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# 4-H Table Setting Contest - Procedures & Guidelines



The Table Setting Contest is open to all 4-H members ages 5-19. It will be held Wednesday, August 17 starting at 5:00 pm in the 4-H Youth Building at the Delaware County Fairgrounds, Walton.

Participants select a theme and display one place setting, including table covering, dishes, glassware, silverware, centerpiece, and menu. No food needs to be prepared.

## Why participate in the Table Setting Contest?

It is a fun way to learn how to:

- Properly set a table.
- Plan a nutritious meal.
- Express originality and creativity in choosing a theme.
- Present to a judge.
- Express knowledge of food, nutrition, and food safety.

The contest is divided into three divisions: Cloverbud (ages 5-7), Juniors (ages 8-11), and Seniors (ages 12-18). \*\*Note: Depending on the number of entries, divisions may be combined (minimum of 3 per division)

## Categories -

Members may enter only one category: Birthday, Casual, Formal, or Picnic (holiday theme can be in any appropriate category).

Here are some category hints:

- Formal = use candles (not lit), more than three pieces of flatware, china (no stoneware), tablecloth and/or mats are acceptable and cloth napkins.
- Casual, Picnic, Birthday = be creative! Theme can be indoors or outdoors. Use any type of cover (tablecloth, blanket, paper, etc.) and any type of table service. Overall place setting should be an expression of the youth's creativity; homemade touches are encouraged! It should be evident which theme you have selected.



## Guidelines in Creating Your Table Setting

Do you know that you can be a designer each time you set the table? A designer chooses and arranges things according to a plan for beauty and order. A neat, interesting, clean and attractive table setting makes any meal more enjoyable.

Actually, there is more than one way to set a table. The usual way to set a table is to put all the dishes, flatware, and food on the table before anyone sits down. When there is company or for a special meal, part of the food and dishes may be left in the kitchen and served later. Diners at a buffet or a picnic may fill their plates and glasses before they are seated. The way to set your table depends upon the way the meal is to be served. Be creative and have fun! Color texture, design and creativity are important.

For the Table Setting Contest, one place setting is to be displayed. Include table covering, dinnerware, stemware, flatware, centerpiece and menu. You **MUST** bring a card table for the display (except for the picnic category, in which an appropriate blanket or other covering may be placed on the floor).

**Select a Theme** — What is the occasion...a family dinner, a holiday, or lunch with friends? Select a theme which fits the occasion. Possibilities can run from a fishing party sack lunch to a formal Mother's Day dinner.

**Table Appointments** — These include any item used to set a table: tablecloth, placemats, dinnerware, glassware, flatware, and centerpiece. Choose table appointments to fit the occasion and carry out the theme. Paper plates, plasticware, and paper napkins may be used for a picnic but they would not be appropriate for a formal dinner. Flatware and dishware must be safe to eat from i.e., no glitter, glue, etc. is to be used on eating surfaces.

**Table Covering** — This is the background for the food and table appointments placed on it. It protects the table

and makes for less noise. Placemats and/or tablecloths may be used. Sometimes the table is left bare. Choose a covering which is appropriate for the occasion and the other table appointments. You may match or blend colors and textures in the dishes — or use something quite different for contrast.

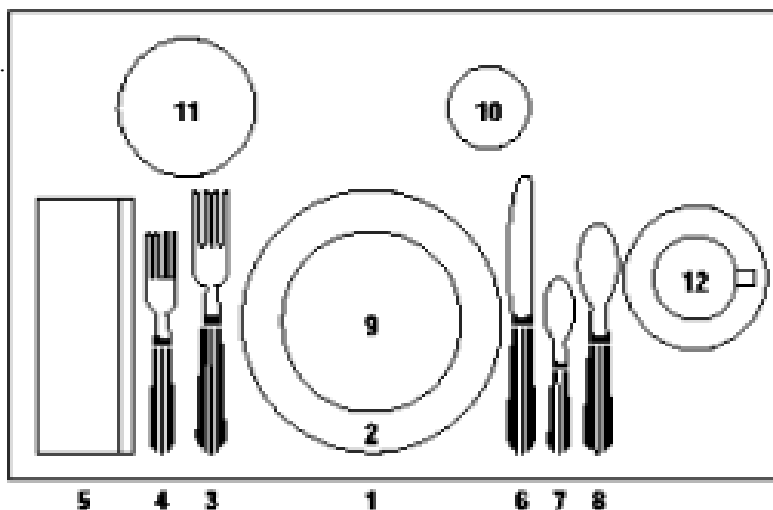
**Place Setting** — Allow at least 20 inches for each person's dishes. This is called a cover and each cover is set exactly the same. A cover contains the dinnerware and flatware for the meal served.

