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4-H COTTON BOLL &
CONSUMER JUDGING

This study guide contains information that will help you prepare to judge the four classes that will be part of our Cotton Boll and Consumer Judging Contest this year.

The categories for 2023 are:

Family Games.....2

Bluetooth Speakers.....4

Cereal.....6

Athletic Socks.....11

Family Games

If you've been considering grabbing a couple of fun family card games for the household, consider it one of the best things you do for your family! Besides allowing your family to connect and bond deeper, keeping games at home has several other advantages. Scheduling regular game nights with the family is a great way to get into the habit of making everyone ditch the technology for a short period to enjoy one another's company. Another plus? You'll always have good card games to play with friends whenever there's company over. Choosing the right family card games can be challenging to do.

- *Age of Players*

When picking out a card game, it's essential to consider the players' ages because your goal is to bring home a game that appeals to every single member of the family. Family game night isn't that fun if the players aren't excited to play.

- *Engaging Concept*

Games that are family-friendly and about things that are relatively pleasant and relatively non-violent are preferred: for example, trains, food, history, cowboys, or cartoonish pirates. If a game is centered around a subject that you (or the people you're planning to play it with) find boring or distasteful, how often will you be able to play it? On the other hand, if it's centered around something you think is exciting, you'll enjoy it all the more.

- *Clear Rules:*

Clear and understandable rules are a must. If you need help understanding how to play or you have to check the rulebook every 30 seconds, it will not be fun. Also, you may want to read the list of components since more components may mean more complicated rules.

- *Workable number of players:*

Stay away from games that only accommodate a couple players. Keep in mind that your goal is to bring everyone together. Grab a couple of games that can be played with more players so each household member can feel included in the activity. Sometimes you see a game that looks really fun, but it requires ten players. Consider whether you have ten people together to play a game regularly in that situation. We usually find ourselves playing with one or more members of our families. Therefore, we play games with two, five, or six players. If a game only supports exactly three or four players, you won't have the chance to play it as often, so you probably aren't going to buy it.

- *Reasonable playing time:*

Any game you buy should fit into your family's schedule. For many people, if a game takes over an hour to play, they may not have enough time to play it very often.

- *Good Value:*

Price is always a factor when buying anything, but the price isn't just about the number on the price tag. Consider a game's price relative to other games. For example, if a game costs

\$25 and it's just a small deck of cards, that's probably not a good value. If a game costs \$25 and you get a deck of cards, 20 plastic miniatures, a stack of tokens, and a board, that's a good value.

- *Storage/Carrying*

Where do you intend to play the game? For instance, portability is a larger issue for someone planning to play the game in various locations. If you are only playing at home, your primary concern would be whether or not the game is easy to store. If you don't want to spend that much time cleaning up after a game session, it would be ideal to grab a game that doesn't come with a million tiny pieces, which could easily get sucked into that mysterious black hole.

Resources:

Questions you should ask before buying a Family Card game

<https://store.totemteam.com/en-us/blogs/news/questions-you-should-ask-before-buying-a-family-card-game>

Top 10 things to look for when buying a board game

<https://existentialreviews.com/top-10-things-to-look-for-when-buying-a-board-game/>

Bluetooth Speakers

The first stage in picking the best Bluetooth speaker to buy is to decide what you want to use it for. Some speakers may be for use in the home, others for outside, listening when you are barbequing outside, etc.; others may be a portable speaker for traveling. Before you can decide on the best speaker, it's necessary to determine what it is wanted for. The best-buy Bluetooth speaker for the home may not be the best for traveling, as the requirements will differ.

Battery Life

Battery life is a key parameter to consider. You want to avoid recharging the speaker every hour. It should be able to last as long as you expect to need it. Small speakers tend to have smaller batteries and a shorter battery life, but some larger speakers can last for 24 hours! More typical operation lengths are four to ten hours, which will be specified as the average battery life. A range of time is given for average battery life because the louder you play the speaker, the more current it will use, and the battery will last for a while before recharging. However, when buying the Bluetooth loudspeaker, ensure the battery life is long enough for your needs. Also, remember that the Li-ion batteries used do not like being completely discharged, so charge them up before you use the speaker, and don't leave it discharged. Also, as the batteries age, the amount of charge they can store falls.

Style

There are very many different styles which are available for Bluetooth speakers. This means choosing the type that most suit your tastes.

Size

Bluetooth speakers come in a variety of sizes. Small conical or cylindrical types are aimed at very portable operation and for packing into luggage, and larger ones tend to provide better quality audio. These may be rectangular or even again, cylindrical. Generally, the larger they are, the better the audio quality, and the larger ones can have a larger battery for more extended use.

