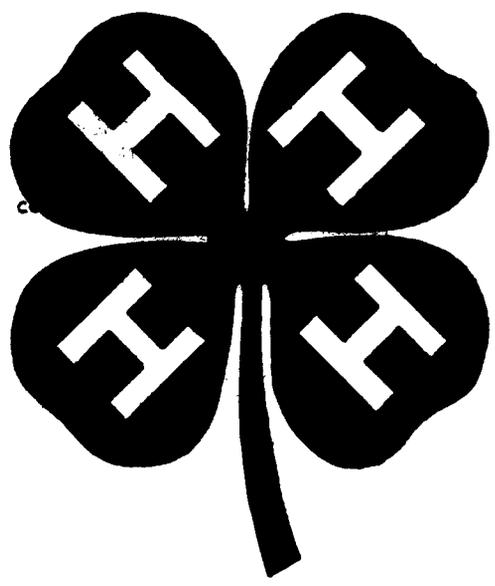


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4-H Meetings— *Democracy in Action*

Oregon 4-H Leaders' Guide
4-H 023L



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4-H Meetings—Democracy in Action

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The 4-H club meeting is a workshop in democratic action. It provides young people an opportunity to work together on common interests. Club members share in learning and serving others through 4-H club meetings.

The 4-H club should have regular meetings. Some clubs meet weekly, some semi-monthly, and some monthly. The frequency of meetings is determined by the project and the age of the

club members. Some projects demand frequent meetings, while others do not. Younger club members need to have meetings more frequently than older club members in order to hold their interest and enthusiasm. The day and time of meetings are determined by the club members and leader in counsel with parents.

Meetings Have Four Parts

A typical 4-H meeting has four parts:

- Opening
- Business session
- Project work
- Recreation

The leader is usually in charge of the project session, but the club members plan and carry out the opening, business session, and recreation—with guidance from the leader. The leader may call on club members or others to assist with the project session.

Opening

Spend 5 to 10 minutes on the opening of the meeting. It should have a definite 4-H emphasis and help boys and girls feel that they are a part of an on-going organization. The opening might include songs, the pledge of allegiance, the 4-H club pledge, minutes of the last meeting, and roll-call topics.

Business session

From 10 to 15 minutes should be enough time for the business session. The club can use this time to plan for future activities, such as a trip to the county Extension agent's office, a party for parents, or other business.

The club should take time to consider business matters, but care needs to be taken to avoid waste of time on unimportant things. Help them keep on the track. Many times it is

better to refer a matter to a committee for further study, rather than have the whole club work on it. The committee can go into all the details and prepare a report for a later meeting.

Project session

The project session should take from 20 minutes to an hour. In a way, the project session is the heart of the meeting. It is around the project that we hold the club together. The project session might include brief talks by leaders, club members, or resource people from the community. It might include actual work on the project, plus judging sessions and demonstrations.

Recreation

Ten to thirty minutes may be spent on recreation. The recreation leader should select and direct the games. Games should be directed to the needs, interest, and development of the club members. Consider rhythm games for development of coordination and speed of response; spelling, word, and number games for intellectual alertness; tag and other active games for general physical fitness; and dramatics for helping club members put themselves in the place of others—thereby increasing understanding. Avoid games that make an individual look ridiculous and be laughed "at" rather than "with." The games chosen should be varied with new ones introduced often.

Planning Meetings

A well-planned program for each club meeting is important to the success of the club. The meeting should be educational and fun.

Make meetings interesting

Meetings should be arranged to hold the interest of the club members throughout the whole period. 4-H'ers should go home eager to return to the next meeting.

Leaders and club officers can make meetings interesting in many different ways. Here are a few ideas:

- Vary the response to roll call. For example, have the members answer by telling what they have done on their project during the past week, name a breed of sheep, a kind of fabric, or some other item related to the club program.

- Have a guest speaker—a teacher, a business man or woman, a farmer, a local government official.

- Build all the parts of the meeting around a theme.

- Have refreshments occasionally.

The program should be as well-balanced

as possible, with the business session, project work, and recreation all getting their share of time.

Make meetings good training

4-H'ers will gain valuable experience through participating in 4-H meetings. If possible, see that all members have an active part—each one should feel that he has learned something.

Let the members run their part of the meeting. They can do this if they have assistance prior to the meeting. Experience is important in learning. Young people will not become successful in conducting meetings, working with committees, or sharing with others through study alone. They need practice to become proficient just as practice is needed to become proficient in playing basketball. We know that many times the meeting will not operate as smoothly as if the leader were to take charge. But the growth of the club members is our ultimate objective—not perfectly conducted meetings, though that may eventually be a result.

Training of Officers

Each club elects officers to assist in the conduct of their meetings. Large clubs will likely have more officers than small clubs, but almost all will have at least a president, vice president, secretary, news reporter, song leader, and recreation leader. Large clubs in addition will likely have several committees such as recreation, community service, and membership. If possible, every member should hold some position of responsibility and be allowed to assume that responsibility.

You will need to work with the officers and committeemen prior to the meetings and talk over their plans. You should make suggestions to them as needed. This will undoubtedly require more time in the beginning than it will later. They need to know and understand what their jobs are and what responsibilities they

are to assume. A 4-H bulletin, *Manners for Meetings*, will aid the club members in gaining this understanding.

The president

- Directs the activities of the club and presides at meetings.
- Sees that all club members have a part in each meeting.
- Arranges for meeting place and sees that equipment is in place.
- Arranges to have another person (usually the vice president) take over if he cannot attend the club meeting.
- Appoints committees with the help of the club leader.
- Helps plan the program of work for the year.

- Plans the order of business for each meeting.
- Casts the deciding vote in case of ties.
- Sees that other officers have jobs to do.

The vice president

- Acts as program chairman for the club, and sees that the members are ready to do their part at each meeting.
- Assists the president and presides when the president is absent.
- Can do other jobs in the club such as assisting with record books and helping with local achievement day and exhibits.

The secretary

- Keeps the *4-H Secretary's Book* for the club.
- Calls the roll and records attendance.
- Prepares calendar of events and meetings planned.
- Keeps minutes of all 4-H meetings.
- Reads letters received to the members of the club.
- Writes letters for the club, such as thank-you letters and requests for information.
- Sends meeting report card to the county Extension office after each club meeting.
- Reminds all members of club meetings and their part in the program.

The news reporter

- Studies *Headlining 4-H* before writing news stories.
- Writes and sends news stories of club meetings and activities to local papers or the county Extension office.

- Keeps copies of stories written or prepares a scrapbook of all news stories and pictures about the club.

The song leader

- Keeps 4-H song sheets and books for the club; distributes and collects them at each meeting.
- Plans singing for 4-H meetings and events.
- Leads the singing or gets others to lead at meetings and events.

The recreation leader

- Plans games and other recreation for club meetings.
- Selects activities that will involve and be fun for all members and appropriate for the situation.
- Arranges for necessary equipment.

The sergeant-at-arms

- Helps arrange meeting room.
- Sees that U. S. and 4-H flags, if available, are properly displayed.
- Helps president maintain order.
- Is available to assist club leader and president when needed.
- Sees that equipment is properly stored and that meeting room is in order at close of each meeting.

Extension bulletin *MR. CHAIRMAN* will give you, as a leader, much valuable help in basic parliamentary procedure so that you in turn may help the club members.

Yes, 4-H meetings are democracy in action. They provide a priceless opportunity for you to help young people grow.