

371.42
Or31ca
no. 46
c. 3

OREGON STATE LIBRARY
Documents Section

APR 15 1952

DOCUMENT
COLLECTION
OREGON
COLLECTION

4-H REPORTER'S



HANDBOOK

Club Series A-46

February 1952

FEDERAL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE / OREGON STATE COLLEGE CORVALLIS

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, F. E. Price, director. Oregon State College, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the State Department of Education cooperating. Printed and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	3
What Is News?	4
What to Put in Your Story	5
Writing Your Story	6
The Reporter's ABC's	7
No Opinions, Please	8
Rules for 'Riters	8
Starting Your Story	8
Here's How	9
Meet Mr. Editor	10
Keep the Editor Happy	11
Make a News Calendar	12
Keep a Publicity Notebook	12
Test Yourself	13

4-H Reporter's Handbook

CAROLYN SHAYER

Extension Information Specialist

SO YOU are the new reporter for your 4-H Club. Congratulations! Let's take a look at your job. This business of getting your club news printed in the newspaper is important.

Why? Because many, many people read newspapers—fathers, mothers, city people, farm folks, bankers, businessmen, boys, and girls. They will read the stories you write about what your club is doing.

Some of these readers will be parents and other older friends. Your news stories will keep them interested in your club. Then they will be glad to help the club when it needs it.

Some readers may be people who have never heard about 4-H Club work. You can teach them a lot about it through your news stories. You can even get new members for your club—girls and boys who read about what you do, and think it would be fun to join.

In some news stories, you may write about some boy or girl who just finished a very successful project. This will inspire other 4-H'ers to "make their best better" too.

Writing news about your club is a good way to share ideas. Other clubs in your county, and in other counties in Oregon, may decide to do some of the things your club does. If you ever send any reports to the "National 4-H Club News," you can share your club's ideas with 4-H Clubs all over the United States.

Ask your leader to lend you a copy of the "National 4-H Club News." This monthly magazine is made up of stories of 4-H Clubs everywhere in the country. It has many pictures of 4-H'ers, too. There is a special place in the magazine where 4-H Club reporters tell about their clubs. This means there is a place for *your* stories in the "National 4-H Club News." Your club would be very proud to be "written up" in this magazine!





You have an important job, but it will be fun. There is no thrill quite like reading a newspaper and finding a story that you wrote. You'll find it's easy to be a *good* 4-H Club reporter by following a few simple rules.

This Handbook shows you these rules.

What Is News?

You are a news reporter. Let's find out just what *is* "news." Information about the unusual and important things your club and its members are doing is news. Of course, you must write about these things as soon as they happen. If you don't, everyone will have heard about them and your story won't be "news" any more.

MEETINGS are news. You can write *two* news stories about every meeting. One will be an "advance" story, to tell people *when* the meeting will be, and *why* they should come. The other will be a "follow-up" story, to tell people *what happened* at the meeting.

Many other things make good news stories too. Will any of your club members take part in a FAIR? Who? What will they exhibit, or demonstrate, or do? Will your club put an EXHIBIT in a store window? Where? When? Why? Who will help put it up?

Did your club take a TOUR? Where? When? Who went? What did you see? Did any grown-ups go too? Will your club have a PICNIC? When? Where? Are any members going to a 4-H CAMP? 4-H SUMMER SCHOOL? NATIONAL 4-H CLUB CONGRESS? When the time comes,

write a news story to tell people who is going, where they are going, when, and why.

Of course, you will want to write about your club ELECTIONS. Who are the new officers? And when any COMMITTEES are appointed, tell who will be on each committee, and what they will do.

You have DEMONSTRATIONS at your meetings. Write about them, too. Tell what was shown to the club. If the demonstration was on "how to feed pigs," tell what feed is recommended and how it should be fed—not just who gave the demonstration. Maybe the demonstration was on "how to make an angel cake." Then tell some



of the important things about making that kind of cake. And of course, tell who gave the demonstration, and when and where.

Did your club make a DONATION to the Red Cross, or some other good cause? Tell people about that, too. If they know your club helps other people, they will be glad to help your club.

What else can you write about? A member with a very good or "different" PROJECT. Tell what he did, and perhaps why he chose that project. CONTEST WINNERS . . . What was the contest, and who won? What did he win? JUDGING TEAMS . . . Who was on them? What do they judge, and what points do they look for when they judge?

Any SPECIAL ACTIVITIES of your club, such as conservation, health, maybe a "pen pal" project. Any COMMUNITY PROJECTS your club helps. This might be a "Clean-up Day," or a hospital drive. Any AWARDS your club receives.

If you remember to write about all these things, you will soon have a good "nose for news." And remember, too, you can write *two* stories about most of these events. Write one story *before* it happens. Write another right *after* it happens.

