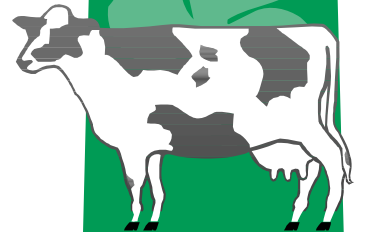


Record

Improvement Guide



**4-H Member's Guide for
Completing a 4-H Recordbook**





Acknowledgments



In August of 1999, a committee of volunteers, agents, specialists and 4-H members gathered at the Texas 4-H Center for a 3-day retreat of intensive meetings to revamp and simplify the Texas 4-H record-book. As it is with any project of this magnitude, many people helped provide input and creative suggestions along the way.

Grateful acknowledgments go to the following people who labored to create and revise this new system:

Kandy McWhorter, Moore County Extension agent

Patty Jones, Lubbock County adult leader

Dale Sandlin, Young County 4-H member

Cindy Buckner, Collin County Extension agent

Cecilia Flournoy, Angelina County adult leader

Ty Porter, Crockett County 4-H member

Jerry Kidd, McCulloch County Extension agent

Paula Christian, Hamilton County adult leader

Camille Bowden, San Jacinto County 4-H member

Natalie Knesek, Gonzales County Extension agent

Lori Bellows, Refugio County leader

Kyle Harriman, Atascosa County 4-H member

Luis Saldana, Extension program specialist - 4-H, District 12

Charla Bading, Extension program specialist - 4-H, District 10

Toby Lepley, Extension program specialist - 4-H, College Station.



For more 4-H
information click on
<http://texas4-h.tamu.edu>

Have you ever thought that you could get a record in 4-H?



No, not that kind of record!

This kind of record is the one that records your accomplishments and triumphs during the year. Keeping a 4-H record is cool and fun! It's like writing your own history. Because it helps you keep track of what you do and helps you review what you've learned in your project, a record is your way of saying:

"I did it! I rule!"

4-H wouldn't be the same without records. They're an important part of completing each project. They help you set some goals, keep track of your attendance at 4-H meetings and functions, record your demonstrations and talks, and a whole lot more.

Completing your recordbook can give you a sense of personal accomplishment. You did it! Your records:

- help you earn credit for completing the 4-H year.
- make you eligible to participate in other activities.
- give you the opportunity to be recognized on the county and district level.
- help you set challenging goals - and more!

Keeping records is a great way to hold onto your memories about each incredible year you have in 4-H. In a couple of years, you can look through these journals and remember what fun you had.

Keeping records is also a great way to develop your skills in communication, organize your time, document events and actions, evaluate your own efforts, set goals, solve problems, and keep track of money.



Records are like journals - they're a way to keep track of what you do and when you do it. Think of your records as an entry book that you keep regularly or even daily if you want to keep track of each day. The point to remember:

When something important happens, write it down.

You're doing this for yourself. What do you want to remember about your year in 4-H? It will be your record of progress. Remember - these are your records. Make them fun. Make them yours. Make them creative. Make them memorable. Design your own unique story and pictures. Put them on the computer. Add to your records so that they become your scrapbook. Add photographs.

Assembling Your Texas 4-H Recordbook -

What's the best way to assemble your records? Use the 4-H record forms. Junior level 4-H'ers under 14 years of age need to complete three forms; senior level 4-H members complete four major record forms.

What's included in the 4-H Recordbook?

- "Texas 4-H Personal Information Page" (junior and senior levels)
- "My 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio" (junior and senior levels)
- "Texas 4-H Report Form" (junior and senior levels)
- "4-H Resume" (senior level only)
- "Additional Information" (six additional pages of photos you have taken for Photography Category entries)



What are the resources needed to complete the 4-H Recordbook?

- Texas 4-H Clover (Opportunities Handbook):** a list of the current recordbook categories and recordbook objectives.
- Record Improvement Guide (Guide for Completing a Recordbook):** guidelines and rules for assembling a 4-H record keeping system.
- Member Achievement Plan (M.A.P.):** project record forms for providing information to complete a 4-H Recordbook.

