



**STUDY  
COMPARE  
DECIDE...**

**a consumer decision-making guide for 4-H**

# STUDY – COMPARE - DECIDE

## Table of Contents

What is Decision-making? . . . . .	1
Why is Decision-making Important? . . . . .	1
Where and How to Start . . . . .	2
Sharpen Up . . . . .	3
Classes . . . . .	3
Judging Cards . . . . .	4
Make Your Decision . . . . .	5
Giving Reasons . . . . .	5
Sample Reasons . . . . .	6
Your Manner is Important . . . . .	9
4-H Sportsmanship . . . . .	10
Suggested Outline for Guides. . . . .	10

# STUDY – COMPARE – DECIDE

## WHAT IS DECISION-MAKING?

1. Decision-making is something you do every day. All through life, you are making decisions – what to wear, what to eat, what to buy, what friends you want and many, many more decisions.
2. You use your judgment every time you make a decision or choice.
3. When you judge, you make comparisons and tell why you made a particular choice.
4. Every 4-H member must first decide what project he or she will take. The best choices are based on facts. In your 4-H work, you will learn how to select one article or product instead of another according to certain standards and qualities.
5. Judging will help you gain understanding of qualities and desirable standards.

## WHY IS DECISION-MAKING IMPORTANT?

Through decision-making, you learn - - -

- . . . to recognize good and bad points in products or workmanship
- . . . to make close observations
- . . . to make your own decisions
- . . . to express yourself clearly
- . . . to appreciate others' opinions
- . . . to improve your own work
- . . . to sharpen your judgments

For more information on 4-H decision-making projects and the roles and responsibilities of a volunteer coach, please see **Minnesota 4-H Consumer Decision-Making Program Guide for Extension Staff & Coaches** available at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-H/events/ConsumerDecMaking/docs/Consumer-Decision-Making-Program-Guide.pdf>.

## **STUDY**

### **WHERE AND HOW TO START**

Before the youth can make decisions about garments, articles, animals, or products, they must know what qualities they are looking for. There are many ways and places for them to find this information or help.

#### **4-H Meetings**

The youth's local club meeting is a good place for them to "learn to do by doing." As they work with their project, their leader will help them:

- . . . to set standards for good work before the work is done.
- . . . to see improvements they need to make.
- . . . to check their project to see if they have learned and practiced the principles they have been taught.

#### **Project Records**

The efforts put into this program should be reflected in the Project Record. Examples of Project Records by age group can be found at [https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_4h\\_project\\_records](https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_4h_project_records). Members follow these 12 steps documenting their accomplishments over the year in the project report for each of their completed projects. They also can attach supporting project books, pictures, and/or stories.

#### **Other Club Members**

Through sharing ideas, the youth will learn to be a better decision-maker. Discuss articles, products, or animals with their fellow club members and, as a group, decide how the article, product, or animal should be rated or placed and the reasons for their choice. They learn from each other and share in the successes or mistakes made in judging. A bit of friendly competition will help the youth to sharpen their judgment.

#### **Project Material**

The youth should learn and discuss the information in their project reference materials. They also should learn about the Score Cards for judging particular items.

#### **Exhibit Days, Tours, or Visits**

The youth should watch for opportunities to learn more about the subjects in which they are interested, such as being keen observers on tours or special visits.

The youth should watch an official judge make placings at a fair or exhibit. They should listen to the judge's comments; it will increase their understanding of placings and standards.

### **Club Judging Sessions**

The youth should ask their club leaders to plan a Judging Event for their club. This is a fine way to learn standards for specific projects and gain experience in judging.

## **COMPARE**

### **SHARPEN UP**

The youth should constantly try to improve their ability to make good decisions and observe standards. Whatever their project, wherever they go, they should see if they can pick the good qualities and poor qualities of the article or animal. They should compare one article or animal with another.

The youth should learn the names of the parts of the article, product, or animal they will be judging and words that describe exactly what they mean.

