# MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCIENCE FAIR

HOW TO REGISTER AND MORE!

# DISCLAIMER:

THIS PRESENTATION IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCIENCE FAIR RULES AND PROCESSES

FOR FULL DETAILS, REFER TO OUR WEBSITE
http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/index.cfm

# QUICK OVERVIEW

Step 1: Read the ISEF and ScienceMontgomery Rules and the pages of the ScienceMontgomery Website

Step 2: Choose a topic of interest, do background research, work with teachers and mentors, and write your research goals/plans

Step 3: Obtain any pre-reviews and pre-approvals as required by ISEF and Science Montgomery and fill out paperwork

Step 4: Conduct your experiment, gather and analyze data, and write up your conclusions

Step 5: Complete any post-experiment paperwork required by ISEF and Science Montgomery

Step 6: Register for the fair on the ScienceMontgomery website and submit all paperwork

Step 7: Check your email and fair account and follow up to ensure you get approved to enter the fair

Step 8: Once accepted into the fair, prepare a tri-fold poster for presentation at the fair

Step 9: The day before the fair, set up your poster at the fair location and have it inspected by safety and display volunteers

Step 10: Present your research to judges at the fair on Fair Day!

Step 11: Attend the awards ceremony the day after the fair to receive your awards

# STEP 1

- Read the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) and ScienceMontgomery Rules:

  http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/index.cfm?action=students.rules

- Read the ScienceMontgomery Website carefully and pay attention to instructions and deadlines:

  http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/index.cfm

# STEP 2

- Choose a topic of interest and problem or question to investigate
- Seek help from a teacher or mentor
- Do background research to learn about your topic
- Form a hypothesis (educated guess) about your results and devise an experiment to test your hypothesis
- Write a detailed research plan to implement your project. The research plan should follow the format on the ISEF website https://member.societyforscience.org/document.doc?id=642.

# STEP 3

- BEFORE your start your experiments, obtain all necessary pre-approvals and signatures on required forms and fill out the required forms.
- Use the ISEF Rules Wizard https://apps2.societyforscience.org/wizard/index.asp to determine what forms and pre-approvals are needed for your project.
- Some examples of necessary pre-approvals include:
    - Institutional Review Board (IRB) pre-approval if your study involves work with humans
    - Scientific Review Committee (SRC) pre-approval if your study involves potentially biohazardous agents, vertebrate research, or other types of work per ISEF regulations
    - A Risk Assessment form may be required before you start your experiments
    - Other forms that may be needed include the Qualified Scientist Form, Human Participants Form, and the Vertebrate Animal Form
- Refer to the ScienceMontgomery website for more details on forms and pre-approvals: http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/index.cfm?action=students.forms

# STEP 4

- Conduct your experiment to test your hypothesis and implement your project plan.

- Gather and analyze data. This process should include determining any limitations or problems in your data or experimental methods.

- Write a discussion of your results and state your conclusions as supported by your data.

# STEP 5

- Obtain post-experimentation signatures and fill out any post-experimentation forms as required by ISEF and ScienceMontgomery.

- To determine which signatures and paperwork are needed after experimentation, read your required forms carefully.

- Refer again to the ISEF Rules Wizard and ScienceMontgomery Website to ensure you have filled out all necessary paperwork (http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/index.cfm?action=students.forms).

# STEP 6

- Once you have all of your paperwork gathered and fully completed, read the registration instructions on the ScienceMontgomery website: http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/index.cfm?action=students.howToRegister

- Register for the science fair at: http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/index.cfm?action=students.regClosed

- If you are registering as a team, refer to rules for team projects: http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/index.cfm?action=students.rulesForTeamProjects

- Submit all of your paperwork according to deadlines and instructions on the ScienceMontgomery website.

# STEP 7

- After your paperwork is received, it will be reviewed by ScienceMontgomery

- ScienceMontgomery will email you after our review to say that you are:
  - Accepted into the fair or
  - Need to make changes to your paperwork or
  - Withdrawn from the fair

- It is your responsibility to provide a correct email address when registering, check your email, and check your online fair account for any requests from ScienceMontgomery

- If ScienceMontgomery requests changes to your paperwork, you must complete these changes by the given deadline in order to participate in the fair.

# STEP 8

- Once you have received an email from ScienceMontgomery stating that your project has been accepted into the fair, prepare a tri-fold poster for presentation at the fair

- For rules about preparing your poster and presentation area at the fair, refer to http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/index.cfm?action=students.setupAndSafety

# STEP 9

- The day before the fair, set up your poster at the fair location

- During poster set up, you MUST have your poster and display area inspected by safety and display volunteers BEFORE you leave the fair site.

- Bring everything you need for your presentation on this set up day. You will not be allowed to bring additional items into the fair on fair day unless you obtained a property pass for those items at set up.

- For rules about what is allowed at the fair, refer to http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/index.cfm?action=students.setupAndSafety

# STEP 10

- BEFORE the daty of the fair, read the fair day rules: http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/index.cfm?action=students.fairDayRules

- On the day of the fair, be sure to arrive at the time posted on the ScienceMontgomery website

- Present your research during the judging period:  Plan a 3-5 minute description of your project to present to the judges (NOT a memorized spiel, but a mental list of the points you want to make).

- Plan to have fun asking questions of the judges and talking to your peers about their projects.

- You may be interviewed by both Category Judges and Community Awards Judges

# STEP 11

- Attend the awards ceremony the day after the fair to pick up your awards.

- The ceremony location and time is posted on the ScienceMontgomery website.

- It is important for you attend the awards ceremony. We will send unclaimed awards to schools, but we will not be responsible for following up on or providing missing awards after that point.

# Common Problems

Common problems that lead to required revisions or project rejection include:

- Missing some or all required paperwork
- Scanned paperwork is difficult to read
- Forms are not filled out completely and/or do not have all required signatures
- Using date of signature instead of date of acknowledgment when signing forms
- Research plan is incomplete and does not provide enough information for the Scientific Review Committee (SRC) to evaluate

# Common Problems Continued

- Not realizing that research requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval because it just involves the student and his/her parent or sibling.
- Not realizing that research requires IRB approval because the student is developing a program that analyzes information taken from text messages/discussion board postings.
- Not realizing that anything done at a Community College or similar location is being done at a "Regulated Research Institution", and as such all of the "Regulated Research Institution" paperwork must be filled out by the institutional officials.
- Not realizing that the project can't be done at home because of safety issues.

# Common Problems Continued

SSP/ISEF also provides a list of common problems with projects:

https://student.societyforscience.org/common-scientific-research-committee-src-problems?mode=topic&context=6