What to Put in Your Story

You will want to tell people *all* the facts. Here is a good way to make sure you have all the facts. Just remember the big Six: WHO . . . WHAT . . . WHEN . . . WHERE . . . WHY . . . and How. Ask yourself these questions about each event.

Usually the WHO is most important. People love to see their own names in the paper. They like to read about people they know. So try to include as many names as you can.

When you gather the facts, check them with people who really know. Unless the time, spelling, and other information is right, the editor will not want to print your story. Correct spelling of names is most important. Check them. The short, common names are the most frequently misspelled. Use the full name—not just Mr. Brown, but John R. Brown.



Writing Your Story

All good reporters use a special "newspaper style" when they write a news story.

Here is the secret to this "style." They put the most interesting and important facts in the first paragraph. This first paragraph is called the *lead* (pronounced "leed"). A good "lead" should be complete enough to make sense all by itself.

Then they put facts that are not quite so important in the second paragraph. And at the end of their stories you will find facts that are interesting but not important. (Read a few newspaper stories, and see for yourself.)

Why do reporters write this way?

They put the most *interesting* facts first so people will want to read the rest of the story. Here is an example.

Suppose you start your story: "A meeting of the Busy Bees 4-H Club will be held . . ."

But every club holds meetings, so that is not very exciting. Suppose you write your "lead" like this: "'Arranging Fall Flowers' will be discussed by Mrs. A. E. Powell at a meeting of the Busy Bees 4-H Club at 7:30 p.m., Friday, September 21, at the Santiam High School. Anyone interested in flower arrangement is invited to attend, according to President Mary Petersen."

Isn't that more interesting? In the next paragraph, you could write about what else will happen at the meeting. For instance: "Each club member is asked to bring a vase. The club will decide what kind of flowers look best in each vase."

But the *most* interesting and important facts are in the *first* paragraph. And see how the Big Six have been answered in the first paragraph. See how it is complete all by itself.

Here is another reason for putting important facts first. If the reader is in a hurry, he may not take time to read the whole story. So even if he reads just the "lead," he will get the important facts.

And here is still another reason for putting important facts first. Perhaps the editor will not have room to print all of your story. When this happens, he will shorten it. He doesn't have time to rewrite your story. No indeed! He is a very busy man, so he just chops off the last paragraph, or the last *two* paragraphs if he must. Now you see, if you don't put the important facts first, they might never get in the paper at all.



Warning

Your club secretary takes "minutes," or records, of each meeting, but these minutes do not make good news stories. They are not written in "newspaper style."

Why? Because the minutes usually read something like this: "The meeting was called to order by President John Harper. We sang the "Ploughing Song." The secretary read the minutes of the last meeting. The treasurer reported we have \$6.13 in the treasury." —And so on.

Are *these* the most interesting and important facts about your meeting? Of course not! You will want to change the order of the minutes to make a good news story. And parts of the minutes should never be in your story at all, because they are not *all news*.

The Reporter's ABC's

Here's another rule to help you, called "the Reporter's ABC's."

► A stands for ACCURATE. Get your facts right. Then people will not be unhappy because their names aren't spelled right. And club members won't miss a meeting because the wrong date was given.

► B stands for BRIEF. The editor may not be able to give you much space in his newspaper. The shorter your story is, the more chance it will have to get printed.

Write the story, then go over it again and cross out all unnecessary words. This will help keep it brief.

At first, count your words so you will know about how many words you usually get on one page. The "biggest" stories usually are worth no more than 300 words. A 200-word story is best of all if the story is at all important.

Write short paragraphs, too. Newspaper columns are narrow. A story looks better and will tempt more readers when it has several short paragraphs instead of one long one.

► C stands for CLEAR. Say exactly what you mean. Then your readers will understand everything you write. Short words and short sentences help make your story clear.

If you know a long word and a short one that mean the same, use the short one. (Which is easier to read: "Rides will be given to members who need them" or "Transportation will be furnished to members who are unable to provide their own facilities"?)



Watch your punctuation. If you have more than two or three commas in a sentence, make that sentence into *two* sentences. It will be easier to understand.

Now you have a new set of ABC's. They will remind you to be ACCURATE, BRIEF, and CLEAR.

No Opinions, Please

News stories are not editorials. A good reporter does not write about what *he thinks* in a news story. He writes about what he *sees* and *hears*. That means you won't say "The club made a *wise* choice," or "It was an *interesting* talk." Those are your opinions.

You *can* say "The *club* agreed it was the most interesting meeting of the year." That's everybody's opinion, not just yours.

When you want to give an opinion, you must "credit" it to someone. You could "credit" it to the club president, for instance: "It is important for everyone to attend this meeting," President Roger Mack said." That is still opinion, but it is not *your* opinion when you write it this way.

