

Tips for Science Projects

- **Number One:** always consider safety first! Will there be adequate supervision? Are there any steps that will require adult assistance or protective gear of some kind? Make sure the student lists these in the Materials and Methods (Procedure) section. No project should be started without your approval of the plans. It is wise to have parents also sign their approval on the plan itself.
- **No cruelty to people or animals** is appropriate in science projects (Consult the California Ed. Code for regulations).
- The project should be based on a subject that **truly is of interest** to the student.
- **Good research is key!** It should come before planning and continue during the project. The Internet, books, magazines, television shows, newspapers, and even interviews with knowledgeable people are all good.
- Make sure **each student keeps a log**, recording every time anything is done for the project, including research and class discussion. Data is also recorded here.
- The **written plan should be so clear** that another person could copy the procedure exactly.
- Check the plan to see that there are **enough trials and examples**.
- Including **pictures of the work in progress** and/or results can be very useful.
- Students should **look for patterns**, or lack of patterns in the data. This is made much clearer by including tables, graphs, and age-appropriate statistical treatment. All these (and all pictures) should be clearly labeled.
- **Graphs should use comparable scales**, so that they can be compared easily.
- **Ask the math department** of your school how they handle graphs, so that you can cooperate with them.
- **Ask the English department** how they treat bibliographical references, so that you can cooperate with them.
- Have students **get their project proofread** before finishing it; it is very hard to find your own mistakes and spellcheckers can't catch everything. Neatness, good spelling and grammar all give the best impression to viewers.
- First and last: ***attention to safety is the first concern!***

