

The Danish Judging System for events, contents, and projects

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The Danish Judging System is a method of evaluating a participant's product, skill, or exhibit based on established **Standards** or criteria of quality that originated in Denmark. It is primarily used in youth competitions, such as 4-H events and emphasizes learning and development over competition. In this approach, entries are judged against established criteria rather than against each other.



How is it used?

- Judges evaluate whether the standards have been met.
- Each item in a class is evaluated individually based on class standards.
- After evaluation, the class is subdivided into four award groups based on the scores and merits of each item (performance) relative to the standard.

What are the four categories for awards?

Blue – Excellent: the exhibit closely meets the standard and fits within the ability of most of the exhibitors (does not indicate perfection). Example of a numerical score: **90% -100%**.

Red - Good; indicate average or above average relative to standard guide, but there is room for improvement. Numerical score: **80%-89%**.

White - Fair; need improvement but meet the minimum standards. Example of a numerical score: **70%=79%**.

Green Participation – Pre-Junior exhibitors and any exhibits that did not meet the set standards. Example of a numerical score: - **69% - below**.

Why the Danish system?

- When applied correctly, the system recognizes a maximum number of exhibits or contestants.
- It recognizes the existence of, and allows for, minor differences in entries and performances while allowing for individual assessment.

When the Danish system is not applied correctly the following can happen:

- There can be too many or too few blue, red, or white placings. Ribbons may be awarded on a set bell-curve which pre-establishes the number of blue, red, or white awards allowable.
- Problems can arise if the application of standards is too rigid or too lax.
- Standards were not clearly understood prior to judging. When judging exhibits, allowances are made for age differences, abilities, and experience.

Are there any other things we should consider?

- Items should be judged against the standards, not against the field or each other.
- The exhibit shall never be judged on who the exhibitor is.
- Only the product, exhibit, or performance of the exhibit should be judged.
- Age should not be the sole factor in judging experience.