

How to Help Your Child Win a Science Fair



Wallace Elementary School Science Fair, 2013

Projects due: January 14, 2014, Tuesday

Science Night/Awards: January 17, 2014, Friday

Researched and Written by Deborah McAlister Holland

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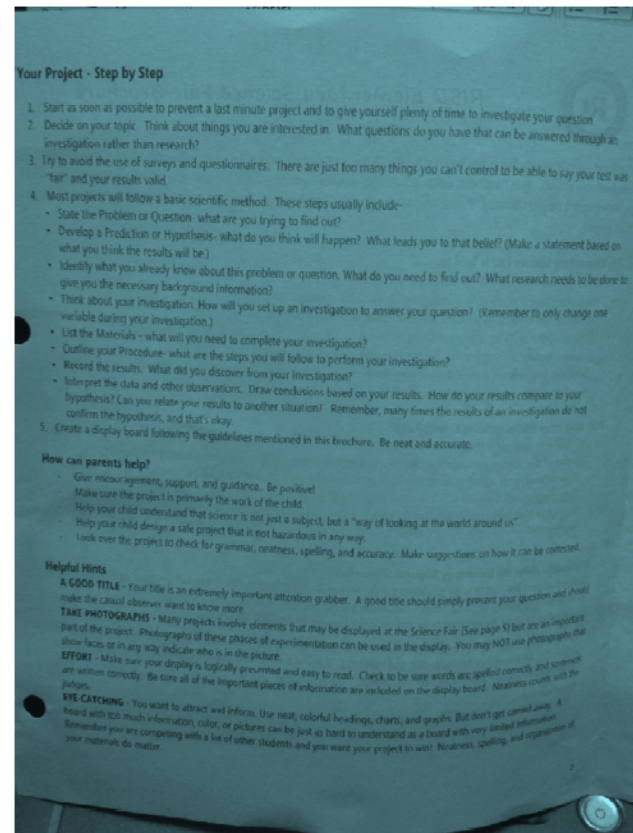
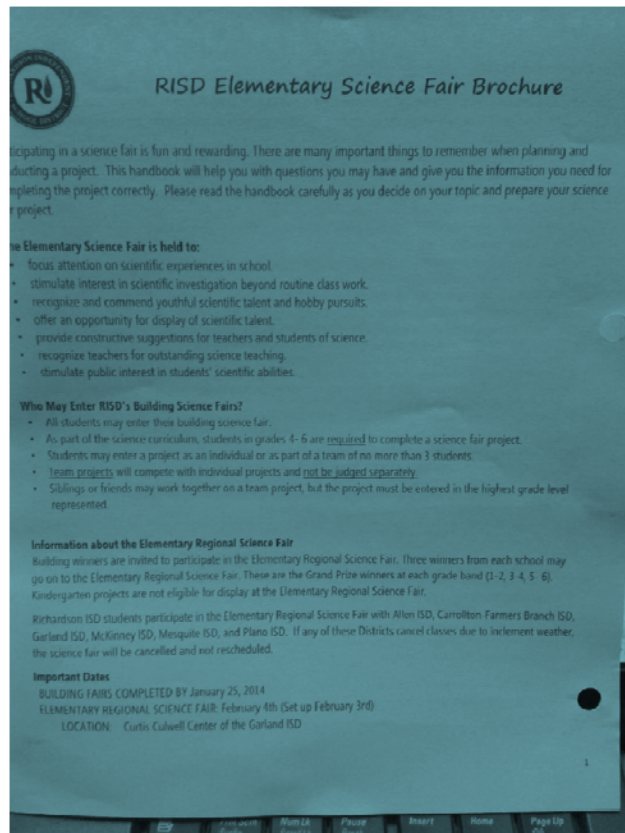
Wallace Science Fair Schedule

- December 6, Friday **Question Due**
- December 13, Friday **Hypothesis Due**
- December 18 – January 10, **Work on Project**
- January 10, Friday **Results - Conclusion Due**
- January 14, Tuesday **Final Project Due**
- January 17, Friday **Wallace Science Fair**
- February 3-4, Mon-Tue **Regional Science Fair**

RISD Elementary Science Fair Brochure Sent Home With Your Child (Blue)

