



Snohomish County 4-H Record Book Guidelines

Record keeping has a long history in 4-H and can enhance the educational experience for 4-H members by helping members learn to:

- make plans and develop the ability to shape life choices.
- set goals and develop self-determination.
- understand and figure project costs of time and money.
- realize what has been learned during the year and the mastery of skills over a progression of time.
- develop leadership skills and strive to be an active member of their communities.
- develop communication and writing skills.

4-H Record Books are:

- a historical record of a 4-H member's plans, experiences, successes, mistakes, friendships, profits and losses, fun, what they learned and what they still want to learn.
- a tool that 4-H members and others can use to evaluate their growth and accomplishments.
- a helpful reference for making plans and decisions on projects.
- a useful resource when applying for awards, scholarships, and jobs.

Record Book 101

- Record keeping should be a positive experience that adds to the member's educational experience.
- Maintaining a record book is a core expectation of all 4-H members.
- All work should be done by the 4-H member. Mentors may guide as needed, allowing the member to do the work. Accommodation is acceptable in circumstances where needed (e.g., developmental assistance needed, broken arm). Explanation should be noted in the record book.
- A record book consists of two parts: a 4-H Record Book and a Permanent Record.
- 4-H members will complete a new 4-H Record Book each 4-H year, while the Permanent Record will carry over year to year with information for each year added to it.
- There are two levels of record book: Level 1 and Level 2. Members may choose whichever level is appropriate for their needs. Level 1 is written to be developmentally appropriate for members ages 5-9, though members within this age group may choose to use Level 2 materials if they wish.
- 4-H Record Books are available in two formats: handwritten and digital. Members may choose the format they prefer. Both are free and found on the [Record Book Resources](#) page.
 - .pdf files are fillable. Tip: Save the file to your computer before editing.
 - Word files are fillable and also allow manipulation and editing of fonts and tables.
 - Either format may be printed for handwritten record keeping.
- Members may choose to keep records in an alternative format to accommodate individual needs. Alternative forms of record keeping should include information relevant to their project, such as goals, calendar, journal, financial accounting, mentor support, 4-H story, goal appraisal, photos, etc.
- Some projects (e.g., Shooting Sports, Dairy Cows) require a project-specific record book.
- An **"Add Sheet"** is a supplemental page added to a record book to include project-specific information necessary to the project (e.g., Individual Horse Record). An "Add Sheet" is a required component of a record book for some projects.
- Some clubs and/or projects may have specific completion deadlines and requirements to qualify for participation in certain activities or competitions (e.g., fair). Reminder: keeping the minimum records required to qualify for an activity or event is acceptable and should not be penalized.
- Some awards and scholarships require submitting a completed record book with the application.
- **Multiple Projects:** Members who participate in more than one project, or with more than one animal within a project (e.g., two horses) may need to include an additional Project Journal for each project or animal. Guidelines vary for each project. Your 4-H leader can verify any expectations.

Record Book Awards

4-H members may choose to submit their record book for awards at the end of the 4-H year. 4-H Record Books are evaluated using the Danish system. The Danish System evaluates a participant's product, skill, or exhibit relative to the standards developed for that class or contest. For record books, standards are outlined in the [Record Book Guidelines](#) (this document) and [Record Book Scoring Criteria](#), available on the [Record Book Resources](#) page. Some projects may have additional standards (e.g., add sheet, allowances, requirements, or deadlines), which can be confirmed with your 4-H club or project leader.

- The record book should be secured in a binder, making sure it will not fall apart with reasonable handling.
- The member's name and club name should be clearly visible on the cover.
- We recommend saving a copy of the Permanent Record before submitting. If lost or damaged, this record is very hard to re-create!
- Record books should be neat and legible.
- Be sure the record book contains all the requirements specific to the project(s). (e.g., Add Sheet)
- Divider tabs should be used to separate sections: calendar, each project (e.g., swine, sheep, clothing, etc.), the 4-H story, supplemental materials, and the Permanent Record. *NOTE: Members who are not submitting their book for awards may choose to omit divider tabs.*
- All work should be done by the 4-H member. Mentors may guide as needed, allowing the member to do the work. Accommodation is acceptable in circumstances where needed (e.g., developmental assistance needed, broken arm). Explanation should be noted in the record book and is not to be penalized.
- 4-H Record Books are evaluated on completeness of each page according to a member's project experience and ability. In areas which do not apply, members should write "none", "N/A", or draw a line in the space so it does not appear to be overlooked.
- Members who choose to submit an alternative record book for judging should include the elements of a traditional record book: Calendar/Journal, Project Goals with Mentor Support, Photos and Supplemental Materials, Highlights/Goals, Financial Accounting, 4-H Story, and Permanent Record.
- Completed record books are first submitted to the club leader or designated club volunteer for club level judging in September. Books that score 80 points and above are eligible for county-level judging.
- Books submitted for county judging are due in the 4-H Office by October 15.

The Danish System

There are three general award groups in the Danish System:

- Blue = Excellent; work/exhibit meets or most nearly meets the standard (does not indicate perfection)
- Red = Good; relative to pre-established standards, a few specific shortcomings have been identified
- White = Fair; many improvements are needed to meet the pre-established standards

Record Book Scoring

- Club-level awards are evaluated to the standard and based on the following scores:
 - 0 - 59 points = White Sticker (white Danish)
 - 60 - 79 points = Red Sticker (red Danish)
 - 80 - 101 = Blue Sticker (blue Danish)
 - Books that receive a blue sticker (Danish) may advance to county level judging, if desired. Must be submitted to the 4-H Office by October 15.
- County-level evaluation is based on the following scores for additional awards:
 - 80 - 84.5 points = Blue Award
 - 85 - 89.5 points = Purple Award
 - 90 - 94.5 points = Record Book Seal
 - 95+ points = Record Book Pin

Record Book Examples

In addition to these guidelines, you may like to see examples. An example of the Level 2 yearly record book and the Level 2 Permanent Record are available on the [Record Book Resources](#) page.