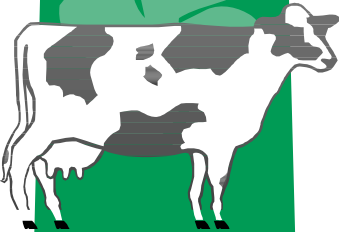
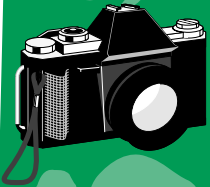
Back Up! How do I get started in 4-H record keeping?

Record keeping is going to be an important part of your life. You will keep records in high school, at work, in college, and even if you own your own business or work for someone else. Now is the time to learn how to keep good records. The most important thing about 4-H record keeping is to find a way that you are comfortable with to collect information. Three of the most common ways of keeping up with 4-H records include a calendar, an index box and a notebook!

Calendar Method - Keep a calendar in a handy location (such as on the refrigerator) and every time you do something related to 4-H, school, church or other organizations, write it down. Then at the end of each month place the calendar in a safe place until summer time comes and recordbooks are ready to be completed.



Index Box Method - Get a 3-inch by 5-inch box, index cards and dividers. Label each of the dividers as one of the sections in the report form discussed later in this guide. Then each time you do something, write it down on an index card, then file the card in the section marked by the divider. For example: If you were to take Lucky the project dog to the nursing home for recreation with the



residents, then write it down and put the card behind the community service divider. After you have maintained your "4-H File Box" for a year, you can pull the cards out and select the most important activities for your 4-H recordbook.

Binder or Spiral Notebook Method - Grab an old school binder or notebook and organize each of your activities by type of activity or by date. This is an easy way to start out until you get the hang of record keeping.

Let's have a Lucky lesson:

Record keeping should be done throughout the year. If you wait until the last minute you may forget some of the most important activities and opportunities that you participated in. Use the Member Achievement Plan (M.A.P.) to help you with this record keeping throughout the year until it is time to complete the 4-H Recordbook.



How do I complete a 4-H Recordbook?

Most 4-H recordbooks are due to your county Extension agent during June and early July of each summer. So prepare early. Begin to develop your 4-H recordbook in April and May. This will give you plenty of time to get help from your parents, club manager, leader and Extension agent, and you won't be rushed.

The first step in creating your 4-H recordbook is to decide what category you are going to enter. With this recordbook you can enter almost any 4-H project for competition. For a list of current year recordbook categories refer to the current year's Texas 4-H Clover available from your county Extension office or the Texas 4-H Web site. When choosing a category, remember that you will want to enter your recordbook in the category in which you have been most active or in which you have a lot of community service, leadership and learning experiences.

The category list allows a 4-H member, involved in a project that does not fall into a specific category, to enter one of the open categories. There are seven broad "Open Categories" that allow for the entry of many neat projects. However, your project must be listed correctly. For example, if you have an iguana project, list it under the "Plants and Animals Open Category," because an iguana is a companion animal. You cannot enter a recordbook in an "open" category if it is listed as a recordbook. For example, a beef recordbook must be entered as a beef recordbook and not in the "Plants and Animals Open Category."

Texas 4-H Personal Information Page

The Texas 4-H Personal Information Page is the first page in your 4-H recordbook that someone will read. This allows the reader to learn your name, the recordbook category that you are entering, your address and city. It also allows the reader to know the name of your 4-H club and how many members are involved.

One important thing, when completing the Personal Information Page, is to remember to fill in the number of years in your main project. This is where you enter the total number of years involved in the project, not the number of years that you have entered a recordbook in that category.



The last part of the Personal Information Page provides an opportunity for you as the 4-H member to sign your recordbook, and say

"Yes! I did it and I am proud of it!"



Your parents, club manager and county Extension agent should also sign this page. This lets the reader know that you have done an outstanding job and that they support you in your 4-H career. However, if your mom or dad is also your club manager, make sure that another leader in your club who also knows about your hard work signs in the club manager/leader space.

Lucky's Comments on Social Security Numbers!

