



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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Sonoma County 4-H

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# OFFICER TRAINING MANUAL

# REPORTER

# DUTIES AND SUGGESTIONS

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## REPORTER

### REPORTER'S DUTIES

1. Write a brief report of club meetings and activities for newspapers, radio, and TV. Tell what was done and by whom.
2. Learn to write interesting news items and send them in on time.
3. Make a collection of all newspaper items referring to club for permanent records kept by secretary. Use loose leaf notebook.

### SUGGESTIONS TO REPORTER

- Before you start writing your story, be sure you know WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? HOW? and WHY? Start with the most interesting facts. Spell correctly all names in your story. Use first name, initials, and titles.
- Write as neatly as you can. Type, if possible, and double-space. Never write on both sides of the paper. Never use pencil.
- Secure the names and addresses of local newspapers and dates news items are due. Send your news articles to the newspapers before that date.
- Read newspaper reports of various clubs to get ideas that will help in writing news items.

### EXAMPLE OF NEWS ARTICLE

Mountain View 4-H members will be participating in County Presentation Day on Saturday, May 20.

Plans for participating at the event were made at the regular monthly meeting of the club at the Community Center Thursday, January 20.

Members of our club will decorate the center with seasonal flowers for the Spring Fling theme. Parents of 4-H club members are invited to help.

Another feature of the club meeting last Thursday was a discussion and demonstration regarding the best use of color on 4-H Presentation boards.

Ten of the 24 members were present. Jose Ramirez, president, presided.

Signed—Jenny Altarez, Club Reporter

## REPORTER

### REPORTER AND NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

- Rule 1: Make sure you know when the article is due.
- Rule 2: Include the five “W’s” in your article: Who, What, When, Where, Why.
- Rule 3: Be certain places and times are correct.
- Rule 4: Be creative.

#### Suggestions:

- Ask someone to read your article and tell you if they understand what you’ve written.
- Ask someone to check your spelling and punctuation. It relieves the editor of a lot of stress if you turn in a great article.
- Be creative.
- Editorials and president’s messages may be in 1<sup>st</sup> person (I, me, mine, we, etc.).
- All other articles should be in 3<sup>rd</sup> person (he, she, him, her, they, their, etc.).
- Project news will probably be written in first person (we did..., mine was..., etc.).

#### Suggestions for articles:

- Interviews
- Demonstrations
- Program for meetings
- Project Fair
- Club Social
- Judging Night
- Record Book information
- Horse shows, animal shows
- January Jamboree
- Special Person of the Month
- Focus on Project
- Article about a coming holiday
- Birthday Column
- Recipes
- Artwork
- Puzzles
- Work search
- Items for sale
- Services for sale
- Committee reports
- Doggie Daze
- Fairs
- Weather
- Contest participants
- ChickenQue
- Biographies
- Project news
- Special meetings
- Club officer
- Junior/Teen Leader

## REPORTER

### 4-H CLUB REPORTER

Take notes during the meetings so that information reported in stories will be accurate. If you write stories in longhand, PRINT names, addresses.

Learn to write interesting stories about regular club meetings, project meetings, tours, achievement days, projects, leaders work, and other activities of the club and get them to the newspaper on time.

### TIPS FOR THE REPORTER

Look upon a news story as a visit with your reader. Make that visit interesting. So, before you write a news story, get all the facts needed to satisfy your reader's curiosity.

Pick out the most interesting thing that happened in the meeting or event and put it in the first paragraph of your story. In one of the meetings for example, the most interesting thing may be who was elected president. In another meeting it may be what someone said in a project talk, or what someone reported about a trip he had made, etc. Also in the first paragraph he sure to answer the four questions: Who? When? Where? What?

Give credit where credit is due. Be careful not to play favorites.

Some of the most interesting stories in a 4-H Club never are written. These are stories of what individual club members are doing. Most editors would like to have more of these stories. A member who is doing outstanding project work, has an outstanding record in judging or demonstration work might be a possibility for a good story. But you'll probably never get the information for your story unless you ask questions.

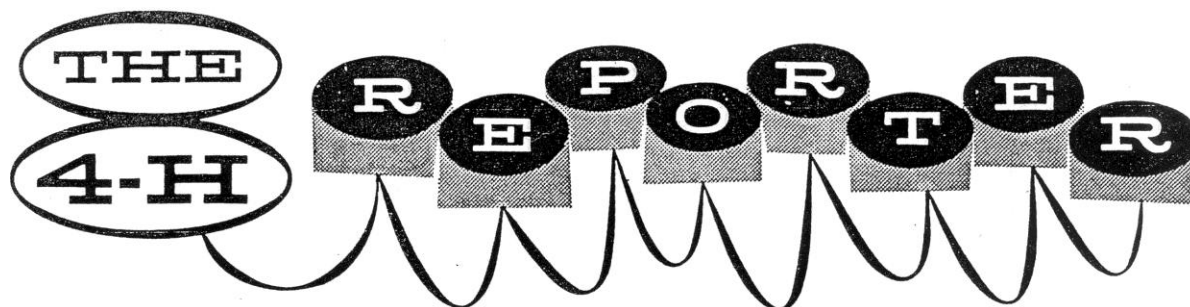
## REPORTER

In a newspaper office a lot of work has to be done in a short time to get the paper out; although the newspaper folks make a sincere effort to avoid errors, one does appear now and then. If there is an error in your story, don't ask the editor to run a correction.

