

# 2024 TIPS FOR GREAT RECORD BOOKS



# Table of Contents

Philosophy of Awards .....	3
Ten Steps to a Quality Program .....	4
Definitions .....	5
Planning for a Record Book .....	6-7
Oklahoma Report Form .....	8
What is Project Work? .....	9
What is Leadership? .....	10
What is Civic Engagement/Citizenship? .....	11
Reporting Work with Other Groups .....	12
Making you Record Book come to Life.....	13-16
The Photography Section.....	17-18
Clerical Hints.....	19
Tips for Great Record Books.....	20

# Philosophy of Awards

Recognition is a tool 4-H leaders can use to help each 4-H member have a satisfying experience in the 4-H program. The question is, “How can we use recognition to encourage the desirable growth and development of 4-H youth?”

4-H volunteers must consider individual differences in meeting the needs of 4-H members. For some 4-H members, competition will inspire creative thinking and encourage them to discover and develop their talents. Competing with achievements will help members develop perspective as they measure themselves against the achievements of others. For some individuals, however, measuring their abilities against the abilities of others may only deepen an existing sense of inferiority. Others may not be interested in competitive efforts but will see value in working cooperatively with others to achieve certain goals.

The following questions are important to keep in mind as you plan your awards program:

- Will all members that participate be allowed some degree of success?
- Will the emphasis be individual efforts toward worthwhile, educational goals or getting ahead of someone else?
- Will the participants know why they won or failed to win?
- Will the focus be learning from competitive experiences or simply collecting awards?

Adults working with young people must make careful choices to create the best learning experiences for all concerned. Observe the following guidelines for effective use of recognition and competition in 4-H educational programs:

- Design and conduct programs of educational value. Utilize competition and recognition wisely and effectively while enhancing education.
- Provide possibilities for all participants to succeed by offering classes for different stages of development.
- Plan activities that are satisfying in and of themselves by de-emphasizing competition.
- Avoid applying undue pressure. Participation in a competitive experience or event should always be optional.
- Train judges to recognize that concern for the individual member takes precedence over the award.
- Provide opportunities for young people to evaluate or judge their own work and that of others against standards appropriate to their development and their capabilities.
- Design and conduct learning experiences that help instill in youth a concern for others.
- Realize the real purpose of recognition and competition; their significance to youth should be enhanced by appropriate presentations and publicity.

# Ten Steps to a Quality Program

1. Realize it will take time and commitment to accomplish goals – good things rarely come without hard work.
2. Plan to devote as much time to 4-H as you do to other extra-curricular activities. A football team that practiced one day a month would not expect to win many games. Why do we expect attending one 4-H meeting a month to make a quality program?
3. As a volunteer, if the 4-H member you are working with is your own child, seek an objective outside resource person to help. It is common knowledge that children perceive their parents to be more ignorant as adolescence progresses.
4. Encourage group projects and activities. Teens have high social needs, and individual project work, by itself, is no longer satisfying to them. 4-H should supply opportunities to combine social experience and project work to retain interest. Monthly club meetings are not the place where the most project work takes place. Volunteers need to plan project meetings through project clubs or groups to expand project work for members. Youth are encouraged to expand project work by taking leadership in planning and implementing project meetings.
5. Beware of burnout. When planning a program, pace the work to avoid an “early peak.” When work peaks at age 14-15, the child may be robbed of a scholarship opportunity because he/she has not had time to develop sufficient project growth to accompany leadership and civic engagement/citizenship.
6. Plan around known conflicts. If basketball controls the household November-February, then accept the fact that the child will not get much project work done during those months. If he/she wants to be competitive, more work must be done in the other eight months of the year.
7. Be creative! Think big! Look for opportunities! Reach out and include others!
8. Ask some serious questions: Is the activity important enough to justify the time it takes? Who will benefit from what is being planned? Do my community service activities deal with real needs and issues? What are my motives?
9. Expect setbacks. They are part of any growth process. Have a plan to deal with projects that do not work out.
10. Encourage personal growth – one goal of the 4-H program is to create opportunities for members to mature, develop empathy for others and develop self-awareness.

# Definitions

These definitions are to help members to use correct terminology in the record book. Please review and use accordingly.

