

**TERRA NORTHEAST  
REGIONAL SCIENCE  
& ENGINEERING FAIR**

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

### Selecting a Topic<sup>1</sup>

Try to keep it simple -- what question would you like to answer? Find a topic by looking to favorite hobbies, sports, books, toys or family life for inspiration. Or visit [Science Buddies](#).<sup>2</sup> (Note to teachers and parents: Please resist assigning a topic. Students put more time and energy into projects inspired by their own interests.)

Find out about your topic by asking professionals in the field, consulting the librarian to find reference books, materials and magazines, and accessing the Internet. (Note to adults: You may help your student locate resources; you do NOT prepare reference lists or fact sheets!)

### What do I want to accomplish?

You may want to share something you learned as part of your Science Olympiad competition or your 4-H project. Or perhaps you have been teaching a dog hand commands and want to learn more about obedience training. Telling the fair judges about your work will improve 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, 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. This can be one or many pages and it can contain charts, illustrations and photographs. You can include:

- The topic's name, why it was chosen and what you hoped to find out.
- A bibliography of the research information. Cite *every* source you use!

For images and data downloaded from the Internet, you must include date of access as well as the *complete* URL! (Note: "wiki.com" is NOT a complete URL.)

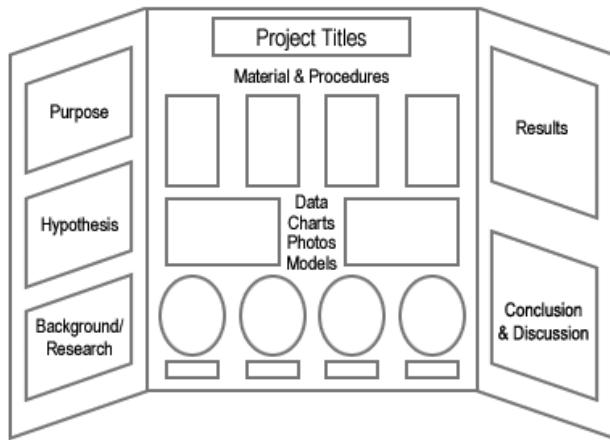
<sup>1</sup> You will find more on choosing a project idea at the end of this guide.

<sup>2</sup> *Science Buddies URL* [http://sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/project\\_ideas.shtml](http://sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/project_ideas.shtml)

### Terra Northeast Regional Science and Engineering Fair

## Required Exhibit and Presentation

The exhibit is how your topic is communicated visually.



You need:

1. A free standing display board  
(purchased or homemade will be fine)
2. Drawings, photographs, charts or anything else that describes your topic visually. See sample board to the left.  
(You MUST cite the source for each item, including the photographer's name for any photos. If one person took ALL the photos on your display, one label suffices.)
3. That written report you already

prepared (Your report can lie on the table in a notebook or be attached inside a folder). The maximum space allowed for each exhibit is 48 inches wide by 30 inches deep by 72 inches high (above table top). Include in your display photos of any part of the exhibit that does not fit in this space. Be sure to bring all the supplies you need, including tape, scissors and markers. Label *everything* with your own name and your school's name. Set out your written report.

Now, prepare your oral presentation (3-4 minutes). Talk briefly about how and why you chose your topic, and the work you did to learn about it. **YOUR TALK IS VERY IMPORTANT, AND MUST BE BRIEF.**

## More about Project 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; the TNRSEF does allow teams of two or three students. That will affect how you choose your project 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 stop 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 there's a question you've not found an answer to yet. Voila - the topic you want to learn even more about!

## Terra Northeast Regional Science and Engineering Fair

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