

4-H Table Setting Contest — Procedures and Guidelines



The Table Setting Contest is open to all 4-H members ages 8–18 (by January 1 of current year) — participants need not be enrolled in a specific project. It will be held during the Lancaster County Super Fair on **Friday, Aug. 4, 5 p.m.** at the Lancaster Event Center Fairgrounds, 84th & Havelock, Lincoln (Exhibit Hall — use east entrance).

Participants select a theme and display one place setting, including table covering, dishes, glassware, silverware, centerpiece and menu. (Do not bring/prepare food.)

Why participate in the Table Setting Contest? It is a fun way learn how to:

- properly set a table
- plan nutritious meals using MyPlate, online at www.choosemyplate.gov
- express originality and creativity in choosing a theme
- present to the judge
- express knowledge of food, nutrition and food safety

Age divisions:

- Junior (ages 8–10)
- Intermediate (ages 11–14)
- Seniors (ages 15–18)

Register by July 18

Register by Tuesday, July 18 by contacting the Extension office at 402-441-7180. You must give the age of youth (by January 1 of the current year) and category they will be entering. There is no entry form.

Categories

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

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 originality and creativity. Homemade items will be judged more favorably than prepackaged items. The chosen theme should be clear to the judge and spectators.

Table Setting Contest Guidelines

The goal of this contest is for youth to present the table setting they created to the judge. The 4-H'er acts as the host, and the judge is their guest. The 4-H'er should extend a welcome to their guest and guide their guest through the menu, as if actually hosting the meal. Participants should explain the ideas behind the theme, menu items and table setting techniques. For example, for the formal theme, if your dessert plate and dessert utensils will be brought in after dinner, be sure to explain this to the judge.

continued on next page

Each Table Setting participant has 5 minutes to present their table setting to the judge.



4-H'ers need to describe the food; including general ingredients and basic preparation. If there are temperature considerations (such as ice cream and sorbet at picnics), explain them to the judge. Try to anticipate and answer any questions the judge may have before they ask them.

5 minutes is allotted for each participant to present their table setting to the judge. Hint: practicing with a timer is helpful.

For the Table Setting Contest, one place setting is to be displayed. Include table covering, dinnerware, stemware, flatware, centerpiece and menu. **DO NOT PREPARE FOOD.** 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. Let your imagination run wild. Be creative and original.

Attire — Participant's attire should fit the theme. Participants may come dressed or change in one of the restrooms.

Menu — Participants are encouraged to develop interesting and creative menus. For example, consider naming a food to fit your theme. Healthy snack menus are OK. If planning a meal, refer to MyPlate, online at www.myplate.gov. Formal menus require a complete, healthy meal.

NOTE: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN ANY MENU IS PROHIBITED.

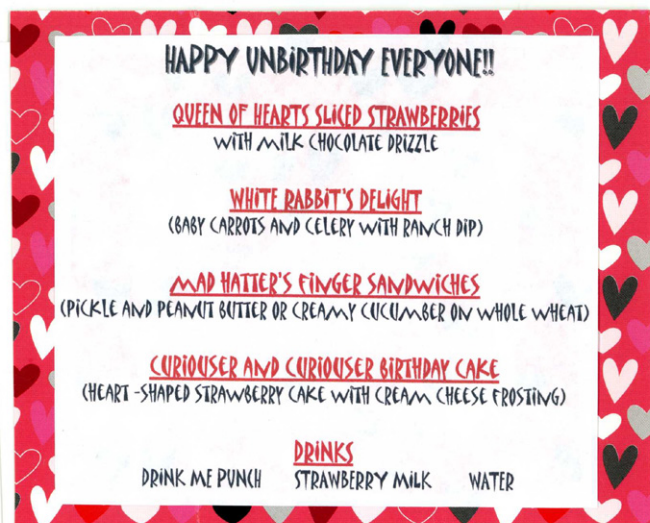
Menu must be 4" x 6" or larger on your choice of medium (index card, ceramic tile, chalkboard, etc.) printed, typed, etc. by the participant. You may decorate and/or prop up the menu. Be creative and imaginative.

- Every menu will not include all the foods listed.

