



4-H Club Reporter Handbook





Writing 4-H News

Name of Club _____

Community _____ Year _____

County _____ State _____

Officers:

President _____

Vice President _____

Secretary _____

Treasurer _____



REPORTER'S DUTIES

- Submits reports to local newspapers
- Makes collection of all newspaper items for permanent records
- Writes articles which tell who, what, where, when and how, including people's names
- Writes a story of each meeting to send to the local 4-H office or local paper
- Sends advance information on an event to the local paper and writes a follow up.

Writing 4-H News

As a 4-H Club News Reporter, you have a big job ahead. The success of your 4-H club will depend on your work. You are now one of your Club's most important officers.

By writing good news stories you can:

- Help keep parents and other interested in what your club does.
- Let people know what your club is doing to help your town.
- Point out good work that will inspire other 4-H members to "Make the Best Better."
- Attract more boys and girls to join 4-H clubs.

This is Your Job

- Learn how to write GOOD news reports
- Then, write them and get them into your paper.
- Always be on the lookout for 4-H club news.

What is News?

News is timely information about unusual and important things your club and its members are doing.

Meetings are an important part of 4-H club work. You can find a news story at every meeting. Some meetings are good for two news stories; an advance story telling about what is planned for the meeting, and a follow-up story telling about what happened at the meeting.

Other events you should write about are: fairs, exhibits, tours, picnics, members attending camps, conferences, officers elected, committees appointed, donations by the club, members with outstanding projects, contest winners, judging teams, community projects, and awards to clubs.

Getting Started

Never write a news story as you would a Secretary's Report. Write your news story so that it will be used in the paper. Here are a few hints to help you get started.

Step #1

This first step in writing a 4-H news story is to collect all the information. You can do this by getting the answers to these six questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Apply each of these to your story and get the answers to each question.

Step #2

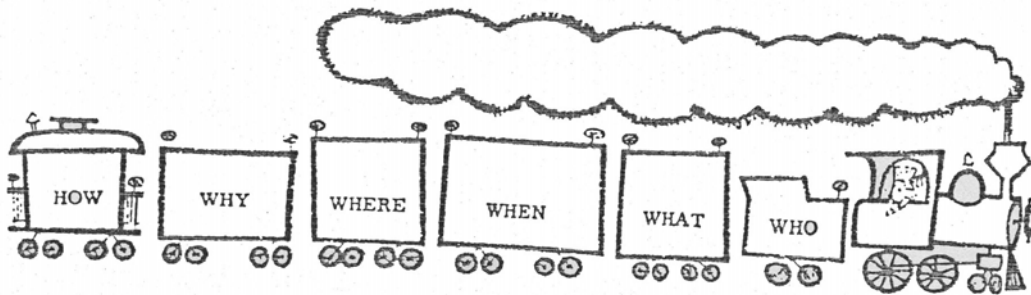
Next, study all the facts you have collected. Arrange them in the order of their importance. Ask yourself: What was the **MOST** important and **INTERESTING** fact about the event? That is the **FIRST** thing to tell about in your story.

Step #3

The first paragraph of a news story is the **LEAD**. The lead is a short summary of the entire story. It should answer most or all of the questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? It should be interesting and attention-catching.

The following is a lead:

WHO	The Danby 4-H Club	voted to give \$10 to the
WHAT	Rutland County 4-H Camp	at their monthly meeting held
WHEN	yesterday, June 6	at the home of Mr. & Mrs.
WHERE	John Quill of Pond Road	This money will be used to
WHY	buy recreation equipment which will be used by all Rutland Club members who go to 4-H camp this summer.	
HOW	The Danby youths raised more than \$100 last month with a series of car washes	



Don't begin any news story this way:

1. At nine o'clock...
2. The last meeting of the year...
3. The purpose of the meeting....
4. The Danby 4-H Club met...
5. At a meeting...
6. A most interesting meeting...

Just **Remember:** In any story **Lead Off** with your most important fact of the story.

To interest the newspaper editor and the readers, start with your **Most Important** fact. That is also a rule for writing the rest of your story. *Build with the most important details at the top you your story, and leave the least important points for the last.* Follow your lead with the next important item. Weave it into your story so that the story reads smoothly.

Here is Why:

Busy readers can get a summary of the story quickly

Newspaper space is limited. If an editor doesn't have space, he can use the first few paragraphs that give the news without rewriting the entire story.

Use Simple Language in writing your story. Don't use big words where smaller ones will do. Leave out words that aren't necessary. Be **Brief** and **Clear** in your writing.

Remember that you are the Club Reporter not the Club Secretary. Let the secretary write the minutes of the meeting. You cannot ask an editor to use valuable paper space to print a Secretary's report instead of news story. So never write your news story in the same style used for a Secretary's Report.

Tell Who Attended the meeting or event. Copy the names carefully, including initials. Tell who the visitors are, if your club has any (Jean Jones of Rutland, guest of Mary Smith, or Miss Helen Adams of Burlington, State 4-H program leader). The visit of an important person may be the big news of your meeting. In that case, start your next story with that fact.

Leave Out Your Opinions. A good reporter writes about what he saw and heard...not what he himself thinks about those things.

