

This project began because when I was IM consort, I was trying to make sure that my new judges had some background to use in judging A&S. It was inspired by a similar project that Cedric took on when he was consort. Cedric's project tried to break A&S into artistic and technical categories but I thought there was more opportunity in guides that help newer judges and/or judges with categories they did not know a lot about. I had some help in the ideas here because there are plenty of A&S areas where I am no expert and lots of people gave me excellent input. I want to thank Cedric, Ceinwyn, Athena, Marchand, Airleas, and many others from this kingdom. I also want to thank Sir Kaz de Kinky of the EH and all the users of his Serpent's Den message board. Their comments were very valuable. I already agreed to a request from the consort of the Golden Plains to use them to educate some of his judges and I intend to make them available to anyone else who can use them as well.

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2D Art –

Definition/Description:

Two-dimensional art, usually drawings, paintings, or any other flat artwork. Artwork done on a three dimensional surface with lots of flat can easily go into this category but an area where all the art work is done on fully three dimensional surfaces (like a painted miniature) are often areas where different autocrats see things different ways. In general such things should be 3d Art but check with your Autocrat. Also unless photography has been broken out into its own category, it should go here.

General Information:

The items entered in this category should be judged on their quality, workmanship and artistic merit. While difficult mediums may be rewardable, items are judged on the criteria above. The artistic component of such judging is very much subjective and although quality and workmanship are more easily quantifiable, artistic elements should have a greater impact on overall score.

Possible Positive Factors

- Originality and/or Amtgard flavor in choice of a topic should be rewarded.
- Items that evoke a strong response (interest, emotion, humor) in the viewer should be rewarded.
- Certain art forms are particularly challenging to execute. Using one of these forms well is difficult and should be rewarded. For example, a design worked out in a glass mosaic should be rewarded more that the same design in ink.

Possible Negative Factors

- Poor execution stemming from laziness, inattention, or lack of effort can be penalized.
- Items that lack artistic merit may be penalized even if the overall quality of the item is high. For example a very well made Shield, with an unexciting and imperfectly executed design on it, would receive a much lower score in this category than if entered in Shield construction.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a hand drawn picture of a barbarian with a giant axe over his head, executed on white paper with pencil and then outlined in black ink with nothing else done to finish it and with the overall drawing quality good but not special.

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3D Art –

Definition/Description:

Three-dimensional art, figurines, sculpture, metalwork, masks, pottery, or any other piece of artwork that is multi dimensional. Artwork done on a three-dimensional (like a painted miniature) is often an area where different autocrats see things different ways. In general such things should be 3D Art but check with your Autocrat. Entries where a 3D surface is decorated should be clearly labeled whether the object was made or purchased. (For example, paint your own pottery).

General Information:

The items entered in this category should be judged on their quality, workmanship and artistic merit. While difficult mediums may be rewardable, items are judged on the criteria above. The artistic component of such judging is very much subjective and although quality and workmanship are more easily quantifiable, artistic elements should have a greater impact on overall score.

Possible Positive Factors

- Originality and/or Amtgard flavor in choice of a topic should be rewarded.
- Items that evoke a strong response (interest, emotion, humor) in the viewer should be rewarded.
- Certain art forms are particularly challenging to execute. Using one of these forms well is difficult and should be rewarded.

Possible Negative Factors

- Poor execution stemming from laziness, inattention, or lack of effort can be penalized.
- Items that lack artistic merit may be penalized even if the overall quality of the item is high. For example a very well made camp chair with some minor decoration would score lower in this category than the same item entered in Passive Construction.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a miniature diorama with two figures both well painted but unchanged from out of the package, with some green flocking and a few rocks and sticks on the ground.

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Active Construction –

Definition/Description:

Items with moving parts created for use in the club whether on or off the field.

