutting edge of the knife towards the plate. If there is more than one piece in each cover, such as one dinner fork and a salad fork or a teaspoon and a soup spoon, place the one that will be used first outside the other.
- Napkins folded into oblongs are placed next to the forks. Decorative and creative folds are encouraged. Placement of napkin may vary.
- The first beverage glass is placed about one inch above the tip of the knife. If serving more than one beverage, place additional glasses to the right of the first glass in order served.
- If coffee or tea is served, the cup is placed on the saucer and set to the right of the spoon. Have the handle pointing to the right.
- Salad, bread and or dessert plate or bowls may be placed to the top of the fork.



Centerpiece

The centerpiece should be coordinated with the table appointment and be appropriate for the occasion. The centerpiece should be visible to all as if the entire table was set and should not obstruct anyone's view of each other. You may select or make your centerpiece. Centerpiece candles are NOT to be lit. Points will be deducted for lit candles.

Dress Code

Participants should choose to wear clothing that will match the theme/occasion of their table setting.

Menu

When planning a menu, first decide on the main dish, then select appropriate side dishes to complete the meal. Use [My-Plate](#) to plan nutritious meals. Participants are encouraged to develop interesting and creative menus. For example, you might name a food to fit your theme. Alcoholic beverages may NOT be used in any menu. *Menus with alcoholic beverages will be disqualified.*

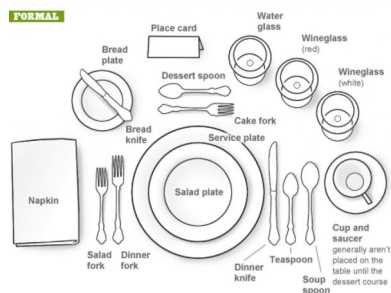
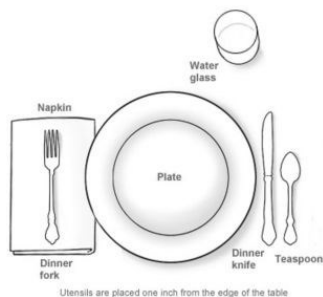
Writing the Menu

Menus must be displayed on the table. Examples include an index card or paper, ceramic tile, chalkboard, etc. and be printed or typed by the participants. The menu can be decorated and/or propped.

- List foods in order in which they are served, list beverages last.
- Foods that are served together should be grouped. Use single line spacing between food items and a double line spacing between courses.
- Use CAPITALS at the beginning of all words except the a, an, and, or, for, to, with, or, on
- When an item on the menu has food or sauce that goes with it, place them both on the same line with the main item to the left.

Braised Pork Chops Applesauce
Tomato Soup Sesame Seed Wafers
Saltines

- When a food is commonly prepared in more than one way, avoid confusion by describing the method of cooking, such as: Roast Turkey or French-Fried Potatoes.
- List each food except for butter, cream, sugar, or salad dressing, unless it is something special, such as Honey Butter or Poppy seed Dressing.
- Plan the spacing and arrangement of the items on the menu so that the written menu is symmetrical (looks balanced).
- Consider creativeness when choosing names of menu items (except for formal menus). Formal menus must use original names of items. Example - using Patriotic Punch for a 4th of July theme and Cherry Punch for a formal theme.



Examples of Informal Meals:

Hot Dogs
Potato Chips
Watermelon Slices
Baked Beans
Lemonade

Space Adventure Birthday
Countdown to Corn Dog
Astro Chips
Moon Pies
Taste of Mars Jello Jigglers
Milky Way Fudge Brownies and Ice Cream
Out of this World Homemade Root Beer

Examples of Formal Meals:

Broiled Ham
Grilled Pineapple Slices
Cole Slaw
Hot Gingerbread with Applesauce
Coffee Milk

Cream of Broccoli Soup
Curried Toast Fingers
Fresh Fruit Salad Plate
with Lime Sherbet
Crescent Rolls
Glazed Chocolate Roll
Coffee Milk

Table Setting Judging Checklist

1. The flatware, plate, and napkin should be one inch from the edge of the table.
2. The plate is always in the center of the place setting.
3. The dinner fork is placed at the left of the plate.
4. If a salad fork is used, it is placed to the left of the plate.
5. The napkin is placed to the left of the fork. The napkin may also go under a fork on top of the plate.
6. The knife is placed to the right of the plate with the sharp blade facing in towards the plate.
7. The teaspoon is placed to the right of the knife.
8. If a soup spoon is needed, it is placed to the right of the teaspoon.
9. The soup bowl may be placed on the dinner plate.
10. The drinking glass is placed at the tip of the knife.
11. If salad, bread and/or dessert plates or bowls are used, place at the top of the fork.
12. The cup or mug is placed to the top right of the spoons.

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Southwest Field 4-H Table Setting Contest

Judges Evaluation

Name: _____ Exhibitor Number: _____

Age Division: (Circle) Junior Intermediate Senior

Category: (Circle) Casual Formal Ribbon: Purple Blue Red White

Is the complete cover correctly set? Is the tablecloth or place mat appropriate? Clean and Pressed?	
Are dishes and silverware appropriate?	
Is the centerpiece appropriate (color, height, occasion, visible from all sides?)	
Total Effect: Coordination of originality and creativity	
Menu: A menu on the medium of choice (may be propped up). Correct spelling, use of capital letters, and foods in correct order as served	
Food Choices: Do food preparation, type and variety of foods to be served compliment each other? Are foods suitable for the occasion and theme? Nutritional value?	
Is 4-H'er well groomed? Neatly and appropriately dressed?	
Interview: How 4-H'ers present themselves (eye contact, clarity, volume) Does the 4-H'er demonstrate an understanding of table setting techniques and the menu, food preparation, and food safety?	
4-H'ers conduct and sportsmanship	