You cannot say:

"The club will spend it's funds wisely." That is an opinion.

Instead, say something like this:

"The club will spend it's funds wisely, according to James Walker, President."

Since you are a reporter you must write your story from an impersonal viewpoint.

Never write:

1. Our 4-H Club...
2. We had a good attendance.
3. I think it was the best demonstration we ever had.
4. Miss Margaret Simpson visited us.
5. We voted to...

Instead write:

1. The Jolly Workers Club...
2. All members attended.
3. Jane Reed and Ruth White gave a bread making demonstration.
4. Miss Margaret Simpson of Bennington visited the club.
5. The Jolly Worker club voted to ...

Never Write Rumors

Be sure of every statement you write. Be Careful. Use the right words and spelling, the right names and addresses. Check places, dates, times and all other information of which you are not sure. Use a dictionary.

Step #4

The last step is to help the Editor.

You can help the Editor by following these rules:

1. Send in a clean, neat news story...**Get it to Your Editor at Once.**
2. Print your articles, if at all possible. Double space your stories on regular sized paper (8 ½ x 11 inches).
3. Print on one side of the paper only.
4. Write short sentences and short paragraphs. Keep sentences under 10 words, paragraphs under 60.
5. Make each paragraph complete in itself.
6. If you have a long story, number the pages. Write your name and address in the upper right-hand corner of page one.
7. Get to know your local editor or town correspondent.

A Test for Reporters

QUESTIONS

1. Name two kinds of stories you can write about 4-H meetings.
2. What is the first step in writing a news story?
3. What is the first thing you tell about in a news story?
4. What do you put in the lead when writing a story about your club's meeting?
5. Give the rule for building a news story.
6. List three rules you should use in writing a news story.
7. Do you give your opinion in a news story?
8. Accuracy is important. Tell about points you should check carefully.
9. How can you help the newspaper editor?
10. Is it true that your news story should be written like a secretary's report?

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NSWERS

1. Advance stories to announce meetings, and follow-up stories which tell what happened
2. Get all the information...find the answer to Who, What, When, Where Why and How.
3. The most important and interesting fact you learned.
4. The most important happening at the meeting.
5. Build with important details near the top. Leave the least important points for the last.
6. Use short, simple words. Be clear. Check your facts to be accurate.
7. Only when you credit to someone.
8. People's names and initials. Give places, dates and times.
9. By typing neatly on one side of each sheet. By writing short sentences and short paragraphs.
10. No.

4-H CLUB PLEDGE

I Pledge:

My **HEAD** to clear thinking

My **HEART** to greater loyalty

My **HANDS** to larger service

My **HEALTH** to better living

for my Club, my Community, my Country and my World.



Guidelines for Submitting Photography

Guidelines for submitting photographs would include:

- ★ Use black and white, 8x10, pictures taken with a 35 mm camera or digital camera.
- ★ Have the same person (skilled in photography) take all the pictures.
- ★ Take action pictures but take lots of them. Action pictures often are confusing when reprinted in the paper. All people may not be clearly seen. Action shots are usually preferred, though, over “portrait” shots.
- ★ Keep the photography simple. Don’t have too many people in picture, have them doing something of interest which the viewer can easily identify, don’t have complex or dark background.
- ★ Submit caption information. Type on a piece of paper the full names of people, (from left to right in the picture), what is happening, where it took place, and when it took place. Tape the paper to the back of the photograph. **DO NOT WRITE ON THE PHOTOGRAPH.** Include the name and phone number of a contact person if there are questions.
- ★ If the photograph is to accompany a press release or article, make reference to both on both pieces submitted.
- ★ Encourage a reporter from the paper to cover an important event and bring a photographer with him/her. That way, they’ll get the right shot and right slant.

Submitting Electronically

With today’s technology, articles and photographs can be sent via e-mail. If you have access to a computer and the internet, check on line for your local newspaper. Instructions for submitting should be found within their site.

Check out the *Concord Monitor On Line* found at
<http://concordmonitor.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=COMMUNITY01>

This is where you can upload your photo along with your article/special event.

Sample Press Release

TO: "Community News",
Concord Monitor and New Hampshire Patriot
Monitor Publishing Company
P.O. Box 1177
One Monitor Drive
Concord, New Hampshire 03302-1177
or e-mail: communitynews@cmonitor.com

FROM: Reporter's Name, Name of 4-H Club, Reporter, Address, Street, Town Zip Code

DATE: November 10, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOWN NAME GOES HERE

4-H club name. Officers of the (4-H Club Name) attended the Merrimack County 4-H Officers Training Workshop held recently at Merrimack Valley High School in Penacook. Officers and Leaders in attendance were Susy Smith, John Jones, Bill Black and Wanda White. They will use their newly acquired skills at their next 4-H Business meeting on November 29th.

- END -

For more information contact *Reporter's Name* at *Reporters Phone* or *email address*

4-H CLUB PLEDGE



I pledge...

my **head** to clearer thinking,
my **heart** to greater loyalty,
my **hands** to larger service, and
my **health** to better living for
my **club**, my **community**,
my **country**, and my **world**.