- **Speech or Illustrated Presentation:** An organized talk, with an introduction, body and conclusion. Rituals, prayers, and/or presiding over meetings do not qualify as speeches.
- **Demonstration:** To give instructions for making a finished product and show how it is done. Even if a demonstration shows how to make two or three small items to complete one big item, it is still counted as just one demonstration.
- **Workshop:** To give participants actual hands-on learning experience. A workshop takes more time to present than a demonstration because it involves more active audience participation.
- **Short Course:** Lengthy demonstration or program (may be a lecture). Participants listen; no hands-on experiential learning occurs.
- **Competitions:** Events in which 4-H members participate in to practice and demonstrate knowledge and skills in a particular area. Competitions generally have awards presented at the completion of the event. Examples include judging contests, public speaking contests, food showdown, etc.
- **Committee Appointment:** Should be reported only when 4-H'er is an active, contributing member of the committee.
- **Educational Booth or Display:** Not for competition. Simply tells about a project.
- **Educational Exhibit:** A competitive exhibit demonstrating a project, e.g., a food nutrition exhibit
- **Working Display:** Display that 4-H'ers operate to answer questions or give information to public on request.
- **Leadership:** Activities in which the 4-H'er has an active role in planning, organizing, or conducting an activity or event. This does not include attending a leadership conference or workshop as a participant (such as attending district fall leadership conference).
- **Civic Engagement:** Activities in which the 4-H'er has an active role in planning, organizing or conducting project to benefit other individuals, a community or group. This does not include attending workshops or learning experiences in which civic engagement or citizenship is the topic such as a workshop on service learning.

# Planning for Record Keeping

The 4-H'er should begin by setting personal goals for his or her 4-H project(s) or activity(ies). A well-developed 4-H record should be based on personal goals for the project or activity. It should include a report on the accomplishment of these goals and accomplishments in project work, leadership, and civic engagement/citizenship.

A successful 4-H project or activity takes advanced planning and accurate, continual record keeping. A County Yearly Project Report Form is an excellent method of keeping records for a project. Members should complete this for each project, especially those in which the member plans to continue for several years. Many counties have developed their own form, so check with the Extension staff in your county to obtain one of these forms.

## Planning for Success

A quality program requires good planning; it does not just happen. Ideally, the initial planning session should take place when the member is 12 to 13 years old, or even younger. The member should bring all county project report forms from previous years. The adult will need a current copy of the Oklahoma 4-H Awards Handbook and the award application form currently in use.

Allow about two hours for the first conference. During this time, have the 4-H member tell you about his/her favorite projects, goals, what he/she wants to get out of the program, etc. Also ask the parent the same questions, if a parent is there at the time.

Encourage the selection of two related projects and the continuation of other projects on a small scale. If scholarships are a goal, the list will show whether scholarships are available for the program in question.

Take inventory of the resources available for carrying out project work, then brainstorm. Consider all possible activities to be carried out in the program. Be sure to plan progressive work – increase the difficulty of tasks, skills and responsibilities. Making a written plan increases the sense of commitment.

Generally, if a 4-H member will devote two to three days per month to 4-H project work, research, leadership and community service activities, they can have a quality program. Remember that most 4-H members are not self-motivated. They need a plan to follow and an adult to see that the plans are carried out.

