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# Headlining 4-H

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*A Manual for 4-H Club Reporters*

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CLUB SERIES A-49

FEBRUARY 1955-6M

Reporter's name .....

Address .....

4-H Club .....

Meeting day .....

I send my stories on .....  
(Day)

to .....

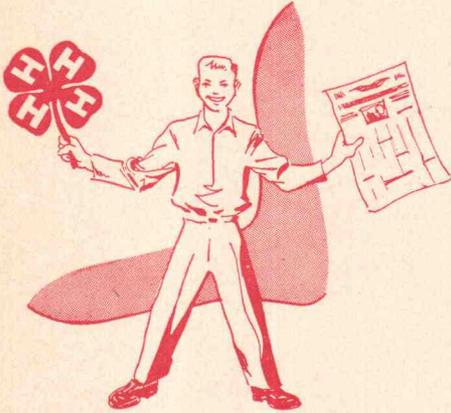
at .....  
(Newspaper or extension agent's office)

This bulletin was prepared by Mrs. June Quincy, Extension Information Specialist, in cooperation with central staff members of the Oregon 4-H Club Department.

# Headlining 4-H

## *A Manual for 4-H Club Reporters*

**C**ONGRATULATIONS, REPORTER! And welcome to your new job. Let's see how we can work together to help you become the best reporter ever.



Getting news of your club in the local paper is important. Your stories let all kinds of people—parents, city folks, farm people, boys and girls—know what your club is doing. You are the “link” between your club and the people who read the newspapers.

Many people and many businesses are interested in 4-H work. People who don't know about 4-H can learn about it by reading your stories. And the good work you point out in your stories may inspire other 4-H club members to “make the best better.”

Reporting is fun, too. You will never forget the thrill of seeing your first story in print.

### **What to write about**

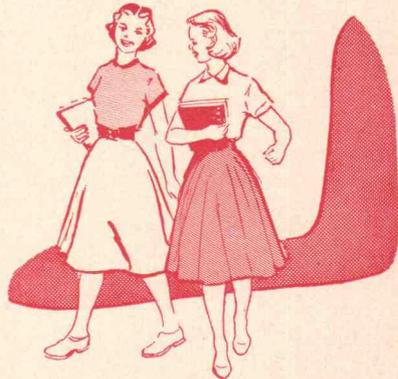
What is a news story? It is a written record of what happened or

what will happen. It might be something unusual or important. But it should be something interesting.

Here are some of the things that might be news—meeting, fair, tour, picnic, camp, summer school, National 4-H Club Congress, club elections, demonstration, committees named, donations, projects, contest winners.

Many things can happen at one club meeting. But probably one particular thing is more interesting than the others.

This is one way to decide what is the most interesting. Pretend you are on your way home from the meeting when you see a friend. Your friend wants to know what happened at the meeting. Right away, you say, “Mary Ann Nelson gave a demonstration on muffins, and she said that if we stir them too much, they get tunnels in them.” So that might be the start of your story. Or maybe you tell your friend, “We elected John Mason president.” Telling who was elected can be the beginning.



## Our friends, the W's

No matter what we are writing about, stories should include certain facts. We call them the Five W's and their friend the H—or sometimes they are called the Big Six. They are Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How.



**Who** tells us who does something. It can be one person or a whole group.

**What** tells us what they do. Maybe they gave a demonstration, or helped with a Red Cross campaign, or planted trees at the fairgrounds.

**Where** and **When** are easy to figure out. We all know what they mean.

**Why** is the reason something is done. It doesn't always have to be included. If you help with a Red Cross drive, people understand why you are doing it, and you don't have to tell them. But maybe your club is testing wells. Then you might want to explain that you're doing it to avoid illness from drinking bad water.

**How** means the way it is done.

## Let's look at some leads

On the opposite page you can see stories that show how the Big Six are used.

From these examples, you can see that all stories do not begin the same way. There are even different ways to tell the same story, as we will see later when we practice writing.

## How to write

Now that we know what facts to include, let's look back at what happened at the meetings we talked about on page 3, and write stories about them.