Appetizer
Main Dish
Vegetables
Fruit
Salad
Bread
Dessert
Beverage

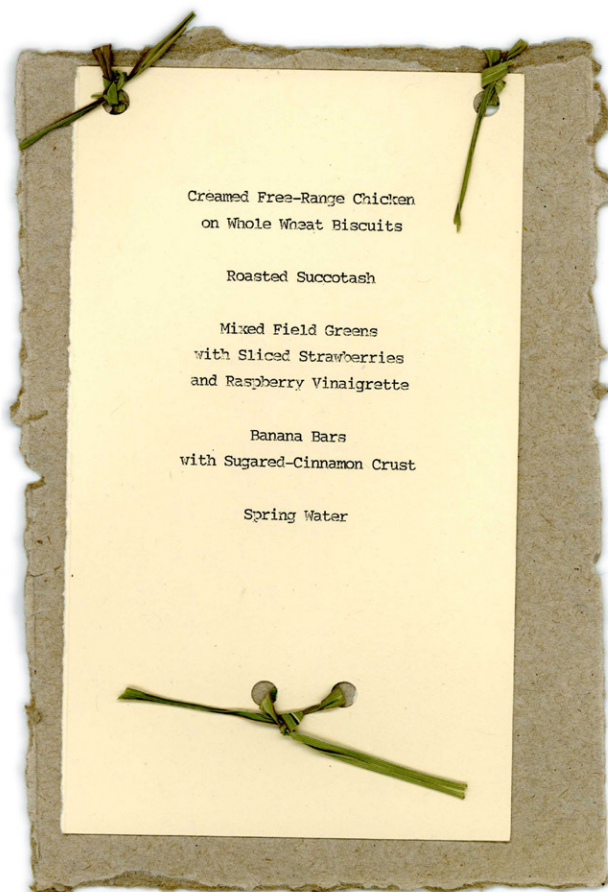
- List the foods in the order they are served.
- Must have correct spelling.

EXAMPLE MENUS



Menu Planning Hints:

- Use your imagination to picture menu food items.
- The plated meal should be pleasing to the eye, appetizing to look at and make your guests ready to eat.
- Vary the way food is prepared (ex. not all fried or creamed).
- Use food groups appropriately for the theme.
- Consider how food is stored safely (especially for picnic).
- Serve a variety of temperatures, textures, shapes and colors.
- Make sure the food flavors compliment each other.



- 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.
- Condiments are not listed.
- List beverages last.
- Space and arrange menu items to fit theme.

Table Appointments

These are items used to set a table. For example: tablecloth, placemats, dinnerware, glassware, flatware and centerpiece. Choose table appointments to fit the occasion and carry out the theme. Plasticware may be used for a picnic but they would not be appropriate for a formal dinner. All items must be safe to eat from and non-toxic (no paint, glitter, glue, stickers, etc. on eating surfaces).

Tableware — includes dinnerware, glassware and flatware. When selecting tableware, include only appropriate items needed for meal. Tableware selections should fit menu. Placement can vary to fit meal according to how and when food is served. For example, do not include a soup bowl if soup is not served. If serving ice cream, a dessert bowl is needed instead of a dessert plate.

Centerpiece — The centerpiece should coordinate with the table appointment and fit the theme. It should be visible to all sides of the table and not obstruct anyone's view of each other. Do not light candles. No electrical outlets are available for use.

At the Contest

Check In & Set Up

- Scheduled times are mailed to participants about a week prior to the fair.
- Each participant is allotted 5 minutes to present table setting to judge.
- Arrive 15 minutes prior to assigned set-up time.
- Card table is provided by participant.

- **Only contestants are allowed to set up. Contest volunteers provide assistance to 4-H'ers to help carry supplies.**
- Judging area is closed to public and family.
- Public viewing of all tables is announced after judging is completed (approximately between 7:45 and 8:15 p.m.). Ribbons are awarded after public viewing.

After the Contest — The top exhibit in each category and division will be on display in the Lincoln Room during the remainder of the fair. All other table settings must be dismantled after the Table Setting Contest and taken home.

Additional Information

If a purple ribbon has not been achieved in a category, there will be no consideration for a top table setting award.

If you have questions, call the Extension office, 402-441-7180.

NOTE: Nebraska Extension and Lancaster Event Center Fairgrounds are not responsible for any damages.

