



**Ohio 4-H**  
***News***  
***Reporter's***  
***Handbook***

Name of News Reporter \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Age as of January 1 \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Club \_\_\_\_\_

4-H Advisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_



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Adapted from Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service *The 4-H Reporter*; Huron County *4-H News Reporters' Manual* written by Bonnie Malone, Extension Educator; *Ohio 4-H Club Officer's Guide News Reporter*.

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# 4-H News Reporter



## Welcome

Congratulations on your new role as your 4-H club's news reporter. Your club has bestowed upon you both an honor and a responsibility—and an interesting and fun job! You will find a list of responsibilities for your office as well as activities, ideas, and websites in this book to help you fulfill your duties. Good luck!

## An Officer's Role in the Club

Serving as a club officer means you are part of a team. The team's responsibility is to hold a club meeting that is both well-run and fun. The officers should meet with their club advisor prior to the meeting so that they are prepared for the meeting and to help the club make decisions.

## Your Role as a News Reporter

You are being given the opportunity to raise awareness about the 4-H program in your county—the work your members are doing, the fun your club members are having, and the help your members are giving to the community. And, as a 4-H club officer, you represent your club, your county, and the 4-H program throughout Ohio.

As the club's news reporter, you will:

- Submit announcements for events planned by your club, as appropriate
- Prepare a news article after each meeting, event, or activity, and submit it to the news media in a timely manner
- Keep a notebook with all your written articles and related clippings from the newspaper

## Getting Started

### News Story Format

- The first time you refer to a person, use their full name (and title if appropriate).

- The next time you refer to a person *under* age 18, refer to them by their first name. The next time you refer to a person age 18 and *over*, refer to them by their last name.
- Write in the third person. This means you use the words *he, she, him, her, they, them* – NOT the words *I* or *you* or *we*.
- Use simple language. Don't use a long word when a short word will do. Sentences should be short and easy to read. Paragraphs should contain no more than two or three sentences.

### The 5 Ws and the H of News

The important parts of a news story are the five Ws and the H. Explain each one and your story is complete!

WHO is the story about?

WHAT is the story about?

WHEN will (did) it happen?

WHERE will (did) it happen?

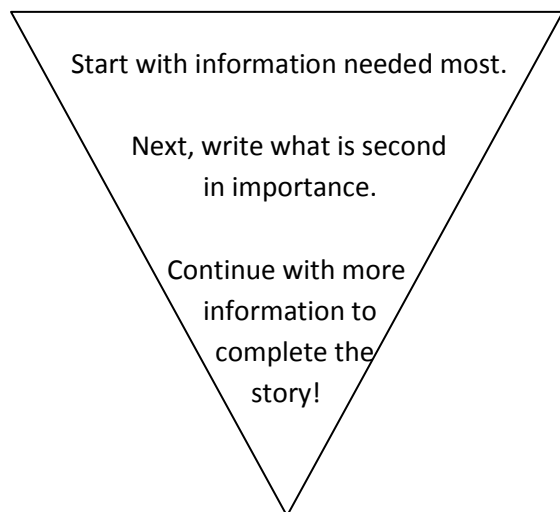
WHY will (did) it happen?

HOW will (did) it happen?

And, **these facts must be accurate!** Check and re-check names, titles, dates, times, costs, etc.

## The Upside-down Pyramid format

The Upside-down Pyramid format puts the facts in “news order” so that the story starts with the most critical information that the reader needs and works down from there.



The first paragraph should contain enough information to give a good overview of the entire story.

The rest of the story explains and provides additional information.

You must assume that the story might be cut due to space limitations, so ask yourself if the story is satisfactory if the editor decides to include only the first two paragraphs. If not, rearrange it so that it does!

## News Reporter Duties

### Contact Your Local Newspaper

Ask to speak with the staff person to whom you will be submitting your news stories, or “copy,” and request detailed instructions on how copy is to be submitted, such as:

- Electronically—be sure to get the e-mail address.
- Hard copy—does it need to be typed or is handwritten copy acceptable?
- What photo formats are acceptable?

### Write Club Meeting Reports

- Write club meeting reports like a news article in paragraph form—not like a secretary’s report with bullet items.
- Keep the article interesting and brief.
- Avoid slang and abbreviations.
- Begin your article, or “lead with,” the most important part of the meeting.

#### Club Meeting Report *SAMPLE*



Roger Helms  
Coming Up Clovers 4-H Club  
555-555-5555  
April 1, YYYY

The Coming Up Clovers 4-H Club voted to clean up and adopt a stretch of highway as a community service project at their meeting held March 30 at the 4-H Town Hall.