## Where 4-H Projects and Record Books Come Up Short: Suggestions for Strengthening Record Books

- Lack of good, solid project work.
  - How can we strengthen? Project work does not typically happen at general club meetings. It can be strengthened by increasing self-study in the project, project clubs or project group meetings.
- Failure to show personal growth and application of project skills.
  - How can we strengthen? Personal growth means that knowledge and skills increase in difficulty and depth in a project. If a project is planned out, growth can be included in the learning experiences. Application of project skills is using what you have learned and using that information in other projects, to expand your learning experiences in new directions within the project, etc.
- Leadership – there needs to be a balance between “project leadership” and “other leadership.” Both are important.
  - How can we strengthen? Project leadership is planning, organizing and implementing activities, workshops, and other experiences for other members. Other leadership might include but is not limited to holding an office at the local, county, district or state level, serving on committees, serving as a teen leaders for a project or activity, etc.
- Civic Engagement– many project record books lack true civic engagement. Judging committees look for projects and activities that make a difference in the community, in the family or in the life of an individual.
  - How can we strengthen? Explore/research the concept of “service learning” and work on following the steps of the service-learning model to plan and carry out service.
- Project work, in general, shows a lack of focus, which is often due to lack of planning or lack of commitment on the part of the member.
  - How can we strengthen? Work with your educator, volunteer and parents to plan the project and set goals to accomplish.
- Record books have too much repetition between sections.
  - How can we strengthen? Be specific in the role you played in an activity or event and place it where it will make the most impact in your book. If you had more than one role, for example, you attended an event and participated in that event but you also had a leadership role, separate out the information and be specific in reporting to the correct section. For example, if you participated in the club officer workshop because you serve as the club president, but you are also the county 4-H council secretary, you would report your participation in the workshop and in leadership, your role as the secretary to train club secretaries.

# Oklahoma Report Form

The Oklahoma Report Form consists of five sections in which 4-H members will report project work and related non-4-H work. Below is a summary of the space given, scoring and content for the 5 sections of the Oklahoma Report Form.

## Section 1A – Participation in the 4-H Project

- What have you done in this project? Limited to two (2) pages.
- Scoring: 4-H project work – 15 points; Other Project Work – 5 points
- Report the steps you have taken to meet the stated objective for the project (refer to the Oklahoma 4-H Project Objectives guide). Include the amount of project work (number of items, number of times, etc.) along with related experiences such as tours, public speaking experiences.

## Section 1B – What have you learned in this project?

- Limited to one (1) page.
- Scoring: 5 points
- List what you have learned because of participation in the project along with the skills you have acquired related to the project. It is best to provide the year for each set of skills learned to show project growth.

## Section 2 – Leadership Experiences

- Limited to two (2) pages. Place asterisks (\*) beside leadership activities relating directly to the project outlined in Section 1-A.
- Scoring: 4-H Leadership – 15 points; Other Leadership – 5 points
- List your leadership participation, including offices and committees by year. List 4-H leadership in the project first, followed by other leadership activities.

## Section 3 – Civic Engagement Experiences

- Limited to two (2) pages. Place asterisks (\*) beside civic engagement activities relating directly to the project outlined in Section 1-A.
- Scoring: 4-H Civic Engagement– 15 points; Other Civic Engagement – 5 points
- List your experiences that contributed to the welfare of the community, other individuals, or members of your club or group. Explain what you did and how many people were affected. List 4-H civic engagement first, followed by other civic engagement.

## Section 4 – Awards in all 4-H Projects

- Limited to ½ page. List the most meaningful awards you have received.
- Scoring: 5 points
- It is acceptable to group similar awards on one line to conserve space (example- county fair placings, public speaking awards, or project medals)

## Section 5 – Non-4-H Experiences

- Limited to ½ page list your most meaningful non-4-H experiences. These may include participation in school, church/faith or community organizations.
- Scoring: 5 points
- Items listed in this section should not duplicate items listed as other project work, leadership, or civic engagement. It is acceptable to group like items (academic awards, etc.) to conserve space.



# What is project work?

Section 1-A of the Oklahoma Report Form is a summary of the project work in a given project the 4-H member has completed in their time in 4-H. The Oklahoma Report Form is a cumulative record of the member's entire 4-H career. Each project in which there is a scholarship given has set objectives, which can be a jumping point for 4-H members to help them design and determine project work. Section 1-A is the project work section and is limited to two pages.

## Project work is...

- Age appropriate and flexible learning experiences for individual development
- A teaching tool for developing desirable character traits and project skills
- Real life experiences in making decisions
- Concerned with the optimum development of the individual member

The term “**project work**” is in reference to a single subject (ie. Public Speaking, Beef, Food Science). It is the big picture or long-term goal of what a member wants to learn. The term “**project activities**” (ie. speech, animal, cookies) is in reference to the individual part or short-term goals of the 4-H project.