HELPFUL RESOURCE



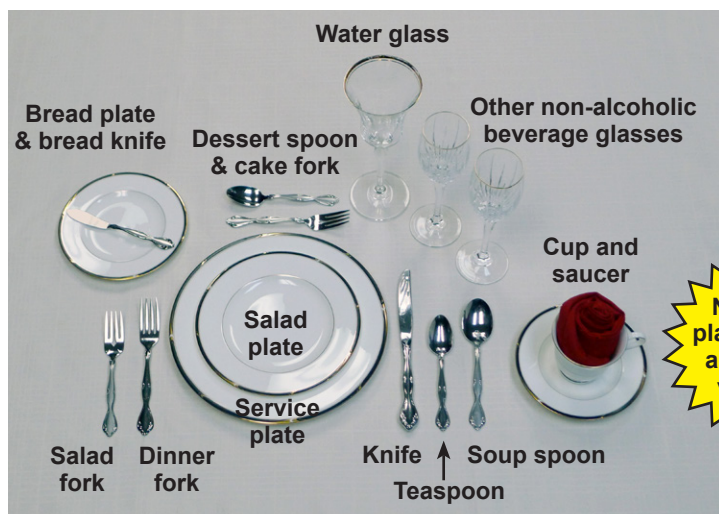
A YouTube video, "4-H Tablesetting Contest Judging Example (Re-enactment)" is online at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Fair>.

STATEWIDE CONTESTS:

- Nebraska 4-H Culinary Challenge Contest is for youth ages 9–18 (by Jan. 1 of the current year) who form teams of two members to represent Lancaster County at the State Fair. A themed table, a menu including a challenge ingredient (in 2023, the ingredient is sunflowers) and a technology presentation are exhibited during a live judge interview. 4-H'ers do not need to qualify at a county contest to participate, but must be enrolled in a 4-H Foods & Nutrition Project. To participate, call Kristin Geisert at the Extension office at 402-441-7180 or email kristin.geisert@unl.edu by Monday, Aug. 7. For more information, see <https://4h.unl.edu/fairbook/contests/culinary-challenge>.
- Nebraska 4-H Chicken BBQ Contest at the State Fair is for youth ages 14 and up (by January 1 of the current year). Individuals will prepare four bone-in, skin-on provided chicken thighs on provided barbecue grills. Contestants will also present an illustrated presentation. 4-H'ers do not need to qualify at a county contest to participate, but must be enrolled in either a Poultry or Foods & Nutrition project. For more information, see <https://4hfairbook.unl.edu/fairbookview.php/contests/58>. To participate, contact Kristin Geisert at 402-441-7180 by Monday, Aug. 7.

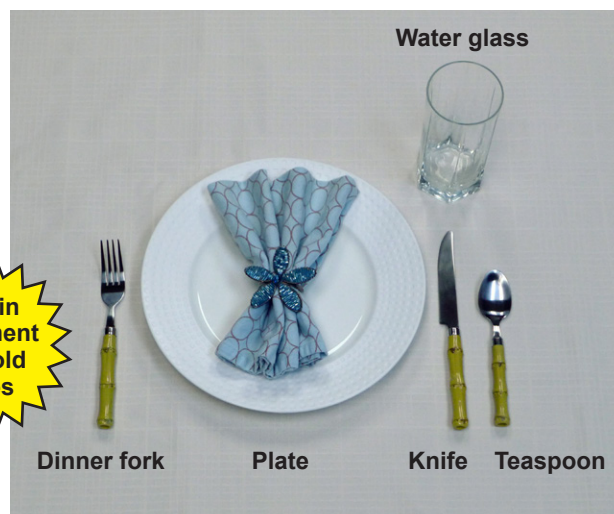
FORMAL PLACE SETTING

Cloth napkin placement may vary.



INFORMAL PLACE SETTING

These are general guidelines. For non-formal categories, placement may vary. Let your creativity go!



Only the tableware needed for the meal are placed on the table.