General Information:

Items with moving parts created for use in the club to be judged primarily on quality of workmanship. This can include catapults, folding chairs, Water clocks, hinged items and many other things. Items in this category can be differentiated from 2d and 3d art by the fact that they judged mostly on their usefulness and construction rather than on their artistic merits.

Possible Positive Factors

- Original items or construction methods should be rewarded, as should Amtgard Flavor.
- Decorative features like inlays, carvings or finishing may be rewarded but since it is a construction category the lack of the same should not be penalized.
- Difficult construction techniques or materials should be rewarded if they are well executed.

Possible Negative Factors

- Unfinished or sloppily done elements should be penalized more heavily than the equal flaw in an arts category would be.
- Items that appear not to be durable should also be penalized.
- Since it is active construction, the moving elements of the piece need to work. A catapult that doesn't fire very accurately might not be penalized but one that hardly fired at all would be.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a miniature trebuchet made of untreated balsa wood, that fired a marble sized missile across the room successfully.

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Armor Construction –

Definition/Description:

Any item of Armor designed to be worn on the Amtgard Battlefield. Most Autocrats include items like coifs and gauntlets in the Armor category even though they do not count as armor on the battlefield because they may protect parts of the body that cannot be legally hit. Check with your Autocrat if there is a question they may prefer to judge such items under passive construction.

General Information:

Armor can include many types: chain mail, plate mail, brigantine, padded cloth, leather, or even wicker. There are many things to consider when judging this category: quality of workmanship, safety, durability, and effort. Each piece should be judged individually, and not compared to other entries. How good the armor is in game terms should not be a factor. That is aluminum plate should score the same as an equally good piece of armor made of steel.

Possible Positive Factors

- Original construction methods/materials should add to the scoring of an item.
- Decorative features like inlays flourishes and trim should be rewarded.
- Difficult construction techniques or materials should be rewarded if they are well executed.
- Finishing details like leather stains and metal polishing should be rewarded.

Possible Negative Factors

- Unfinished or sloppily done elements should be penalized.
- Items entered into Armor construction need to be ready to wear on an Amtgard field, thus sharp points or other unsafe elements may be penalized. Items meant to be worn but not safe to wear on an Amtgard field should be entered into Passive Construction. As always check with the autocrat since there is some disagreement about where Armor that is not field safe should be judged.
- Armor that not to be durable should also be penalized.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a pair of untreated leather bracers, studded in a simple pattern with store bought studs, and tied on with nice leather ties through metal eyelets that matched the studs.

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Composition (Fiction) –

Definition/Description:

This is fictional writing, and may include character histories, short stories, or fictionalized accounts of Amtgard events. Some things to consider when judging these entries are: flow, story line, grammar, spelling, consistence of writing style, point of view, and structure.

General Information:

Literature can be challenging to evaluate since the purpose of a piece is not clear and my only be loosely defined. Compositions that are emotionally evocative, exiting, or humorous; are obviously good. Items that do not engender a strong reaction from the reader are harder to judge. You need to evaluate the piece as a whole, guess at the possible themes of the piece, and judge how it achieves those ends.

Possible Positive Factors

- Originality and/or Amtgard flavor in choice of a topic should be rewarded.
- Items that evoke a strong response (interest, emotion, humor) in the reader should be rewarded.
- Exceptional vocabulary, organization and lucidity should all be rewarded.

Possible Negative Factors

- Defects in grammar, spelling, structure and style are small negative factors unless they impede communication; in which case they should be penalized more harshly. Also when such defects are clearly intentional and designed as part of the piece, they should be evaluated on how well they worked in context rather than as negatives.
- Illegibility should similarly be a small negative unless it is severe enough to impede communication.
- Failure to keep below five pages can be dealt with in several ways. Some judges prefer to judge the whole item and the apply a small negative factor, some to judge only the first five pages, and some to just let it pass. Check with your autocrat to ensure consistency.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be s character history that was somewhat interesting and hung together fairly well, written with a few grammatical errors but complete in 4 pages.

