

Completing 4-H Projects

A Step by Step Guide



A Little Background...

What is a 4-H Project?

Projects are a series of educational experiences and the foundation used by 4-H for helping youth develop life skills.¹

A 4-H project is made up of three types of activities:

- Hands-on activities: making, producing, practicing, observing, testing, interviewing, caring for, etc.
- Organized activities: demonstrations, speeches, workshops, camps, county judging, project activities, exhibits, etc.
- Leadership/Citizenship activities: conducting, planning, teaching, assisting, informing, organizing, etc.

Does a 4-H member have to take a project?

Yes. However, there are two ways to take a project, either as an individual project or as a group project.

How does a member select a project?

When choosing a project, consider your interests, background, what is necessary to start your project, and what is available to help you complete it. Review the Family Guide.

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Included in the description of each project is a level— beginning (B), intermediate (I), or advanced (A). These are primarily skill levels, so that if you have little or no experience in a project area, for example, you are a beginner, regardless of your age. Intermediate-level projects are for members with some experience in a project area, and advanced-level projects are for members experienced in a project area. There are exceptions though! Some projects were written with certain ages in mind. In those cases, the project descriptions give the ages. Also, some projects are described with an “X,” meaning they are appropriate for all skill and age levels.

Once you've selected your project(s) for the year, request the project book(s) from your 4-H club leader. Look for in the Family Guide to see if the project you selected needs an additional resource book.

Can a school project be used as a 4-H project too?

No. In order for a member to achieve the progression of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations necessary for positive youth development, all 4-H experiences in which a 4-H'er is involved must be separate and different from previous or simultaneous experiences in other programs, groups, businesses, and organizations.

This information is from the Ohio 4-H Family Guide

¹ <http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-H/leading-a-club/docs/club-management-guide/projects.pdf>

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Step 1: Make a Plan and Get Organized

Before even beginning project work, it is a good idea to make a plan and get organized. Here are some suggestions:

- Discuss Project Goals** — What do you want to accomplish with the project? Do you want to complete the learning experiences and have a great time? Do you want to compete at a higher level like the State Fair? Knowing the goals of the 4-Her related to project work, can guide the Project Helper as he or she works with the member.
- Make a Plan and Stick To It** — One suggestion is to print a calendar for the summer. Write down important dates like 4-H club meetings and county project evaluation dates. Use the calendar to write in times to focus on 4-H project work. You can write a certain activity on a certain day or just set aside time for 4-H.
- Create a 4-H Project Area or Container** — Often, 4-H projects can involve a lot of supplies and materials. Setting aside a specific place to keep all of these 4-H things can help you stay organized. It may be a shelf in a closet or a desk area. Another suggestion is to use a plastic storage container to hold all 4-H materials. It could be one per project or just one for everything.
- Ask Questions** — Ask questions before you start, along the way or whenever you are unsure. Never be afraid to seek advice and assistance.

Step 2: Know the Project Requirements

The Member Project Guide is the place to start. The guide gives step by step instructions for conducting activities that make up a 4-H project.

Member Project Guide

Do the following each year you take this project:

- Obtain your project animal by the required possession date for your county. Contact your county Extension office for this date.
The required date for my county is _____
- Be committed to study one or more of the Topics of Interest from your *Swine Resource Handbook 4-H 134R*. Topics can be big or small depending on your age and skill level in the project. Write a summary of the topic you studied and what you learned.
- Complete a minimum of five activities from the list of "Project Levels and Activities" for your age level.
- Participate in two or more 4-H Project Experiences.
- Take part in two or more Leadership/Citizenship Activities.
- Complete the *Quality Assurance* section of this guide.
- Complete the *Animal Records* section of this guide.
- Take part in a project review at a club meeting or on the county level. This project review can take place with your parent or project advisor. Have this person review this project record book with you. This review will help you evaluate what you have learned, as well as your growth as a 4-H member. Members who take part in this type of evaluation can receive one of Ohio's 4-H Project Achievement certificates, 4-H 905-908. These are awarded based upon the member's level of involvement in the project (beginner, intermediate, advanced) and if the member has met the minimum completion requirements for the project.
You may also want to take part in county project judging (usually referred to as a skillathon or interview judging). This level of evaluation determines how well you did on your project by assigning a project grade or score. Your achievement will also be compared against the achievements of others to determine the best project in your class and the best overall. Outstandings may be given for achieving a set standard for your age in your project area, or you may be recognized for meeting your own personal project goals!

Swine Breeding Project Book

MEMBER PROJECT GUIDE

Welcome to *Snack Attack!* Do you know about making healthful food choices? In this project you are introduced to the specific parts of MyPyramid, a very important guide to making healthful food choices and being physically active. You'll learn about grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, meat and beans, oils, and sugar—everything you need to know to be a healthful food detective!