Safety Rules and Display Rules

Step by Step Guide and Hints

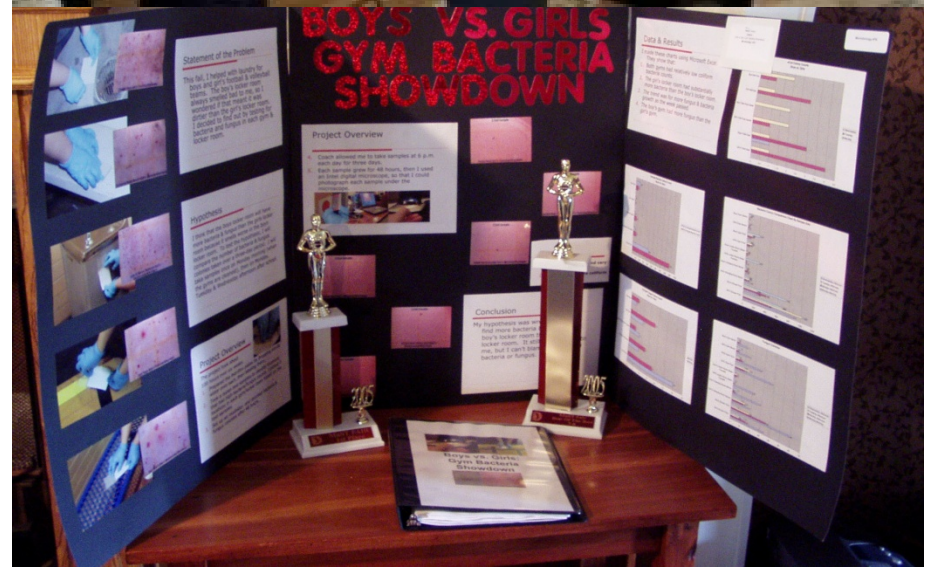


Your Job: Help & Guide

- Don't do the work for your child.
- Let your child make mistakes – children learn much from their own mistakes!
- Read the rules with your child. Enforce safety standards and help your child follow the rules.
- Schedule the work and supervise the work.
- Ask questions of your child's teacher
- Email : fredddallas@gmail.com
- Use the Subject Line: SF Hints for *Child's Name*

Why Science Fair Matters

- Major part of grade.
- Teaches real-world problem-solving skills.
- Looks good on a magnet school application.
- In upper grades, there are prizes and scholarships.
 - National: \$1 million in prizes
 - Regional \$250K in scholarships



What Parents CAN & CAN'T Do

Parents Can & Should:

- ✓ Brainstorm.
- ✓ Explain concepts.
- ✓ Show them how to use required tools.
- ✓ Purchase supplies.
- ✓ Take photos of your child doing the work. (Make sure the child can't be identified in photos!)

Parents Can't & Shouldn't

- Assemble, build, or “help” with project or display.
- Do the research for them.
- Purchase a “kit”.
- Write reports.
- Record data.
- Calculate results.
- Create drawings or graphs.

Read and Follow the Rules

- Don't bring prohibited items to school, or to a regional science fair.
- "No identifiable information" on display.
- Don't leave part of the project at home on the day it's due.
- Rework your display for Regionals.
- Focus on discovery, not winning.
- Every child that does a science fair project by themselves and completes a project board is both a winner and a scientist!

Start Early

- Regional Science Fair
 - Prizes go to projects that take time.
 - Elementary School: 30-90 day projects
 - Junior High School: 90-180 day projects
 - High School: 6 month to 1 year projects
 - Multi-year projects at the national level



