

Frequently Asked Questions About Record Books



Are Record Books required?

Yes, the record keeping system is an important part of the 4-H program and an important life skill to develop. All members are required to keep records as a part of their 4-H learning experience. The forms indicate the categories of information to be kept but the type of form/format used is left up to the member and county.

What records are required to complete a project?

4-H members receive credit for completing their project with their record forms and project books. The following record forms are needed to complete the 4-H project:

[My 4-H Year](#) – One form completed annually to document information and achievements through 4-H and other activities you are involved in outside of 4-H.

[Animal Project Journal and Financial Record](#) – Complete one for each animal project

[Non-Animal Project Journal and Financial Record](#) – Complete one for each non-animal project

4-H members are encouraged to add to and expand on these basic records.

[Project book](#) – Set goals and complete the required activities for the project.

Are record sheets different than project books?

Yes - Record sheets are the forms you fill out detailing your goals, what you did, what you learned, finances, feed records, productions records, etc. They include My 4-H Year, Animal Records and Non-Animal Records. Project books are the curriculum materials used by a member to learn about and practice their projects. A Record Book contains both.

How will the record book be assessed?

Each county has a different process for checking the records for completeness. Record books should not be graded. Some counties have the Organizational Leader check the forms, while other counties turn in record forms to their Extension Office. Regardless of how the forms are checked, all projects must have completed record forms. Check with your Extension Office for your local process and deadlines.

Do I have to rewrite information in multiple places in my record book?

Do not duplicate information in your records from project pages to “My 4-H Year” or vice versa. It only needs to be written one time. You may want to write in a section to tell people to look somewhere else in your records. Put the information where it makes the most sense to you.

Can we hand write in the record book forms?

Yes - Records should be clean, neat and legible. Record books should be in the member’s own handwriting if possible. As an accommodation for special needs, a parent may write the information but must write what the member says.

Can we type our records?

Yes, you can download the forms and type into them or create a customized form using a different computer program. The categories need to be the same on all forms.

Does the member need to complete the record sheets?

Record books should be completed by the 4-H member. Adults may assist by guiding, explaining and helping to compile the information and with proofreading.

Is there a certain way record books should be set up?

A 3-ring binder is a great way to organize your record sheets and project books. It is easy to move things around and add to the information. You may use plastic sheet protectors if desired. You may want to put tabs between each project or each year. You can also get the record book covers from Shop 4-H online.

Can pictures, ribbons, newspaper clippings, receipts, etc. be included in records?

Yes - They provide additional information to your record. Be sure to check the county guidelines for your county. These items may need to be kept in a separate format.

Can additional pages be added to my record when I run out of room in a section?

Yes - If you use printed forms or just add more pages. The online and downloadable document allows for additional information to be included.

What if a member does not reach a goal they had set for the year?

The member needs to evaluate their goals compared to what they have learned, why they did not reach them and then plan for the following year. Sometimes there are very good reasons we can't meet a goal and the learning is the key component. Write the reason why the goal(s) was not met.

Could a member record their records, create a video, etc. to tell their 4-H story?

Yes, for some members this is the only way they are able to complete the records. For others it maybe the best way for them to communicate. Counties may have guidelines for this – please check with your county.

What is the difference between Self-determined projects and Independent Study projects?

A Self-determined project (created by you) allows YOU to decide what you want to learn, what you want to do, and how you want to share what you learn. You can focus on your interests and create projects that are not included in the 4-H project list. You can get help from others and get creative.

An Independent Study project is for any youth looking for more challenges and opportunities in a current project area. Members need to develop a detailed plan for their work after identifying an area of interest in the project area.

What is the difference between a project and an exhibit?

An exhibit is what you take to the fair to show one part of what you have learned in your entire project. Exhibits display smaller, more specific parts of the whole project. Exhibits are usually designed to show a part of what has been learned in the project.

A project includes all the learning and activities in one area or subject. Projects are usually summarized by year and may continue for more than one year. They include activities in leadership, citizenship, or community service. For example, a project in geology could include a leadership activity, such as organizing a group of club members to go rock hunting; a citizenship (and communication) activity, such as sharing a rock collection with the 3rd grade class; and a community service (and communication) activity, such as setting up a rock identification booth at county conservation day at the park.