This beginning-level project is a one-time experience for members 8–10 years old and for older members lacking in experience with food and nutrition. It is designed to be completed in one year. Members who complete this project are encouraged to take other beginning-level food and nutrition projects.

Check your county's project guidelines (if any) for completion requirements in addition to the ones below, especially if you plan to participate in county project judging or plan to prepare an exhibit for the fair.

Your Project Guidelines

- Complete **all seven** activities, the related recipes, and the Notes for Next Time. If an activity has more than one recipe, it's all right to make just one.
- Take part in **at least two** Learning Experiences.
- Become involved in **at least two** Leadership/Citizenship Activities.
- Take part in a Project Review.

Recipe Reminder!

Whenever you're ready to cook, ask yourself these questions.

Before You Begin

Have you washed your hands and cleaned the preparation area?
Have you read the recipe and assembled the necessary equipment?
Is the kitchen clean?
Are leftover ingredients stored appropriately?

Snack Attack Project Book

Step 3: Begin Working on the Activities in the Project Book

In the Member Project Guide, you will find exact instructions about what activities need to be done to be considered a completed project. Sometimes there are more activities than need to be completed. This is where you can go above and beyond the project requirements to be more competitive, if that is your goal. Many project books provide a place where you can record your progress through the project to help you stay on track and see what you have accomplished.

STEP 1: PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Complete **all seven** activities and one recipe for each. The Mission Accomplished! Next Level activities are optional.
When you begin an activity, jot down the date you start it. When you finish an activity, review your work with your project helper. Then ask your project helper to date and initial your accomplishment.

Activities	Date Started	Date Completed	Helper Initials
1. Exploring My Pyramid Recipe: Yogurt Parfait			
2. Is It Snack Time Yet? Recipe: Fruit Smoothie			
3. Digging for Grains Recipe: Oatmeal Muffins OR Popcorn Trail Mix			
4. Color Hunt Recipe: Confetti Bean Salsa OR Baked French Fries			
5. Got Dairy? Recipe: Nachos			
6. Protein Protection Recipe: Meatballs OR Bean Dip			
7. Not-So-Hidden Calories Baked Tortilla Chips OR Peanut Butter Cookies			

In this project, a member needs to complete ALL seven activities and make one recipe for each.

Even though some of the activities have 2 recipes choices, the member only needs to make one to meet the project requirements.

This project asks the member to study one or more topic of interest each year. The member needs to write a summary of the topic that he or she studied.

Many of the livestock project books have activities for all 3 different age levels. In this project, a beginner is grades 3-5 OR the first three years of the project. A beginner needs to choose 5 or more activities each year. There is space to record which a member plans to do and when the activities are completed.

Topics of Interest DO ONE OR MORE

Be committed to study one or more topics of interest from your 4-H Swine Resource Handbook. Topics can be simple or more complex depending on your age and skill level in the project. Write a summary of the topics you studied and what you learned. Remember to record the date you started the interest area and the date you completed it.

Interest Area	Date Started	Date Completed
1. History		
2. Selection		
3. Quality		
4. Pork Products		
5. Nutritional Value		
6. Digestive System		
7. Nutrition		
8. Diseases and Their Control		
9. Ear Notching		
10. Space Requirements		
11. Showing Your 4-H Swine Project		
12. Selling the Project Animal		
13. Working Safely with Swine		
14. Selection of Breeding Stock		
15. Selecting Breeding Stock Based on Records		

Swine Breeding Project Levels and Activities

Check the activities you plan to do for your level in the project. Select a minimum of five activities per year. Members should choose different activities each year the project is taken. Have an adult initial and date the activities you complete. Activities may be modified or added in the space provided. Members may advance to the next level after completing a total of 15 activities or reaching the appropriate grade level.

Beginning Level

Designed for members in grades 3, 4, and 5 or in their first three years of the project. Members should choose 5 different activities each year this project is taken (except for items 15-22, which may be completed every year).

Plan to Do	Completed (Initial and date)	Project Activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	1. Identify and describe five breeds of hogs and tell at least two characteristics of each, including their origin.
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	2. Identify and locate 15-20 exterior parts of a hog.
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3. Visit a local swine farm and observe the way the pigs are managed. Give a report to your club.
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	4. Describe or demonstrate three ways you could identify your project animals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	5. Name and spell two protein sources commonly grown in your area for hog feed.

DO FIVE OR MORE

Step 4: Don't forget the Learning Experiences and Leadership/Citizenship Activities

These parts of the project are often forgotten until the last minute. They are easy to incorporate throughout the time a member is working on the project. Often members are doing these things and don't realize how it connects to the project. Most projects ask you to complete 2 or more in each area.

