



TERRA SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIRS

How do I prepare a Topic Presentation? (Students *and their parents and mentors* should read this!)

Selecting a Topic

Keep it simple. What question would you like to answer? Might your family or hobbies inspire an idea? (Teachers and parents: Please don't assign a topic. Students invest more time and energy into projects inspired by their own interests.)

Ask professionals in the field. Consult your librarian. Wikipedia is NOT the source of all knowledge! (Note to adults: Please do NOT prepare reference lists or fact sheets!)

What do I want to accomplish?

You could share something you learned for your Science Olympiad competition, Project Lead the Way class, or 4-H project. Or perhaps you have been teaching a dog hand commands and want to learn more about obedience training. Telling fair judges about your work will expand your understanding.

Do you want to learn about flooding patterns in Upstate NY so next year you can do a Research / Engineering Design project on the changes your town could make on the flood basin to protect the school? Use this year for a topic presentation about flooding or weather patterns or damming structures (your "literature review"), and talk with the judges about your next-year research ideas!

Communicating about Your Topic

Optional Written Report

You have the *option* of preparing a written report, one page or many pages. You can include charts, illustrations, photographs and:

- your topic's name, why it was chosen and what you hoped to find out;
- a bibliography citing *every* source you used! Did you download anything from the Internet? Then include the date you downloaded AND the *complete* URL! (Reminder: "wiki.com" is NOT a complete URL.)

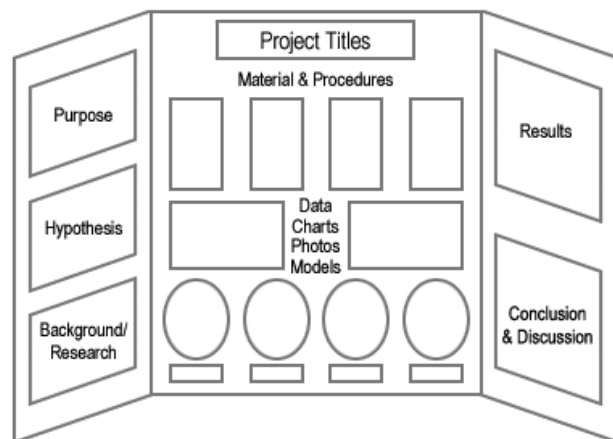
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Required Exhibit and Presentation

Your exhibit lets people *see* what you did.

You need:

1. a free-standing display board - it can be bought or homemade;
2. drawings, photos, charts (anything showing your project visually), citing the source for each item, including the photographer's name for each photo. If one person took EVERY photo, one label is fine.);
3. your model if you made one;
4. your report.



Your exhibit space is 48 inches wide by 30 inches deep by 72 inches high (above table top). Include on your display photos of any part of your work that cannot fit in this space. Read the Display and Safety rules to check what cannot come into an Exhibit Hall.

Bring what you need, including tape, scissors, markers, extension cords, or laptops. Label *everything* with your name and your school's name. Set out your written report and at least 5-6 copies of your abstract. *The fair must know ahead of time if you need electricity!*

We do NOT provide WiFi, nor are you to access the internet for any part of your presentation.

Now, prepare your talk (3-4 minutes). Talk briefly about how you chose your topic and all you have learned. **YOUR TALK IS VERY IMPORTANT, BUT MUST BE BRIEF SO JUDGES CAN ASK QUESTIONS.**

More about Topic Ideas

Still scratching your head about what to choose as your topic? Try this:

1. Decide if you like to work on your own or with a partner; Terra Fairs do allow teams of two or three students. That will affect how you choose your topic.
2. Then give your imagination free rein. Walk outside and see if you come across something fascinating that sparks a question in your mind. Take some time to sit quietly and see where your curiosity carries your daydreams. You may find your idea there. Next step is the public library. Start with a topic that interests you and read along from topic to narrower topic to narrower topic until you find something that makes you say, "Wow!" You found the topic you want to learn even more about!

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