### **4-H JUDGING EVENTS**

Youth will want to participate in their local club and county 4-H judging events because:

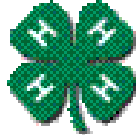
- . . . they get together with other club members
- . . . they learn more about their project
- . . . they can sharpen up on standards and quality
- . . . they can learn to develop their individual thinking skills
- . . . they can learn to make decisions
- . . . they gain experience in expressing their ideas in a clear-cut way
- . . . they learn the importance of poise, good posture, and good grooming

### **CLASSES**

The youth's 4-H leader, agent, judge, or the committee in charge of the judging events will select beforehand the classes to be judged; for example, a class of jeans, a class of cookies, a class of menus. A class is usually made up of four samples, exhibits, products, or animals. (In county or state events, youth generally judge four to eight classes, giving oral reasons for one or two classes. Written reasons also may be given.)

The youth will be given instructions for the classes they will judge, the time to be allowed for placings and reasons, and specific information about handling the exhibits, etc. The usual time limit for judging a class is 10-15 minutes --- 2-5 minutes for reasons.

# FLORIDA



<b>FLORIDA 4-H JUDGING CARD</b>	
CONTESTANT NUMBER _____ _____ _____ Class _____ _____ _____ _____	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <u>1-2-3-4</u>  <u>1-2-4-3</u>  <u>1-3-2-4</u>  <u>1-3-4-2</u>  <u>1-4-2-3</u>  <u>1-4-3-2</u> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <u>2-1-3-4</u>  <u>2-1-4-3</u>  <u>2-3-1-4</u>  <u>2-3-4-1</u>  <u>2-4-1-3</u>  <u>2-4-3-1</u> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <u>3-1-2-4</u>  <u>3-1-4-2</u>  <u>3-2-1-4</u>  <u>3-2-4-1</u>  <u>3-4-1-2</u>  <u>3-4-2-1</u> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> <u>4-1-2-3</u>  <u>4-1-3-2</u>  <u>4-2-1-3</u>  <u>4-2-3-1</u>  <u>4-3-1-2</u>  <u>4-3-2-1</u> </div>
CIRCLE THE PLACING WHICH SHOWS HOW YOU PLACED THE CLASS –  EXAMPLE: <b>2-1-4-3</b>  _____	
PLACING SCORE _____ REASON SCORE _____	
Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida	
<b>REASONS CARD</b> <b>CONTESTANT NUMBER</b> _____	

## JUDGING CARDS

At a contest, each contestant receives a judging card for each class. The cards should be filled out completely and accurately.

Note the information requested. First is the contestant's number or name.

When cards are received which have no contestant number or name, the scorers are unable to give credit for the placing score.

Next is the class. This refers to the kind of articles being judged; for example, measuring cups, jeans, menus, etc.

Along the right side of the card are numbers in various orders. Be sure the youth indicate clearly their placing on the judging card. One of the best ways to do this is for them to circle the placing they think is right. For example; if they think article number 4 is best; number 1 next best; then number 2 is third; and number 3 is last; they would circle 4-1-2-3 on their judging card.

Be sure the youth fill in the judging card correctly and completely before they hand it in.

The placing score and reasons score will be filled in by the tabulator and reasons judges.

## **DECIDE**

### **MAKE YOUR DECISION**

Members should have a system for judging. The keen judge is always orderly, never haphazard. The youth should take a look at the class from a distance; getting a view of the whole class from several angles. They should get in mind a clear picture of the whole class first, then examine each closer; feel or taste, if this is permitted.

They should look for something that stands out – an easy top or bottom. This helps the youth narrow the field for their placings and gives them a picture of the class that will stick in their mind for giving reasons.

When the top product has been selected, the youth should place the others in the order as they measure up to the top one.

This long-range is then confirmed or changed by a closer look and handling, if permitted.

### **GIVING REASONS**

Even if the youth places a class of articles correctly, they won't learn much unless they –

- . . . know why they placed the products as they did.
- . . . can easily explain their choices or “give reasons.”

In other words, giving reasons why they placed a class a certain way is probably more important than the actual placing. Giving reasons separates the luck guesses from the good

judges. Giving reasons helps members to organize their thinking and teaches them to express themselves in a logical, convincing manner.

Reasons can be given orally, written, or both. Members probably learn more by giving them orally if time allows.

These steps will help the youth give reasons:

1. **Opening Statement**

Give the Name of Class and Order of Placing.  
For example, I placed the class of sweaters – 4-1-2-3.

2. **Explanation** – is most important:

They should make a general statement about the entire class before discussing individual articles or products.

They should tell why the top article was placed first and compare it with the one placed second – then compare middle pair and bottom pair.