Ideally, a member can plan these experiences as part of the project form the very beginning of project work. The experiences can enhance the project work and add to the overall project experience. For example, a member taking a food and nutrition project might tour the kitchen of a local restaurant and talk to the cook about food preparation in a restaurant setting. The books give examples of activities that fit each area or you can add you own. Be creative and think about ways to make these experiences and activities fun and engaging.

STEP 2: LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Learning Experiences are meant to complement Project Activities, providing the opportunity for you to do more in subject areas that interest you. What are some Learning Experiences you could do to show the interesting things you are learning about food and nutrition? Here are some ideas:

- Attend a clinic, workshop, demonstration, or speech on a topic related to food and nutrition or healthful living.
- Look for a local news story about food and nutrition or physical activity in your local newspaper or on the Internet. Share this information with a friend or family member.
- Share an activity from your project book with your club members.
- Go on a nutrition- or food-related field trip or tour.
- Host a cooking group and prepare a healthful food item.
- Prepare your own demonstration, illustrated talk, or project exhibit.
- Participate in county judging.

Once you have a few ideas, record them here. Complete **at least two** Learning Experiences. Then, describe what you did in more detail, and ask your project helper to date and initial in the appropriate spaces below.

Plan To Do	What I Did	Date Completed	Helper Initials
Demonstration	Explained to club members how to make a wrap.	4/5/YR	L.G.

STEP 3: LEADERSHIP/ CITIZENSHIP ACTIVITIES

Choose **at least two** Leadership/Citizenship Activities from the list below (or create your own), and write them in the table below. Record your progress by asking your project helper to initial next to the date each one is completed. You may add to or change these activities at any time. Here are some examples of Leadership/ Citizenship Activities:

- Teach someone about making food choices according to MyPyramid.
- Teach someone how to make his or her own MyActivity Pyramid.
- Help another member prepare for his or her project judging.
- Prepare a recipe in this book and share it at a club meeting.
- While attending camp, share what you learn about physical activity and nutrition.
- Demonstrate to other club members how to warm up and cool down before and after physical activity.
- Collect examples of food labels and discuss them with a group.
- Arrange for someone to speak to your club about making food choices that support an active, healthy lifestyle.
- Plan your own Leadership/Citizenship Activity.

Leadership/ Citizenship Activity	Date Completed	Helper Initials
Teach someone about making healthy food choices.	4/5/YR	L.G.

Examples of Learning Experiences

Example	Project
Dissect an owl pellet	Ohio Birds
Talk with a livestock producer about biosecurity	Any livestock project
Attend Quality Assurance	Any livestock project
Visit an art museum	Getting Started with Art
Watch You Tube video about a topic related to your project. i.e. How to show a chicken. How to hem a skirt.	Any project
Visit a nature preserve, take part in a nature activity at 4-H Camp	Explore the Outdoors
Participate in County Judging	Any Project

Examples of Leadership/ Citizenship Activities

Example	Project
Prepare a recipe from your book and share it with someone in your community	Food and Nutrition projects
Help a younger member learn how to show his or her animal.	Any livestock project
Demonstrate how to decorate a cake for your club	Cake Decorating
Ask a park ranger to talk to your club about opportunities at a local park	Natural Resources Projects
Be a 4-H Camp Counselor, Junior Fair Board member or volunteer in another way	Any project
Repair a garment for someone	Any clothing project

Step 5: Put it All Together

Many times as you complete your project you will complete activities on a piece of paper separate from your project book. Some members like to take pictures as the project is worked on. As you finish your project work, it is a good idea to find a neat and organized way to put all your work together. An easy way is to use a 3-ring binder. You can use tabs to separate different activities or project records. Page protectors keep everything clean and neat. Even your project book can be put in the binder. For those with livestock projects, you can include multiple years in the binder using the tabs for each year. You can include project records, a progression of learning activities and other supporting materials.

If a poster or another type of exhibit is required for your project review, this is the time to think about that as well. See below for information about the Project Review.



Step 6: The Project Review

All 4-H members must complete a county level project review to be eligible for exhibit at the Preble County Fair. These reviews are held on different days in the middle of July. Each member will visit with a qualified judge and share the story of his or her project. Many non-livestock projects require an exhibit of some sort whether a poster or something made in the project. These requirements are listed in the Project Completion Guidelines that can be found at www.preble.osu.edu. Dates for the various judgings are listed both there and on the yearly calendar posted on the website.

During the judging, the member will present what he or she did to complete the project and the judge will ask questions related to the project.

In some cases it is appropriate for the project helper or 4-H advisor to review the project. This should be discussed with the 4-H Advisor and the Extension Office.

STEP 4: PROJECT REVIEW

Set up a project evaluation. You can do this with your project helper, club leader, or another knowledgeable adult. It can be part of a club evaluation or it can be part of your county's project judging. Completing a Project Review helps you assess your personal growth and evaluate what you have learned.

Snack Attack!



