



The 4-H Reporter



Duties

The reporter informs the public about what your 4-H club does. Newspaper editors are interested in stories about 4-H. Every 4-H reporter who writes for publications indirectly serves as a reporter for the newspaper to which he or she sends material.

The Reporter

- Speaks to the 4-H leader or UW CES Extension educator about how to handle club stories
- Writes a story about each meeting to send to the county Extension office and to the local newspaper immediately after the meeting
- Sends advance information to local papers, radio stations, and the county Extension office when the club plans a special event
- Writes a follow-up story after a special event
- Takes photos

Suggestions for 4-H Reporters

- Stories should be organized in the inverted pyramid style. The story's lead should feature the most important or most interesting aspect of the meeting. Write the story so the editor can cut off all except the first few paragraphs and still have a complete story.
- Early in the story, you should answer the following questions: who, what, where, when, how, and why. Always be accurate. Some stories will have a series of answers to the above questions. The lead paragraph should contain the club name, the type of meeting or event, the date and place of the meeting, and the main reason for the meeting. Following paragraphs should include the future plans, presentations, committees, and other important club business. Advance meeting stories must include the time and date of the meeting. Follow-up stories may give the date and place but need not include the time of the meeting.



- Write the story in the third person, never use I, we, or you in a news story. “New club officers will be elected at the May 20th meeting.”
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short. Present only facts, not opinions.
- Be sure all names are spelled correctly throughout the article and include your club’s name.
- The article should be written so that anyone can read and understand it. Remember, not everyone who reads the article is involved or familiar with the 4-H program. The purpose of the 4-H news is to let other people know about the interesting and fun activities 4-H offers.
- It is a good idea to consult the 4-H leader, university Extension educator, and the newspaper editor about news stories. You may need to follow certain procedures to have articles printed in your newspaper.
- Always type articles, double-spaced, on 8½ by 11 inch paper.
- Type your name, phone number, and club name in the upper left-hand corner of the page. Leave a large top margin of 1½ to 2½ inches for editor notes.
- Photographs will greatly enhance your 4-H news story and may help you get your 4-H news printed in the paper. Most newspapers prefer black-and-white prints with sharp contrast. However, some newspapers now accept digital photos. Most papers also have a policy of accepting only action pictures and will not accept posed pictures of officers and members. Check with the newspaper editor to determine his or her picture preferences.
- It is important for your article to get to the paper as soon as possible after the meeting. Read everything you write carefully to be sure it is absolutely clear. Names, dates, and places should be correct, and essential information should be included. Be certain to run spell check.

- A good reporter is always on the lookout for interesting news about 4-H activities and sees that this material reaches the press so others can learn of 4-H work. Do not feel bad if the editor shortens or changes the story.

How to Write a News Story

Take good notes during the meeting or event you are covering. Remember particularly, the six parts of a good news report: who, what, when, where, how, and why.

Decide what the most important issues of the meeting are and make that information your story’s lead.

Who

- Use the person’s full name
- Spell the name correctly
- Use the person’s title such as 4-H leader or president of the club

Example: Sue West, president of the Cloverleaf 4-H club, is the state representative for the National 4-H Conference in Washington, D.C.

What

- Be definite
- Be exact

Example: A tour of the 12 home improvement projects in the Luck H 4-H club is set for Saturday, April 6, 1 p.m. at ...

When

Before the event:

- include the day
- include the date
- include the exact hour

After the event:

- include the date

Example: Tuesday, June 11, the Cooking Capers 4-H club will give a “Parents’ Tea” at 2 p.m. The event will be held at...



Where

- Give the exact location

Example: The State Capitol will be visited by the Mavericks 4-H Club Friday, January 26, as part of their citizenship study. Appointments have been made with Governor (name) and Commissioner of Agriculture (name).

How

Example: Using six pullets from his poultry project, Don Jones showed members of the Ranger 4-H Club how to select birds for exhibiting at the fair. His presentation was given at the 4-H meeting on July 8.

Why

Example: The early April blizzard made it necessary to cancel the meeting of the Busy Bees 4-H club. This meeting has been rescheduled...

Now complete the story. Use your notes to plan the order in which you will tell what happened.

Sample 4-H News Story Written by Jane Baskett for the Casper Star Tribune

Can you live with eating sugar?

This question was discussed in a presentation given by Cookie Doe at a recent meeting of the Happy Helpers 4-H Club. Doe described how sugar breaks down in the body, and mentioned several books that advocate sugar-free diets.

Other meeting business held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Kerr, included naming a committee to plan a skating party in March. The Jolly Ranchers 4-H Club will be invited.

4-H Leader Jody Barrett noted that it was not too early to begin thinking about a booth for this year's 4-H carnival.

Semi-monthly project meetings for sewing and cooking will begin in March.

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