A Highway Clean-up Committee was formed. The committee members will organize work days and keep track of the results of this project. Kurt Kleaner was elected committee chairman.

Penny Jones gave a demonstration on her Money Fundamentals project, and Joey Current gave a demonstration on small electric engines.

Twelve members and two advisors attended the meeting. Refreshments were prepared by parents.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 30 at 6:00 p.m. at the 4-H Town Hall. Members are reminded to bring camp forms with them to that meeting.

#### **Election of Officers Report *SAMPLE***

Roger Helms  
Coming Up Clovers 4-H Club  
555-555-5555  
March 1, YYYY

Perry Prez will serve as president of the Coming Up Clovers 4-H Club for the coming year. Perry, a 10-year 4-H member, was elected at the February 26 meeting held at the 4-H Town Hall.

Other new officers are Vice-President Wylie Smith, Secretary Ashley Akins, Treasurer Penny Jones, News Reporter Roger Helms, Health Leader Nicky McNeal, Safety Leader Nicole Hankins, and Recreation Leader Jose Mendez.

The next meeting of the Coming Up Clovers 4-H Club will be held on Thursday, March 30 at 6:00 p.m. at the 4-H Town Hall.

# Photographs Help Tell the Story

The old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words is accurate! A photograph can draw the readers to the story because a picture draws the eyes and then the reader wants to know the story behind the picture.

Follow these rules of thumb with pictures:

- All persons in the photograph should be clearly identified, front to back, left to right.
- Check and re-check the spelling of names of persons in each photograph.
- All persons should have given permission to use their photographs.
- Submit photographs to the newspaper in the required format (usually JPG files) along with your article. At the bottom of the article, indicate the name of the photograph file you are submitting.

## More Tips

- Your story must be current. Submit your story within a few days of the event or activity.
- Write your copy objectively. You must remain completely impartial.
- Add authority to a story with quotations. “We’re really excited about this competition,” said advisor Bob Heart. “It’s the highest target we’ve ever set for ourselves.”
- Check and re-check your story before you submit it. It is critical that the story is completely accurate, with all names and other information spelled correctly.
- Correct information in a story you have already submitted if it has changed or is not correct. Call the newspaper immediately so the information can be corrected. It is important to report changes so that readers will not be inconvenienced by incorrect information.
- Submit your story, then watch the newspaper closely. Once the story appears, clip it carefully and collect each one for your record book or as part of the club scrapbook.

### Where else can you publicize 4-H?

Talk these ideas over with your advisor and your extension educator.

- Offer to tape radio public service announcements during Ohio 4-H Week and National 4-H Week.
- Offer to assist in working on the county 4-H newsletter.



- Offer to work with your extension educator on producing special pages in the newspaper during Ohio 4-H Week.
- Write a letter to the editor during Ohio 4-H Week, telling how much you enjoy the 4-H program.

## To learn more . . .

You can learn more about journalism from these resources”

- 4-H project 587 *Writing and Reporting for Teens* is designed to provide practical experience in news gathering and reporting. It contains basic activities designed to help you become a competent reporter and writer. This project is recommended for teens ages 14 and older.
- 4-H project 586 *Creative Writing* is designed to exercise your creativity with activities to stimulate writing skills. This project is recommended for youth ages 12 and older.

## Helpful Web sites

Merriam-Webster online dictionary: [www.m-w.com/dictionary](http://www.m-w.com/dictionary)

Encyclopedia Britannica: [www.britannica.com/?source=mwtab](http://www.britannica.com/?source=mwtab)

Thesaurus.com: <http://thesaurus.reference.com/>

Roget’s Thesaurus Online: <http://education.yahoo.com/reference/thesaurus/>

## Forms for the News Reporter

Visit the Club Officer Resources web site at [www.ohio4h.org/members/officers](http://www.ohio4h.org/members/officers) for these helpful forms:

- Meeting Report Form—Use this form to keep notes during club meetings. Work with the secretary to verify your information, then refer to this form when writing your club meeting reports for the newspaper.
- News Reporter Summary—Use this form to keep track of the stories you write and submit to media outlets.

## Make it a Project (optional activity)

Your efforts in this officer position can be turned into a project by completing the requirements for a self-determined project. Every self-determined project requires the 4-H member to identify and complete areas of interest and related activities, learning experiences, leadership/citizenship activities, and a brief report. Just like other projects, self-determined projects can be reviewed and are eligible for fair participation. Learn more about self-determined projects and download the 4-H 365 Self-Determined Project Guide at [www.ohio4h.org/publications](http://www.ohio4h.org/publications).

### I pledge

My head to clearer thinking,

My heart to greater loyalty,

My hands to larger service, and

My health to better living

For my club, my community, my country, and my world.