Rules for 'Riters

Here are a few more suggestions that will help you to be a good reporter.

▶ Never make fun of anyone. Even if you are sorry, once your story is in the paper you cannot erase part of it.

▶ Learn to use a dictionary. Then you can check your spelling. (You will be surprised how this will help you in school work too.)

▶ When you begin a sentence with a number, always spell the number out. Write: "*Six* members of the Hilltop 4-H Club plan to go to 4-H summer school at Oregon State College next month." Not: "6 members, etc. . . ."

Do not abbreviate. Write out the full names of months, states, and days of the week. Then your readers will make no mistakes.

Starting Your Story

Begin by studying your facts. Ask yourself: What is most interesting to other people? What is most important? Then put that in the first paragraph.

Your story might begin with the title of the talk to be given at the next meeting if it is an "advance" story. ("Beekeeping" will be discussed by Roland Adams at the next meeting of the Willing

Workers 4-H Club, Saturday, May 6, at 10:30 a.m. at the home of James Parr in Coos Bay.")

It might begin with something important or interesting that the speaker said, if it is a "follow-up" story. ("Too much pressing can make a dress look as bad as too little pressing," Joy Grant told members of the Olney 4-H Club at a meeting on Tuesday at the home of Grace Young. Joy gave a demonstration on pressing.")

Your story could begin with some plans your club made at the meeting. ("A father-son banquet was planned for next month by the Chefs 4-H Club at its meeting Monday, November 10, at the home of Peter French, in Richland.")

Your meeting story might begin with the names of new officers, if an election was the big news. ("Willa Carter was elected president of the Maupin Merrymaids 4-H Club, at a meeting on March 3, at the home of their leader, Mrs. W. D. Price. Other new officers are: Mary Green, vice president, Beverly Hart, secretary, Dorothy Parker, treasurer, and Frieda Schultz, reporter.")

Here's How

Here are some 4-H news stories. See how the reporters chose what they thought was most interesting and important, and put that in the "lead." See how they have answered the Big Six in the lead, too.

* * *

"Too much stirring makes muffins have peaks on top and tunnels inside," Anna May Snell told the Cheerful Cooks 4-H Club at its meeting Monday at the home of Helen Horn.



After demonstrating how to make muffins, she let the club members taste them. Everyone decided to make some herself.

The other members present were: Ellen Jones, Jane Purdy, Jean Raymond, Donna Green, and Mrs. R. S. Corbett, club leader.

* * *

"Practice did it," explains John Marks, 14, of Heppner. He won the 4-H showmanship contest at the Morrow county fair last week. John is a member of the Top Notch 4-H dairy club.

He said he had practiced for many months with "April," his Guernsey heifer. At first she was very hard to handle. But after John worked with her a little every day, she soon learned to "behave like a lady."

John also practiced fitting her for showing. He said that it is easier to keep an animal in good condition for several weeks than it is to get her in shape at the last minute.

He expects to show "April" at the state fair. Even if he doesn't win, he said, he has learned a lot about handling animals in a show ring.

* * *

A float in the Pea Festival was planned at a meeting of the Hillside 4-H Club Friday at the home of Bill Stone, Pendleton. The float will be built at the home of June Rose.

President "Mike" O'Malley gave a demonstration on how to make a livestock equipment box. The members decided to build one for the club to use at county fairs.

The next meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. March 28, at the home of Tom Thomas.

* * *

The Friendly 4-H Club of Hillsboro will take part in the community Red Cross drive next Saturday, the members decided at a meeting on June 10 at the home of Mary Longstreet. Each member will visit all the homes on her street to ask for donations.

This was a recreation meeting. Each member taught a new game to the others. Club leader Mrs. T. L. Coletti taught several songs.

* * *

"How to Raise Rabbits" will be discussed by Don Reed at a meeting of the Prineville 4-H Club at 7:30 p.m., September 25, at the home of Peter French. Don will bring his best rabbit to the meeting.

Club President George Plant asks each member to bring a friend. There will be games and refreshments after the business meeting.

Meet Mr. Editor

The editor is the man who runs the newspaper and decides which stories will be printed. He likes to hear about 4-H Club work. He would like to know every single 4-H Club reporter, too.

That's why it is a good idea for you to stop at the newspaper office some day.

Ask to see the editor. Then tell him who *you* are. He can tell you many things



that will help you write good news stories. He will tell you when his paper "goes to press." Then you will know when to send him your stories so he will get them in time.

Every newspaper has a "deadline." That is a certain time each week when all the news must be at the newspaper office. Any news that is sent in after the deadline cannot be printed until next week, because the paper has "gone to press" for this week's issue.

The editor may even show you how a newspaper is printed. When you see all this, you will feel like a real newspaper reporter—which is just what you are.