Answer a Real Question

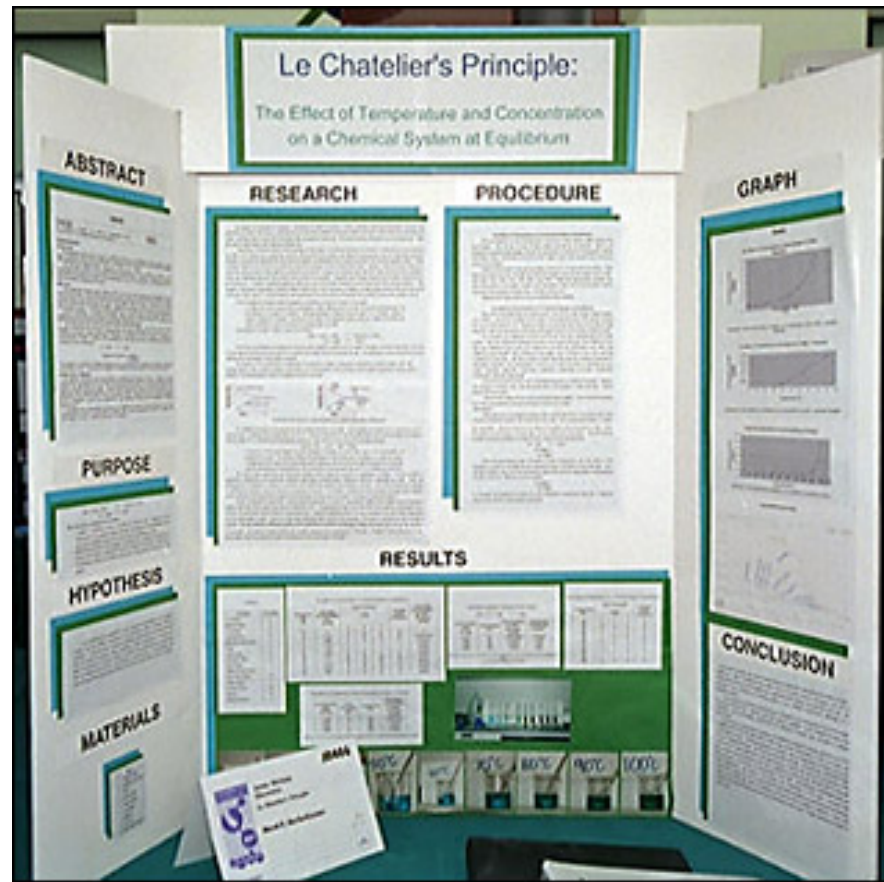
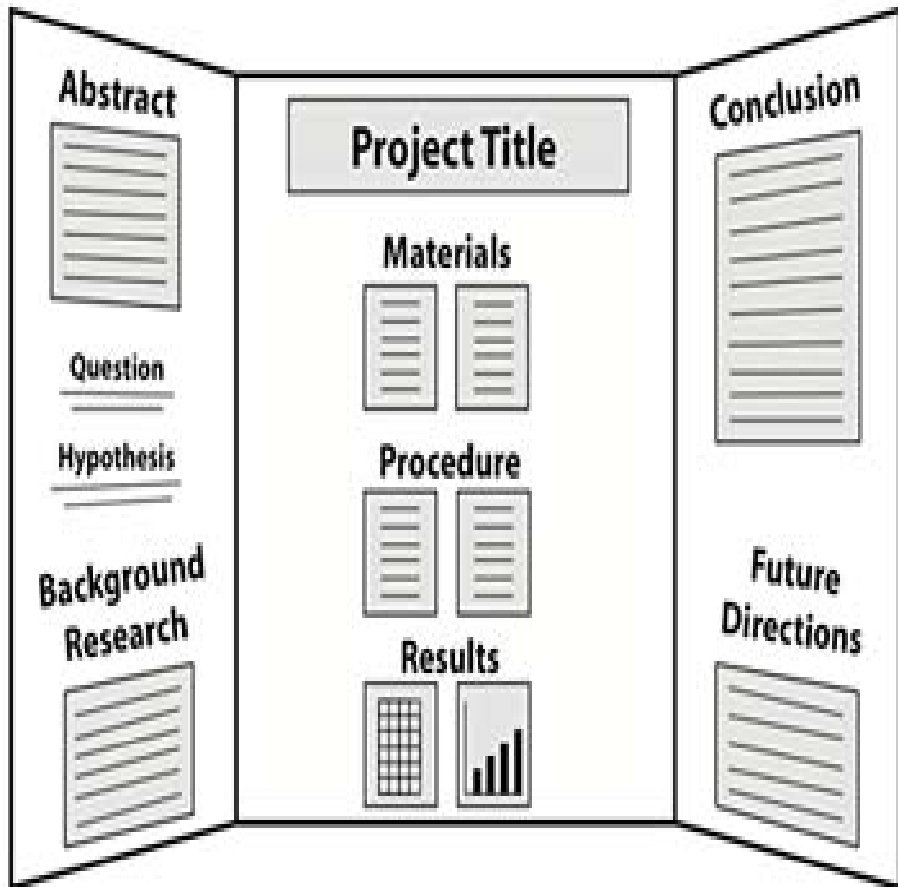


- Building a model is not a science fair project.
- Winning science fair projects answer a question that can't be answered by looking at Wikipedia.
 - Kids are great at asking this kind of questions.
 - If you know the answer, can Google the answer, or know that your child ever did it in class for a grade , don't do a project on it.

Every Science Fair Project Needs:

