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Free Science Fair Project Ideas, Answers,
& Tools for Serious Students



Science Buddies Newsletter
Issue 1
April 2008

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the first issue of the Science Buddies newsletter. We want you and your students to be inspired, so we see it as our mission to inform you about upcoming events, exciting news, new website features, and to offer you helpful classroom tips and tricks. Visit us online anytime at www.sciencebuddies.org to find out more about any of the articles you see here.

We've got some exciting announcements and information to share with you in this issue. We hope you enjoy.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Hess
Science Buddies Founder and President
www.sciencebuddies.org

News and Announcements

New to the Science Buddies Website!

[A Guide to Planning a Science Fair](#)

Whether you're planning an upcoming science fair or you're new to the process and want to get organized, this invaluable step-by-step guide is loaded with tools, tips, and tricks for teachers who want to offer their students the benefits of a full science fair event. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- **[A Guide to Planning a Science Fair](#)** Plan every step of your school science fair with this guide—from setting goals, to recruiting and training volunteers and judges, to announcing the winners. We've also included sample templates, such as contact lists and a school fair registration form, for your use.
- **[Judging Guide](#)** This guide features an introduction to the teacher, thorough instructions to print out for the judges' training, grade-level expectations, and scoring guidelines. This guide will also prepare judges for using the Judging Scorecards.
- **[Judging Scorecards](#)** We've provided three different scorecards, based on your students' levels of understanding. Simply select the appropriate scorecard for your students, then print and hand out copies to the judges on the day of the fair.

Science Fair Tips & Tricks for Teachers

[Science Project Enrichment Tools](#)

Science Buddies wants to help you and your students get the most out of the science fair project experience, which is why we want to pass along some great ideas from the experts...teachers like you! Below are the highlights of just a couple helpful tools. Visit our website to see a complete list.

[The Black Box of Project Improvement](#)

This tool involves giving students assignments related to their science projects, grading

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them according to set rubrics, and then offering students the chance to improve at each step. With the ability to utilize teacher feedback to improve their work, students take greater ownership of the process and ultimately improve the quality of their assignments.

Science Fair Passports

With this tool, each student who visits the science fair receives a "passport" containing spaces that he or she must fill in. Students who fill in all of the spaces win a small prize, but ultimately enjoy learning, communicating with, and being inspired by their peers' projects. The Science Fair Passports are an effective way to turn visitors into active participants, as well as to ensure that students displaying projects at the fair get the opportunity to talk about their projects and engage with visitors.

Science Fair Tips & Tricks for Students

The Science Buddies website not only offers hundreds of Project Ideas for students, but also provides information designed to help students succeed at science fairs. In this issue, we've focused on student tips for making a display board and preparing for the judging process. Be sure to share these tips and links with your students.

Making a Great Display Board

For almost every science fair project, you need to prepare a display board to communicate your work to others. In most cases you will use a standard, three-panel display board that unfolds to be 36" tall by 48" wide. ([Sample display board formats](#))

- Organize your information like a newspaper so that your audience can quickly follow the thread of your experiment by reading from top to bottom, then left to right. Include each step of your science fair project: Abstract, question, hypothesis, variables, background research, and so on.
- The title should be big and easily read from across the room. Choose one that accurately describes your work, but also grabs people's attention.
- A picture speaks a thousand words! Use photos or draw diagrams to present non-numerical data, to propose models that explain your results, or just to show your experimental setup. But, don't put text on top of photographs or images. It can be very difficult to read.

Preparing for the Science Fair Judging Process

Practice Makes Perfect

- Write a short "speech" (about 2-5 minutes long) summarizing your science fair project. You will give this speech when you first meet the judges. (Remember to talk about the theory behind your science fair project-why your project turns out the way it does.)
- Organize a list of questions you think the judges will ask you and prepare/practice answers for them. Practice explaining your science fair project to others and pretend they are judges.
- Practice explaining your science fair project in simple terms so anyone can understand it.

Presenting Yourself Professionally

- Always dress nicely for the science fair judging period—NO JEANS!
- Make good use of your display board. Point to diagrams and graphs when you are discussing them.
- Be confident with your answers; do not mumble.

Upcoming Events

Deadlines

- [Lemelson-MIT InvenTeams](#) InvenTeams are teams of high school students, teachers, and mentors who collaboratively identify a problem that they want to solve, research the problem, and then develop a prototype invention as an in-class or extracurricular project. Grants of up to \$10,000 support each team's efforts. Grant applications are due April 25, 2008.
- [RoboGames 2008](#) Students compete in over 70 different events with self-built robots. Registration closes on May 19, 2008.
- [Camp Galileo Summer Teaching Positions](#) Camp Galileo has 19 different locations throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and is currently seeking qualified, inspiring, science-loving instructors for their 2008 summer programs and classes. The camps focus on art, science, and outdoor summer enrichment activities for entering K through 5th graders.

Events

- [National Environmental Education Week](#) is April 13-19, 2008. National EE week promotes understanding and protection of the natural world by actively engaging K-12 students and educators in an inspired week of environmental learning and service before Earth Day.
- [Earth Day 2008: A Call for Action on Climate Change](#) Earth Day is April 22, 2008. This website highlights worldwide events happening on Earth Day, as well as ways you can make a difference in the environment.
- [National DNA Day](#) On April 25, 2008, students can participate in National DNA Day through a live, moderated online chat with NHGRI researchers.
- [Intel International Science and Engineering Fair \(ISEF\)](#) The Intel ISEF 2008 will be held May 11-17, 2008 in Atlanta, GA.

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