Sometime, your club may want to invite the editor to one of its meetings. And *he* might like to show the club members through his newspaper plant.

Keep the Editor Happy

In newspaper language, all the stories you write are called "copy." The editor will be glad to see your "copy" if you follow these rules when you write.

- Begin by putting your name and address at the top of the page. Now the editor knows how to get in touch with you. He might have some more questions to ask about your story.

- If you can, use a typewriter. Do not use a typewriter, though, if you make lots of mistakes. You will find it is just as easy to write out your stories.

- If you write out your story, make each letter very clear. *Print each name* after you write it, so there will be no questions about spellings.

- Write on every other line. Leave 1-inch margins on the sides.

This gives the editor plenty of room to make any changes in your "copy" if he wants to.

- Write on only one side of the paper.

- Start your story about 3 inches from the top of the paper. This gives the editor room to write a headline. (That's one job *you* don't have to do.)

- Number your pages.

- If your story takes two pages, write "more" at the bottom of the first page. Then the editor will look for page 2.



- Don't break a paragraph in two at the bottom of the page. If you have no room to end a paragraph on the first page, don't begin it there. Start it on the second page. Then if the editor *should* lose page 2, he will not be left with only half a paragraph on the first page.

- Of course, it is most important of all to have your "copy" NEAT and EASY TO READ. After you write your story, ask someone else to read it. This might be your mother or dad, or your Club leader or County Extension Agent.

If this person can read your story without any trouble—and if he can understand it—then it is ready to be sent to the editor.

Tie a String on Your Finger

That's just a joke, of course, but *do* remember to write your news story *immediately* after an event happens. Don't let it get "stale."

Then send it to the editor right away, so he will get it before his paper's "deadline."



Make a News Calendar

In the fall, your 4-H Club makes its plans for the whole year. That is a good time for you to make a News Calendar.

Get a large sheet of paper and draw two lines down it. Now you have three columns. In the first column, write down all coming 4-H events. In the second column, fill in the date for each event as soon as it is set. In the third column, put down any important facts about the event that you want to remember.

Each week you can look at your calendar, and perhaps add something to it. This will help prevent meetings and other activities from "sneaking up on you" before you have time to write an "advance" story. It will remind you to write "follow-up" stories, too.

Keep a Publicity Notebook

Your 4-H Club should have a publicity notebook that it keeps from year to year.

The club can buy a special loose-leaf 4-H notebook with a stiff cover from the county extension agent. This should be turned over to you, the club reporter.

First of all, put this Handbook in the notebook. Then you will be able to find it quickly when you need it.

Your News Calendar should go in the notebook, too.

Then put in a copy of every story you write about the club. Sometimes the newspaper may not print one of your stories—there are times when they have just too much other news. But you will have proof that you wrote it if you put your copy of the story in the notebook anyway.

And last of all, clip out of the paper the stories that the editor does print. Paste them on sheets of paper to fit your notebook. Be sure to label each clipping with the name of the newspaper and the date it was printed.

To keep your notebook neat, paste on only one side of the page, in three 10-inch columns. Leave $\frac{1}{4}$ inch above each clipping to write in the name of the newspaper and the date it was printed.

Your publicity notebook will be a good record of what the club does. It will help you write better stories, too. You can look back at the first stories you wrote, and try to make each story better.

If the 4-H Clubs in your county decide to enter a publicity contest, you will have a neat, complete notebook that may win a prize.

Next year, you will turn the notebook over to the *new* reporter. Then it will be his responsibility to keep it up to date. He will be glad to see what you have done, and it will help him do a good job too.

Test Yourself

Now—what are the most important things for a good 4-H Club reporter to remember?

Here is a little test for you. It's easy, though. The answer is given after each question.

1. Name two kinds of stories you can write about meetings.

“Advance” stories, to announce meetings.

“Follow up” stories, to tell what happened.

2. What's the first step in writing a news story?

Get all the facts, or the Big Six—Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why.

3. What's the first thing to tell about in a news story?

The most interesting and important fact.



4. Tell a good way to begin an advance story.
Tell what the demonstration—or talk—will be about.
5. How might you begin a follow up story?
With the most important happening at the meeting.
6. How do you “build” a news story?
With the most interesting and important facts first, and the least important facts last.
7. List some “style” rules for news writing.
Do not abbreviate. Use short sentences. Avoid big words.
8. What are the ABC’s of news writing?
Be Accurate, be Brief, be Clear.
9. Do you give opinion in a news story?
No, not unless you “credit” it to someone else.
10. Tell some facts you should check carefully.
People’s names and spelling. Correct places, dates, times.
11. How can you help the editor?
By writing clearly on one side of the paper. By giving him your name and address. By getting the story to him on time.

* * *

Remember—Your County Extension Agents are always glad to help you with your job.

Good Luck, 4-H reporter!