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Cooking Beverage –

Definition/Description:

Any beverage made or concocted by the entrant.

General Information:

This is a straightforward category. As you would expect, beverages are scored primarily on taste. Even the most complex and appropriate recipes will not score well unless they are tasty. Some accommodation can be made for period foods since the range of ingredients and spices available then was limited. Even period foods should be good though. A list of ingredients is required for food entries if only to protect judges with allergies. Even A&S autocrats that dislike documentation expect ingredient lists to protect their judges. NOTE: Whether a beverage is alcoholic or not should not affect score, although the complexity of some home brewing may be a factor.

Possible Positive Factors

1. An original recipe invented by the judge can be a positive factor.
2. Presentation can also be rewarded. Food that looks better usually tastes better.
3. A period recipe should be rewarded, but non-period recipes should not be penalized.
4. Difficulty or complexity can be a positive factor.

Possible Negative Factors

1. Lack of necessary glasses, mugs or serving items can be a negative factor.
2. Items that rely heavily on box mixes or purchased items can be penalized.
3. Lack of an ingredient list can be penalized but check with your tourney organizer.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would receive a three would be a fruit punch that was fairly tasty, completely modern and used a finished product like soda pop to achieve part of it's taste.

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Cooking Food –

Definition/Description:

Any food cooked by the entrant.

General Information:

This is a straightforward category. As you would expect, food is scored primarily on taste. Even the most complex and appropriate recipes will not score well unless they are tasty. Some accommodation can be made for period foods since the range of ingredients and spices available then was limited. Even period foods should be good though. A list of ingredients is required for food entries if only to protect judges with allergies. Even A&S autocrats that dislike documentation expect ingredient lists to protect their judges.

Possible Positive Factors

1. An original recipe invented by the judge can be a positive factor.
2. Presentation can also be rewarded. Food that looks better usually tastes better.
3. A period recipe should be rewarded, but non-period recipes should not be penalized.
4. Difficulty or complexity can be a positive factor.

Possible Negative Factors

1. Lack of necessary utensils or serving items can be a negative factor.
2. Items that rely heavily on box mixes or purchased items can be penalized.
3. Lack of an ingredient list can be penalized but check with your tourney organizer.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would receive a three would be a pie that was fairly tasty despite the crust being a little hard, with a home made crust and filling that came mostly out of a can.

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Court Garb –

Definition/Description:

Any piece of clothing designed primarily to be worn at Court or in other decorative, non-fighting situations.

General Information:

Artistic merit and quality of construction should also be considered. Both design and decoration are important and should be evaluated. The decorative aspects and pure beauty of a piece is credited more than sturdiness and usefulness. The opposite is true in Field Garb, although both elements are important in both categories.

Possible Positive Factors

- Original design, materials, or patterns should be rewarded.
- Durability of an item should be rewarded but remember that court garb may not be meant to be worn often or harshly.
- Particularly Difficult sewing techniques can definitely be rewarded if executed properly as should challenging materials. The same design is much harder to execute successfully in silk than in trigger.
- Challenging decorative techniques should be rewarded. This is particularly true if the work is done by hand. A beautiful trim, made by hand on an inkle loom, should get more credit than an equally good-looking store bought piece.

Possible Negative Factors

- Unfinished or poorly finished seams should be looked at as a significant negative. The same is true of necklines and hems.
- Failure to line up symmetrical items, like matching hems and seams and arms of the same length should also be significantly penalized.
- Poor choice of materials can hurt appearance and durability and should be a small negative.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a simple dress, with some nice store bought trim, well finished seems and good quality cloth, that lacked any real special features but has seams, hems and necklines finished with a plain flat fold.

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Factual Writing –

Definition/Description:

Any non-fictional written piece, including how-to documents, informational pamphlets, descriptions of actual events, editorials and historical research. When judging this category one should consider how the material presented within pertains to the club, as well as the grammar, spelling, writing style and structure.

