



AZSEF
ARIZONA SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR

Preparing Your Students for Judging: Tips And Tricks



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Agenda

Judging Overview



Key Elements of a Strong Project



Preparing Students for the Interview



Judge Q&A



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The Judge's Role



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Understanding The Azsef Judging Process



- **Research Question & Problem Statement**
- **Design & Methodology**
- **Data Collection & Analysis**
- **Creativity & Innovation**
- **Presentation & Interview**



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Understanding The Azsef Judging Process

Question:
**Which of the
following is MOST
important for a
strong AZSEF
project?**

- A) Having a flashy, well-decorated board
- B) Memorizing facts about the project
- C) Demonstrating a deep understanding of the research process
- D) Using expensive materials in the experiment

Key Elements Of A Strong Project

Scientific Method	Engineering Design Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Formulating a testable hypothesis● Conducting experiments● Collecting data● Analyzing results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Clearly defining a problem● Designing and testing solutions● Refining their designs



Creativity, Data Quality, and Clear Communication



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Preparing Students for the Interview

Common Interview Questions

- What was the inspiration behind your project?
- What challenges did you face during the process, and how did you overcome them?
- How does your project relate to real-world applications?
- What would you do next if you had more time or resources?
- Questions about methodology or results of their experiment or design



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Preparing Students for the Interview

Strategies for Answering Confidently

- Help your students practice their responses to common questions
- Encourage honest responses. If they don't know, they could say 'That's a great question. I'd like to investigate that further'.
- Practice answering questions briefly but thoroughly, without over-explaining or going off-topic
- Practice staying calm and gathering thoughts before responding



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Communicating Clearly and Confidently



- Simplify complex ideas for clarity
- Show passion & ownership of the project
- Avoid scripted responses

Common Mistakes to Avoid



- Lack of depth in research or methodology
- Poor organization or unclear presentation
- Overuse of jargon without understanding

Creating a Winning Display Board

Balancing visuals & content	What to highlight for maximum impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Board is a visual summary of the project● Use headings, bullet points, and short paragraphs● Visuals should support the content, not overwhelm it● Board should support the oral presentation● Remember to check Display and Safety Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Research Question● Methodology● Results● Conclusion● Innovative aspects of the project● 'Future Work' section

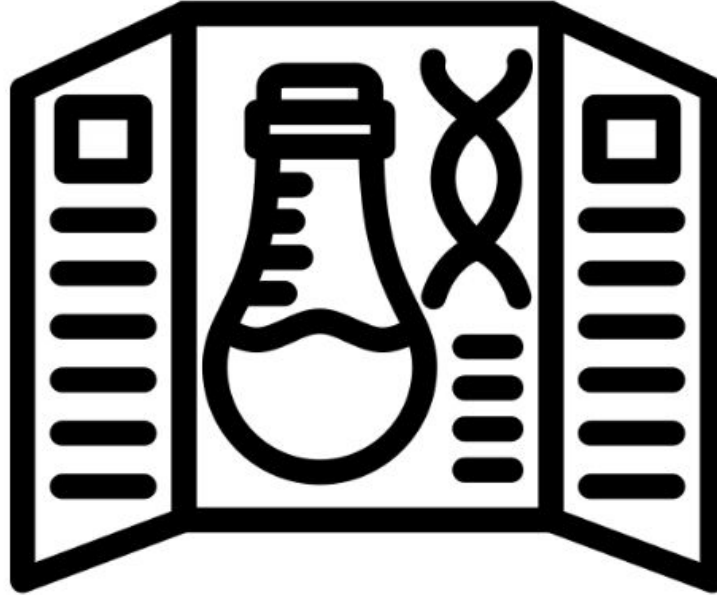


Do's and Don'ts of Board Design

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Keep it simple and clean● Use high-quality visuals● Use color strategically● Organize sections logically● Check for grammar and spelling● Incorporate interactive elements if possible (check Display & Safety Regulations first)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Don't overcrowd board with text● Don't use small/hard to read fonts● Don't use irrelevant or excessive decorations● Don't forget about the title● Don't leave sections incomplete



Display and Safety Regulations



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Display and Safety Changes for 2025

- ALL images must be **cited independently**. NO blanket statements.
- Senior division: Quad charts- **max 75 words per quad**. It is a visual representation of the project.
- **AI detection tools** will be utilized to reduce the chance of plagiarism.



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The Role of Teachers in Student Success



- Encouraging independent thinking
- Providing constructive feedback
- Helping students practice without overcoaching
- Educator code of conduct
- Registering on ZFairs



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Final Checklist Before the Fair



- Reviewing the project one last time
- Mock judging sessions
- Reminders for students (confidence, enthusiasm, preparation)



Integrating Authentic Research into Your Classroom



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Office Hours

During the registration period, students, teachers, and parents have the opportunity to join and ask questions about registration, project materials & submission, and paperwork.

All Office Hours will be from 4-5 p.m.

- Elementary & Junior Division Dates
 - February 17
 - March 3
 - March 11
- Senior Division Dates:
 - February 10
 - February 24
 - March 10

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AzSEF Website

www.azsef.org

Thank You!

Questions? Contact petersenj@azscience.org