4-H projects are an opportunity for 4-H members to:

- Develop subject matter and life skills
- Be part of a group that fosters a sense of belonging
- Develop and practice communication skills, both written and oral
- Share ideas
- Exhibit their project work and teach others what they have learned
- Receive recognition for their work

4-H projects should:

- Help 4-H members develop skills and gain knowledge
- Expose 4-H members to explore careers in the given field
- Provide a sense of accomplishment for the 4-H member
- Give 4-H members a learn by doing experience
- Assist 4-H members in creating ownership in their project and also accept responsibility for their project
- Create and strengthen family and community ties

Successful project work:

- Uses 4-H project manuals or other sources that are deemed credible and research based
- Encourages members to set goals and plan project work ahead
- Creates an environment of learning and follow-through with planned work
- Have an evaluation component so youth are constantly understanding how to improve
- Encourage participation in local and county activities and events

# What is leadership?

Section 2 of the Oklahoma Report Form is the opportunity for 4-H members to report their leadership experiences both in and out of the 4-H program. Leadership experiences are much more than being an “officer”. Organizing events, showing another 4-H member something project related, or being part of a committee are all good leadership experiences for 4-H members. Leadership projects that are related to the project listed in Section 1-A are to be shown with an asterisk (\*).

There are various levels and kinds of leadership:

- Helping an individual on a one-to-one basis (4-H member or other)
- Helping several individuals with a project in a group situation (presenting workshops, demonstrations, speeches and other oral presentations)
- Helping individuals learn about a project through a promotion (displays, distribution of literature, etc.)
- Planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating a program or activity
- Serving as leader for a project club or regular club
- Serving as a club, county, district or state office
- Serving as a committee chair or committee member.

Leadership project work reported in Section 2 of the Oklahoma Report Form should show good growth as the 4-H member gets older and is developmentally ready for more responsibilities. Below are some examples of progressive leadership projects:

## 7th - 9th grade

- Help an older member conduct a workshop
- Serve on a county committee for an activity in chosen project

## 10th grade

- Plan and conduct one or more workshops in chosen project
- Chair a committee to deal with a local issue related to project
- Start a project club

## 11th grade

- Plan and conduct a series of classes or workshops in chosen project
- Continue project club work – promote enrollment/participation
- Reach new audiences, especially those with special needs
- Look for a member to take leadership role with project club

## 12th grade

- Train a member to take over project club
- Develop a new activity or event in the project
- Continue teaching workshops and short courses
- Chair a county committee to host an invitational contest in the project area.

# What is Civic Engagement?

Section 3 of the Oklahoma Report Form is the opportunity for 4-H members to report their civic engagement experiences both in and out of the 4-H program. Civic engagement through 4-H encourages and empowers youth to be actively engaged in local, county and state government. Youth learn how to become involved in their communities and in their world. These skills help 4-H members grow into experienced leaders who embrace responsibility. Civic Engagement is much more than just community service or service learning. Community service is actions taken to improve the quality of life for a member of the community in which the action is taking place. Service learning is community service actions planned by 4-H members and contains some educational component for the members who are performing the actions.

Civic engagement is the relationship between you and others, as demonstrated by the following:

- The way you think, feel, and act toward your family, other 4-H'ers, your school and church groups, and other people in your community.
- Activities that help foster greater understanding of the role of a community citizen.
- Activities that contribute to the welfare of your local 4-H club, individuals in your community or the community as a whole.
- Activities that show good civic engagement by allowing the 4-H'er to work with people to carry out the duties and responsibilities of a good citizen.
- Civic engagement/citizenship activities can include helping an individual or a group or carrying out a project individually.
- Representing 4-H while working with others to deal with significant community issues.