Social security numbers also are requested on the 4-H Personal Information page. Many people ask, "Why do you want to know that information?" Social security numbers are required because recordbooks are used for award purposes in counties, district and state level competitions. In these competitions, money is sometimes awarded. This must be reported to the Internal Revenue Service. This does not mean that you are going to have to pay income taxes. It just makes sure that everyone is following government guidelines.

My 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio

Have you ever wanted to be a book author? Have you every wanted to tell and show off to everyone what you do in 4-H? Well, guess what? Here's your chance! A 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio provides an opportunity for you, as a 4-H member, to say:

"Here is my 4-H life. Look at what I have done!"

Your 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio lets the people who are reading and/or judging your book get to know you personally. This is your opportunity to talk about some of your most special leadership experiences, learning opportunities and community service projects at length. It also gives you a chance to tell funny stories or tell about sad situations that have happened to you in 4-H. A 4-H Story and Photo portfolio is yours, so take advantage of it!

What should be included in a 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio?

A 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio will need to include the following information. However, this information can be provided in any method, using your own creativity and design ideas.

- Title: "My 4-H _____ (Recordbook Category) Story and Photo Portfolio"
Example: "My 4-H Dairy Story and Photo Portfolio" You may add a subtitle to your story and photo portfolio if you wish, however each story must begin with this title.
- Information about yourself, your family and your community.
- When and why you joined 4-H.
- Things about your involvement in the recordbook category you are entering and the most important things that you have learned in 4-H.
- Highlights of other 4-H projects and activities.
- How 4-H has helped you become a better leader and citizen and what you have learned through your community service and leadership activities.
- How being a 4-H member has helped you set goals (tell what the goals are) and develop new interests, and if 4-H has influenced your future plans or career goals.

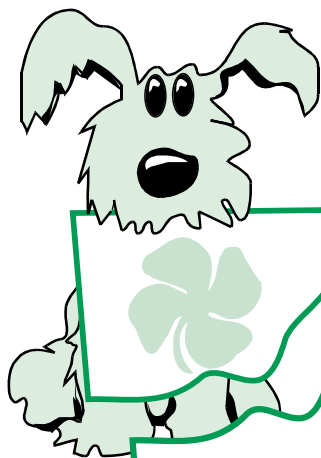


What are the requirements for a 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio?"

A 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio is designed for you as a 4-H member to display your creativity regardless of age or ability. Don't worry - some people build houses, others draw houses - everyone is different and that is what we want to see! This section is for you to mix your photos with your story or keep them separate, whichever you have the ability and supplies to do. However, to have an "even playing field" for everyone, a few rules for the 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio have been identified. Be sure to follow these rules:

- **Length:** The 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio can be no more than 10 pages for both senior and junior age categories. Each portfolio must be at least three pages of double-spaced type and use a minimum of a 10 point or equivalent size font for the text. Each portfolio also should include a minimum equivalent of three pages of pictures. Each picture should have a brief caption that explains the actions in the photo and lesson learned. Story and photos may be combined. The remaining four pages are up to you. They may be used for text, photos or left out. There is no requirement to use all 10 pages. Guess what? Handwriting your story is okay, too! Color and/or black and white photos, clear sharp copies of photos (scanned and/or color copied), and newspaper photo clippings can be used, however, they cannot overlap and must be fastened securely. No newspaper stories are allowed.
- **Text Margins:** Top, bottom and right margins must be 1 inch. The left margin must be 1½ inches to allow for hole punching.
- **Photos:** The photos that you use are a very important part of your 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio. They should reflect growth, development and involvement in your 4-H career. Use photos that show you doing things, learning and teaching others, and especially of you having FUN in 4-H! Use photos that show your main project, other projects, leadership, community service and other 4-H related pictures. Photos depicting family activities, livestock auction, U.I.L., sports events, other school events (non-4-H related photos) are discouraged.
- **Paper Type:** Typing paper and bond weight paper are acceptable. Do not paste your typing paper to construction paper and do not use sheet protectors.
- **Creativity:** This is strongly encouraged, and can include the use of backgrounds, decorative elements, construction paper cutouts, etc.

