



4-H Record Books

Purpose



What is a Record Book?

The Achievement Record Book is an organized summary of your entire 4-H experience that contains a comprehensive report of your goals, plans and accomplishments.

Why Build A Record Book and Make A Report?

It is one way to make a formal review of your goals and achievements and is a helpful tool to plan your own growth for the future. Your achievement records and report will be a good keepsake for years after you've finished your 4-H career. The record you build opens doors to many awards and benefits such as medals, trips, scholarships and other kinds of recognitions. Completing a record book will make it easier to apply for scholarships and state level awards that reward 4-H members with scholarships and trips.

4-H Members Develop the Following Life Skills Through Record Keeping

- Maintaining records of 4-H project and club work, school and community activities
- Keeping personal and business records
- Improving communication with other people
- Learning time management and organizational skills
- Learning responsibility and developing goal setting skills

Youth can gain a lot of valuable knowledge and skills in 4-H, especially through 4-H clubs and long-term projects. But kids are usually so busy having fun, they don't always recognize the life skills or other competencies they learn while participating.

Record-keeping can help 4-H'ers, as well as their parents and adult leaders, realize more of the value of their involvement in clubs, camps, projects, and other educational activities.

There are many positive reasons for integrating and record-keeping into 4-H projects throughout the year. Keeping a 4-H record book aims to help youth:

- Learn how to organize themselves;
- Learn how to set reasonable goals for themselves;
- Appreciate what they learned each year from the goals they reached;
- Recognize what they learned in their 4-H projects;
- Explain what they've learned;
- Keep track of costs of their projects;
- Gather information needed to apply for awards and scholarships;
- Complete applications and resumes for jobs and college;
- And yes, also meet requirements to participate in some county, state, or national 4-H events.

Criteria For Judging Record Books

Neatness, Completeness, and clarity of your records are very important. Your 4-H story is also an equal important item in your report. The judges will be looking for experiences in 4-H projects and activities as shown by knowledge acquired, attitudes and skills learned, scope and size of project growth and development. Leadership, citizenship and community service are equally important. Indicate your involvement in these areas by your development of positive attitudes toward service to others, your leadership experiences as both officers and committee members and in one on one leadership opportunities.

Age-Appropriate Development

Expectations of record book completion and standards change as 4-H members become older, more experienced and have gained life skills in 4-H, school and other endeavors. Outlined below are a few suggestions on age-appropriate expectations for 4-H Record Books. The following age guidelines. Ages 7-8 do not understand the whole concept of competition at this age as research shows. They are more interested in the process of doing, than finishing and having an end product. Attention span is very short.

Junior (9 – 10 years old; 4-5th grade)

Junior members enjoy both cooperation and competition, so planning 4-H Record Books as a group project is helpful. Using encouragement and incentives will keep members motivated and recognize them for their accomplishments.

Intermediate (11 – 13 years old; 6-8th grade)

Intermediate members can make decisions and take responsibility for planning and evaluating their own work, with adult guidance. Give youth responsibility for group activities, including planning, implementing and evaluating.

Senior (14 years old and above; 9th grade and above)

Senior members have a strong desire for status within peer groups along with a need for challenges and problem solving. Use activities where youth search for experiences that will allow them to identify their own philosophies.

Reference: Massachusetts 4-H “Ages and Stages of Youth Development”

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Here are some friendly suggestions to help 4-H members to get started

Set Goals:

Decide on project goals now, before you get started in the project, rather than at the end of the project when you already know what you did. If you write goals at the end of a project then they really aren't goals.

Copy it:

Make a copy of the record sheet and post it somewhere in your house so that you can write down activities as you complete them. Refrigerators and family bulletin boards are great places to post your “in progress” record sheet.

Photo:

Post a large envelope near your record sheet and label it “Photographs”. This a great reminder to take pictures of your activities and to keep them in a central location. You would be amazed at how easy it is to find pictures for your photo pages if they are all together.

Keep a Calendar:

Write down all the activities you do for your club, your county, church, school, and for your projects. If you keep one calendar you can go back to the end of the year and see how much you have done. It also helps you make it to meetings on time and at the right place.

Records shouldn't be a frightening part of a 4-H experience. You do all the work, you should get credit for it. Take the time to use these hints or develop your plan in order to take the nightmare out of record keeping.