General Information:

The primary feature in scoring factual writing should be how well it serves its purpose. That is how convincing an editorial is, how informative a research piece is, or how well a how to article teaches. When judging this category one should also consider how the material presented pertains to the club, as well as the grammar, spelling, writing style and structure. Since it is factual writing, technique is important. Research items should be properly documented and sources referenced. ‘Facts’ used in an opinion post should be justified as such.

Possible Positive Factors

- Originality and/or Amtgard flavor in choice of a topic should be rewarded.
- Effective communication should be rewarded. For example, a how to article that explains how to make a cloak via a humorous retelling of the author’s attempts to make one could be significantly more effective than the same information dryly presented.
- Exceptional vocabulary, organization, and lucidity should all be rewarded.
- Properly documented research and back-ups like a strong bibliography should be rewarded.

Possible Negative Factors

- Defects in grammar, spelling, structure and style are small negative factors unless they impede communication; in which case they should be penalized more harshly.
- Illegibility should similarly be a small negative unless it is severe enough to impede communication.
- Failure to keep below five pages can be dealt with in several ways. Some judges prefer to judge the whole item and the apply a small negative factor, some to judge only the first five pages, and some to just let it pass. Check with your autocrat to ensure consistency.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be an article on how to make a sword, that described a reasonable process of making a sword fairly clearly and had relatively few errors in grammar, spelling and word usage.

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Field Garb –

Definition/Description:

Any piece of clothing designed primarily to be worn on the fighting fields of Amtgard.

General Information:

Clothing meant to be worn on the battlefield or at an event. Artistic merit and quality of construction should also be considered. Both design and decoration are important and should be evaluated. Sturdiness and usefulness of a piece of garb is credited more than pure beauty. The opposite is true in Court Garb, although both elements are important in both categories.

Possible Positive Factors

- Durable materials and construction should be rewarded and is particularly important in areas like the underarms where Amtgard fighting puts a lot of stress.
- Original design, materials, or patterns should be rewarded. Decorative elements like designs, inlays and trims; should be rewarded.
- Particularly Difficult sewing techniques can definitely be rewarded if executed properly as should challenging materials.

Possible Negative Factors

- Unfinished or poorly finished seams should be looked at as a significant negative. The same is true of necklines and hems.
- Failure to line up symmetrical items, like matching hems and seams and arms of the same length should also be Significantly penalized.
- Poor choice of materials can definitely hurt durability and should thus be a negative. Likewise particularly fragile elements should be a small negative.
- Clothing Elements like large metal spikes that could cause a hazard on the field should be a negative factor in this category.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a throw over tabard, with a simple but well executed appliqué design on the front, trimmed with quilt binding and with the few seams finished with a serger.

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Garb Accessories –

Definition/Description:

Any small clothing accessory whether designed to be worn at court or on the battlefield. Belts, pouches, favors, and sashes are all examples of items frequently entered into this category.

General Information:

Garb Accessories are judged on appearance and quality of work. Design and decoration are considered as well as Sturdiness and usefulness. Since many techniques are going to be used in this category and entries will be designed for very different levels of wear, the judge should be particularly careful not to compare items too much.

Possible Positive Factors

- Original designs, materials, or patterns should be rewarded, as should Amtgard Flavor.
- Decorative elements like designs, inlays, or trims should be rewarded.
- Particularly Difficult sewing or construction techniques can definitely be rewarded if executed properly. This applies to both the base item and the decoration.

Possible Negative Factors

- Unfinished or poorly finished items should be penalized. This can be seen on a cloth item, or edges on a leather one.
- Items like spell bags, which are obviously meant to be used on the field, can be penalized if they have unsafe elements like sharp edges, but since this category does not assume field use for something like a belt, only penalize items that are labeled as for the field or clearly made with that in mind.
- Poor choice of materials can hurt appearance and durability and should be negative factor. For example puffy paint on a cloth favor is less durable than appliqué or dye and could be treated as such.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a leather knight's belt, made of a single strip with a simple ring riveted on and a simple but tasteful design on the point.