As you create your 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio, you should enhance your 4-H story in any way you can. However, remember your photos and story are very important. Do not add too many other things that might take away from their importance.



"My 4-H Beef Story and Photo Portfolio"

My 4-H career began as an accident and through the help of my best friend
(This is a 10 point font - this is the smallest size font allowed.)





Lucky's lesson on the 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio:

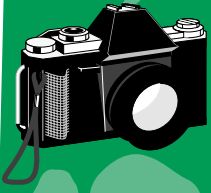
When readers look at the 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio, they take into account how long it is and how long you have been a 4-H member. Therefore, if you have been in 4-H for 5-plus years it should be easy to produce 10 pages of text and pictures. Also, don't forget to take pictures throughout the year of your 4-H projects and activities. Waiting until the last minute and having to pose or create false photos is sometimes noticed by the readers.



Texas 4-H Report Form

The Texas 4-H Report Form is the main form for the 4-H recordbook. It is used to report all of the neat and cool stuff that you have done in 4-H, along with school, church and other community groups. Always keep in mind that 4-H teaches growth, so show as much growth as possible when filling out the report form. You are encouraged to say:

"Yes, I'm an active 4-H member and proud of it!"

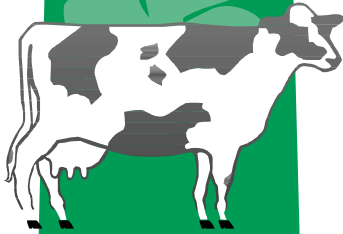


The Texas 4-H Report Form is divided into six different sections. Some of the sections will require more time and thought, while a couple of the sections will be a breeze to complete. Each section highlights different parts of your 4-H career, such as your projects, learning experiences, teaching experiences, community service, leadership, awards and recognition and your non-4-H activities. Each section is judged on growth throughout your past 4 years in 4-H.



Here are some important facts that you should know about the Texas 4-H Report Form:

- Sections I, II and III deal with only the past 4 years of your 4-H work. The three parts of Section I should include information on a maximum of four projects. Additional 4-H projects are listed in Section IV of the Report Form. This 4 years/four projects report allows you to write about your successes and to show a greater amount of growth.
- The Texas 4-H Report Form should reflect the amount of growth that you, as a 4-H member, have had in your projects and activities.
- Leadership and Citizenship are listed as projects just like Swine, Beef, Clothing and Textiles, etc.



Section I - 4-H Project Experiences

The 4-H Project Summary asks: *What is your project? How did your project change or grow?* This single page should include, but is not limited to, such things as: items bought, items made and/or raised, places visited, profits/losses, hours spent on the project, and number of people taught and/or served.

The current 4-H year's experiences should always be listed first in the Report Form and projects talked about in the Report Form must include the project or project(s) that match the recordbook category entered. And, be sure to list the recordbook category entered as your first project. For example: if you are entering the Clothing and Textiles Recordbook category, then Clothing and Textiles should be the first project listed in Section I.



The 4-H Learning Experiences and Knowledge Gained asks: *What have you done and what have you learned?* On two pages, list all of the cool and neat things that you have done and learned that are related to your 4-H projects. This is your opportunity to tell the world: "Look at the cool stuff I have been doing!" Include such things as, but don't limit yourself to, workshops, contests, tours, research, computer learning programs, study of written material, interviews, etc.

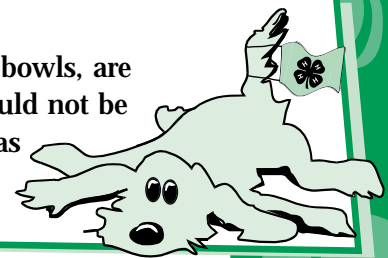
Learning experiences are those activities in which you, as a 4-H member, have been a participant and not a teacher or instructor. Project related leadership experiences should be reported under Volunteer Leadership in Section II. Your knowledge gained should meet the project specific objectives outlined in the Texas 4-H Clover. The objectives should not be listed in their entirety, however, they must be noted.