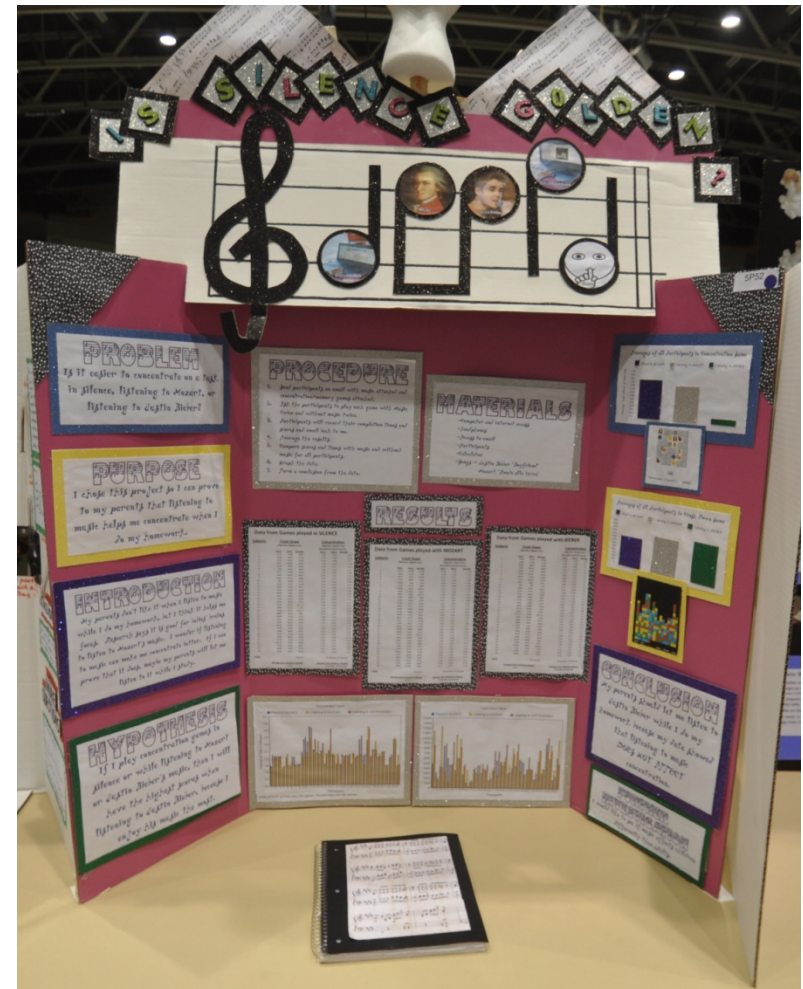
- A question (why the experiment was done)
- Hypothesis (what the student expected to happen)
- List of supplies
- Methodology or Procedure (a “how to” or “Step by Step” description of the experiment)
- Data (charts, graphs, photos, drawings, observations, information collected during the experiment) recorded by the child in a dated log book and shown on project display.
- Results as a Conclusion (what happened)
- Analysis (what the data means, and why it proves or disproves your hypothesis)

Where does the work show up?

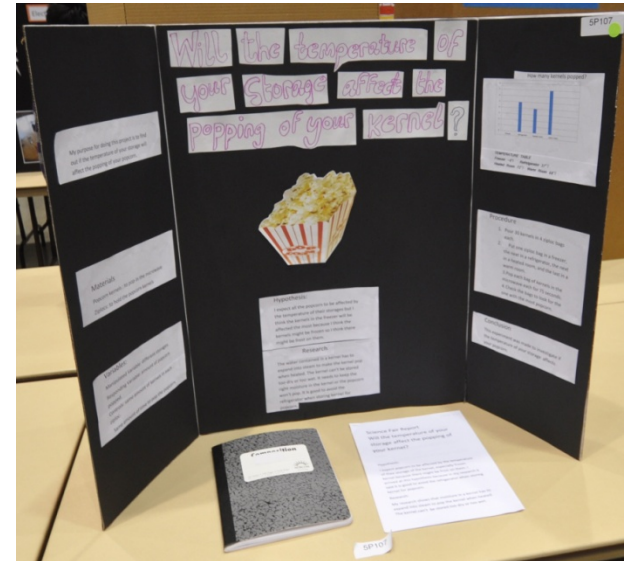


Size Matters: Use Bigger Displays

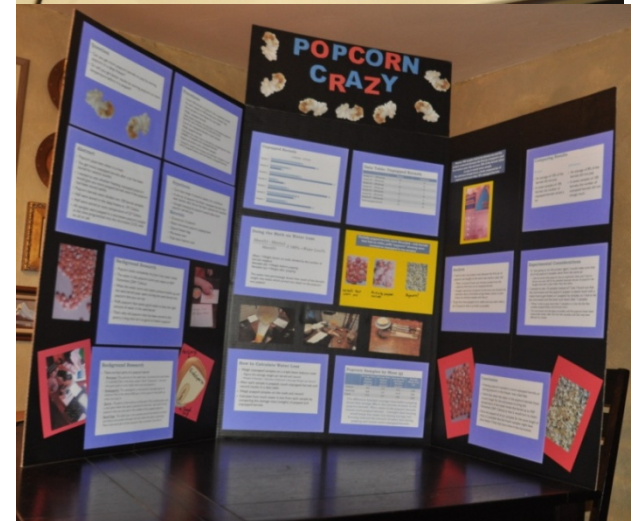
- Big displays are allowed.
 - Store-bought displays are half the allowable size.
- More room for:
 - Graphs & charts
 - Information
 - Photos
- Judges spend just a few minutes per entry to pick finalists.