- . . . always try to tell why one item is superior to the next.
- . . . point out the outstanding differences between placings.
- . . . avoid such words as good, better, and nice. Be specific.
- . . . make reasons short and definite.
- . . . if the lower of two has some points where it is better than the higher one, be sure to mention it.

3. **Closing Statement**

The youth should repeat the name of the class and order of placing. For example, “These are my reasons for placing this class of sweaters 4-1-2-3.”

**SAMPLE REASONS**

**SAMPLE SET OF REASONS – COTTON SUNBACK DRESSES**

I place this class of cotton sunback dresses 2-4-1-3. The class has a close top. I place 2 over 4 because it is more suitable in both material and design for a sundress. Gingham is washable and the design is so simple that washing and ironing will be easier.

The design of 2 is more youthful than 4.



The checked bias on the edge of the pocket is more attractive than the large amount of contrasting color on 4.

The matching of the checks on all seams on 2 is well done.

The workmanship of 2 is the best in the group in every detail from the belt carriers made by thread to the corded buttonholes and the careful cutting of the material on the grain line.

However, I believe the dull check is not quite as attractive as a brighter color check might be for a sunback dress.

I place 4 over 1 because of laundering and care. The frill on 1 is difficult to keep looking fresh and crisp and may wear out before the dress fabric.

Dress 4 can be worn practically year round by adding a short jacket but 1 is more limited to the warm season because of its light color.

I place 1 over 3 because it is more youthful in design and also because 3 is a flimsy material. Seams in 3 are too narrow and have no finish to keep them from fraying. It would not give as long wear as any of the others.

For these reasons, I placed this class of cotton sunback dresses 2-4-1-3.

### **SAMPLE CLASS AND REASONS – BREAKFAST MENUS**

Let's think about reasons on a class of summer breakfast menus for 4-H club members. This will help the youth see how reasons can be given – both oral and written. We will not attempt to list everything. To do a complete job we also would need to know what was being planned for lunch and dinner.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Cooked Prunes<br>Bacon - Fried Eggs<br>Toast<br>Cocoa    | 2. One half Grapefruit<br>Soft-cooked Egg on Toast<br>Wheat Cereal with Milk<br>Tomato Juice |
| 3. Orange Juice<br>Scrambled Eggs<br>Toast - Butter<br>Milk | 4. Apple Juice<br>Pancake - Syrup<br>Sweet Roll<br>Water                                     |

### **Oral Reasons– Example I**

(Beginning) I placed this class of summer breakfast menus for 4-H club members 3-2-1-4.

(First pair - 3 above 2) I placed 3 first and above 2 because it most nearly fulfills the requirements for an adequate breakfast. It has the three important breakfast foods needed, a Vitamin C fruit, protein, and milk. 1 is attractive, tasty, and easily prepared. It

is low in cost. 2 has many of these qualities too, but 2 does not have enough milk. There should be at least one glass of milk included, and this amount would not be used on the cereal. 2 also included two Vitamin C foods, and this is not necessary.

(Second pair – 2 above 1) I placed 2 above 1 because the soft cooked egg in 2 should be preferred to the two fried foods in 1. 1 does not include a Vitamin C food. Prunes are good but a fruit rich in Vitamin C would be preferred. 1 does not include butter for the toast. 1 does have more milk than 2 but cold milk would be preferred to cocoa for a summer breakfast.

(Third pair – 1 above 4) I placed 1 above 4 because in 1 eggs and milk are included. 4 has too many sweets.

(Bottom) 4 is easily the bottom because it is least attractive, lacks nutritive value, has too many sweets, and lacks three important foods: milk, protein, and Vitamin C fruit.

(Summary) For these reasons, I placed this class of summer breakfast menus for 4-H club members 3-2-1-4.

### **Written Reasons – Example II**

In placing this class of 4-year-old (breed) cows 3-2-4-1, I found that the class fell into logical order from top to bottom, with 3 an outstanding top that closely resembles the ideal type, a dairy-like middle pair that easily places 2 over 4 with an obvious bottom in 1.

3 places over 2 because 3 shows more body capacity by being deeper in the heart girth and especially deeper in the rear rib and flank. 3 is fuller in the crops and is a longer, stretchier cow than 2 with a longer, cleaner head and neck. 3 carries out fuller in the rear quarters with a higher rear udder attachment. 3 shows more pronounced veining on the udder than 2. 3 is also neater and more refined at the tailhead and wider in the pins. I grant that 2 has more correct size of teats.