4-H Record Book Sections

The record book is designed to be *flexible* which means members will fill out their record books differently. This is not only OK, it is encouraged. This flexibility also allows a project to make adaptations to fit its specific needs by allowing/requiring information to be recorded a specific way, and/or by using an “Add Sheet”. Your 4-H club leader or project leader will be able to clarify any project-specific expectations, deadlines, or requirements that these general guidelines may not address.

My 4-H Planning Calendar

- List the date and time of club meetings, county 4-H activities, and other 4-H events that pertain to your project. (optional: add the location)
- Include all events available to your club and project such as weigh-ins, clean-up days, club parties, etc.,
- Check off all the events you attended.
- Include planning you did for your project as well.
- Dates do not need to be in chronological order.
- Members who join 4-H in the middle of the 4-H year may cross out the month(s) they did not participate and write N/A or “not a member”.

Example for the month of March:

5	<i>Rabbit Club Meeting, Leader’s House, 7 pm, bring record book</i>	✓
21-31	<i>Work on poster for Fair</i>	✓
	<i>Need to purchase animal for fair</i>	

Complete **Project Record / Project Plans and Project Journal / Project Diary** for each project you have during the year. These are pages 5-12 in Level 1 record books, and pages 7-14 in Level 2 record books.

Project Record / Project Plans

- Outline what you are going to do in your project over the year.
- Goals may be determined as a club or as an individual and should be set first thing in the new 4-H year.
- List specific goals, such as learning about a specific animal disease or learning to sew with plaids. You may find using the S.M.A.R.T. model helpful.
- You may use the leader / parent agreement section to obtain and record mentor support.

Example (Level 2) “This is what I want to learn this year”:

- *to properly care for my rabbit during cold winter months and hot summer days*
- *to work with each of my animals frequently so they get used to being handled by me*
- *how to clip my rabbit’s toenails myself*
- *about rabbit diseases or conditions such as sore hocks or mastitis*

Project Journal / Project Diary

- This should show what you are doing to attain your goals.
- Columns should be totaled at the bottom of each page.
- Some projects have routine jobs like feeding, grooming, etc. that may be totaled and recorded once a month.

Example (Level 2) Journal:

Date	What	How much	Cost	Income	Time	Comments
Jan 1-31	<i>Fed & watered rabbits daily</i>	<i>4 rabbits</i>			<i>15 min./day; 8 hrs./month</i>	<i>check the water often to keep it from freezing.</i>
Jan. 10	<i>Purchased rabbit pellets</i>	<i>50 pounds</i>	<i>\$10</i>		<i>30 min.</i>	<i>4 rabbits eat a lot of pellets</i>

Project Photos / Project Related Materials

- Include project-related photographs.
- Label the photo with what it is, who is in it, and the date.

Project Highlights / This is what I did ...

- This is a place for you to look back to your project goals and assess. Did you do what you started out to do? If so, this is the place to tell how it turned out and how you feel about accomplishing your goals. If it didn't go as planned, this is the place to record those challenges as well.

Example (Level 2): What you learned:

- *I learned that after working once a week for several months with my mini rex, he started to let me do things like clip his toenails. I learned toenail clipping is very important and should be done about once a month.*

Problems:

- *I let my rabbit's toenails get too long and he pulled one out in the carpet. Besides hurting him, if it doesn't grow back, he will be disqualified from showing.*

Successes:

- *My mini rex is much easier to handle now that I have been working with him.*

To do differently next time:

- *I will always take the time to clip the toenails.*

Project Financial Summary

- The financial summary reflects how much the project cost in time and money. Not all projects use the financial summary page. Your 4-H leader can verify requirements for your project.
- Keep an inventory, starting with the inventory of supplies, animals, etc. they have available to them at the beginning of their project year, and finishing with the supplies, animals, etc. left at the end of the year.
- Totals from the bottom of the journal pages should be included.

"Add Sheets" | Additional Project Records

- Some projects require more information for complete records. That information can be recorded on an "Add Sheet" that has been specialized for the project. Some parts of the Add Sheet may ask for information that was already stated in the journal or on the financial summary page. You should choose to record those items in the format that gives the best evaluation of your specific project; write "see journal" instead of repeating information.
- **Market Animal Health Records** should be completed for each market animal.

My 4-H Story

Before beginning to write, reflect on your 4-H year and what the experience has meant to you. The story should have four parts and be no longer than two sides of one page. Write about the whole year and in first person (using "I").

A. Introduction- begin the story by telling about yourself (age, interests, family, and why you joined 4-H, etc.)

B. Projects- don't repeat project highlights; tell about the project and activities and share interesting experiences

- Why did you choose this project?
- Did you meet any interesting people?
- Did the project grow in size and scope?
- What did you try that was successful? What wasn't?
- What did you learn?
- What were your financial profits, losses, and savings?

C. Club, Community, and School Experience- tell about club activities, community service projects, and how you were involved in your community and/or school

D. How 4-H has impacted you - you can highlight one significant activity, event, or experience that was of major importance. Be creative! You can include things such as:

- Have you learned leadership, citizenship, responsibility, sportsmanship, friendship, new skills, etc.?
- How will this knowledge be applied in the future?
- How did you work with others? How did or will you share your 4-H experience and knowledge with others?
- What did you learn about yourself and your abilities? How have you grown through 4-H?

Supplemental Information / My 4-H Memories

- Add pictures, newspaper clippings, and photos of club activities, such as community service or fun events.
- Label the photo with what it is, who is in it, and the date.