

A Matter of Record: Completing Your 4-H Record Book

A 4-H Record Book is a way to organize what you have done and learned in your 4-H projects and activities. It will help you summarize your leadership, citizenship, and community service activities. 4-H records are a tangible expression of the joy of striving and all the hard work you have done. They document the knowledge, attitudes, and skills, that you have learned through your 4-H experiences.

4-H records help you establish goals, assume responsibility for record keeping, collecting data, and evaluating your progress. Perhaps, most importantly, the 4-H record book is recognition of your accomplishments that you can keep with you as you move into adulthood.

You should remember, however, that 4-H record books are not created in one day. Good records are developed over a period of time. To keep track of things you have done and learned in 4-H, you need a record keeping system that can be added to as your work progresses and changes.

Ways to Keep Records in 4-H

1. **4-H Record Book** – This is the best method. You can obtain one from your leader, county 4-H agent, or the Extension Office. You can record all your activities while they are still fresh in your mind or even take your record book to 4-H activities. Your record book includes a calendar to record all your activities without having to do a lot of writing on the spot.
2. **Calendar/Planner** – Use a calendar or a planner to mark everything you do. Not only place meeting dates and locations, you can note how many you attended, what you did, what was learned or made, what you would do differently if you took pictures, etc. A calendar can be easily kept and carried. After the year is over, you have a good account of everything that you have done, which can be easily transferred to a 4-H record book.
3. **File Folder** – Designate 12 folders at the beginning of the year (start in October) for each month. Place the following in your monthly folders:
 - A list of meetings/activities attended
 - Newspaper articles
 - Evaluation sheets
 - Ribbons/certificates
 - Pictures – remember to put captions describing the event.At the end of the year, band all of your folders together, and you will have a year of 4-H life. This can be transferred into and supplement a 4-H record book.
4. **Box Method** – In a good sturdy box, keep everything that is valuable and has data that you may need in the future for your record book. This method is very similar to the file folder, but it is not being held in an orderly

manner, and will be more difficult to retrieve if you wish to complete a record book.

Your 4-H Story

Your 4-H story is a very important part of your 4-H records. It should emphasize your personal growth and development, leadership, and community service experiences. Try to convey how your participation in 4-H contributed to your self-respect and concern for others, how it has influenced you in school, in your use of leisure time, and in your career plans. Your 4-H story should tell the reader what you have done and learned by participating in 4-H.

The following outline may help you to develop your 4-H story. It is divided into parts to help you outline what you want to say about yourself. DO NOT identify these parts in your 4-H story-write it in paragraph form.

Part One: Introduce yourself. Include information about your age, interests, family, where you live, where you go to school, when and why you became involved in 4-H.

Part Two: Tell about the projects you worked on this year. Describe how 4-H has helped you learn things about these areas you did not know before, how your projects have grown, and some of the successes and failures with your project areas.

Part Three: Highlight your other 4-H activities, including major learning experiences, special interests, and unusual situations you have encountered.

Part Four: Explain how 4-H has helped you to become a better leader and citizen, how 4-H has increased your interest and participation in community events and what you have learned from your team or group involvement and efforts.

Part Five: Describe how 4-H participation has helped you feel good about yourself, influenced your school and career goals, and your use of leisure time. Tell about your future plans and the career you wish to pursue.