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Heraldry –

Definition/Description:

Amtgard heraldry displayed on whatever medium. Examples include scrolls, favors, banners or garb.

General Information:

For Heraldry the score is based two main elements. First, how appealing the design is to the eye and how well presented it is and second on how well the items fulfill the purpose of Heraldry. An item which is well made and beautiful that only happens to have a design on it would score less than an equally high quality item where the symbols displayed had meaning and relevance.

Possible Positive Factors

- Anything that would positively affect a similar type of item in another category. For example, an exceptionally durable shield design could be rewarded.
- A good choice of medium should be rewarded. For example a banner might score better than the exact same heraldry on a belt favor. Some reward should be given for using a significantly more complex medium, but remember that in this category the heraldry is being judged not the medium. A well-built shield with an average design probably should score lower than an outstanding design on paper.
- In scoring Heraldry, it is important to remember that the purpose of heraldry is to convert ideas into attractive symbols. Choosing symbols that appropriately represent the ideas they are intended to can be a positive factor. Having a reason for each element and forming a unified whole deserves to be rewarded.
- The purpose of the individual piece should also be considered. The level of complexity appropriate on a tunic is lower than the level expected on a painted plate, since the point of the tunic is to make the wearer recognizable from afar while the purpose of the plate is to show off the appropriate symbols.
- While Amtgard does not follow a specific set of heraldic rules very closely, we do nod our head to the classic British form of the art. While it is wrong to penalize someone for not following heraldic conventions it might be appropriate to reward someone who follows a set of rules well. (Note: Several continental European systems exist and some rules for oriental heraldry are also recognized) Some small reward should probably be given to a proper blazon of a heraldic entry.

Possible Negative Factors

- Anything that would negatively affect a similar type of item in another category. For example, unfinished seams on a tunic entered in Heraldry could be a detractor.
- An item where the heraldry is a very minor part of the whole item is probably mis-entered in this category and this is a negative factor.
- Clearly unattractive designs could be penalized a little bit even though the medium is fairly well done.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would receive a three would be a fairly well made belt favor that had a simple and somewhat attractive design, which was hard to recognize at a distance, perhaps because the colors failed to contrast.

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Performance Instrumental –

Definition/Description:

Exactly what it sounds like. Any music that is not sung should be judged in this category. Duets and group performances are entered in this category as a joint entry, although some autocrats are willing to treat duets as two single entries since they require two people by nature. As always consult your autocrat with any questions.

General Information:

Instrumental music is judged on overall performance. Carrying the tune, playing with flow, and conveying emotion are all important elements. This is a category where even a three may be unattainable for a novice with effort.

Possible Positive Factors

- Good choice of material, in terms of originality and making a good performance, will positively affect score, as will Amtgard Flavor.
- Music written by the entrant can be a positive factor if it is well done.
- Difficult performances and long, complex, or intricate tunes, should be a positive factor. Reward successful risk taking.

Possible Negative Factors

- Showing nervousness by stopping and starting, looking away, loosing your place or veering off tune should be a negative factor.
- If a song is not memorized, then fumbling with the music or failure to track while reading should be penalized.
- Failing to keep the interest of the audience should be penalized but other factors like people fighting in the background or similar interruptions should be understood and not heavily penalized.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a rendition of a well known tune, where the music is somewhat engaging at there are few technical mistakes that would be recognizable by a novice.

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Jewelry –

Definition/Description:

Bracelets, necklaces, rings and similar. Any and all jewelry is judged in this category. Chainmail style, beading work, and lost wax cast items are examples of types and techniques you might see.

General Information:

Appearance and originality are the primary elements in scoring Jewelry. This category combines both artistic elements and construction techniques and should be judged in both areas.

