



Hello young scientists and parents of young scientists! The BPC Science Fair committee wanted to provide a brief outline of what to expect from this year's science fair, as well as highlight some changes that we've made from previous years.

One thing we noticed from the last few science fairs is that the projects can generally be put into two broad categories: the more **traditional** science project based on the *scientific method*, and a more **demonstrative** project which explains or shows a scientific principle in action. We think both are amazing, and want to encourage our young scientists to explore science in whatever way is fun for them!

In the past, however, we haven't really delved into the difference between the two, and we'd like to address that. Please note, one is not "better" than the other--they are just different! Let's take a look at a simple example: paper airplanes.

A **traditional** science project might seek to use the scientific method to see which material provides the farthest flight. They would pose a question to themselves, think about what they know about paper airplanes already, do some research, and make a hypothesis (take a guess) as to which material is best. Then they would start experimenting! This could be making the same paper airplane out of various materials, some lighter than others, some heavier, and seeing how far they fly. They'd record that information, analyze it, and present a conclusion, all nicely presented on a trifold poster board for the viewer to read.

A **demonstrative** project might tackle paper airplanes in a different way. The young scientist might begin by making a bunch of their favorite designs and exploring what makes each design fly differently from one another. They might do some research into how and why the planes fly, and by extension, why real airplanes fly, and then bring some designs to show the viewer. They might explain or show with detailed instructions how to fold an airplane that flies the farthest, one that flies the highest, or one that does loops. The viewer might then get to try out the various designs.

In the past, we have used a very informal "scoring sheet" that really only focused on **traditional** science projects, and we want to broaden that to **demonstrative** science projects as well. Some of what you might be looking for in a **traditional** science project doesn't really apply at all to a **demonstrative** one and vice versa. For instance, a demonstrative project doesn't necessarily need a hypothesis to be successful.

We are sending home evaluation criteria for both types of projects to help guide your young scientist into making the best project they can. But please remember, the science fair is all about fun and exploration--the evaluation criteria is to help guide the students.

Each student will be awarded a spirit stick and a participation ribbon for their hard work! Thank you so much for your participation in the Brook Park Elementary Science Fair! We can't wait to see what our young scientists come up with!

--BPC Science Fair Committee
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