

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

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Science Project Enrichment Tools

Peer Review

Submitted by Laurie Peterman, a teacher at Andover High School in Andover, Minnesota.

Key Objective

Have students interview each other about their science fair projects to help them build confidence, enhance presentation skills, and learn to evaluate and implement feedback.

Applicability

Grades six and up

Description

During Peer Review, small teams of students interview their peers regarding their science projects and provide feedback on evaluation forms regarding how each student could improve his or her project. Peer review can be conducted in the classroom before the science fair occurs, or if time allows, at the science fair itself.

Implementation

Getting Students Ready

Prepare students for Peer Review by showing them the appropriate [Science Fair Project Judging Scorecard](#). Using the scorecard as a guide, explain what characterizes a strong science project.

Have students prepare questions to ask one another, such as:

- Why is this project important?
- What does your data tell you?
- How is your project innovative?
- What problems did you run into while doing your experiment and how did you solve them?
- What would you change if you were to do the project again?
- What are the three most interesting things that you learned when doing this project?

Provide students with the [Peer Review Worksheet](#) to guide them in writing helpful evaluations.

Peer Review in the Classroom

If you choose to set up peer review in the classroom, ask about ten students per day (depending upon the length of the class time) to bring in their projects. The other students in the class will serve as reviewers, in teams of two. Each review team should review 1–2 projects, depending on the length of your class period. Organize the time by setting a timer for 8 minutes for each review round. The reviewers should work in pairs. For the first 5 minutes, each pair should interview one student (or team of students) who did a project. Then each pair should go to the back of the room and confer for 3 minutes. On the [Peer Review Worksheet](#), they should write down:

- LIKE: one aspect that they liked about the project.

- CONCERN: one concern that they had.
- SUGGESTION: a concrete suggestion to address the concern.

If you conduct peer review in the classroom, hold the review time close enough to the fair so that students retain the confidence that they will gain from practicing and improving their projects. However, allow enough time between peer review and the fair for students to make any changes suggested by reviewers.

Peer Review at the Fair

You can also implement the same type of peer review at the fair if you have a long time period for students to visit each other's projects. Have pairs visit students' projects and ask them their questions. Then they can take time to confer and provide their evaluations. Make sure the reviewing students are prepared in advance with the questions they will be asking, as well as with the evaluation form that includes their likes, concerns, and suggestions.

Resources

Use the following Science Buddies resources for this Science Project Enrichment Tool:

- [Science Fair Project Judging Scorecard](#)
- [Peer Review Worksheet \(pdf\)](#)

Benefits

Laurie Peterman reports that her students have received the following benefits:

- The chance to practice their presentations among peers, which is naturally a lower-key situation for most students than interviews with adults
- Confidence and poise
- Feedback from others, which directed them in improving their work—a key skill that is relevant to working in the real world

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