Possible Positive Factors

- Durable construction techniques and well chosen materials should be rewarded.
- More hand work is usually better. A Necklace with hand carved wooden beads would likely score better than an equally nice one with store bought beads.
- Difficult items should be rewarded as long as they work. For example a knight's chain with a Persian weave might score a little better than a European Box, as long as they both looked equally good.

Possible Negative Factors

- Unfinished areas, like loose wires or cords or flashing from the casting process should be a negative factor.
- Poor quality materials can be a negative especially when they might affect durability. Note however that not all Amtgarders have the same financial resources and thus using nickel instead of Sterling, for example, should not be penalized.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a simple helix style knight's chain with two colors of metal that worked together well, but was otherwise unadorned and had no other special features.

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Needlework –

Definition/Description:

Cross-stitch, crochet, tatting, lace, or other fine work with thread and needle. In general items made with sewing machines, looms, or other mechanical assistance should go in some other category. Please check with you Autocrat.

General Information:

When judging this category you should look at the quality of workmanship and the artistic value. Both elements are important but keep in mind most needle work is not expected to see heavy abuse and thus does not need to be especially durable.

Possible Positive Factors

- Well-chosen or original themes and materials should be rewarded as should Amtgard appropriateness.
- A pattern designed by the entrant can be rewarded. Embroidery and cross-stitch in particular have many beautiful store bought patterns available so personal work deserves credit.
- Difficult techniques and/or intricate designs should be rewarded as long as they work. Reward successful risk taking.
- The needlework itself should be primarily judged but a great item that is enhanced by the needlework can be somewhat of a positive factor. For example, a piece of hand made lace on a stunning dress should score a little better than the same lace loose.

Possible Negative Factors

- Unfinished elements like loose threads; unplanned pouches of cloth; and the like should be negative factors.
- If your autocrat allows machine assisted work into this category it should be held to a significantly higher standard than hand done work.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a belt favor with a simple design composed of hand appliqué and embroidery, pretty and relatively well executed with the favor itself finished tidily.

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Passive Construction –

Definition/Description:

Items created for use in the club whether on or off the field.

General Information:

Items created for use in the club to be judged primarily on quality of workmanship. This can include boxes, candles, spell-books, wands, staffs, and many other things. Items in this category can be differentiated from 2d and 3d art by the fact that they judged mostly on their usefulness and construction rather than on their artistic merits.

Possible Positive Factors

- Original items or construction method should be rewarded, as should Amtgard Flavor.
- Decorative features like inlays, carvings or finishing may be rewarded but since it is a construction category the lack of the same should not be penalized.
- Difficult construction techniques or materials should be rewarded if they are well executed.

Possible Negative Factors

- Unfinished or sloppily done elements should be penalized more heavily than the equal flaw in an arts category would be.
- Items that appear not to be durable should also be penalized.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a simple wooden box that fitted together well was finished with a simple outside and used store bought brass fittings.

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Poetry –

Definition/Description:

This category can include any style of poetry, including free verse.

General Information:

Poetry can be hard to judge since it is subjective in nature, and can be very personal. It is a form of art, and should be judged primarily on its artistic merit. This means that a piece might intend to be evocative or moving and it can be analyzed partially in that context. However, the valuation of a piece of poetry is largely dependent on what you bring to the table and subjective judging is a necessary part of the form.

Possible Positive Factors

- Originality and/or Amtgard flavor in choice of a topic should be rewarded.
- Items that evoke a strong response (interest, emotion, humor) in the reader should be rewarded.
- Certain forms and conventions of poetry have strength and value of their own. Using a specific form such as Haiku or Sonnet well should be rewarded unless you see such a form as a crutch that props up an otherwise poor piece.
- Decorative presentation is appropriate for poetry and should be rewarded if it works.

