

March 2016 Youth Talk-Record Book Article

My 4-H Story

My 4-H Story is a very important part of the 4-H Record Book. It is located in the Record Book behind the Personal Development Report (PDR). Too often it is the last part of the Record Book that members tackle, when time is at a premium, and it doesn't receive the attention it deserves.

The 4-H Story is an opportunity for members to share feelings about experiences and enables them to expand on information that may appear in the Annual Report Form (APR) or the story may include information that enhances the APR. The story should show personal growth and should not be a repeat of what is recorded in the APR. For example, you may have recorded the shows you participated in on the APR and the placings you received. There is no need to repeat this in the story, but you can explain the difficult lessons you learned in order to place second in showmanship or to be able to bake a blue ribbon pie. Writing about the great things that happened in your project as well as the frustrating parts brings your 4-H year to life, and enables you to show the reader the progress you have made throughout the year.

The 4-H Story format should follow these guidelines:

- ◆ Double space
- ◆ Print single or double sided, you choose
- ◆ Use an easy-to-read font such as Times New Roman or Garamond.
- ◆ Keep the text size between 12 point and 14 point.

Follow these word counts if your Record Book is to be competitive at County Record Book judging.

- ◆ Junior (or first year member): 250-500 words
- ◆ Intermediate: 500-1,000 words
- ◆ Senior: 1,000-2,000 words

Approach your story as if you are writing a composition for school. The story should have an **introduction** that sparks interest and entices the reader to want to learn more about you. You may want to pick a theme for your story, and include terms related to that theme to describe your 4-H experiences (i.e. theme-baseball: terms- double hitter, grand slam, coach, etc.)

The **body of** the story should include the information you wish to share about your 4-H year. Start with your strongest project or the one you are most passionate about. Be sure to include your experiences about serving as a club officer or a committee chairman or junior/teen leader: experiences that show growth in leadership, and citizenship.

The **summary** is a great time to discuss your future plans and aspirations for next year. How do you plan to grow your project or run for a club office or plans to share your knowledge serving as a junior leader etc.