In the story about the muffins, this is our outline:

Who—Mary Ann Nelson.

What—Told the Handy Pans 4-H Club how to make muffins.

Where—At the home of Frances Patterson.

When—Tuesday afternoon.

With this information, we could write the story like this:

“Mary Ann Nelson told the Handy Pans 4-H club how to make muffins Tuesday afternoon. The club met at the home of Frances Patterson.

“‘Stirring the batter too much can make tunnels in the muffins,’ she said.”



Or if you think what she said about making muffins is more interesting, you can write it this way:

“Stirring muffin batter too much can make tunnels inside after they are baked, Mary Ann Nelson told the Handy Pans 4-H club Tuesday after-

Fifteen members of the Cow Catcher 4-H livestock club

*Who*

will sell animals at the 4-H and FFA Fat Stock sale in The

*What*

*Where*

Dalles June 7.

*When*

Four-H livestock club members got experience judging

*Who*

*What*

livestock Saturday on a tour in The Dalles and Dufur.

*When*

*Where*

Survey of safety hazards in Pistol Creek, sponsored by

*What*

*Where*

the community's 4-H health club, will begin Saturday.

*Who*

*When*

From the list of hazards, the 4-H club members will de-

*Why*

cide on their goal for the year. One club member will visit

each family in the community to learn what they would like to

*How*

see improved.

During National 4-H Club Week, March 6 to 14, 4-H cook-

*When*

ing club members will give daily cookery demonstrations in

*Who*

*What*

the window of Smith's Department Store.

*Where*

Speaking through loudspeakers that will be heard outside

*How*

the building, the young cooks will give ideas for easier and

*More on What*

better meal preparation.

noon. She gave a demonstration on muffins at the home of Frances Paterson."

Either way, this would be just the beginning of your story. You then go on to tell more about what she said about muffin making, and what else happened at the meeting.

Now let's look at the other meeting we talked about, where John Mason was elected president. Let's use these as our facts:

Who—John Mason

What—Was elected president of the Rock Creek Health Club.

Where—At Rock Creek school.

When—Friday afternoon.

In this case, our story could begin like this:

"John Mason was elected president of the Rock Creek 4-H Health club Friday afternoon. The club met at Rock Creek school."

Then you can go on to tell who else was elected to the other offices, and anything more that happened.



..in a nutshell..

In most stories, the first sentence or two will tell the story "in a nutshell." The beginning of the story is called the "lead," which rhymes with "reed."



### News and minutes

What is the difference between a news story and the secretary's minutes? They both tell what happened. But they tell it very differently. The secretary writes down all the official business. The reporter writes what is interesting and important.

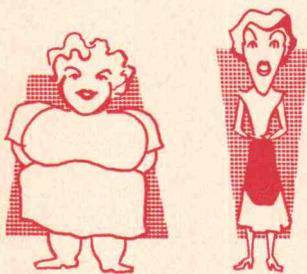
For instance, the secretary records that the meeting was called to order, the flag was raised, the 4-H pledge recited, the minutes of the last meeting read, and such matters. None of these things are put in a news story.

When you write about a meeting, pick out the things that were different from all other meetings of your club. Tell about the demonstration. Tell what the speaker said. Tell what the club voted to do.

This is the reason all the regular parts of the meeting aren't put in—newspapers have so much to print that they have to cut down to the most "newsy" parts. Those things that are the same at every meeting don't have to be reported every time. Readers just take for granted that they are done at the meeting.

### Tell the whole story

Tell everything that should be told. If there is a demonstration, tell who gave it and something of what you learned. If you write about a Mrs. Johnson, tell which Mrs. Johnson it was. All good reporters see that both the first and last names are there. With married women, the rule is to use the husband's first name—Mrs. John Johnson, not Mary Johnson.



Mrs. Carl Johnson... Mrs. Karl Johnson

Another thing to remember with names is to be sure to spell them correctly. Mrs. Carl Johnson and Mrs. Karl Johnson would be two entirely different persons, even though their names sound alike. If you aren't sure about names and spelling, ask your leader.