Possible Negative Factors

- Defects in grammar, spelling, structure and style are small negative factors unless they impede communication; in which case they should be penalized more harshly. Note that in poetry such defects are frequently planned or come as part of the format and if such is the case they should not be negative factors in any way.
- Illegibility should similarly be a small negative unless it is severe enough to impede communication. Again planned illegibility could be part of the Art form and should be evaluated as such.
- Failure to keep below five pages can be dealt with in several ways. Some judges prefer to judge the whole item and the apply a small negative factor, some to judge only the first five pages, and some to just let it pass. Check with your autocrat to ensure consistency.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a series of 10 humorous limericks with an Amtgard theme, where a couple of the poems were humorous but most were not so much so because they stuck to fairly well known Amtgard jokes.

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Recitation –

Definition/Description:

Unless there is a movement category or an acting category, all performances that are not music fall under recitation. Recitation is usually poems or speeches, but active performances like juggling or gymnastics are also part of this category.

General Information:

Recitation is about communicating a feeling or a story. The best performances are evocative, and well paced. Entrants should be judged on their handling of the audience, the effectiveness of their communication and the emotion they manage to convey. Non-spoken items should be evaluated on their entertainment value rather than communication in most cases.

Possible Positive Factors

- Good choice of material, in terms of originality and making a good performance, will positively affect score, as will Amtgard Flavor.
- A recitation written by the entrant can be positively rewarded but it is sometimes harder to do as good a performance if the writing is less polished and the performance is what gets graded.
- Difficult performances, long complex poems, or joint entries where the interaction is obviously challenging can all be rewarded if they are done effectively. Reward successful risk taking.

Possible Negative Factors

- Showing nervousness by stopping and starting, looking away, dropping an item or speaking very softly all can be negative factors.
- Failing to keep the interest of the audience should be penalized but other factors like people fighting in the background or similar interruptions should be understood and not heavily penalized.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a recitation of Marc Antoino's speech at Caesar's grave from Shakespeare where the performer showed very little nervousness and only had to stop and restart once but communicated the emotion of the piece fairly well.

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Shield Construction –

Definition/Description:

Any Amtgard Legal Shield intended for field use. Non-Amtgard shields should be entered in one of the art or construction categories.

General Information:

This category is much the same as weapon construction. It is for any amtgard legal shield. Shields are judged on safety, durability, attractiveness, and originality. Note that illegal shields should never be allowed in an A&S tournament in the first place and therefore judging shouldn't take that into account. If a judge believes a shield is illegal, they should appeal to the Autocrat to not allow that weapon into the category. Shields can and should be checked for how safe they are (as long as they are legal).

Possible Positive Factors

- Original construction Techniques or materials will add to the entry.
- Shape of Shield adding to the overall ascetic appearance of the item.
- Decorative Shield Cover will add to the scoring of the item.

Possible Negative Factors

- Exceptionally heavy or unwieldy shields will have points taken off.
- Sparsely padded (but still legal shields) should be penalized.
- Shield Covers that are thin and prone to rip easily or able to see the foam through them should be penalized unless it is obvious that it is part of the design concept.

Example of an average entry:

An average entry would be a punch shield made with a Frisbee, leather pop-riveted for the handle, pipe insulation on the edges, couch foam on the front, and a basic cloth cover with no decoration.

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Performance Singing –

Definition/Description:

Exactly what it sounds like. Any music that is sung should be judged in this category. Duets and group performances are entered in this category as a joint entry, although some autocrats are willing to treat duets as two single entries since they require two people by nature. As always consult your autocrat with any questions.

General Information:

Singing is judged on overall performance. Carrying the tune, making sure the words are comprehensible (if appropriate), and conveying emotion are all important elements. A three should be achievable by anyone who can carry a tune who works hard. Remember the average level for a good musician is still a very hard level for a non-musician to attain.