4-H Table Setting Contest Score Sheet



Name _____ Contestant Number _____

Age (as of January 1 of the current year) _____

Division: ☐ Junior (ages 8–10)

Category: ☐ Picnic ☐ Birthday ☐ Casual ☐ Formal

☐ Intermediate (ages 11–14)

Theme _____

☐ Senior (ages 15–18)

	Superior	Excellent	Average	Comments
PRESENTATION				
4-H'er was a good host/ hostess.				
Ideas behind theme, menu and tableware choices were explained.				
General food ingredients were described.				
Basic food preparation was described.				
4-H'er dressed to fit the theme, maintained eye contact and used a clear voice with good volume.				
Presentation showed originality and creativity. Theme was obvious and well used.				
TABLE SERVICE				
Tableware was correctly set.				<input type="checkbox"/> see back
Appropriate tableware was chosen for menu.				
Centerpiece was appropriate for theme and visible from all sides of table.				
Presentation showed originality and creativity. Theme was obvious and well used.				
MENU				
Menu was easy to read with correct spelling and appropriate placement on table.				
Foods complemented each other and fit the theme.				
Foods varied in texture, color, shape and size.				
Presentation showed originality and creativity. Theme was obvious and well used.				

Ribbon: ☐ Purple ☐ Blue ☐ Red ☐ White

4-H Table Setting Contest Score Sheet (continued)

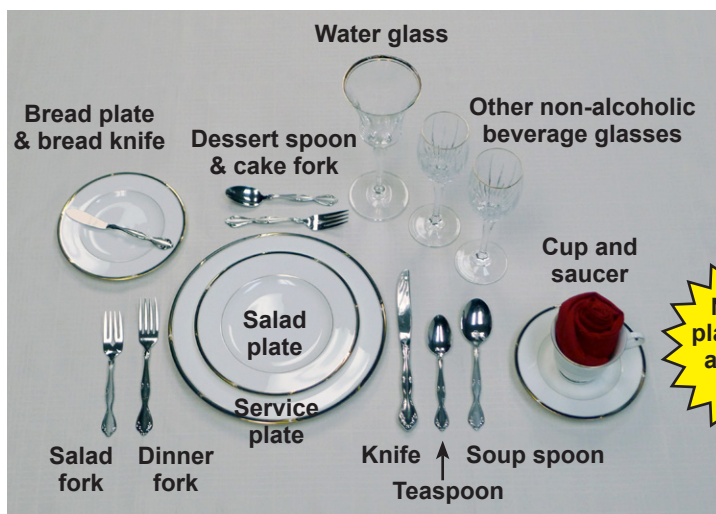
Rule(s) for setting a formal table

Note: Only the tableware needed for the meal are placed on the table.

- ☐ 1. Flatware, plate and napkin should be one inch from the edge of the table.
- ☐ 2. Dinner plate
- ☐ 3. Dinner fork
- ☐ 4. Salad fork
- ☐ 5. Cloth napkin (placement may vary)
- ☐ 6. Knife
- ☐ 7. Teaspoon
- ☐ 8. Soup spoon
- ☐ 9. Soup bowl may be placed on the salad plate and/or service plate or above fork(s)
- ☐ 10. Drinking glass is placed at the tip of the knife and/or above spoon if second glass is used
- ☐ 11. Salad, bread and/or dessert plate(s) — or bowl(s)
- ☐ 12. Cup with saucer

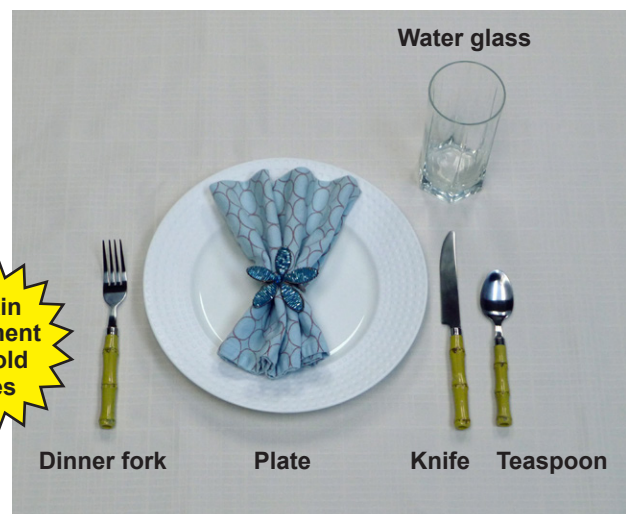
FORMAL PLACE SETTING

Formal categories must follow this placement,
Cloth napkin placement may vary.



INFORMAL PLACE SETTING

These are general guidelines. For non-formal categories,
placement may vary. Let your creativity go!



Only the tableware needed for the meal are placed on the table.