### Who says so? Make it clear

Good reporters are objective. That means they tell what happened or will happen, but they do not tell what they think about it. And neither do they put in words like "I" or "you."

### This is the right way

Scissors and shears are among the most important pieces of sewing equipment, Mary Louise Moeller told the Fern Hill 4-H sewing club Monday.

She said good sewing requires sewing scissors, bent handle dressmaker shears, and pinking shears.

### This is the wrong way

Scissors and shears are among the most important pieces of *our* sewing equipment. *We need* sewing scissors, bent handle dressmaker shears, and pinking shears.

When we read the "right way" story, we know who said scissors and shears are important. We do not feel that the newspaper or the reporter said it. We understand that Mary Louise did, and we know to whom she said it.

### Short sentences

Generally, short sentences are easier to read than long ones. If sentences grow too long, people forget the beginning before they get to the end. You



will probably find, too, that short sentences are easier to write. So keep them short. And the words should be ones you ordinarily use.

### Keep stories short, too

Because newspapers have just so much space, sometimes they have to make stories shorter to get everything important in the paper. Usually if they have to "cut" a story, the last paragraph is left out. That is why you should put the most important things first. Then they will be sure to be printed.

## Write while it's news

Look closely at the word "news" and you'll see the word "new" in it. That is the important part of "news." Be sure to write your stories while they are still new. There is not much reason to print a story in the paper if everybody already knows about it.

## Getting the story to the paper

Now that we have talked about how to write, let's start in. We'll write our story as soon as we can, while the facts are still fresh in our minds—while the story is still news.

Get a piece of paper that is white or almost white. The best size is 8½ x 11 inches.

If you can use a typewriter, the newspaper will prefer it. But most 4-H reporters don't type, so they use pen and ink or a good black pencil to write with.

Start about 2 or 3 inches down on the page and write very clearly. Skipping every other line is a good idea for two reasons: it makes the writing easier to read, and it gives space to make changes if the editor wants to.

In the upper left-hand corner of the page, put the identifying information—your name, the name of your club, your address or telephone number, and what you are writing about.

Use just one side of the paper. If your story is too long for one sheet, write the word "more" at the bottom. On the second sheet, put your name again, the name of your club, and "Page two."

When your story reaches this point, it is ready to send in, and your responsibility is fulfilled.

## Helps to doing the best job

- Meet the editor or person on the paper who takes care of 4-H news. He can tell you many things that will help you write good news stories.
- Find out the newspaper's deadline. That is the time when the story must be in the newspaper office. And then, of course, make sure your story gets there on time.
- Make out a news calendar, a list of when your club will probably have news. There is a blank on the inside of the back cover in this handbook that may be used. First list the things



your club will be doing under the EVENT column. Then put down the dates they will take place. For FACTS TO INCLUDE write in any notes that you want to be sure to put in—not all the facts, because you won't have room.

Plan to write one story before the event happens; newspaper readers will want to know when it will take place, especially if it is something they can attend. When you write this first story—the "advance" story—write in the date on your calendar so you have a record. And do the same when you write the story afterwards to tell how things went—the "follow" story.

### Cut and paste—Make a scrapbook

To keep track of your stories, cut them out of the newspaper and put them in a scrapbook. With each clipping you will want to write the name of the paper and the date the story appeared.



Some counties have publicity contests. To find out whether there is one in your area, ask your leader or 4-H extension agent. If you enter, you will want to follow the rules for putting your scrapbook together.

### Let's see what we've learned

As a review, let's look over what we talked about on news writing. Here's a list of the important things. They are summarized for you as "Rules for 4-H Club Reporters." During the club year, look at them occasionally. They'll help you do better news writing.

Now you're on your own. Good luck, 4-H reporter—and have fun with the news.

### RULES FOR 4-H CLUB REPORTERS

- Put the most important things first in your story.
- Put in all the facts—especially WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, and HOW.
- Use easy words ; keep sentences short.
- Be sure names are spelled correctly ; include first names.
- Type or write clearly on one side of the paper.
- Write every story while it is still news.
- Meet the newspaper's deadline.
- Keep a record of your stories.