- Put the plate, china, pottery paper, glass, etc., in the center of the cover about one inch from the edge of the table. If a table is not used at the event, placement may vary.
- Place the knives and spoons on the right side, the forks (silver, plastic, etc.) on the left about one inch from the plate and one inch from the edge of the table. Turn the cutting edge of the knife towards the plate. If there is more than one piece in each cover, such as one dinner fork and a salad fork or one teaspoon and a soup spoon, place the one that will be used first outside the other.
- Napkins folded into oblongs are placed next to the forks with the fold to the left so it opens like a book. Decorative and creative folds are encouraged. Placement of the napkin may vary.
- The first beverage glass is placed about one inch above the tip of the knife. If serving more than one beverage, place additional glass(es) to the right of first glass in order served.
- If coffee or tea is served, the cup is placed on the saucer and set to the right of the spoon. Have the handle pointing to the right.
- Salad, bread and/or dessert plate(s) — or bowl(s) — may be placed at the top of the fork(s).
- When selecting your cover, include a dish for each course. Placement may vary according to how and when food is served.

(Continued on next page)

The following rules for setting a table correspond to the numbers seen in the table setting illustration below.

1. The flatware, plate, and napkin should be one inch from the edge of the table.
  2. The plate is always in the center of the place setting.
  3. The dinner fork is placed at the left of the plate.
  4. If a salad fork is used, it is placed to the left of the dinner fork.
  5. The napkin is placed to the left of the fork, with the fold on the left (unless a decorative/creative fold is used). The napkin may also go under a fork or on top of the plate.
  6. The knife is placed to the right of the plate with the sharp blade facing in towards the plate.
  7. The teaspoon is placed to the right of the knife.
  8. If a soup spoon is needed, it is placed to the right of the teaspoon.
  9. The soup bowl may be placed on the dinner plate.
  10. The drinking glass is placed at the tip of the knife.
  11. If salad, bread and/or dessert plate(s) — or bowl(s) — is used, place at the top of the fork(s).
  12. The cup or mug is placed to the top right of the spoons.
- Note: Only the utensils needed are placed on the table.



**Centerpiece** — The centerpiece should be coordinated with the table appointment and be appropriate for the occasion. Even though a single place setting is set, the centerpiece should be visible to all as if the entire table was set and should not obstruct anyone's view of each other. Centerpiece candles are NOT to be lit. Points will be deducted for lit candles.

**Menu** — When planning a menu, first decide on the main dish. Select appropriate vegetables, appetizer, soup or salad. Add a bread, dessert and beverage, if desired. Use My Pyramid to plan nutritious meals. Breakfast, party, and picnic menus should contain two or three food groups. Other meals should contain five food groups. Participants are encouraged to develop interesting and creative menus. For example, you might name a food to fit your theme. For more information about MyPyramid, go to <http://mypyramid.gov>

Note: The use of alcoholic beverages in any menu will disqualify table setting.

**Attire** - Participant's attire should correspond with the theme/occasion of their table setting. Participants may come dressed or change in one of the restrooms/or 4-H dorms.

**At the Contest** - The judge will spend approximately 5 minutes with each participant. The participant should be ready to answer any question posed about table setting, their menu etc. (See "Judging & Interview" on the next page).

**Registration & Set Up** — Please arrive 15–30 minutes prior to 5:00 p.m. to set up your table. You MUST bring a card table for the display (except for the picnic category, in which an appropriate blanket or other covering may be placed on the floor).

When you arrive, check-in at the 4-H Info Booth. You will be assigned a specific area to set up (numbers are taped to the floor). Areas are grouped by category.



Parents may help the younger 4-Hers set-up but please remember that this is the 4-Hers exhibit and they should do the majority of set-up. Senior 4-Hers should set-up their table setting with no help from parents.

**Judging & Interview** — During judging, you PRESENT your table setting to the judge by telling about your ideas and why you chose this particular theme. You should view yourself as a host and the judge as your guest. You should extend a welcome to your guest and present your ideas behind your theme, choice of menu, food preparation and food handling. You should also demonstrate an understanding of table setting techniques. Following your presentation, be prepared to answer any questions your guest may have. You should be able to describe the ingredients and preparation required for all menu items, as well as food safety.

**Public Viewing & Awards** — After all contestants have been judged, all tables will be on view for the public until 7:30 p.m. Ribbons will be awarded at approximately 6:30 p.m.

**After the Contest** — The 1st place exhibit in each category and division will be on display in the 4-H Youth Building in a reserved/roped off area. All other table settings may be dismantled after 7:30 p.m. that evening.

#### **Additional Information**

If you have questions, call Emily Roach 865-6531 extension 107 or email at [esc33@cornell.edu](mailto:esc33@cornell.edu)



## Writing the Menu

The menu should be displayed on a 4x6 or larger on your choice of medium (index card, ceramic tile, chalkboard, etc.) printed or typed by the participant. You may decorated and/or prop up the menu.

- 1) (a) List the foods in the order in which they are served.  
(Every menu will not include all the foods listed.)

Appetizer  
Main Dish  
Starchy Vegetable  
Other Vegetables  
Salad  
Bread  
Dessert  
Beverage

- (b) Group foods served in one course. Use single line spacing between food items and a double line spacing between courses.

- 2) Use CAPITALS at the beginning of all words except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions. Correct spelling is important.