Audio Power

Not all Bluetooth speakers have this parameter specified. When stated, it's given in watts. Ten watts is loud, although the speakers' efficiency in such a small case means they need to be more efficient. Be aware that more power is needed for large rooms and use outside.

Waterproof

As Bluetooth speakers are convenient and portable, you may end up using them near the pool or on the beach. Water and electronics don't mix, so it is often beneficial to have a speaker that has been made waterproof. Some speakers are even submersible, but it is more common to have water-resistant ones.

Charging Style

A standard USB charging port is an added convenience, especially when you're outdoors or at a friend's place and don't have the bundled cable. Most speakers stick to a Micro-USB port, which makes it possible to charge them with power banks, too, if you're away from a wall socket.

Buying a Bluetooth Speaker? Here's What You Should Keep in Mind

<https://www.gadgets360.com/audio/guide/bluetooth-speaker-how-to-buy-buying-guide-india-tips-1768719>

How to Buy the Best Bluetooth Speakers: buying guide

<https://www.electronics-notes.com/articles/equipment-items-gadgets/bluetooth-speakers/how-to-buy-best-bluetooth-speaker.php>

Cereal

Cereal is one of America's most-loved breakfast foods, and we all know why. It's easy to grab, tastes like your childhood, and it's delicious. But thanks to its high sugar content, cereal often gets a bad rap—especially when consumed first thing in the morning. Pick the wrong box at breakfast, and you'll need a nap before noontime and be well over the recommended daily sugar intake. The good news? Not all cereals are created equal, and there are plenty of healthy and tasty cereal options on supermarket shelves. Because the nutrition information can be overwhelming, this study guide directs you to key points to consider. Consumers should compare prices, nutrients, and food groups within each meal. The following information will help you choose a healthy and affordable cereal to meet your specific needs.

Limit the Added Sugar

When picking a breakfast cereal, find brands with a limited amount of added sugar. It's wise to pick cereals that have fewer than 10-12 grams of total sugar per serving. "Keep in mind that sweeteners go by many names—including syrups, like brown rice or corn syrup—and words ending in '-ose,' like fructose, sucrose, or maltose."

Choose a Whole Grain Base

We should always opt for cereals that have a healthy whole grain base or those that are labeled as "100% whole grain." This includes cereals made with ancient grains, like quinoa, millet, and sorghum, along with cereals made from brown rice and whole-grain corn. The higher you see whole grain ingredients listed in an ingredient label, the more confident you can be that the product is predominantly whole grain.

Look for Beneficial Ingredients

Just as you should look to avoid too much added sugar, you want to also look at factors that will help keep you full. Make sure the cereal has enough protein and fiber. Look for options with at least 3 grams of fiber and 3 to 4 grams of protein. Also steer clear of any cereals that contain partially hydrogenated oils, high fructose corn syrup, or artificial flavoring and coloring.

Check Serving Size

Be sure to check a cereal's serving size. Double-check what a serving size is. For example, if the box says a $\frac{3}{4}$ cup serving provides 5 grams of sugar, but you usually pour yourself 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of cereal, then you'll be getting 10 grams of added sugar in the morning. Serving sizes can be surprisingly small, which is particularly problematic if a cereal isn't rich in nutrients like fiber that aid in satiety. If you choose a healthy cereal in the first place, you will feel full after eating a $\frac{3}{4}$ cup serving. The more whole grains your cereal includes, the greater the chances that it will have fiber and protein that help to keep you satisfied.

MyPlate Food Groups

One place to start is to look at your MyPlate food groups. The best meals will have ingredients from multiple food groups. This will provide a wider range of vitamins and minerals while helping to keep you satisfied. Whole grains, fruits, and low-fat dairy are going to be the most common healthy foods found in breakfast cereals.

Remember, **grains** can provide carbohydrates (which give us energy), fiber, B vitamins, and the essential mineral iron. Whole grains, (oats, popcorn, brown rice, and whole wheat), are healthier choices than refined grains (enriched white flour, corn meal, and white rice) because whole grains provide more fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Fruits: provide fiber and healthy natural sugars.

Calories: Consider the calories in the portion size you plan to eat. While calories are not the only piece of nutrition information you should consider when choosing a meal, they can help guide you in making the best choice.

Carbohydrates: Under normal, healthy conditions, carbohydrates are our bodies' primary source of energy. It's important to get carbohydrates from your food, but some sources of carbohydrates (like whole grains) provide more nutrients than others. Look on the nutrition label to see how much total carbohydrate, sugar, and fiber a cereal contains.

Fiber: Carbohydrates from fiber are beneficial to your health by causing you to feel full for longer and helping with digestion. Eating enough fiber can also reduce your risk for heart disease and some cancers. Look for meals with more fiber.

