Hey Knights!

It’s always great to be prepared before those judges greet you! So, take some time to study your project tonight. Practice standing up straight and giving firm handshakes while looking someone in the eye (not a scary stare, lol! Do not look down at the floor. Focus on the judge ☺). You should have a kind, confident disposition…not arrogant, sheepish, or nonchalant. Speak clearly and at a normal pace…not too fast or slow. Wait for the judges to ask you a question and then answer that question. Don’t ramble off on some other idea unless you’re asked to do so. Do not interrupt them. Always greet the judge first with a firm (confident; don’t squeeze the life out of their hand, lol!) handshake, kind smile, and say, “Hello! How are you today?” Or perhaps you can say, “Hello! Thank you for volunteering your time to judge our projects today!” When answering the judges’ questions, focus on them. Use your display board only as a guide to explain your answers. Do NOT read the display board to the judges! NEVER turn your back to a judge. It’s good to show your graphs/data/pictures/visual aids and explain them…judges like to SEE what you’re discussing ☺.

Typical Judging Questions at the County Science Fair:

1. **Why did you do this project?** 
   1. This is the NUMBER ONE thing judges want to know…WHY? Why did you spend months of your life invested in this project? What interested you? What captured your attention? Well, you need to capture the judge’s attention in the first 30 seconds and preferably without “oh’s”, “umm’s”, and “well’s”…If you are unsure as to why you worked on this project or perhaps you just picked it randomly…think of something spectacular that you learned and draw from that inspiration! Think about the project’s RELEVANCE in society. Why should the world know about YOUR data? Make a PERSONAL CONNECTION if possible. Make it worth remembering. (without faking data or information, of course…be a person of integrity! ☺) DO NOT just tell the judges…”well, I just found it on Science Buddies.” Or, “My teacher gave the topic to me.” Or “My parents made me do this topic.”
2. **Tell me a little bit about your project.** 
   1. Your answer should be a BRIEF summary of your project taking the judge through the Scientific Method. Use your display board as your guide. Focus on how you did the experiment and the data you collected. Explain what you learned from your research and experimentation.
3. **What did you learn from your research?** 
   1. Your background research should have given you substantial knowledge to pursue the experimentation portion of your science fair project and the information you may have needed to tweak the hypothesis or perhaps the variables being tested. Think about the interesting things you learned from your research. The judges want to see your excitement about science!
4. **What are your variables? How did you control them?** 
   1. Identify your dependent and independent variable. It would be great to note your control group and controlled conditions (separate items…control group didn’t get IV; controlled conditions = all things kept the same amongst experimental groups minus IV).
5. **Could you identify sources of error?** 
   1. There’s always room for improvement/possible sources of error. Think about your project. The judges want to see a student who has thought in depth about their project and reflected upon how they can do better the next time.
6. **What were the results of your project?** 
   1. Refer back to your hypothesis. Review your data tables/graphs. Then, summarize your analysis. What worked? What didn’t? Remember, just because the project didn’t work doesn’t mean it was useless…that’s part of science! You just figured out a way to NOT do something. That’s just as important as finding results from experimentation that supports your hypothesis. NEVER say my experimentation PROVES my hypothesis to be true/false…just say that your hypothesis was SUPPORTED or NOT SUPPORTED by the results of your experimentation. It’s also great to mention SAMPLE SIZE. Did you do enough experimentation to obtain accurate results? Most kids do not. That could be an area of improvement ☺. Judges again, like to see that you’ve taken time for reflection.
7. **Would you continue this project next year? If so, how would you tweak it?** 
   1. Be ready to do a continuation project. The results of your project should leave you with even more questions about the experiment/topic. What would you do differently? Again, judges want to see students who have taken their project seriously and thought about it in depth. Reflection is key to great scientific thought!

I hope this information helped you feel more confident going into tomorrow’s competition! You can do this! I am proud of all of you and the work you’ve already accomplished. I feel that each and every one of you represent school so very well!

**GO OAKLEAF KNIGHTS!!! Woohoo!!! #sciencerocks**

Sincerely,

Miss Butler

OHS Science Fair Coordinator 2016