Sample 4-H Project Expression Guidelines

The 4-H Project Expression should be the fun part! Here is where you can share all the fun things that happened and what you learned from them. These stories can be written, drawn, recorded, blogged, vlogged, etc. You can choose how to share your experience.

Your 4-H Project Expression is an opportunity to reflect on your 4-H experiences that focuses on the current 4-H year.

In general, your expression should have 2 parts:
Part one: Tell us about the specific project and
Part two: Tell us about your experiences in 4-H outside of the project

References to the life skills wheel (below) are encouraged throughout your Expression. This will help to make connections about how this project applies to life skills you have practiced.

If you complete more than one 4-H project in a year, you can create your expression with one section with information about you (part 2 below), and then separate sections about each of your 4-H experiences!

4-H Project Expression Suggestions for 9-10 year olds:

Part One:
Share about the project and interesting experiences in the project.

Part Two:
Share about:
(1) Who you are and why you joined 4-H; What might be one of your “sparks” (interests or passions)?

(2) Use the life skills wheel to explain your thinking and connect your learning to other activities (ex. How did you use your head, heart, hands and health?)

and

(3) What you like best about being a 4-H member?

**4-H Project Expressions Suggestions for 11-13 year olds:**

**Part One:**
Describe experiences associated with this 4-H project this year. You could include knowledge and life skills you learned (other than what you listed in your project report). You could also describe how you have used problem solving or responsibility, practiced good sportsmanship, or list possible careers related to this project that you may have interests in pursuing. What might be one of your “sparks” (interests or passions)?

**Part Two:**
Choose one or more of the following 3 areas and write about your experiences this year with that topic. Try to include things that you have not already written about in your Project Report or in Part One. In your story tell how you are applying these 4-H life skills to create change in your life and/or your community. You can include stories about how you have learned about these things from family, school, the community or other organizations, but most of the story should be on 4-H experiences.

**Leadership**
A) Communicating as part of Leadership
   Communication has many parts and skills:
   · Speaking in front of groups
   · Listening
   · Observing behavior of others (nonverbal feedback)
   · Talking with small groups
   · Speaking on the phone
   · Writing and Email
   · Getting feedback from others

   Describe your skills and give specific examples, such as how listening changed your actions, or how nonverbal feedback encouraged you to ask more questions.

B) Getting Along with Others as part of Leadership
   Understanding and appreciating the people you meet is vital to success in leading groups. To be a leader in 4-H you will need to gain the trust and support of the individuals in your group. Skills in meeting, accepting, caring, and trusting are essential to building teamwork.

   Describe how you have used your skills to be a part of your group and build a team attitude.
C) Learning to Learn as part of Leadership
Helping people make changes is what leadership is all about. Learning to learn is exploring how to make desired changes. You may have to change your attitude to try new things. The things you know may be applied in new and creative ways. What are some ways you learn new things? Do you learn better in groups or by yourself? Can you learn with games and songs? Do you see that youth of differing ages have differing abilities to learn?

Describe how you and your group have been able to learn new things.

Citizenship
Citizenship is being informed about and helping to make good decisions for your club, community, country and world. It is different from community service which is about serving others. Citizenship experiences may include, but are not limited to: volunteering on Election Day, representing your peers on a council or senate, understanding your local government, job shadowing a government official, reading the local newspaper, writing a letter to the editor of the local newspaper, voting and voicing your opinion at club meetings or learning about other cultures.

Describe what you learned about your community, school or country, as well as about yourself, in the process.

Community Service
Community service is what you do as an individual or with others to help the community. Write a narrative of your community service experiences (include both experiences from 4-H or outside 4-H).

Identify community service projects or activities in which you have been involved, describe your level of involvement and what you learned through the experience.

4-H Project Expression Suggestions for 14-18 year olds:
Part One:
Describe what you learned in the project and how you used that knowledge. What activities did you do and what life skills did you use and how much time and money did you spend? What might be one of your sparks: interests or passions? Describe how you have used problem solving, responsibility, practiced good sportsmanship, and possible careers related to these projects and activities you may have interests in pursuing, and how these experiences are going to help you in the future and what that means to your community, country, and world.