Civic engagement project work reported in Section 3 of the Oklahoma Report Form should show good growth as the 4-H member gets older. Skills and activities should become more complex as the 4-H member is older and learning more about how they fit into their world. Below are some examples of progressive leadership projects:

## 7th - 9th grade

- Be part of a club service project
- Serve on a committee for a service project related to chosen project

## 10th grade

- Chair a committee to deal with a local issue related to a service project
- Promote and coordinate the state service projects in your local club and/or county

## 11th grade

- Reach new audiences through service, especially those with special needs
- Conduct a county needs assessment to identify projects in the county that could benefit from 4-H's assistance

## 12th grade

- Chair a committee to conduct a major community service event related to project

# Reporting Work with Other Groups

The State 4-H Awards Committee recognizes that 4-H members may be active participants in several groups or activities that complement their 4-H project work. 4-H is part of a holistic process that helps to develop life skills in its members. When doing a project record book or applying for any award, the member should strive to honestly and accurately report service, experiences or other project work they have done in the name of 4-H as 4-H work and other experiences that they did as a member of some other youth program as non-4-H work. This in no way diminishes the value of those experiences. If a member is not sure if something fits as 4-H project work, they should use the following test:

***“If those who were there and saw, heard or benefited from my actions were asked what organization I was representing, the answer determines whether it should be reported as 4-H or non-4-H work.”***

Consider the following example: A 4-H member goes from the 4-H meeting once a month to join his church youth group in singing at a local nursing home. This is not 4-H community service, but instead it is community service done as a member of the church youth group. However, if the member recruits some of his youth group to join the 4-H club in Christmas caroling in local nursing homes, this then is 4-H community service as he is now singing at a 4-H sponsored activity.

The awards committee has developed the following guidelines to help 4-H families with membership in two or more organizations determine if, where and how to report project-related activities conducted in a non-4-H setting:

*Work related to the project done through another organization (Church, FFA, FCCLA, FBLA, Boy/Girl Scouts, junior breed associations, etc.) may be appropriately reported as project-related non-4-H work by clearly identifying these activities and grouping them together in each section of the Oklahoma Report Form.*

The awards committee also acknowledges that the majority of 4-H project work is done outside the organized club setting, often on an individual basis or in a family setting. This type of work can generally be reported as 4-H project work, unless it was completed specifically to earn recognition in another group or organization. Only the member and his/her family know the intent of an activity, and intent governs where project work is reported.

# Making your Record Book come to life

One of the challenges of 4-H record books is developing an adequate vocabulary for describing your 4-H work. Think of your record book as an English assignment. Spelling, grammar and punctuation should be correct. The language in the Oklahoma Report Form needs to be clear and concise; it should tell the reader exactly what you did and why the activity was important. Have someone unfamiliar with your work and your project proofread the book to analyze for clarity, grammar, punctuation and completeness. Remember three to four people completely unfamiliar with your work will be reviewing it later.

## The 4-H Story

The purpose of the 4-H story is to allow members to complement the facts and figures reported in the Oklahoma Report Form with the personal growth aspects of project work that are sometimes hard to report. The story should not be a reiteration of the Oklahoma Report Form, but instead should give the reader a sense of who the member is and why 4-H and this project in particular have made a difference in his/her life.

While the story is not a creative writing project, it does need to convey more than facts and figures. This is the place to share personal growth experiences, special projects, etc. The story should be conversational – the reader should feel as if he/she is listening to the writer or having a conversation with him/her. The reader should feel the member's disappointments and share his/her triumphs through his/her words. The most successful and meaningful 4-H projects are those that demonstrate the member understands that what is learned is more important than what was won. If involvement in a particular 4-H project has resulted in a change in the individual, the family or an even larger entity, it is important to share in the 4-H story.

### Use descriptive terms to convey feelings or to emphasize points.

If you liked something, use:

Appreciate	Enjoy	Admire
Regard	Prize	

### If you were part of a group or helped an adult or older member, instead of assisted, use:

Supervised	Distributed	Guided
Managed	Arranged	

### If you taught a class or workshop, use:

Tutored	Informed	Conducted
Instructed	Directed	

### If you started something new or took an active leadership role, use:

Introduced	Developed	Designed
Organized	Initiated	Prepared

**The examples that follow use different writing styles and convey different messages.**

## **Sheep**

In 1999, I joined 4-H and bought two show lambs. I showed those lambs at the county fair and the spring livestock show. One placed first and the other sifted. I spent a lot of time exercising the lambs and tried several different feeds before we found one the sheep liked. The next year, I bought two ewe and a wether and we had a good show season. We had the ewe bred and she had twin lambs. One died. I showed the other one the following year, but it did not do very well. My dad decided that if I was going to make the sale, we had to buy better sheep. We asked our neighbor for some help in buying better ewes so that I could raise better sheep. I made the sale with a wether from the next crop of lambs and this year I had the breed champion. Now I have 20 ewes and a little money in the bank.

