

DOCUMENTATION CLASS
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Where does an artisan start when it comes to documentation?

- Decide what you want to do
- Discuss your idea with other artisans
- Consider your level of ability and talents
- Find out the criterion required for your project
- Begin your research

If I want to work up a demo item and it involves some assembly, should I photograph each stage, find existing documentation and say I followed this with the exception of.....

Yes. If you used modern materials, tools, or techniques, say so. Also say why you may have mixed period styles, techniques, tools, etc. It is VERY nice to include both photocopies of period examples and photos of your work in progress. Photos can illustrate the creation process and even show the item in use. In theory, the judges need to visualize the piece and process in which it was created by reading the documentation before looking at the item. If you aren't able to give them good visualization in the documentation, and this is not always possible, show them in photographs as well.

Do I actually have to raise the goat, milk the goat, kill the goat to make the stomach enzymes to curdle the milk, and make the cheese to document an entry?

No, but the more that you can do that is as it was in period, the more points you are likely to receive. The more you vary from the original techniques and tools used, the fewer points you will receive. For example, for a tart recipe, I did milk a goat (although I did not raise it), I made the cheese (using vinegar as I did not want to kill a goat), I made the cheese and then made the tart. All A & S entries have a degree of difficulty factor. If your entry is relatively simple, as was my tart recipe, doing the little "extra" will gain you more points from the judges.

What is static art?

Any non-performance entry. The piece sits alone, it is static, non-moving.

Is documentation different for different categories?

It can be, but need not be. For example, you would likely not use photographs for a research paper, unless the paper were written about say, castle building and how it changed over period. In that case, photographs or drawings of castles would be appropriate. If you are documenting, for example, blackwork (needlework), you would almost definitely want photographs of several different types of blackwork.

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

1. Make sure the item is clean and in good repair.
2. Make sure the documentation is concise, readable and presented in an orderly fashion. In Caid, you would likely want to follow the format from the Pentathlon 2007 Handbook, in another Kingdom, such as Atenveldt, the judges prefer the documentation organized according to their judging forms. Check with someone if you are unsure.
3. Present the items as part of a larger picture, where appropriate. For example if you have a tourney dish, present it on a tablecloth, with a napkin and a mug of drink. "Paint" a

picture of the use of the item for the judges. Remember, the initial presentation of your item, the first impression, does count!

4. Do not put your name on the paperwork or the item. You will be given a number upon entry into the competition to place on both. These competitions are supposed to be “blind” competitions, so the judges are not influenced by their knowledge of the artisan.
5. Be courteous of other contestants. There is not a lot of space for entries at competitions. Plan your presentation so that it takes up minimum space, but is still attractive.
6. Give yourself time to set up each entry. As your teammates or members of your Barony to help if needs be. Usually there is only about 30 minutes to set up all the entries. Practice setting up your entry.
7. If you are presenting a static item, show how it would be used. Take photographs of a hat on a model and include them in your presentation. If it is a tool, take photographs demonstrating its use.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Although it is not required, type it! Make the font large enough to be read. Provide at least three copies of the documentation.
2. Have the documentation organized. Use divider tabs. Put all items in a folder or have a plastic cover, or at a minimum, staple the pages together. Have a cover page, stating the category and the entry.
3. If you make photocopies, use color, don't “cheap out” and make black and white copies.
4. I recommend against using books as references, but if you do, make sure the pertinent pages are clearly marked. It would be best to photocopy the page(s) from the book.
5. Make the documentation as brief as possible and somehow highlight important information, use different fonts or boldface, etc. Judges have a lot of entries and little time to judge, so make it as easy as possible to find the information they need.
6. Don't assume the judges are experts in the field they are judging, it may be difficult to find 3 cooking Laurels to judge a cooking competition, for example. Explain everything in your documentation. Try to answer the questions the judges may have. Have a friend, or friends, unfamiliar with the category read the documentation, if they understand it, likely the judges will too.

Don't forget to save copies of all your documentation, with the judging sheets. Take photographs of the item on display. This will help in preparing an SCA resume, especially if you aspire to becoming a laurel.

Remember to have a thick skin. When you are judged by others, you are subject to their ideas and opinions. Do not become discouraged. Try to use their thoughts and comments to make your entries in the next competition better.

IMPORTANT TIP: Talk to people who have entered this competition before. Talk to the autocrat of the competition long before you enter. In some kingdoms, items are judge on replication of medieval items, in some kingdoms, creativity is more highly thought of. Know how you will be judged. Look at the judging sheets before your prepare your documentation, where will you earn your points? Focus on these areas, if documentation is 25% and you only have one hand-written page of documentation and only site one reference, you will likely receive minimal points and no matter how stunning your entry, it will not win the competition.