

### STEP 4

#### What the Judges are Looking for

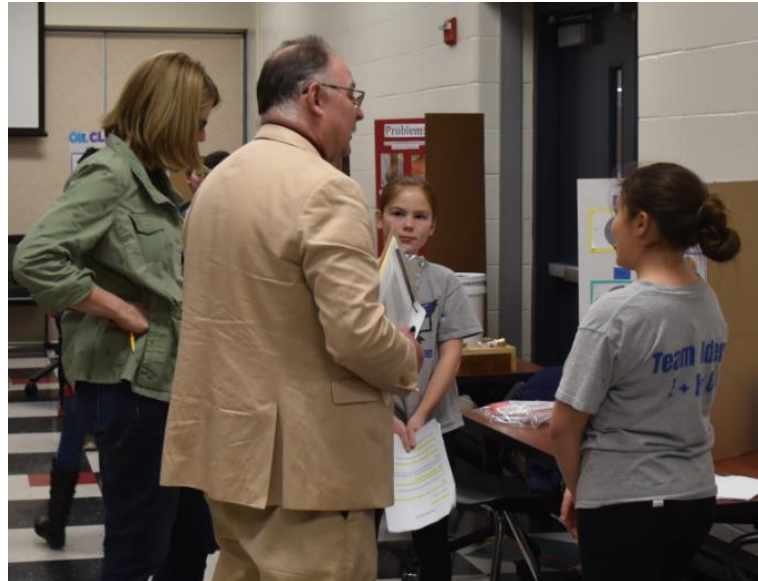


At this point, your project should be in progress. Keep working on it, and feel free to reach out to us with questions. As you work, it may be helpful for you to know what the judges will be looking for when you present your project to them, in order for you to have the best chance at a top score.

SCORING RUBRICS – We always share the actual rubrics that the judges use when scoring your project with our participants. There are four slightly different rubrics, depending on whether your project is science or engineering, and whether your project is an individual or team effort. You can find the judging rubrics on our website at [LakotaLEADS.org](http://LakotaLEADS.org) → Events → Science Fair, or you can email us at [LakotaScienceFair@gmail.com](mailto:LakotaScienceFair@gmail.com), and we can email them to you directly.

#### JUDGING PROCESS

Our Lakota fair is traditionally held at a Lakota building on a Friday evening in January. Participants will be given a range of time for judging, and they will need to stay with their project during that time. At least two judges will visit each project. They will look at your project trifold display and anything else you display related to your project. They will ask you to tell them about your project (this is the project presentation – about five minutes,) then they will ask questions, and you will answer them (about ten minutes). After two judges meet with you, you will still need to stay with your project. If the judges' scores are far apart, we will send a third judge to



review your project. Parents and other fair visitors will also be walking around to view the projects during this period, but you can tell the judges by their "Judge" lanyards and clipboards.

SCORING - Each judge will score your project separately, using the appropriate rubric. Your final project score will be the average of the two judges' scores. Your final score will determine if the project is rated Superior, Excellent, Good, or Satisfactory. Scores that average with a ".5" or higher will be rounded up, and anything lower than a ".5" will be rounded down. A third judge will rejudge a project if the two original judges' total scores are more than 5 points apart AND land the project in two different rating categories AND the average of the scores puts the project in the lower of the two categories.

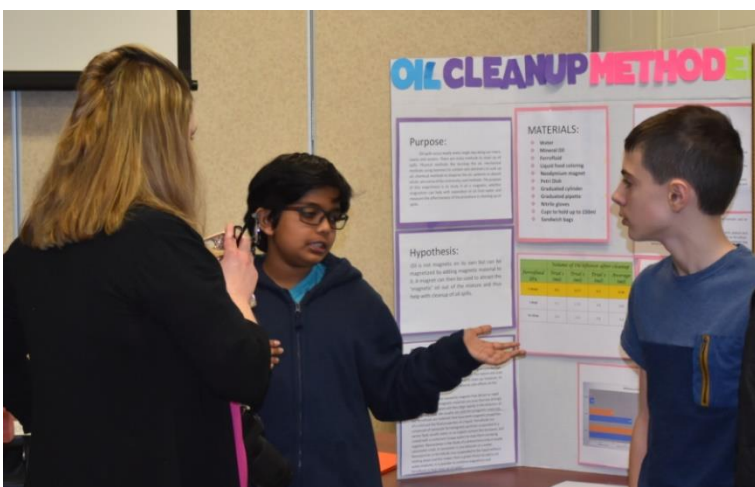
**COMMUNICATION** – The judges will score you on your oral communication (your project presentation and how well you answer the judges’ questions,) your written communication (information printed in your display, your project notebook and/or your optional project report,) and visual communication (your trifold and other materials in your display). We will go into more detail on each of these in future steps.

**ORIGINALITY** – As shared in Step 1, the judges score the projects on originality. They will investigate how you came up with your project idea, whether you modified it from readily available information, how well you understand your research and findings. They are looking for originality in concept relative to grade level (i.e., not “cookbook”, not classroom lab, not a simple extension of “found” idea) – New idea, concept, principle, insight, or non-obvious approach.



**DESIGN** – Experimental Design or Engineering Design is the core of your project. The judges want to see that your project was well planned and executed.

**DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING** – The judges will get some idea of this from your presentation, and a lot more from the questions they get to ask. They will probe your knowledge of the subject. The questions should be grade appropriate.



**TEAMWORK** – If you do a group project with 2-3 people, there will be a section on your rubric to score your teamwork. The judges want to see that all team members contributed equal effort to the project and all team members have a good depth of understanding (not just one dominant team member). It’s okay if different people focused on different parts of the project and have different expertise. You can convey this during your presentation – each team member should share the presentation time roughly equally, and each team member should answer some of the judges’ questions.

**PRIZES** – All projects will receive a ribbon and certificate reflecting their project rating (Superior, Excellent, Good, or Satisfactory). The top-scoring project with a Superior rating in each category will receive a trophy. All projects that receive a Superior rating are eligible to move on to the regional Southwest Ohio Science & Engineering Expo at the University of Cincinnati in the spring.

Having trouble? E-mail us your question at [LakotaScienceFair@gmail.com](mailto:LakotaScienceFair@gmail.com)!



**Lakota LEADS**  
Lakota's Enrichment and Academic  
Development of Students

**NEXT STEP: 5 - Maintaining Your Project Records**