Good Displays Matter

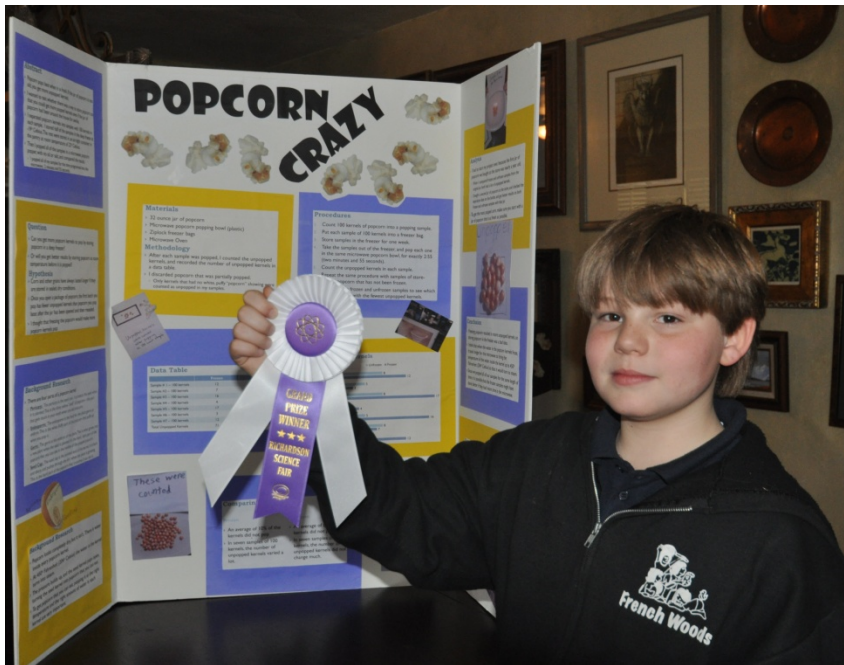


- North Dallas Regional Elementary Science Fair
- 222 projects per grade
- 1,553 projects
- <3 minutes to per project

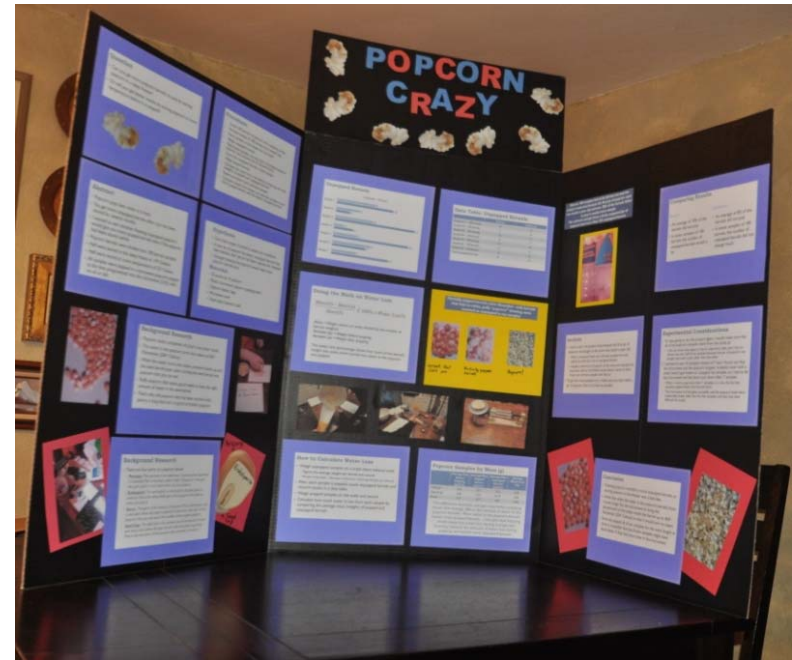


Creating a Great Display

Same Project – Two Displays – 125 photos – 14 graphs – 25 page Notebook



2012 Wallace Grand Prize Winner



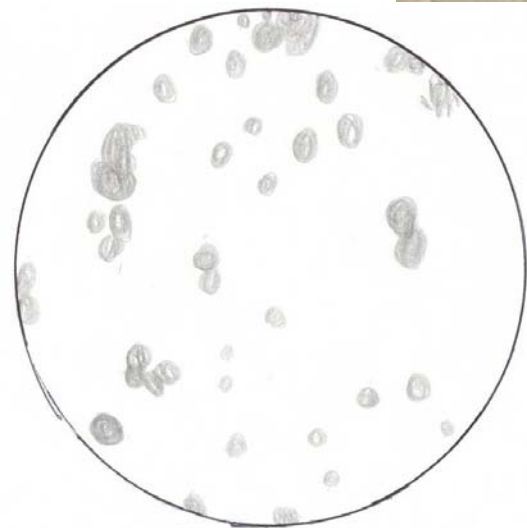
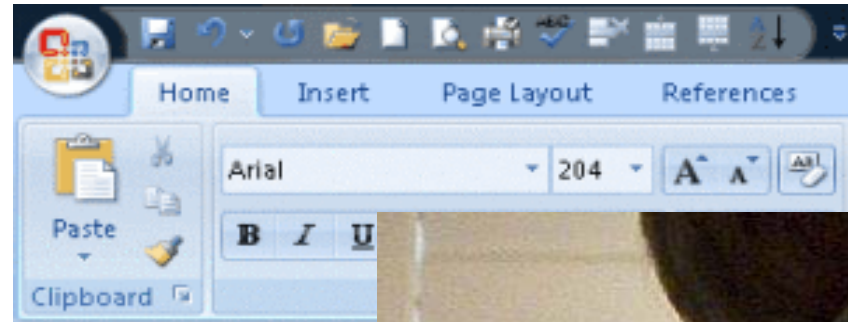
2012 Regional Science Fair Honorable Mention