Possible Positive Factors

- Good choice of material, in terms of originality and making a good performance, will positively affect score, as will Amtgard Flavor.
- A song written by the entrant can be a positive factor if it is well done. This is particularly true if they wrote the music as well as the words. Simply rewording an existing tune is less challenging and needs to be better executed to be rewarded.
- Difficult performances, long or complex songs, or intricate tunes should be a positive factor. Reward successful risk taking.

Possible Negative Factors

- Showing nervousness by stopping and starting, looking away, voice cracking or singing very softly all can be negative factors.
- If a song is not memorized, then fumbling with the music or failure to track while reading should be penalized.
- Failing to keep the interest of the audience should be penalized but other factors like people fighting in the background or similar interruptions should be understood and not heavily penalized.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be a rendition of a popular folk song handled with emotion relatively engaging to the audience, with few or no errors that would be recognizable by a novice.

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The Rose –

Definition/Description:

Any entry whose principle function is to benefit the club. Examples include Awards blanks, newsletters, flyers, and websites.

General Information:

This category is a little different to judge since it often compares entries that would otherwise be in different categories. It is important that the judge remember that while direct comparisons between entries is discouraged that the playing field should be level even among items that would normally be in different categories. The Rose entries are scored in two ways and both elements affect their overall score. First, they like every entry, are scored on how beautiful, well-made, and original they are. For this part of The Rose items are scored pretty much just like they would be in other categories. The other element of scoring under The Rose is that of appropriateness. An item entered in the rose should be designed to serve the club. An item that creatively fills a real need of the club, should score significantly better than an item of similar quality otherwise that only serves the club in a marginal way.

Possible Positive Factors

1. Anything that would add to a similar type of item in another category. For example, quality of construction could be a positive factor.
2. Filling a real need could be a positive factor.
3. Originality in filling a need not already addressed could be a larger positive factor.

Possible Negative Factors

1. Anything that would add to a similar type of item in another category. For example, unfinished seams on Newbie tunics to be donated to the club could be a detractor.
2. An item that does not provide a service or benefit to either Amtgard or the chapter (ie. shire, duchy...). One example of an incorrectly placed entry would be a personal tabard entered into The Rose category with the stated purpose of making the game look better.

Example of an average entry:

An example of an average entry that would deserve a three would be an Amtgard flyer that presented some information in a readable way but was only black and white and use generic fantasy clip-art with only short term or marginal Amtgard relevance.

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Weapon Construction –

Definition/Description:

Any Amtgard legal weapon(s) intended for on field use. Non-Amtgard weapons should be entered into one of the art or construction categories.

General Information:

This category consists of any Legal Amtgard weapon. This includes all melee weapons, arrows, thrown projectiles, and javelins. Weapons are judged on safety, balance, durability, attractiveness, and originality (both in construction technique and weapon type). Note that illegal weapons should never be allowed in an A&S tournament in the first place and therefore judging shouldn't take that into account. If a judge believes a weapon is illegal, they should appeal to the Autocrat to not allow that weapon into the category. Weapons can and should be checked for how safe they are (as long as they are legal). Remember to take into personal preference that sometimes certain people like heavier/lighter weapons than others.

Possible Positive Factors

- New and improved construction methods/materials should add to the scoring of an item.
- Decorative handles/covers should be rewarded.
- Weapons that seem like they will last a good amount of hard use on the battlefield should be awarded extra points compared to those that look like they won't hold up.
- Presentation of new construction techniques should be rewarded.

Possible Negative Factors

- No or shoddy coverings for weapons should be penalized.
- Weapons that are whippy should be considered to have a negative factor.
- Weapons that are still legal but still have a good chance of bruising/harming someone when wielded by the average Amtgarder, should be penalized.
- Weapons that appear like they are not durable should also be penalized.

Example of an average entry:

An average weapon would be a sword made with a golf club as the core, fun noodle for the padding, no padding inside the fun noodle to stop the rattling of the sword, a cover made with broadcloth that is a little baggy on the sword, and finished with grip tape on the handle.