Sugars: Sugar is a carbohydrate that is present in naturally sweet foods like fruits and dairy products but can be added to foods as well to make them taste sweeter. Natural sugar found in foods like fresh fruit and low-fat dairy are a good choice, because they provide energy from the natural sugar and bring vitamins, minerals, and/or fiber along with it. However, sugar that is added to a food to sweeten it provides energy with few or no nutrients and no fiber. This is called "added sugar." Even healthier foods can have sugar added to them, like sweetened sauces.

On the nutrition facts label, sugars are listed under carbohydrates. On some labels, you may also see "added sugar" listed underneath sugar. Even when added sugar isn't listed on the nutrition facts label, you can find out if a product has added sugar by looking at the ingredient list for sugar or other names such as dextrose, fructose, brown rice syrup, cane syrup, corn syrup, and cane juice. Although some of these might sound healthier, like honey or brown rice syrup, they are all basically the same to your body- sources of added sugar that we want to limit in the foods we eat.

Low and no calorie sweeteners: There are several low and no calorie sweeteners that can be used to sweeten foods with fewer calories than sugar. Some common examples are aspartame, saccharin, sucralose, stevia, and acesulfame potassium. While research tells us these are generally safe, we do not know much about the long-term health consequences for children and teens. So, when considering a food you might eat often, it's probably best to choose meals without low and no calorie sweeteners.

Fat: Our bodies need fat to provide energy and carry nutrients. Some types of fat are better for our health than others. Monosaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats are beneficial for our heart and

brain health. Nuts and seeds (like almonds, peanuts, pecans, and hazelnuts) are good sources of unsaturated, healthy fats. So are oils from plant ingredients, like sunflower, corn, soybean, and flaxseed oils. (Fish and avocados are also great sources of healthy fats, but you're unlikely to find these in your breakfast cereal!)

Saturated and trans fat are bad for your heart health. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends that you limit saturated fat to less than 10% of calories and avoid trans fat. If you look at the ingredient list, you do NOT want to find "partially hydrogenated oils" listed, as these are sources of trans fat.

Protein: Protein does so many things in your body, but it is best known for helping you build muscle. Protein also helps you feel full for longer. It is important to get protein in each of your meals because it keeps you full and helps ensure you get enough protein throughout the day. In general, choose meals with more protein.

Vitamins and Minerals: Vitamins and minerals are listed on nutrition labels as a percent daily value (%DV). The goal is to get 100% of the DV of each vitamin and mineral from foods each day. Nutrition labels have changed, and some packages will have an old version and most will have a new version. The new version will tell you how much iron, calcium, potassium, and vitamin D are in the food. The old version will tell you how much iron, calcium, vitamin A and vitamin C are in a food. It is best to make your decision based on the nutrients that are listed on all choices.

Salt: Our bodies need sodium (salt) to function, but getting too much leads to high blood pressure and is harmful to your health. The 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate recommend that you consume no more than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day. Be sure to check the nutrition facts label and choose meals that are lower in sodium.

Overall, it is best to make your decision based on the MyPlate food groups and nutrients that are listed on all choices (like calories, saturated fat, protein, fiber, sodium, and sugars).

The food label, or the nutrition facts panel, tells you what your food is made of. This can help you make informed decisions about how to eat a balanced diet.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Servings per container tells you how many servings are in the whole package

Serving size tells you how much of this food people normally eat. It is the basis of the nutrient and calorie amounts.

This column tells you what nutrients are in this food and how much.

The "Calories" line tells you how much energy (or Calories) you get from eating one serving of this food. (The amount in one serving is the listed above.)

This column shows you what percent of your daily needs of each nutrient this food will fill. It is based on a 2000 Calorie diet.

The point of the food label is to let you know what is in your food and to list the ingredients it is made from. The Daily Values % are a guide for people to follow to build a healthy diet. You want to get 100% of your Daily Value in some nutrients like vitamins, minerals, and fiber. You also want to stay under 100% in other nutrients like sodium, saturated fat, trans fats, and cholesterol.

5% is low - aim low for sodium, saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol

20% is high - aim high in vitamins, minerals and fiber.

The Daily Value % are based on a 2000 calorie diet. Not everyone needs exactly 2000 calories in a day. Some people need more and some people need less. That doesn't mean the Daily Value % can't be useful to you. They are still a good guide to know what foods are good sources of nutrients, and which foods to enjoy in smaller amounts. You can also use the %DV to compare foods.