- 3) When an item on the menu has an accompaniment:

- (a) place the main item to the left and the accompaniment to the right,  
**Braised Pork Chops                      Applesauce**
- (b) or you may center the main item and write the accompanying item underneath,

**Braised Pork Chops**  
**Applesauce**

- (c) if more than one accompaniment appears, place one at each side on the same line,

**Sesame Seed Wafers      Tomato Bouillon      Saltines**

- (d) or place both on the same line below.

**Tomato Bouillon**  
**Sesame Seed Wafers              Saltines**

- 4) When a food is commonly prepared in more than one way, avoid confusion by describing the method of cooking, such as: Roast Turkey or French Fried Potatoes.

- 5) List each food with the exception of butter, cream, sugar, or salad dressing, unless it is something special, such as Honey Butter or Poppyseed Dressing.

- 6) List beverages last.

- 7) Plan the spacing and arrangement of the items on the menu so that the written menu is symmetrical.

- 8) Consider creativeness when choosing names of menu items (except for formal menus). Formal menus must use original names of items. Ex. using Patriotic Punch for a 4th of July theme and Cherry Punch for a formal theme.

## EXAMPLES FOR A FORMAL MEAL:

Broiled Ham
Grilled Pineapple Slices
Cole Slaw
Hot Gingerbread with Applesauce
Coffee    Milk

Cream of Broccoli Soup
Curried Toast Fingers
Fresh Fruit Salad Plate with Lime Sherbet
Crescent Rolls
Glazed Chocolate Roll
Coffee    Milk

## Common Errors in Planning Meals

### PREPARATION AND TYPE OF FOOD

- No main dish
- More than one main dish
- Too many foods prepared in the same way, such as fried foods, creamed food, or foods with sauces
- Too many starchy foods
- Same fruit or vegetable more than once
- Too many high protein foods

### NUTRITION

- Too many foods from one food group
- Missing food groups
- Contain a variety of foods not meeting the nutritional needs of those for whom it is planned

### TEMPERATURE

- Too many foods of the same temperature
- Not enough time allotted for preparation

- Need to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold
- Food not stored at safe temperature (special consideration needed for picnics)

### FLAVOR

- All bland flavor
- Too many strong flavors
- Repetition of food or flavor
- No tart or acid-flavor
- Too many sweet or too many sour foods

### COLOR

- Too many foods of same color
- No contrast or variation
- Clashing or unpleasant color scheme

### TEXTURE

- Too many soft foods
- Too many chewy foods
- Too many crispy or crunchy foods
- Lack of variety in texture

### SIZE

- Too many mixtures
- Too many small pieces of the same size and shape
- Too many similar shapes
- Lack of variety in shape

# 4-H Table Setting Contest Score Sheet



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age (as of January 1st of the current year) \_\_\_\_\_

Division:  Cloverbud  Junior (ages 8-11)  Senior (ages 12-18)

Category:  Picnic  Birthday  Casual  Formal

Table Service (50%)	Comments
Is the complete cover correctly set? Is the tablecloth or place mat appropriate? Clean and Pressed?	_____ see back
Are the dishes and silverware appropriate?	
Is the centerpiece appropriate (color, height, occasion, visible from all sides)?	
Total effect – coordination of originality and creativity.	
Menu (20%)	
Menu: A minimum 4" x 6" printed or typed on medium of choice (may be propped up). Correct spelling, use of capital letters and foods in correct order as served.	
Food Choices: Do food preparation, type and variety of foods to be served compliment each other? Are the foods suitable for the occasion and theme? Nutritional value?	
Participant (30%)	
Is the 4-Her well groomed? Neatly and appropriately dressed?	
Interview: How 4-Her presents themselves (eye contact, clarity, volume of voice). Does the 4-Her demonstrate an understanding of table setting techniques and the menu, food preparation, and food safety?	
4-Her conduct and sportsmanship	

Ribbon:  Blue  Red  White

# 4-H Table Setting Contest

## SCORE SHEET



Cover not correctly set — see the following rule(s) for setting a table:

- \_\_\_ 1. The flatware, plate, and napkin should be one inch from the edge of the table.
- \_\_\_ 2. The plate is always in the center of the place setting.
- \_\_\_ 3. The dinner fork is placed at the left of the plate.
- \_\_\_ 4. If a salad fork is used, it is placed to the left of the dinner fork.
- \_\_\_ 5. The napkin is placed to the left of the fork, with the fold on the left (unless a decorative/creative fold is used).  
The napkin may also go under a fork or on top of the plate.
- \_\_\_ 6. The knife is placed to the right of the plate with the sharp blade facing in towards the plate.
- \_\_\_ 7. The teaspoon is placed to the right of the knife.
- \_\_\_ 8. If a soup spoon is needed, it is placed to the right of the teaspoon.
- \_\_\_ 9. The soup bowl may be placed on the dinner plate.
- \_\_\_ 10. The drinking glass is placed at the tip of the knife.
- \_\_\_ 11. If salad, bread and/or dessert plate(s) — or bowl(s) — is used, place at the top of the fork(s).
- \_\_\_ 12. The cup or mug is placed to the top right of the spoons.

Note: Only the utensils needed are placed on the table.