## **Sheep**

My sheep project began with two wethers. Like most kids, I loved to take care of them – they were really more like pets than livestock. One was somewhat sickly and I even snuck him in the house a few times when it was cold. As they grew and were less playful, getting up early to take care of them before school became more of a chore. I really wished my dad would do it for me sometimes, but I knew it was my responsibility. My hard work did not pay off immediately – my first show season was disappointing, but my dad reminded me of how responsible I had become. I did not really like getting rid of the lambs at the end of the show season, so the next year we bought two ewes and a wether.

When the ewes were old enough, we had them bred and the two of them had three babies the following spring. I was very sad when one of them died, but I was able to show one of the babies the following year and while Charlie did not win many ribbons, I was proud to say I had raised him. With help from a couple of local sheep breeders, dad and I bought three more ewes with the goal of raising our own show lambs and increasing the herd size. With five ewes and eventually their babies to take care of, and a growing social and extracurricular school schedule, I had to learn to set priorities and manage my time to get it all done. While there were still mornings that I wish Dad would do chores for me, I understand that the sheep depend on me for everything and that it is my responsibility to take care of them.

Have I raised the Grand Lamb at the County Show? Not yet, but one of the lambs I raised was breed champion last year. My small flock has grown to 20 ewes and their offspring. While they may not produce a grand champion or make me rich, they have put a little money in the bank and the life skills of responsibility, compassion, dedication and problem solving this project has taught me are worth more than any ribbon.

## **Sheep**

Who would have ever guessed back in 1999 that buying two wethers would have made such a difference in my life? Although my first show ring experiences resulted in few ribbons and even less premium money, we made many memories. I learned that it is really embarrassing when your lamb chews on the pony tail of the cute girl crouched down next to you. I learned that bringing new life into the world is always exciting and sometimes more than a little challenging. Probably most important, I learned what it is like to have something completely dependent on you for its survival.

Dad bought my first two ewe lambs and helped with feed costs, but several years ago, I got a loan from the bank to buy a small flock of sheep from a neighbor who was scaling down his operation. Now I understand why dad worries so much. I just knew the first time I lost a lamb that I would not be able to pay off the note. Since that time, I have made some money and I have lost some, but I have learned a lot about responsibility and management. I have never won Grand Champion, but I have raised almost every lamb I have shown in the last five years and I take pride in that. A few of my

sheep have been good enough to sell as show lambs and I'm always proud when one of the younger members shows one of my sheep.

I have really enjoyed teaching younger members how to care for their sheep. We have project club meetings twice a month at a different member's house so everyone can see how the lambs are coming along. I learn as much from the kids as I teach them. Since I will be graduating next year, I am lining up a couple of the older club members to take over when I am gone, so the work of the club can continue.

### **Food Science**

I joined 4-H in the 4th Grade because everyone else was. One of the first events was the county fair. I made cookies and got 2nd. I should have gotten 1st, but the agent's kid is my age, so I guess I'll never win. The next event was the food fair. I really went all out and made 10 entries. I even made a German Chocolate Cake! I won three blue ribbons, two red ribbons, three white ribbons and two green ribbons, but I didn't win Grand Champion. I did a speech on the MyPlate thing and I didn't win that either.

My second year of 4-H went better. I won first place on my jelly at the county fair and got to send it to the state fair and it placed 8th. I was disappointed, but my mom said getting any ribbon at the state fair is a big deal. Fall came and I had my eye on one of those Grand Champion silver trays at the Food Fair. Mom said if I really wanted to win, we should concentrate on doing two or three entries really well rather than making a whole bunch of entries. I did that and guess what? I didn't win grand champion, but I got reserve grand champion! I did a demonstration on making cookies.

By my third year in 4-H, mom said I was old enough to help put up vegetables and fruits from the garden. I learned that cutting corn off the cob is hard work and okra is really slimy when you blanch it. She also said I was old enough to start cooking some on my own, so I did and I haven't burned the house down yet! That year I made biscuits for the fair and won 1st place at the County Fair and 1st place at the State Fair. I also had lots of entries in the Food Fair and finally won Grand Champion for my age group. I wanted to win the Shawnee Milling Breads award, so I did a demonstration on making my famous biscuits.

