

# JAM judges

## Common Criticisms and Concerns we get from Teachers

### 1. Concerns regarding Project Design

Design and Materials - Design is worth 20 points. For example, in judging a trailers the copy of *DOT Inspection Sheet* you received identifies "it does not have a tongue jack" . You inform the student there should be a lift jack and student replies:

- "the person sponsoring the project did not want the expense of a jack."

Please inform exhibitor politely that the design is lacking a necessary function for utility and suggest that sponsors should be informed when they are presenting a project to be built and exhibited that it must meet certain design requirements for the project to do well in the show and pass inspections – in addition to jack, safety chains, lights and brakes (if more than 4000 lbs.) are required by DOT.

- Cutting the top rail on a utility trailer for a side entry gate may cause a reduction in load carrying capacity of trailer. Make sure the exhibitor understands this.

Sometimes when the exhibitor is asked about the reduction in strength their reply is the trailer will only be used to haul ATV's and will never be used to transport a tractor or other heavy loads. This is not a good justification. If the design has been compromised this should be pointed out to the exhibitor verbally and on the written critique.

Note: It is possible that the trailer has been redesigned to allow for this -if so recognize it.

### 2. Another comment we received from a teacher.

- "Please have your judges judge projects as-is instead of trying to criticize design or redesign the projects"

This contradicts what I described above. It is apparent that this teacher is not aware that design is worth 20 points and you as a judge are responsible for evaluating projects design. You would hope the teacher would appreciate your suggestions so they could improve the design in future projects?

The teacher's objective should be to encourage design and building the best not the minimum.

### 3. Another comment regarding design.

- "You require a 4 inch clearance for fender above the tire. This rule is not in DOT – why do I have to abide by it?"

DOT applies to safety and not utility. A fender rubbing on the tire may not be a safety issue unless it cuts the tire. This rule is in the JAM premium Book and carries as much weight as if it were a state or federal law if the trailer is to be shown at JAM.

Note: we also have other rules that are unique to our show. For example, we do not accept agricultural exceptions on the state and federal rules on a trailer. (We do accept an AG license plate.)

4. You asked the student WHY they used a specific product – example, electrodes, wire or cover gas and the student answers “because it was provided in their shop”.

Your response to this statement should then be to question - Why did your teacher select that product for your project? Write on the critique, exhibitor did not know why a mixture of cover gas was used. Put the responsibility back on the exhibitor and teacher.

5. Workmanship 30 points

Workmanship is the most important criteria and should be emphasized but be careful and not let WOW factors influence you too much just as you should not use GOTCHA for those that could be improved. One poor weld should not condemn the entire project. An outstanding paint job, especially a powder coat job should not WOW you with regard to workmanship.

6. Criticisms we should never get

- “Judges did not explain why my students received a Red ribbon”

I think this is a **legitimate** complaint and I hope we do not get this criticism in the future. There is no excuse for this.

Make sure to always identify on the Critique what could be improved. Do not just write on the critique Good Project with no explanation and give it a ribbon especially a red one. Be as specific as possible. Be sure that you have verbally reinforced any comments you make on the critique.

- “My kids projects were judged last. Judges used less than 5 minutes and minimal comments.”

This illustrates that judges spent too much time judging in the morning and ran out of time. This is not fair and should not happen. Exhibitors at end of day should get same time and respect as those judged in the morning. How would you feel if it was your son or daughter?

- “My students did not receive critiques or ribbons until late in afternoon.”

There is no reason this should happen. Judges should present ribbon and critique when finishing a project – should not wait until you finish entire class.

7. Another comment we get frequently

- “There is too much emphasis on the documentation – this is just a paper contest.”

BY THE WAY DO NOT REFER TO DOCUMENTATION AS A SCRAP BOOK – RIGHT MIKE JACKSON

We do expect a lot in documentation. **We know it promotes learning.** The best way to address this criticism is to emphasize the important things in your comments regarding documentation. Do not imply that drawings must be CAD. Proper pencil drawings are just as educational as computer drawings. Note: All careers require paper work.  
Do not spend more time with documentation than you do with workmanship.

These are criticisms we have received from teachers. With your help we can begin to address them. Your attitude and responses to exhibitors and explanations you write in the critiques will certainly help