

Horrible Science Fair Check-list

Introduction

The *Horrible Science* Fair is a little like the famous US school Science Fairs but with a *Horrible Science* twist. They have been running with great success since 2005.

Format

The Fair is a display of stands - each one based on a *Horrible Science* title. The stands are staffed by rota of the pupils who created the exhibit and who have the job of explaining it to other children and/or their families. The Fair could take place on a school day or after school or on a Saturday.

Time taken: The Fair can run for as long as you like but it should take at least half a day. The preparation may take three days to a week.

Some schools prefer to turn the fair into a presentation with children and teachers taking it in turns to demonstrate their experiments and tell everyone about their work whilst the others watch. This does work but it's less fun and it can be rather a long session for younger children.

Ideas for experiments

Teachers will want to direct their classes towards topics relevant to their term's work in Science so the *Horrible Science* Fair actually reinforces the children's learning in Science. Ideally the children should use their own ideas and imagination to devise and make experiments to show. However experiments can be downloaded from Nick Arnold's website – nickarnold-website.com and all the books have sections entitled "Dare you discover" with safe and proven horrible experiments that children can try.

In addition the *Horrible Science* titles: *Explosive Experiments*, and *Really Rotten Experiments* are full of experiments as are the new *Horrible Handbook* series with titles such as *Beastly Body Experiments*. Details of all these books are available in the Books and Gifts section of nickarnold-website.com.

The series of *Horrible Science Teacher Guides* also contains ideas for practical experiments. For more details see THE TEACHER ZONE section of nickarnold-website.com. In every case encourage the children to consider health and safety when planning their experiments.

Ideas for extension work

Some classes might want to record their work with a page on the school website, a science blog, or perhaps an article in the school newsletter.

Preparation before the day

1. Pupils will need to read or have read to them extracts from a *Horrible Science* book appropriate to their Science work and the topic they will be working on.
2. The pupils can be grouped into teams - each one has the job of making a stand for the show. Each stand can be based on a *Horrible Science* book - so there might be stands on *Ugly Bugs*, *Fatal Forces*, *Nasty Nature*, the books chosen to be at the discretion of teachers.

Each stand can include.

- Horrible experiment equipment, and results.
 - "Horrible" write up of an experiment they did in class. A horrible poster or photographs or collage to illustrate their topic.
 - Horrible exhibits related to the topic - things they bring in or things they've made.
 - Horrible experiments for other children to try - for example a horrible feely-box.
 - One group of pupils may like to demonstrate experiments at regular intervals (on the hour?) as part of the Fair. This is a great opportunity to develop their spoken and presentational skills and think about to make Science clear and accessible to the public.
3. Scholastic can send free posters and A2 show cards to your school. Please ring Scholastic publicity (0207) 756 7756 and specify how many of each you need. These should be displayed throughout the school including at least one at reception or where the pupils enter the building.
 4. Some schools organise a *Horrible Science* Day/Week or design a *Horrible Science* book cover or write a page in *Horrible Science* style competitions. Nick is prepared to judge these and may provide prizes or read winning entries.
 5. You may want *Horrible Science* books to be on sale in the school. The books may be available on a sale or return basis from a local bookshop or directly from Scholastic.
 6. The best venue for the *Horrible Science* Fair is a hall or drama studio.
 7. Some schools open the fair to other children in the school, parents, and groups from other schools (for example, feeder primary schools).
 8. Some pupils could make posters for the *Horrible Science* Fair.
 9. Invitations for parents or groups from other schools to visit, timing of visits, etc.

10. Stewarding and signing up the location of the show, also signing up location of toilets, exits, etc. The stewards need to be briefed on evacuation procedure and any health and safety rules.

11. Children to agree a timetable for staffing the stall and plan what they're going to say to people looking round.

12. You may wish to combine the Fair with presentation by Nick Arnold. Nick offers a choice of two presentations: *The Horrible Science Show* brings his books to life with stories, quizzes and demonstrations. *My Horrible Life* is about Nick's career as a writer and how he became interested in science. Each presentation comes in versions adapted to primary, secondary and family audiences. For more information email Nick at nickarnold.website@yahoo.co.uk

A Horrible Science Fair is about setting creativity free

Preparation on the day

1. Signs and posters need to be up.
2. Stewards need to be briefed and in place.
3. The venue needs to be set up in good time or ideally the day before with a dining-sized table for each stand and any available notice boards for vertical displays.



Most children enjoy the Horrible Science Fair experience. In some schools they actually volunteer to stay after school to work on their projects. Never has homework been so popular!