### **Food Science**

Food Science is my favorite 4-H project because – you guessed it – I love to cook! The Food Network is a regular on my TV viewing schedule. My favorite cook is Rachel Ray and I love the Iron Chef competition. According to my family, I've always been quite creative in the kitchen. During the pre-Cloverbud years, I was known for Cool-Whip sandwiches and Strawberry Hamburgers among other unique creations.

Participating in the Culinary Club has been really fun. I learned so much more than just cooking. We set the table for a variety of different meals; we all did demonstrations and workshops for the group and we tried new recipes each week. We also had homework. One week, we were sent home with a can of biscuits and told to bring back a creation of our own. My Italian Flatbread was such a hit that later in the schedule, I did a workshop for all the club members on how to make it. As a service project, our club prepared a meal and delivered it to the Ronald McDonald House. Our county officer group also served a meal at the Ronald McDonald House and ate with the residents.

Because of my parents' schedules, I am often ready for dinner before they are home (or before mom can get a "real" meal put together.) Most days, I not only prepare a snack for myself and my friends, but I also prepare my dinner. Notice that I said MY dinner. My family still doesn't appreciate my inventive cooking, so I generally have my creations all to myself. I enjoy cooking so much that I asked for a blender for my birthday and I've used my mom's new Kitchenaid mixer more than she has.

### **Food Science**

I've always cooked at home – from the days before I could read and my mom had to read the recipe and color code the measuring cups and spoons with the recipe. After I started reading, I ordered kid's cookbooks from school book orders. While looking through cookbooks is no longer a recreational activity, I do enjoy experimenting with new recipes.

I really like vegetables, which is fortunate since my parents have a fruit and vegetable business along with their regular jobs. That means that at times, I have a lot of vegetables to experiment with and preserve. The rule is that if the produce isn't marketable, we preserve it for use at home, or turn it into a value-added product like jam or relish. Since we're currently experiencing a zucchini population problem (too many), I have been trying to copy the commercially breaded product and cut down on fat - the last version was quite good - except there was a little too much red pepper.

Because I like to experiment with different recipes, entering the Sure Jell contest at the State Fair was a natural fit for me. The only requirements are that Sure Jell pectin be used in the recipe and the recipe must be an original (not published) recipe.

I also enjoy going to the Pink House Community Action Center. A 4-H member or volunteer presents some type of educational program every week. I have progressed from handing out papers and washing dishes to presenting part of the program. "Bread in a Bag" is a program I especially enjoy presenting. Kids of all ages love working with bread dough. Last summer, while presenting this program at the Pink House, I discovered that you really do need the more expensive name brand freezer bags. In trying to cut costs, we had purchased a store brand bag, and almost every group punched a hole in the bag while mixing the dough. The bread was still OK, but we had a much bigger mess to clean up at the end.



# The Photography Section

The picture section is limited to 3 pages of pictures (exception is the Photography project – see below)

Below are guidelines for the photography section:

- Use 3-6 cropped pictures per page.
- DO NOT shingle or overlap pictures.
- Use short captions that describe what is happening in the picture. Include information in captions such as your role, what is taking place, the record book objectives being addressed or what you learned or taught.
- Use photo paper or heavy matte paper to improve photo quality of digital photos.
- Avoid using “grip and grin” type photos. This refers to photos such as the member receiving a ribbon or award, a handshake picture, etc. Unless there is real value in including these, stick with photos that show you in action.
- Make sure you use the required margins for photo pages, which are 0.5 inches on all sides.

**The Photography Record Book:** Ten (10) additional pages of photos may be added to the photography section of the record book. These additional photos should showcase samples of your photography work, including different techniques, lighting, etc. Be sure to place a caption with each photo describing the techniques and interesting facts about the picture.