What Your Display Needs

- Lots and lots of charts, graphs, and data tables.
- A notebook or journal.
- Clear photos of the process, equipment, and results.
 - Make sure that any required safety equipment (gloves, goggles, tongs, hot pads, etc.) are clearly visible in the photo.
 - Make sure that anything identifying (faces, scars, t-shirts with school or camp logos on them, hair, etc.) is not shown in the journal or on display.
- A story that makes sense.
- Readable, attractive presentation “boards.”

Money-Saving Tips

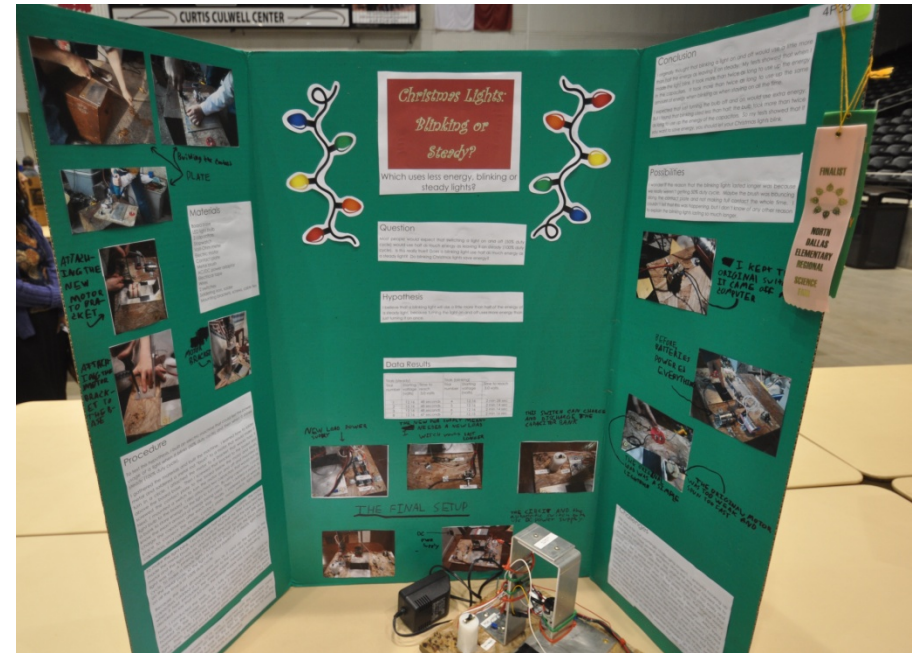
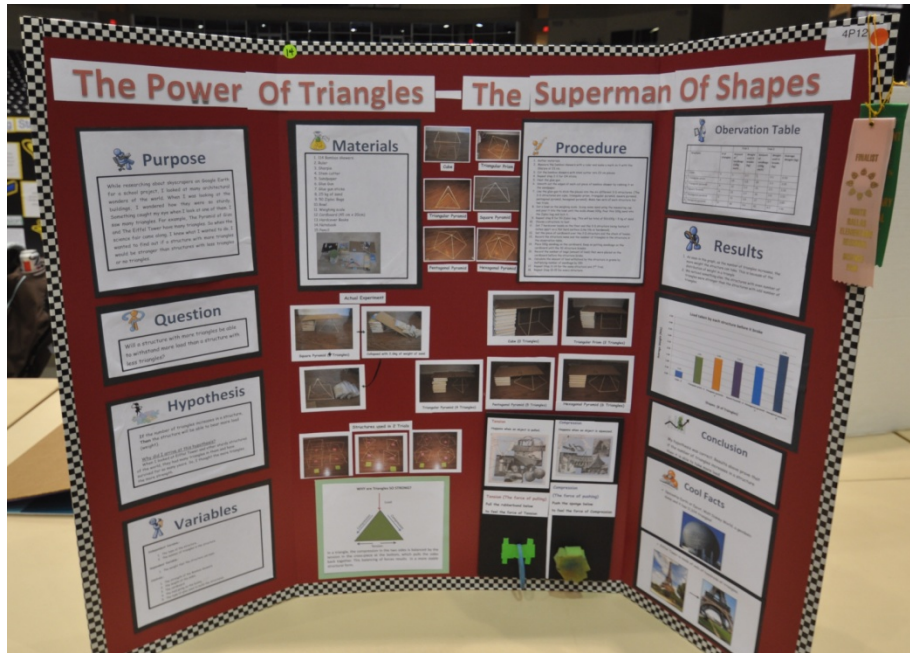
- Don't buy fancy letters.
- Print photos at home.
- Borrow equipment.
- Flinn Scientific Catalog.
- Let your child's creativity show.
 - Judges like hand-drawn illustrations.
 - Interesting photos are eye-catching.



