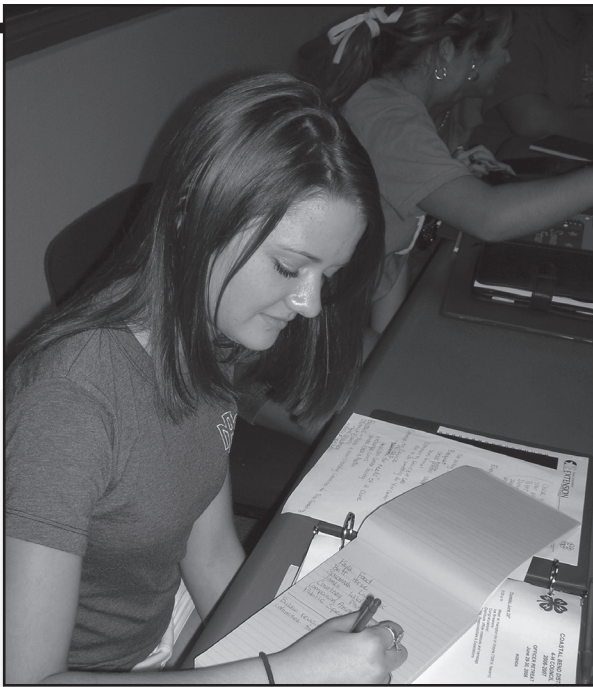


REPORTER/PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

Congratulations! Your fellow club members have selected you to lead them through a successful 4-H year as Reporter. In case you have some questions about what to do, this guide will help you understand your duties. It also gives you some tips for doing the best job possible. Good luck!



DUTIES

- Submit interesting reports and pictures of club activities, members and leaders to local newspapers, and radio and television stations.
- Visit local newspapers, and radio and television stations to learn about their requirements for submitting news.
- Become familiar with the “how to’s” of news writing. You do not have to be an expert, but some helpful hints are included below.
- Report club news to the county Extension office for the county 4-H newsletter or for the county 4-H website.
- Work with the Secretary to complete the *4-H Club Meeting Report* form. Submit it to the county Extension office after each meeting. If your county Extension agent has a different form for you to use, go ahead and use it!
- Arrive 30 minutes early to help set up for each meeting.

REMINDER:

Remember that news is the point, or essence, of the publication or broadcast.

TIPS FOR 4-H CLUB REPORTERS

- News must be timely, immediate or near the present – the first reason for a news story. Without timeliness, a news story is either history or prediction.
- News must be physically close and/or psychologically close to the audience. Remember that news is the point, or essence, of the publication or broadcast.
- Editors prefer local or personal news. Remember to check with your newspaper and radio and television broadcast stations for any other special hints or requirements they may have.
- Structure your story using the 5 W's and the H:
 - Who* – Who said it? Who is it about? Use full names.
 - What* – What happened? Importance counts.
 - Where* – Where did it happen, or where is it going to happen?
 - When* – When did it happen, or when is it going to happen?
 - Why* – Why is it important?
 - How* – How did it happen? Was it unusual?
- Make your story readable. The best way to improve your writing readability is to use:
 - Short Sentences* – For today's mass audiences, new stories averaging between 15 and 20 words per sentence are easy reading. Sentences longer than 30 words may be hard to understand.
 - Short Paragraphs* – Keep paragraphs short and varied in length from one to five average sentences. Remember a 100-word paragraph looks long in a narrow newspaper column. Neither editors nor readers like them.
 - Easy Words* – Use short, simple words in place of longer, multi-syllable words with the same meaning. When you have to use a technical or difficult word, explain it as simply as possible.
 - Personal Words* – Pronouns like "you" and "we," a person's name or a direct quote make your story more interesting. This kind of personalization, which is more often used in "feature" news stories, is a good technique for holding reader interest.
 - Active Verbs* – These verbs keep a story moving and "grab" the reader more than "to be" verbs that show little action. Some examples of active verbs are: tackle, gallop, scramble and pelt.
- Get to the point...fast! Most people whiz through newspapers, reading headlines and maybe only the first paragraph or two. So, put the important facts in the first paragraph; the first sentence is even better! In addition, editors usually chop stories from the end of the article to make them fit available space. If you have something essential to the story at the bottom of your copy, it might not make it into print.