Remember everything you do in 4-H is at some level—local, county, district, state, national or international. You need to let others who read your recordbook know your level of participation in 4-H activities. You should "code" each experience by using "L" for local and/or club, "C" for county, "D" for district, "S" for state, "N" for national and a "I" for international.



Another Lucky lesson about contests:

Contests, such as livestock, dairy, horse judging and horse and nutrition bowls, are considered learning experiences. They are not projects and therefore should not be listed in Section I. All of these activities support the main projects such as horse, beef, or foods and nutrition.



Section II - 4-H Leadership Experiences

Your 4-H leadership experiences are the most important things that tell others how you have been involved in teaching. The Texas 4-H Report Form provides one page for you to tell about these leadership experiences in your four projects from the past 4 years. You should be able to demonstrate leadership in three different areas: Promotion, Volunteer and Elected/Appointed.

Promotion Leadership should explain, "How have you told someone about 4-H?" This includes such activities as wearing a 4-H T-shirt to school, getting a picture related to 4-H in the paper, speaking on the radio about 4-H, or riding on a 4-H float during a parade.

Volunteer leadership should explain, "How and what did I do to lead or teach others in 4-H?" Examples of volunteer leadership include: led the Pledge of Allegiance at the 4-H meeting, demonstrated how to measure a tablespoon at a 4-H club meeting, or organized a 4-H workshop.

Elected/appointed leadership explains, "What did you do to help?" This includes your leadership in volunteering to serve on a committee like the telephone, recreation, and/or refreshment committee, and in serving in any elected office such as president or reporter of your local club, county 4-H council and or district/state council.

Section II should also include any leadership opportunities that occurred while performing community service. Do not report this as community service in Section III. For example: Providing leadership to organize and recruit volunteers for a food drive at the food bank is leadership and should be listed as leadership, NOT community service.



Section III - 4-H Community Service

Community service is the opportunity for 4-H members to go out into the community and help others, or to improve the quality of the town and the lives of those around them. How do you know if what you have been doing is community service? Ask yourself: "What did I do to help other people because of 4-H?"

Community service listed in the Texas 4-H Report Form should be limited to one page and should be "coded" by the amount of leadership and number of persons involved in the activity. There are three codes that reflect this:

- "Y" Yourself** – this was a community service project that you did all by yourself with no help from other 4-H members or club.
- "P" Provided Primary Leadership** – you were the organizer, you made all the arrangements, and recruited other 4-H members to help you.
- "M" Member of a Group** – when another 4-H member called asking for help, you were there as a worker and helper.

This section is for community service activities only and not for citizenship experiences (citizenship is a project). Examples of 4-H community service activities include:

- Gathered games to give to flood victim (2 games)Y
- Donated toys to children's home in the community (17 toys).....P
- Set up and decorated for volunteer fire department fund raiser (12 hours)M

Section IV - Other 4-H Projects

Section IV lets you briefly tell about your other 4-H projects. These may be projects that you were only involved in for 1 or 2 years. It's okay to list projects that you didn't enjoy and did not continue past 1 year. Just be sure to include the number of years you were involved in a project and a summary of your involvement. Don't list any project(s) that are already listed in Section I. You have a maximum of only one-half page to review your projects.

Lucky's comments to 4-H members that have only been involved in four projects:

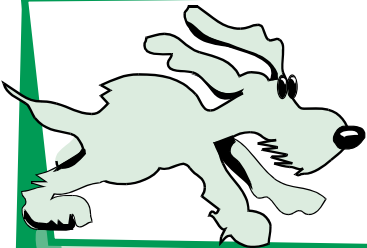
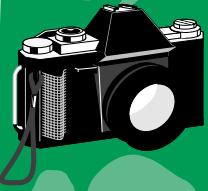
If you have been involved in only four projects throughout your 4-H career, list the fourth project in Section IV. This will prevent the loss of points for not including information in this section.

Section V - 4-H Recognition and Awards

Awards and recognition are important in the 4-H program. They provide an opportunity for 4-H members to be recognized for all of their hard work and dedication to a 4-H project, leadership provided to others, community service activities, and of course for being the "best all around 4-H member." This section allows 4-H members to say, "Look at what I have been recognized for!" In one-half page, list the awards that make you proud, starting with the current year. Emphasize recognition received during the past 4 years, however, you can include information for any year.