Dog Door
Lemon



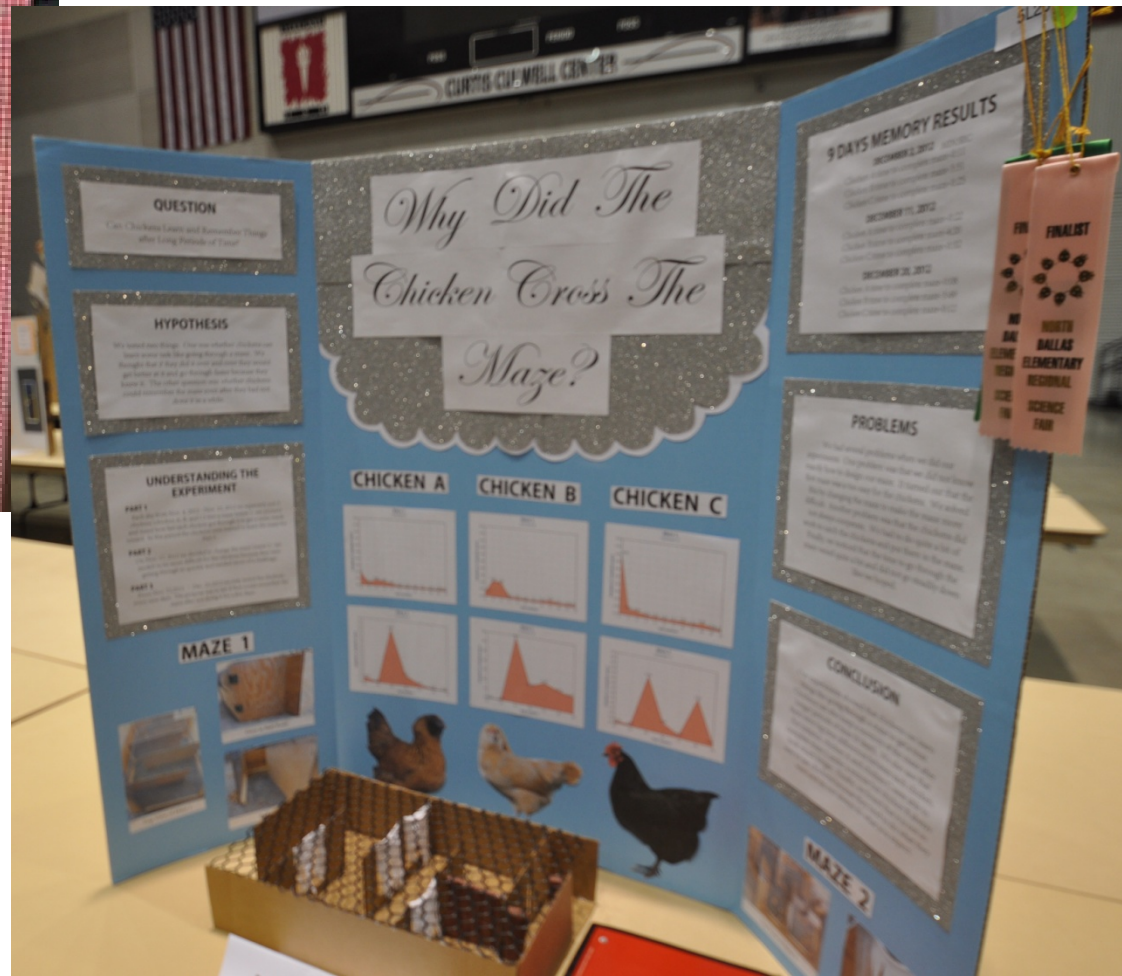
Some Eye-Catching Displays



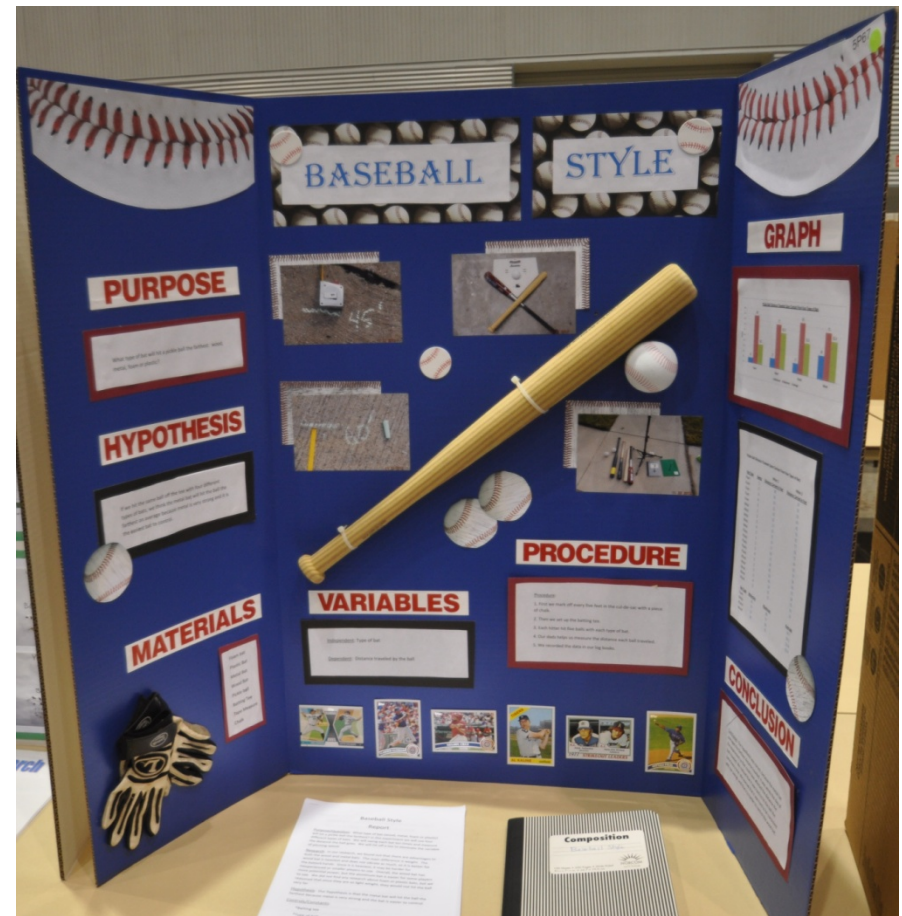
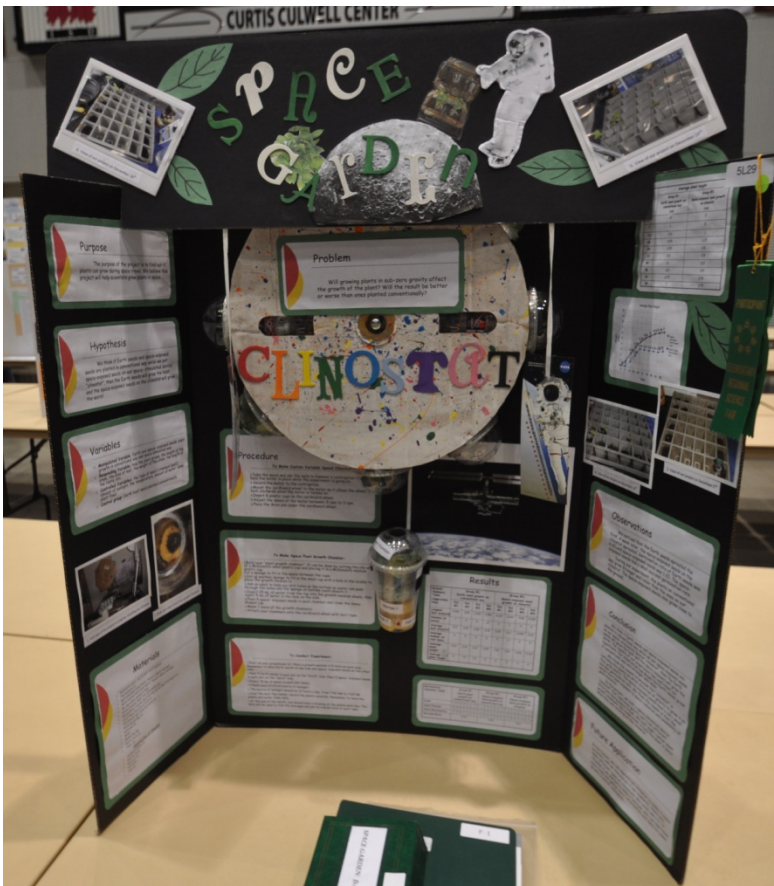
Some Eye-Catching Displays



Expectations change with grade level. Use props where needed.



Some Eye-Catching Displays



Contact: fredddallas@gmail.com or 214-340-4774

QUESTIONS?