

 **Activity 5.4.2 Priority Decisions****Purpose**

If you were given a set of toy cars and asked to pick the best one, how would you know which to select? You may pick the blue one because blue is your favorite color or the one with a triangle sticker because it is closest to you. You could select a car based on other criteria or priorities that are important to you. Throughout life, you will be faced with decisions and you will prioritize your decision-making using a method called criterion-based selection.

For example, if you were given the same set of toy cars with the instructions that the shape of the sticker on the car is the most important priority and the color of the car is second, the results of how you would prioritize a set of toy cars may be as follows:

- Best sticker shape is a square followed by circle, triangle, and octagon.
- Highest-ranking color is blue followed by red, white, and green.

When a set of guidelines (or priorities) are provided, you will find it easier to select the “best” toy car based on the criteria.

If you have watched or participated in a junior livestock show, dog show, or horse show or even seen dog shows on television, you may have wondered what the judges used to make their decisions. The judge or panel of judges evaluating the animals base their decisions on a predetermined set of priorities and use them to make their selection. Just as you can select the best toy car using criteria, judges select the best animal using industry-based criterion. While criterion-based selection is not completely objective, it does provide a consistent means of evaluating and selecting animals.

**Materials****Per group of four students:**

- 4 writing pens

**Per student:**

- Pencil
- *Agriscience Notebook*

**Procedure**

In this activity, you will learn to select objects based on a defined set of criteria. Your teacher will assign you to a group of four students for this activity. Complete Part One below with your group.

**Part One – Making Criterion-Based Decisions Using Writing Utensils**

1. Working individually, think about your favorite writing pen. What traits or characteristics make it your favorite?
  
2. What other characteristics do people find desirable in a pen?

3. In your group, compare your results for the positive traits of pens and make a list of the five most important characteristics of a pen. List the five traits in order of the most important to the least important.
  - 1.
  - 4.
  - 5.
  - 6.
  - 7.
  
4. Your teacher will give you four pens.
  
8. Using the priorities determined by your group, select the best pen using the group's criterion. Why is it the best?
  
9. Does your group agree? Explain any disagreements within the group.

**Part Two – Using Priorities to Classify in Livestock Judging**

In *Lesson 1.2 Team FFA*, you explored several Career Development Events. Several of those included placing classes of objects. Livestock Judging is another Career Development Event as well as a skill livestock producers use regularly. Animals are sorted based on their conformation, or appearance. Working on your own, you will learn how to evaluate market hogs and practice by placing a class of hogs from video.

Your teacher will present *Some Pig*, take notes on the priorities for evaluating market hogs in the chart below.

	<b>Priorities</b>			
	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Muscle</b>	<b>Finish</b>	<b>Skeletal Size</b>
Indicators				

Using the placing class of market hogs provided by your teacher, rank each pig based on the priorities you learned. Then, determine your overall ranking of the placing class.

<b>Priority</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Place</b>
<b>Structure</b>				
<b>Muscle</b>				
<b>Finish</b>				
<b>Skeletal Size</b>				
<b>Overall Placing</b>				

## **Conclusion**

1. How does having a list of priorities make the decision-making process easier?
2. Why are structure, muscle, finish, and skeletal size important when selecting market hogs?
3. Why might priorities differ among people?