



Austin Energy Regional Science Festival 2010

ELEMENTARY RULES FOR PARTICIPATION

1. Project Forms

Elementary Students grades 4–6 must complete an **Elementary Project Research Form** and submit it with their registration packets.

2. Scientist Training

The Scientist Training program is **no longer available** at the Elementary Level.

3. Projects That Are Not Allowed

No student in the Elementary Division will be allowed to design or conduct any science project that involves

- firearms, explosives, or discharge air pressure canister devices (i.e. potato guns)
- **growing bacteria or mold at home**
- causing pain, suffering, sickness, or death of an animal
- any activity or substance that presents a danger to the student or the environment, including hazardous chemicals or radioactive materials

4. Display and Safety Guidelines

All student projects must follow the guidelines listed below to be allowed to display in the festival exhibit hall.

Items Not Allowed

- **No organisms; living, dead or preserved (plants or animals)**
- No human/animal parts or body fluids (for example, blood, urine)
- No human or animal food
- No bacteria or mold cultures
- No liquids – laboratory/household chemicals including water
(Exceptions: water integral to an enclosed apparatus or water supplied by the Display & Safety Committee)
- No poisons, drugs, controlled or hazardous substances
- No sharp items (for example: syringes, needles, pipettes, knives, tacks, nails)
- No glass or glass objects unless encased or an integral and necessary part of a commercial product (for example, a computer screen)
- No pressurized tanks or containers
- No batteries with open top cells (so that battery acid can be seen)
- No dirt, soil, gravel, rocks, sand, waste product, etc.
- No project, device, activity, or substance that may be deemed hazardous to student health or safety
- No photographs or pictures of animals or people in surgical techniques, dissections, or necropsies.

Exception

Students in **1st – 3rd grades** may have **properly sealed*** specimens (dead or preserved plant or mineral materials) as part of their project display. However, **no animal or human food is permitted.**

* "Properly sealed" means items cannot leak odor, liquid or particles out of their container. Items must be double bagged in sturdy (freezer) bags OR they must be placed in clear, plastic containers with the lid sealed using clear book tape. All items (such as shells, rocks, leaves, soil, etc.) must be dried before sealing. We suggest that bags be attached to the project board with clear book tape for safe and neat display.

(More on next page)

Discouraged Items

- Expensive, breakable, or fragile items.

Allowed and Encouraged Items

- Photographs, drawings, stuffed animals/artificial plants, or imitation (play) food should be used to depict the prohibited or discouraged items.
- Students should always plan on taking photographs of their project steps as a visual explanation of their effort. Students must ask permission before photographing any other individuals for display on project.
- Be sure to properly credit/acknowledge all photographers on the display board (Photograph taken by ...).
- Students may use a computer and printer for written parts of the project.
- Electrical projects may use batteries as sources of electricity.

5. Display Board

Project display should be on sturdy 36" x 48" tri-fold board available at local craft and office supply stores. Written material, drawings, and pictures should be securely attached to the display board.

Projects will be displayed on tables that are 36 inches high. Size of display boards may not exceed the following measurements: 30" deep, 48" wide, and 72" high. Due to space limitations, displays that exceed these measurements cannot be accepted.

6. Electricity for Your Display

- Electrical projects may use batteries as sources of electricity.
- If a project requires electricity, indicate this need when registering the project online.

7. Project Organization at Austin Energy Regional Science Festival

(See Project Types & Judging Criteria in this document or on the website for more details.)

A. Grade Level: Each project is categorized by grade level or grade level equivalent

B. Project Categories: There are three types of projects that students may enter. These categories are explained in detail later in this guide.

- (1) Collection with Classification*
- (2) Exhibit: Demonstration, Model or Display*
- (3) Experiment*

***Students in Grade 4 and up are strongly encouraged to enter either Exhibits or Experiments rather than Collections.**

Note: Many students have difficulty discerning the difference between Exhibit and Experiment projects. Remember, an **Experiment** follows the steps of the scientific method. It clearly asks a question to which you do not already know the answer without testing. An **Exhibit** is an explanation of how or why something works. It reveals details about the topic. An Exhibit is an explanation, not a question.

(More on next page)

8. Parental Help

Some students are fortunate to have parents who have time to help them. However, parents who do the thinking or build the project for them do not really help students. Parents are encouraged to help their children in these ways:

- Read and discuss the “Rules for Participation”
- Select projects which are appropriate for the child’s age and grade level
- Plan and manage project work, documentation and clean-up times
- Take your child to the public library or other places for research
- Help draw straight lines for a young child
- Listen to your child’s oral explanation of the project
- Ensure the child’s safety

Students must list any parental help in the References and Acknowledgements section of the project.

9. Registration Deadlines

All online registrations must be submitted at www.sciencefest.austinenergy.com by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 12, 2010. All paperwork must also be submitted to our office by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 12, 2010.

Due to space limitations, late registration will not be permitted.