

The 4-H Story

(Revised – 2022)

Your 4-H Story is an important part of your records. The story should summarize the total 4-H year's activities. It is an essay that includes highlights of your 4-H experiences, involvement, club work, and community service.

Guidelines for writing your 4-H story:

1. Use a computer or write clearly with an ink pen. 7 and 8 year olds may use pencil.
2. Paper (Personal Page & Story) 8 ½ x 11 inch white paper. One side of paper only.
3. Margins: Top, Right Side, and Bottom: 1 inch
Left: 1 ½ inch
4. Font: Arial size 10 font if printed. Easily legible if written.
5. Spacing: Double Spaces
6. 7-8 yr. old: minimum of ½ page. 9 yrs and up: minimum of one page. All ages: maximum of 6 pages
7. No matter whether you are printing, writing in cursive, or typing the story, be sure to do so neatly. Check for complete sentences and correct spelling. If you aren't sure, look it up in a dictionary.
8. Use proper grammar, paragraph styling, punctuation, and spelling. If using a computer be sure to spell check AND proof-read. Sometimes commonly used words are spelled correctly but not used correctly – for example country instead of county; goat instead of coat or boat; counsel instead of counsel; bred instead of bread; or led instead of lead.
9. If numerous errors were made such as white-outs because of typing or words scratched out, it would be best to rewrite/reprint the story for a neater appearance.
10. Use technology to your advantage such as bolding headings or key prints, underlining, bullets, outlines, etc.
11. The 4-H Story doesn't need to be signed.
12. White space is ok.
13. Use action verbs to accurately describe what you have done. Did you "help" or did you "plan and conduct?"

Helpful 4-H Story writing hints:

Here is your opportunity to let the person reading your story to get to know you personally and your life in this 4-H project.

Of course, most good stories start out with some type of introduction. Journalists call it a "lead." The idea is to make it fun, interesting surprising, or informative. Your introduction should make the reader want to delve further into your 4-H story.

The body of your story should focus on activities, leadership, and citizenship during the 4-H year.

The 4-H Story is a time to expand on what you have learned and how you shared your projects with others. What were the highlights of the year (more than just awards and ribbons)? Did you have a project disaster? If so tell what it taught you.

This is your opportunity to share information that wasn't included in any other area of your record book. Did you achieve a longtime goal? Did you learn something totally new? Did you solve a problem?

Think about the people who have helped you with you to be successful in this project. What have others done for you and with you in your 4-H project?

Don't forget to consider your future when writing your 4-H Story. Will you take the project again? Why or why not? Has this project affected your career dreams? What did you learn that has helped you in everyday life?

These are just some sample questions to help you think about what you might include in your story. Focus on what you want to share about your 4-H experience and what the reader needs to know in order to distinguish your record book from all the others.

Like every good story, the 4-H Story has several parts. The 4-H story is the time to let the reader get to know you and your 4-H experiences.

First is the introduction. It should capture the reader's attention. It's a way to get the reader interested in what you have to say. It's a good time for an introduction of yourself and the focus of your 4-H experience.

The body of the story is where you shine. Tell the reader information they didn't find out in the other parts of the record book. This the time to tell what you learned, how you shared it with others and about the highlights of your projects. There are occasionally "down" times in the projects and those are also learning experiences that can be included. Included in the body of the story may be tidbits about who helped you in your project work. Many people are part of your success story. Perhaps you can tell something about them and the knowledge they shared with you. Of course, a project may be a springboard for a future career or job exploration. If this project is closely tied into your future, tell how. Think if this project will be part of your 4-H future or not.

A conclusion isn't always necessary but it lets you wrap up your story neatly. It is here so you can stress what makes your record book stand out above the rest.

Your 4-H Story is about you and 4-H experiences. It can be told in many different ways. There's no secret formula to writing a 4-H Story, but remember to keep it interesting, informative, and a minimum of ½ page for 7-8 year olds and 1 page for 9 and up with a maximum of 6 pages for all ages.

Some things you may want to mention in your 4-H Story:

- ❖ Fun and rewarding experiences
- ❖ Difficulties or problems encountered in project work
- ❖ Skills learned
- ❖ Ways you helped others
- ❖ Your family's involvement in your project(s)
- ❖ Explain how your project(s) helped you grow
- ❖ Community service involvement
- ❖ Recognition you received that meant a great deal to you
- ❖ Involvement in county, area, or state groups, committees, activities, or events
- ❖ Goals reached - accomplishments