I place 2 over 4 because 2 has a more level udder floor, as 4 is low in the rear quarters, indicating a weak rear udder attachment. I credit 2 with more correct placement of teats which hang more perpendicular while criticizing 4 for having front teats set too far apart. 2 is leveler from hooks to pins with higher thurls and stands straighter on her rear legs. 2 is deeper in the chest and barrel and shows more spring and openness of ribs. 2 has more length and stretch, as 4 is a short coupled, shallow-bodied individual. 2 further excels 4 in smooth blending of shoulders. On the other hand, 4 has a stronger, smoother fore udder attachment with more veining on her udder.

In the bottom pair, 4 easily places over 1 because 4 has a more snugly attached udder carried higher above her hocks. 4's udder shows more symmetry with stronger attachments, both fore and rear, as 1's udder is badly quartered and loosely attached. 4 also has more desirable size and shape of teats. 4 is stronger and straighter on her rear legs with stronger pasterns. 4 is more nearly level across the top, showing more strength in the loin. 4 is deeper in the heart with smoother and tighter shoulders, as 1 is pinched in the heart and open-shouldered. 4 has a stronger jaw with smoother blending of head and neck.

1 places last because she has a poorly shaped and loosely attached udder. 1 is weak in the loin, high at the tailhead, pinched in the heart, open at the shoulders, and stands on crooked rear legs. I admit that 1 is level on the udder floor and is free of excess flesh, but shows poor dairy type and belongs at the bottom of this class.

### **The Youth's Manner is Important**

The confidence and poise with which they face the judge leaves a definite impression. They should be confident but not cocky. They should be courteous. While listening to their reasons, the judge considers the following points:

- . . . their ability to give accurate, clear-cut comparisons to justify their placings.
- . . . how well they know the important qualities and relative value of the class.
- . . . how well they organize and state their ideas.
- . . . their use of meaningful words and correct English.

The reasons the youth give on a class are scored on the basis of 50. The judge decides how well they have done. Then the score is put on the placing card.

### **MORE TIPS ON GIVING REASONS**

The youth should use the note-taking system that is simplest for them. Using notes will serve as reminders of things to mention when they give their reasons. Beginners, in giving their reasons, may use a few notes.

Reasons separate the lucky guesser from one who really knows. The youth should practice giving reasons at home in front of a mirror, family, or anyone who will listen. During a judging event, the youth should go off by themselves, if possible, organize their reasons, and get a mental picture of the class. They also should rehearse a bit to themselves.

### **AT A JUDGING EVENT, THE YOUTH SHOULD:**

1. Be on time.
2. Work quietly.
3. Avoid talking to other contestants. If they have a question, they should ask the person in charge.
4. Check their placing card before they turn it in. They should make sure they have marked it correctly and their name or number and the class name are on it.

## **4-H SPORTSMANSHIP**

“Keep your head when you win and your heart when you lose!”

Sometimes, the youth may dislike the way a judging event is handled or disagree with a judge’s decision. It is important for the youth to be fair and reasonable. Encourage them to state reasons why they disagree. Keep in mind judging is not like scientific testing.

- Even experts sometimes disagree.
- Standards change as research helps us know of improved practices and products.

## **4-H Club Members**

- . . . Play fair
- . . . Respect another’s right to his or her own opinion
- . . . Keep an open mind
- . . . Are willing to try again

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR GUIDES**

The following template is an outline for the Teacher Study Guide. Numbers 1, 2, and 3 comprise the content of the Student Study Guide; the Teacher Study Guide contains all the content of the Student Study Guide along with the additional information in Numbers 4, 5, and 6 to aid in instruction. Please see samples of prior years’ Study Guides for examples.

### **TEMPLATE**

1. Introduce Topic
2. Define characteristics and product attributes
  - a. What are they?
  - b. What are the pros and cons of each?
3. Summary table of attributes (suggested)
4. Suggested learning activities it is very helpful if the contributing author could include some suggested learning activities to help the youth better understand the product. Examples include: a chart for youth to fill in the pros and cons of different items in the class; field trip suggestions; etc.
5. Sample situation
6. Suggested solutions

☺ ☺ **GOOD LUCK!** ☺ ☺