## Supporting Photographs

Photographs can add interest and help tell a story about a successful 4-H project or career, but they won't do any good if the photos are dark, are out of focus, or don't have anything to do with your project. Good quality, well-planned photos set your record book apart. Photos tie the entire record book together and add impact, provided they are good pictures with informative captions. Photos need to relate to your project, give details you may not have been able to relate clearly anywhere else, and add emphasis.

Photos are used as supporting evidence. They must help tell the story of your project. The pictures need to show details; however, taking photos to tell the whole story takes real planning.

## Digital Photos

Make sure your digital photos are high resolution so they are not fuzzy or distorted. Try to avoid using photos that have been distorted in any way. Only use photo-editing software to improve the quality of the photo; DO NOT manipulate the message of the image by adding people, etc.

## Writing the Captions

A caption is a short description of the activity in your photo. Informative captions can indicate your knowledge of the project or provide additional information that is not already stated or evident in the photo. The caption should indicate personal involvement. Use captions to explain something important about the photo that may not be easily understood by someone who is not familiar with your project.

- Avoid starting each caption with “Here I am...”; “I am...”; or “This is me doing...”
- Don't state the obvious. Explain what is going on and how it affected your project.
- Be sure the caption relates to the photo.
  
- Check the spelling and grammar of your captions.
- Don't repeat yourself in the same caption. Remember, your space is limited.

- Do not write as if you are talking about yourself to someone else. For example: “David is shown planting a test plot of corn,” sounds strange if you are David.

## Complete vs. Incomplete Captions

### Complete Caption

Working with other 4-H’ers to plant the Oklahoma 4-H Centennial Garden was a wonderful experience. Through this project, I learned patience, teamwork and new plant varieties to incorporate in my own garden.

### Incomplete Caption

Here I am potting a plant for the Oklahoma 4-H Centennial Garden.



# Clerical Hints

## Typing the Record Book

The 4-H'er may do his or her own typing or recruit assistance. The 4-H story should be double-spaced. Use white space as appropriate in the Oklahoma Report Form to make it easy to read. Fonts must be no smaller than 12 spaces per inch and 6 lines per inch. Use of smaller fonts or adjusting line height will result in disqualification.

## Word Processing

The Oklahoma Report Form and all other applications have been revised significantly. **DO NOT use forms from previous years!**

Here is important information to remember as you prepare your record books and applications:

- **DO NOT REMOVE** the grey text boxes from the Oklahoma Report Form.
- Use the new forms and do not try to alter old forms to match the new ones. Cut and paste or re-type your information into the new forms. If you do not have Microsoft Word®, talk to your educator about using a computer in the office.
- **DO NOT CHANGE** the margins. There is no way to lock margins in Microsoft Word®, but the revised forms have been checked numerous times to make sure margins are set properly.
- **DO NOT MOVE** section headings on the page. We have attempted to lock them to the page but this seems to still be an issue!
- The certification page is **REQUIRED**. It is now the check list for the 4-H member to be sure they have formatted and included all required information in their book. This page also includes the section for the educator review, check and sign off on the book. The News Information Sheet has also been added to the Certification page. The Certification page will not be judged. It is used by Agriculture Communications Services and the Oklahoma 4-H Foundation.

# Tips for Great Record Books

**Neatness** is important. Do not use plastic page protector sleeves on any pages.

**Accuracy** is essential! DO NOT GUESS. If totals look excessive, explain them.

**Correct punctuation**, spelling, grammar and capitalization are important.

## Oklahoma Report Form

Use the following margins on the Oklahoma Report Form, 4-H Story and the Photo Section. Smaller margins will result in disqualification.

- Left margin: 0.5 inches
- Right margin: 0.5 inch
- Top margin: 0.5 inch
- Bottom margin: 0.5 inch

Remember that the whole page does not have to be covered. Let the white shine through.

## Special Fonts

Use of **Bold**, **Color**, *Italic* and Underlining for headings and/or emphasis is allowed. Use discretion so the special formatting will be effective. Typed or printed on one side of the paper (no type or font smaller than 12 spaces per inch, 12 point font or six lines per inch.)

Approved fonts: Times New Roman 12, Arial 12, Cambria 12, or Calibri 12

## Art Work

Do not use art work within the record book. This includes scrapbook pages, stickers, clip art, embellishments, rubber stamp art, etc.

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