



Montana 4-H Center
FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Montana 4-H News Reporter's Book

County _____

Name of Reporter _____

Year _____ Age _____

Name of Club _____

Leaders Signature _____

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Congratulations on being elected your 4-H club news reporter. Your club has bestowed upon you both an honor and a responsibility – and an interesting and fun job! You are taking on the job of News Reporter alias Journalist for your 4-H Club! This job will allow you to be creative, meet new people and share all the good happenings of your club!

journalism

Pronunciation: 'j&er-n&e-'li-z&m

The collection and editing of news for presentation through the media; writing designed for publication in a newspaper or magazine; writing designed to appeal to current popular taste or public interest

– Webster Dictionary

You are being given the opportunity to raise awareness about the 4-H program in your county – the fun your 4-H club members are having, the work they are doing and the community service they are involved in.

And, as a 4-H club officer, you represent your club, your county and the 4-H program throughout Montana.

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Your Work is Important-Your Duties are...

As the club news reporter, you will:

- Submit announcements for events planned by your club, as appropriate
- Report to your local papers what your club does, or in some cases, report it to your club leader or county agent. In the news business you are writing a "story."
- Keep a notebook of all, meeting forms for articles, articles written, and include the clippings from the newspaper or any other media source you work with.

Contact your local newspaper...

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

- electronically – be sure to get the email address
- hard copy – does it need to be typed or is handwritten copy acceptable?

Also ask what types of photo file formats are acceptable?

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.

From the Beginning

You will need to write a good lead to grab the reader's attention! The most important part of any story is the opening paragraph or two. This story beginning is called the lead. Generally, newspaper readers skim. They glance at headlines. If they see one that looks interesting, they read the start of the story under that head. If the lead gets their attention, they may read the rest of the story. To get started decide the most important or interesting thing you have to tell the readers and use that to get started! Be sure it has all the facts!

Next: Follow the Lead with the Body of the story which explains the lead and gives more detail. Follow the Inverted pyramid explained below!

Get the Facts and the Details

The 5 "W"s and 1 "H" of News: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

The important parts of a news story are the five W's and the H.

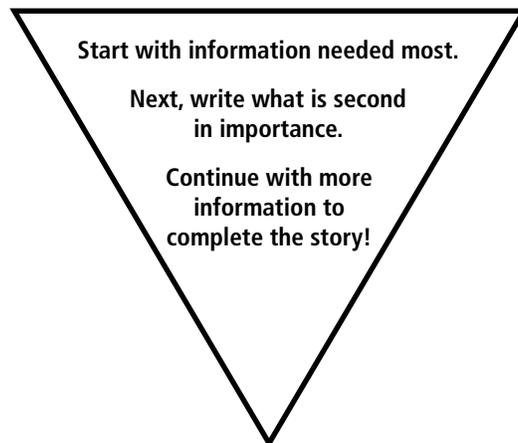
Explain each one and your story is written!

- 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 Upsidedown Pyramid format

The Upsidedown Pyramid format puts the facts in "news order" so that the story starts with the information that the reader needs most 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, re-arrange it so that it does!

Writing 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. So that all readers can become familiar, don't use JLS – spell out Junior Leaders.
- Begin your article (Lead) with the most important part of the meeting.

SAMPLE: Club Meeting Report _____

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.

SAMPLE: Election of Officers Report _____

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

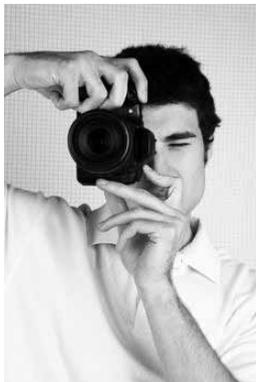
Perry Prez will serve as president of the Coming Up Clovers 4-H Club for the coming year. Perry, a 10-year 4-H member, was elected at the February 26 meeting held at the 4-H Town Hall.