Sources

MyPlate. United States Department of Agriculture. Retrieved April 1, 2023, from <https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/what-is-myplate>

How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label. Food and Drug Administration. Retrieved April 1, 2023 retrieved from: <https://www.fda.gov/food/new-nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label>

How to pick a Healthy and Tasty Breakfast Cereal
<https://www.realsimple.com/food-recipes/shopping-storing/food/healthy-cereal>

Athletic Socks

Wearing the wrong socks may cause blisters or the dreaded athlete's foot due to extra sweaty feet and nail or foot fungus. The right socks help prevent injuries and provide additional support beyond the shoes. This is why it's important to understand what fabrics and features to look for. Remember that the type of socks you purchase will depend on your activity and personal preferences. The best basketball socks are not necessarily the best socks for football. Also, remember to match the length and material of the sock to your activity. If you're hiking, a longer, thicker sock will protect against dirt and sharp shrubbery as you're on the trail. Picking the right kind of high-quality athletic socks can help keep your feet dry, warm, and blister-free so you can continue to lead an active lifestyle and perform at your best.

Cost

A wide selection of athletic socks is available and can range widely in cost. One must consider the purpose of the purchase and the budget.

Types of Sock Cuts

Low-cut socks, no-show socks, ankle socks: These are exactly what they sound like: short socks that sit below, at, or slightly above the ankle. Sometimes you can't see them inside the shoe, hence the term "no-show socks." Lower socks are commonly worn by runners and in sports where less fabric is an advantage.

Crew socks: Crew socks are medium-sized socks that typically reach a few inches past the ankle and sit just below the calf. Shorter versions also exist, often called mini-crew socks. Crew socks are utility-size socks that are functional in the gym, on the field, and in a wide range of athletic activities.

Mid-calf socks: Sometimes called trouser socks, these are long socks that reach halfway up the calf or at the top of the calf. They are common for any activities where warmth or extra coverage is desirable.

Over-the-calf socks or knee-high socks: Knee-highs typically reach just below the knee. Knee-high socks are common in outdoor sports with a lot of exposure to the elements or those needing lower leg protection (for example, to hold shin guards in place).

Over-the-knee socks: Athletic socks provide the maximum length and coverage, reaching up to the thigh. Over-the-knee socks can be used as extra support for knee pads or other protective cushioning.

Fabric Quality

When shopping for sports socks, look for specific fabrics to help cushion your feet in the right places while providing moisture-wicking capabilities. For athletes or highly active people, socks made from acrylic or synthetic materials are likely the way to go since they can trap and transfer moisture so your feet stay dry. Here are some different types of fabric to look for in sports socks:

Wool: Wool is considered one of the best materials for socks and one of the most expensive. Wool is great for socks because it is made of fibers that are soft, non-itchy, breathable, and resistant to

odors. In particular, merino wool is known to preserve heat when wet, so it is a popular option for winter activities such as hiking, skiing, or snowboarding.

Nylon and acrylic: These synthetic fibers are blended to make a cushioned, well-built sock. Acrylic helps provide support and comfort, while nylon makes it durable. Both fibers help wick moisture away.

Natural fibers: These include wool and cotton. While cotton on its own won't cut it for a sports sock, when it's blended with other materials, it becomes much more durable and versatile.

Features to Look for in an Athletic Sock

The features you need will depend on the type of activity you're doing and the season. If you're playing soccer in the dead of summer, you want to look for socks that have a combination of durability, sweat absorption, and quick drying capability. If snowshoeing in 10-degree weather, a thick, wool-based material will keep your feet warm and moisture-free.

Cushion and support: Look for padding on the front and heel of the sock. This may help cushion your feet and prevent blisters. Padding takes up more space, so watch out that it doesn't make your shoes too tight.

Temperature: If you're partaking in winter activities, you'll want socks to keep your feet warm and dry.

Compression: Compression gear applies gentle pressure to stimulate circulation and deliver increased blood flow and oxygen to your muscles. Athletes who work out and perform frequently prefer compression socks to help boost recovery.

Slippage and bunching: This may have to do with finding the proper sizing, but make sure the material is tight enough in the right places, such as the toe area, which helps keep the sock in place.

Moisture wicking: Acrylic, polyester, and wool blends will help keep your feet dry. Nike Dri-FIT socks, for example, have sweat-wicking fabric that provides excellent breathability.

Odor control: This is related to keeping your feet dry. If the fabric can dry quickly, odor-causing bacteria won't have as much chance to grow. Wool and polyester materials are great options.

A Complete Guide to Buying Athletic Socks

<https://www.omegasports.com/blog/a-complete-guide-to-buying-athletic-socks>*Joggers: How Should They Fit and When to Wear Them?*

Choosing the Best Athletic Socks for Your Performance Needs

<https://www.nike.com/a/best-athletic-socks>