Part Two:
Choose one of the 7 leadership skills and one other area (Citizenship, Community Service or Career Goals) to write about. Try to include things that you have not already written about in your Project Report or in Part 1. In your story tell how you are applying these 4-H life skills to change your life and/or your community. You can include stories about how you have learned about these items from family, school, the community, or other organizations, but the emphasis should be on 4-H experiences. Relate one or more of these seven skills to the leadership roles you have held during the past year such as holding an office, being on a
committee, participation in a project, or teaching others:

1. Understanding Self
Developing leadership relies heavily on inner strengths of the leader. What have you discovered about yourself as a leader? How has 4-H helped you identify and overcome a fear (like being in charge of a recognition banquet, co-chairing some special event, or speaking in front of a large group). Or think about how your experience, such as being a Teen Leader, helped you understand your strengths. What were those strengths and how did the experience shape them?

2. Communicating
Speaking in front of groups is one part of communication but also listening and watching others’ behavior (nonverbal feedback), participating in small groups, speaking on the phone, getting feedback from others, and writing are also communication skills. Describe your skills and give specific examples, such as how listening changed your actions, or how nonverbal feedback encouraged you to ask more questions.

3. Getting Along with Others
Understanding and appreciating the people you meet is vital to success in leading groups. To be a leader in 4-H you will need to gain the trust and support of the individuals in your group. Skills in meeting, accepting, caring, and trusting are essential to building teamwork. Describe how you have used your skills to be a part of your group and build a team attitude.

4. Learning to Learn
Helping people make changes is what leadership is all about. Learning to learn is learning how to make desired changes. You may have to change your attitude to try new things. The things you know may be applied in new and creative ways. What are some ways you learn new things? Do you learn better in groups or by yourself? Can you learn with games and songs? Do you see that youth of differing ages have differing abilities to learn? Describe how you and your group have been able to learn new things.

5. Making Decisions
Decision-making is a life skill you will use every day. Helping groups make decisions requires you to help them work through the decision making process. In a group or as an individual, to make a decision these are the steps: define the problem, gather information about it, list alternative solutions to the problem, weigh the consequences of each solution, decide on the best action, follow through, and then evaluate the results. Give specific examples of some decisions you have made in 4-H, the process you or your group used to reach your decision, and the results. Describe what you learned throughout the decision making process.

6. Managing Resources
As you work with larger groups, management skills become more crucial. To help groups use the resources available to achieve goals, careful planning is required. This involves identifying resources (time, things, people or money) and using those resources effectively. Identify ways you have managed resources and relate to planning. What goals did you set? What resources or help did you need to reach your goals? How positive were the results? What did you learn?
7. Working with Others
In your experiences in 4-H, you have had opportunities to examine how groups work. You have seen how the leader's behavior influences the group's behavior. (Example: autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire) You may have learned how to create good group environments by focusing on group members' needs and motivations. You have developed your skills in helping people work together cooperatively and in making decisions through consensus. Think about a specific activity where you were a leader and describe how you have worked with others. What made the experience a challenge – the people, personalities, differences in interests or skills, size of the group, number or size of the tasks, special conditions in the group or outside environment? What kind of things did you do with a group to help set goals, develop budgets, divide labor and delegate responsibilities?

Choose one or more of the following to discuss in addition to the leadership section:

A) Citizenship
Citizenship is being informed about and helping to make good decisions for your club, community, country and world. It is different from community service which is about serving others. Citizenship experiences may include, but are not limited to: volunteering on Election Day, representing your peers on a council or senate, understanding your local government, job shadowing a government official, reading the local newspaper, writing a letter to the editor of the local newspaper, voting and voicing your opinion at club meetings or learning about other cultures. Describe what you learned about your community, school or country, as well as about yourself, in the process.

B) Community Service
Community service is what you do as an individual or with others to help the community. Write a narrative of your community service experiences (include both experiences from 4-H or outside 4-H). Identify community service projects or activities in which you have been involved, describe your level of involvement and what you learned through the experience.

C) College and Career Goals
Discuss the following questions: How has 4-H impacted your career goals? What training or post-secondary education will assist you in attaining your career goals? What is your major field of study? What are your reasons for choosing this course of study?

The 4-H Project Story is your opportunity to showcase what your 4-H participation has meant to you and how it has prepared you as a leader and citizen of the world.

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