Other new officers are Vice-President Wylie Smith, Secretary Ashley Akins, Treasurer Penny Jones, News Reporter Roger Helms, Health & Safety Leader Nicky McNeal, 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 bring attention to 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. Check what types of photos your newspaper requires and in what formats and size.
- You may also need help in recognizing a good photo: first they show people doing something (not posing), good photos don't include too many people 3 to 5 at best, they avoid distracting backgrounds, and they are often close up views of people in picture.
- Find out how they like to receive the photo; will they accept digital photos? Be sure to have a caption.

If they want them printed: Never write on the back of a photo, and you must give a caption or headline, which can be written and taped on the back.

Tips on Getting Media Coverage

It's a local story: Contact the editor or particular reporter assigned to the "county" beat or other relevant beat. Webster assigns "beat" as regularly assigned subject or area.

It is had good visual potential: Contact the news director at the local television station. Be ready to describe why it is worthy of TV coverage. Watch TV news with an eye toward what is a good visual story-- Must be told by photos better than words alone.

If there is definite news: If there is definite news (not a soft human interest feature) also call the radio news director..

The quickest way to "turn off" a news staffer is to call and say you want some publicity on something.

When to call on the Phone: Calling on the phonies Okay. Just make sure you're not calling when reporters are on a deadline. This is something you should find out about right away when you contact reporters, editors, and news directors—when is the best time to call.

Pitch the story's news value: Pitch the story in terms of its significance and news value. (Why is this community service project so much better? The fact that you painted the fence at the fair may not be news unless it has a significant impact on the use of the Fairgrounds and possibly safety of those attending the fair.

Use an angle a reporter can life with: Present the idea in a way that makes the reporter want to write about it. If the reporter isn't interested, see if you can come up with a different angle and explain how it would meet the publications' needs. Quickly follow up with additional information the reporter would need to do the story.

Provide Background: Provide a press release or background information sheet that summarizes the key information you want to present. Put the most important facts first. Put your name and phone number, and the phone numbers of others from whom the reporter could get information. Providing background is especially important if the information is complicated and it will help the reporter be more accurate.

Develop a Rapport: Get to know key reporters and editors so they'll call you if they have a question. The way to do this is by being dependable and respectful and by demonstrating your newshound tendencies; being inquisitive and enthusiastic about people, places and things.

More Tips

- Your story must be current. Submit your story within a few days of the event or activity.
- Be objective. You must remain completely impartial.
- Quotes add authority to a story. Here's an example:
"We're really excited about this competition," said leader Aaron Black. "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.
- If you find that information in a story you have already submitted 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.
- After you have submitted a story, 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?

Here's some ideas to promote 4-H. Talk these over with your leader and your 4-H Agent.

- Offer to tape radio public service announcements during National 4-H Week.
- Offer to assist in working on the county 4-H newsletter.
- Offer to work with your 4-H agent on producing special pages for the local newspaper.
- Write a letter to the editor during National 4-H Week, telling how much you enjoy the 4-H program.



Meeting Report Form

News Reporter: _____

Make a copy of this form for every meeting. Use it to keep your notes during the meeting. Also work with the secretary to verify your information. Keep these forms in your record so that you can write a news article from them.

Name of club: _____

Meeting date / time / location: _____

Number of members present: _____ Guests present: _____

Pledges were led by: _____

Roll call (taken by and any special format used) _____

Committee reports: _____

Unfinished business: _____

New business: _____

Advisor reports: _____

Demonstrations, speakers, other topics: _____

Recreation: _____

The next meeting will be (date, time, location): _____

(duplicate form as needed)

News Reporter Summary

NAME: _____ CLUB _____ YEAR: _____

Record your stories here.

Story Topic	Written by	Submitted to	Date Submitted	Date Appeared in Newspaper

Record other news / publicity activities here (radio, newsletter, county events).

Activity	Completed by	Submitted to	Date Submitted	Date Appeared

Other activities completed as news reporter:

(duplicate form as needed)