**What is a Skill a thon?**
A skill a thon is an educational delivery method youth gain or demonstrate their knowledge and skills. These age appropriate educational activities can be facilitated by teen leaders or adult volunteers.

Skill a thons enhance learning through the use of hands on activities. Youth practice critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills while gaining the opportunity to achieve project goals, build self confidence, and earn recognition.

This event can help you as the club or project leader to assess member knowledge and skills within a certain project. Common skill a thon components include: a general knowledge quiz, identification stations, and demonstration of skills.

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**Getting Started**

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With a little thought and preparation, you can put together a virtual skill-a-thon.

Step 1. Set up a virtual meeting for your group using Zoom.

Step 2. Consider your time frame. Will you set up a series of virtual sessions? Will you have youth join the virtual call for instructions, leave the call to work independently, and then return for reflection? Will you be sending something to youth to complete prior to the meeting?

Step 3. Determine the concepts and content you want your 4-H members to work on. Continue reading for ideas.

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**General Knowledge Quiz**

General Knowledge Quiz

Content might include animal anatomy, systems of the animal (muscular, skeletal, nervous, digestive, etc.), diseases and conditions, veterinary practices, feed and nutrition, general care, or handling and showmanship techniques.

**Tips for Going Virtual:** Use an easy online quiz generator such as www.quiz-maker.com to customize a quiz easily with the questions and the format you want (ex. multiple choice, true/false or checkbox, fill in the blank). Once you create the quiz, you can send members a link to the quiz. This can be done during the virtual meeting or they can complete the quiz prior to meeting as a group. Determine any time limits, just as if they were doing it in person.

You could also create a quiz in a Word or Google document and then share your screen with participants during the Skill-a-thon. Ask them to record their answers on a piece of paper, share their answers using the chat box feature, or share their screens. When determining how you want participants to share their answers, consider time, how many members you have, and if you are scoring the event or not.
**Station Work**
When working virtually, the “station” may look a little different than it would in person. Instead of having youth go to an actual table, you will need to create a virtual station for youth to view. Topics might include disease, nutrition, breeds, animal health, reproduction, or biosecurity.

**Tips for Going Virtual:**
- Arrange items on a table, and label each item with a number or letter.
- Use your camera screen or take a picture that you can show on your screen. Ask members to identify various parts or items. Answers could be posted in the chat box, shared orally, shared visually by having youth hold up a written answer, or by answering a poll question.
- Ask members to complete this task within a time limit similar to an in-person skill-a-thon. If you do not have access to equipment or items you might like to use, consider using photos compiled from online catalogues.

**Showmanship and fitting skills**
Demonstrable skills such as general grooming, care, and showmanship can be incorporated into a skill-a-thon. Examples might include: bracing, setting up an animal, correct halter or lead positions, or safety skills for handling animals and/or equipment.

**Tips for Going Virtual:**
- Have members record a short video of themselves demonstrating a particular skill with their animal.
- Be clear about the skill you are looking for and how much time the youth have to demonstrate it.
- Ask members to upload their video clips (prior to your skill-a-thon meeting) using a simple Drive Uploader on Google or Padlet. If youth cannot upload a video, ask them to do a short live demonstration with their animal.

**Wrap Up**
Take a few minutes to facilitate a short reflection at the end of your session. Ask youth to identify one thing they learned that was helpful, name something that surprised them, or state a topic they would like to learn about in the future. Ask what they liked or didn’t like about the session or how they might apply something new they learned. This is a chance for you to connect with your 4-H members to get a feel for the skills that were enhanced while providing youth with time to reflect on their learning.

**Tips for Going Virtual:**
- Assign a number 1-6 to each youth. Roll a die. Ask your reflection question and have the people with the number you roll answer the question.
- Use the whiteboard feature in Zoom to pose a question and have youth write in answers or use the stamp feature to respond.
- Use the whiteboard feature to play “Pictionary”.
- Use the breakout room feature to have pairs of youth discuss two or three reflections questions for 3-5 minutes. When you return them to the whole group, ask a few youth to summarize and share.
## Resources to enhance your skill-a-thon:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All species interactive resources list</td>
<td>compiled by Cornell</td>
<td><a href="http://4h.ansci.cornell.edu/virtual-resources/">http://4h.ansci.cornell.edu/virtual-resources/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breeds of Livestock</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds">http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Judging/skill-a-thon</td>
<td>(many animal commodities listed)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.geauga4h.org/skillathon.htm">http://www.geauga4h.org/skillathon.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep and Goat programs</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://animalscience.tamu.edu/livestock-species/sheep-goats/">http://animalscience.tamu.edu/livestock-species/sheep-goats/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Kentucky General livestock skill-a-thon</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://afs.ca.uky.edu/4-youth/meat-animal/livestock-skillathon">https://afs.ca.uky.edu/4-youth/meat-animal/livestock-skillathon</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed Identification</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://afs.ca.uky.edu/livestock/test-your-knowledge/feedstuff-identification">http://afs.ca.uky.edu/livestock/test-your-knowledge/feedstuff-identification</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Wyoming</td>
<td>(MANY skill-a-thons set ups for lots of commodities and even non-animal skill-a-thons in things like cake decorating or robotics)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uwyo.edu/4-h/opportunities/state-contests/showcase-showdown/livestock-skillathon.html">http://www.uwyo.edu/4-h/opportunities/state-contests/showcase-showdown/livestock-skillathon.html</a></td>
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