

CREATE YOUR OWN THING

4-H PROJECT

Note to 4-H Parents, Leaders and other Interested Adults:

With adult guidance, young people can determine their own projects. This self-determined idea makes it possible to work on projects that may not be included in the current 4-H Program. Such projects can develop from something in which the young person is interested, would like to do, or wants to learn about. This project idea encourages the maximum use and development of individual ability and creativity.

Level 1 - (Ages 10-12 or 3rd grade in January of current year) - Exhibit your self-determined project. You may show, in any way you like, what you have accomplished in the project. Your project record sheet should accompany exhibit.

Level 2 - (Ages 13-15) - Exhibit your self-determined project. You may show, in any way you like, what you have accomplished in the project. Your project record sheet should accompany your exhibit.

Level 3 - (Ages 16-19) - Exhibit your self-determined project. You may show, in any way you like, what you have accomplished in the project. Your project record sheet should accompany your exhibit.

The CREATE YOUR OWN THING (self-determined) lets you, the 4-H member; choose your own project area. You set your own objectives, determine a method of operation and devise a reporting system.

There are two ways to choose self-determined projects:

1. Take a different direction in some phase of an already existing project.
2. Develop a plan for a project not given in the list of county 4-H projects. Examples: Poetry or Indian Culture.

You can use these pages as worksheets, but you might like to make up your own. Your CREATE YOUR OWN THING Project Record Sheet should accompany your exhibit at the 4-H Fair.

I. Decision Making

It is important to learn how to make decisions, since you will be making them all your life. Selecting a worthwhile and interesting project will be an important decision. Start by making a list of your interests, needs, desires, and concerns. Include ideas or problems you would like to work on, something you would like to do, find out about or learn; situations about which you feel strongly; ways in which you could be helpful to other people.

II. Resource People

As you work on your list, ask for help and guidance from other people, such as friends, parents, teachers, scientists, farmers, craftsmen, business people, mechanics, artists, etc. Sometimes it is difficult to pinpoint your interests. Other people may help recognize your enthusiasms, abilities or potential. They can help you see what you would like to do. Name some of the people you talked with. Tell how they helped you with ideas for your list:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

III. Reasons for Making a Choice

Try to have at least eight of your interests, needs, desires, or concerns on your list. Study this list for a while and then narrow it down to three items. You can list these three here:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Before choosing one of these ideas, consider these questions:

What are your personal experiences and how will they help?

How and where can you get information?

How much is it going to cost?

How worthwhile is the project going to be to you?

What can you learn from your project?

Who else will benefit from your work?

What other things (such as school activities) will you be doing which may affect your time, energy and abilities?

Do you have someone who is willing to help and who knows something about what you want to learn?

Will this help you decide your future career or help you in other ways to years to come?

IV. Select Your Project

Using the suggested reasons for making a choice and using any other reasons that are relevant, list the idea you have chosen from the eight on your list and tell why you selected this project:

My Project Choice and Reasons _____

V. Your Project Plan

You have chosen a project. There are no rules, goals, or literature except what you find or determine for yourself.

A. Goals: To have a good project, you will have to set up some goals as a guide for your work. Examine your project and then list the things you want to learn and the things you want to do.

List your Goals here: _____

B. Methods: You will need to determine as completely as possible how you will reach your goals. Find out what you need to do. Where can you get help? What resources do you need? What kinds of record keeping will help?

C. Project Description: Now that you have given a good deal of thought to your project, goals and methods, it might be a good idea to write a description of your project. Be sure to include these areas: How and why you chose the project, your goals, methods, procedures, tasks, responsibilities and learning experiences you plan to use and how to report the work you have accomplished.

VI. Develop Your Project

You may want to do some of the following tasks to carry out your plans and develop your project: Review your project plans with other young people and with adults. Ask people for help. Make appointments with people, but respect their time. Write for literature and materials. Inquire about costs. Subscribe to a magazine or other publications which will help you. Go to libraries. Find out what books, magazines or pamphlets they have that give information that relate to your project. Clip information from newspapers and magazines. Watch for help from radio and TV programs. Ask to be included in meetings, tours, events and related activities. Try out, experiment, investigate and do things that will aid learning. After developing your project, it would be good to review your plan with an adult and have it approved. This need not be your 4-H Leader. It should be someone who is willing to give you help and guidance with the subject you have chosen.

VII. Evaluate your Project

You can measure your progress or growth in terms of the goals you set at the beginning of your CREATE YOUR OWN THING Project. To evaluate your progress, you will want to collect evidence of progress toward your goals:

A. Pictures: Photography, colored slides and movies tell a story. You can take "before and after" pictures, or a series of pictures to show the steps or different stages in the development of your project.

B. Illustrations: Make samples, models or objects relating to your project. Some projects lend themselves to growing, making or collecting. These examples of what you have done show how you have grown in your knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes.

C. Record Keeping: You should keep records on paper measuring 8 1/2 x 11 inches when possible. There are many kinds of records, such as diaries, outlines, stories, notebooks, tables, charts, drawings and pictures. You will have to decide which type of record is best for your project.

Whatever method you use, these questions may help you:

How can you show the extent to which you are learning or accomplishing what you set out to do?

How can you describe or show what you did?

How can you show the information you have collected and the results of your work?

Is there any reason to show how you used your time and energy?

Do you need to keep track of money spent and received?

VIII. Share Your Knowledge

Sharing with others can help you summarize, analyze and learn more about what you have accomplished in your project. Here are some ways of sharing with other what you have done:

Give individual help to others.

Participate in workshops, programs and meetings or work with communities concerned about the same problems.

Build exhibits, window displays, bulletin boards or fair booth which will be seen by many people.

Use demonstrations, illustrated talks, dramatic scenes or TV programs.

Go on tours and field trips.

Write newspaper articles and features in magazines.

IX. 4-H Fair

One excellent way to share your knowledge with others is to exhibit at the 4-H Fair. You may show in any way you like what you have accomplished in your CREATE YOUR OWN THING Project.

Be sure to include your project record sheet with your exhibit.

X. Here are some suggested possible topics you might be interested in:

1. Hunting - gun safety and training.
2. Comparison buying - Consumer education.
3. Music, dance, drama, literature, journalism.
4. Family history.
5. Study of sports, one particular sport, skill and for history.
6. Engineering.
7. Banking (e.g. bank services, what happens to a check, etc.).
8. Money management, your personal budget and needs.
9. Lawn care, landscaping.
10. Career Exploration.
11. Community studies - improvements, ex. School Boards, County Government, State /Federal Governments.

**CREATE YOUR OWN THING
PROJECT PROPOSAL SHEET**

NAME _____ AGE _____

ADDRESS _____

CLUB _____ TOWNSHIP _____

YEARS IN 4-H _____ YEARS IN THIS PROJECT _____

ADULT REVIEWER OR 4-H LEADER'S SIGNATURE:

AREA OF INTEREST _____

In this project I hope to _____

I will accomplish this by _____

From this I hope to learn _____

My exhibit will be _____

What size will your exhibit be? _____