Section VI - Other Activities

Section VI lets you to show off your school, church, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or other youth organization activities, leadership, community service, and awards and recognition. You have one page to tell about all of these exciting things. This section will also include all Clover Kids activities (no Clover Kids involvement should be reported in prior sections).



4-H Resume (Senior Members Only)

Senior 4-H members are now expected to include a resume in their recordbooks. As a senior 4-H member, you may be in the process of looking for a summer job or a part-time job or even preparing to go to college. By developing your resume, you will develop work force skills that will make you a better employee. Also, while developing your resume, you will realize how helpful a 4-H recordbook can be in this process.

Resumes can be done in a variety of ways. The format in the 4-H recordbook that will be reviewed is a basic one and the information comes from the Texas 4-H Report Form. This format is found as a template on the Word Perfect word processor or may be designed using your own word processor. The sections of the resume are objective (sentence stating the position applying for), employment history (if applicable), education, skills, interests and activities, and awards. The resume is designed to reflect the major highlights of your life, not just your 4-H career.

Customize your resume by listing your strengths first. For example, if you have extensive education and skills, but no work experience, list education and skills as the first items and work experience last. The resume should not include a business name or relation to a business in the heading. This is your personal resume, not the resume of a business. Resumes should be very professional. It is not necessary, however, to print the resume on bond paper. Plain typing paper is acceptable.

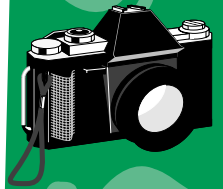
Additional comments about the resume:

- No photos are allowed on the resume.
- It is a summary of your highlights, therefore, you will be repeating items addressed in the 4-H story and report forms.
- No business or letterhead may be used.

Example of Senior Resume:

"Lucky" Dog
123 Dogtrot Lane
Puppyville, Texas 12345
(979) 845-1212
lucky@tamu.edu

Objective:	Development of Resume for 2000 4-H Dog Project Recordbook
Education:	Junior - Puppyville High School Expected Graduation Date: June 2001
Employment:	Trainer - Puppyville Dog Farm April 1996-Present Training assistant for litter of six Dalmation puppies. Assisted with daily training operations including feeding, exercising, cleaning of pens and preparing of training course each day. Lawn Mower - Clean Cut Lawn Services May 1995 - April 1996 Mowed and weeded 30 lawn accounts on regular basis. Responsibilities included customer relations, bill collection and new customer quotes.
Skills:	Computer Word Processor (Word Perfect and MS Word) People/Customer Relation Skills (oral and written) Public Speaking/Presentations
Interests and Activities:	Hunting/Fishing 4-H Club Member - Puppyville 4-H Club Web Page Design Tennis
Awards:	Canine County 4-H Gold Star Award Puppyville High Student Council Member



Recordbook Myth Busters

Have you ever heard things about recordbooks, but you didn't know if they were true or not? Well, here are 13 **TRUE** facts about the 4-H Recordbook!

- Color is okay to use.
- If typed, font size must be at least 10 point, any smaller is hard to read and will have points deducted.
- Margins need to be used according to the guidelines
- Tabs and dividers are not allowed.
- It is okay to hand write your recordbooks.
- Rulers are not used to review and judge recordbooks at state recordbook judging.
- Objectives do not have to be in order.
- Four projects are not required in the first section.
- Judging is based on quality, not quantity. You don't have to fill up all of the space.
- Progress is not necessarily profit in dollars.
- Plastic sheet protectors are not allowed.
- Recordbooks can be placed in either 4-H Supply Service Recordbook binders or regular store-bought folders with three-hole metal fasteners.
- Recordbook forms can be color or black and white versions.

That's it, for now!

Lucky's parting words:

You have kept written notes about your activities for the past year.
You have taken many photographs of your projects and activities.
You have your resource materials and appropriate forms.

Put them all together and you have "a record in 4-H." That is, you have completed a 4-H project recordbook. Now, wasn't that easy!



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