Visit the editor of the newspaper to which you send your stories but *don't make your visit before 12 noon*. Pick some other time when he is not so busy, usually in the afternoons. Make your visit short but find out when the editor would like to have your stories in his office. Ask him how you can improve your stories. Newsprint, the paper on which newspapers are printed, is hard to get. Most editors could use more newsprint. Don't feel badly if your story doesn't get in the paper. The editor probably didn't have space for everything he would like to get in. Don't feel badly either if part of your story is omitted, or if the story is not printed quite the way you sent it to the paper. The editor has just so much space and he has to make the ads and stories fit the space.

Clip and save your news stories for Reporter's Notebook. Using a loose leaf type of notebook, write or type a copy of the news story exactly as you sent it to the paper. Put your written copy on the left page of the book and the story as clipped from the paper on the right side. Be sure to write under each story: date written, date submitted to the paper, and under clipping, date printed and what paper.

## REPORTER



Your 4-H club can be of interest to many people who read newspapers in your community-if you do your job well. It is up to you, as a 4-H club reporter, to get news of your club, its members, and their activities into these papers.

### MEET YOUR EDITORS

Before you begin writing news releases, meet the people who will be handling your stories. Make appointments to visit your local newspapers and radio stations. Talk with the editors and learn what they want and what they will use. Also ask if they will use your photos occasionally.

Learn and observe the deadlines of your daily and weekly newspapers. The deadline is the latest time your story can reach a newspaper office to be printed on a certain day.

Give your editors and reporters a copy of your club's yearly calendar. Talk it over with them. Let them tell you which club events and plans they think are newsworthy. Follow their advice. There's no sense in your writing about events of no interest to the editors.

### MAKE A PRESS RELEASE LIST

After meeting with the editors of your local newspapers, make a press release list of all the papers that will publish your news and articles. (Don't forget to include shopping news publications, school papers, and neighborhood papers. Also list local radio and television stations.) When you mail a story, use this list to ensure that each one receives a copy.

### NEWSPAPER STYLE

Write your stories in short paragraphs and short sentences and with simple words. Try to keep the length of most stories to one page.

The most important paragraph in your story is the first one, called the "lead." A good lead answers one or more of the following questions quickly, accurately, and clearly.

WHO did what? WHAT happened? WHEN and WHERE did it happen? WHY and HOW did it happen? (Study the examples on pages 3 and 4.)

After writing your lead paragraph, expand your story by adding facts in their order of importance. Before submitting it to a newspaper, check to see if your story still would make any sense if cut from the bottom, paragraph by paragraph. Remember, you have no guarantee that your entire article will be printed. Editors assume that any article can be shortened.

If you want to include statements that are not yours in a story, you must attribute them to the persons who made them. You also can include the opinions of others in your stories, as long as you name the source. However, your personal opinions have no place in your news stories. Stick to the facts.

You are not expected to become a polished journalist, but you can and must be accurate in your stories. Always check your copy for accuracy before submitting it to a newspaper. Make certain that all names and addresses are correct and complete.

## REPORTER

### PHOTOS

A photograph can tell some stories better than words. A good news or feature photo can interest the reader in learning more about the subject matter (your story which goes with the photo). So try to submit photos with your stories, if the newspapers in your area will use them.

Basically, editors are looking for three things in a photo: news value, print quality, and emotional impact or interest. The editors give news value first priority in a photo as well as for the copy you submit. The photo's message must be important or interesting, or both.

Each photo that you submit to a newspaper must have a caption to accompany it. A caption gives the full names of the people in the photo or describes what the photo shows. Check an edition of your local newspaper to see how its captions are written.

You can submit your very first RELEASE in correct newspaper form by following these rules:

1. Typewrite or write carefully by hand on 8 ½- x 11-inch paper; one side of the sheet only. Typewrite the story with 1-inch side and bottom margins. Double space and leave 2 to 3 inches at the top of the first page for the newspaper to use when writing the headline.
2. Put your name, club name, your address, and telephone number at the top of the first page so you can be reached if there are any questions.
3. Under your name put the date you are writing the story and the date you want your story released or printed. Editors want to know how new your news is, and when they can use it. If the story can be printed as soon as you deliver it to the paper, write "For Immediate Release" at the beginning of your copy.
4. Number each page in the upper right-hand corner, and repeat your last name and your club's name on each page. If you use more than one sheet, write *more* at the lower right-hand corner so the editor will keep reading. A line of #|# #'s shows you are finished. Don't break a paragraph at the end of a page.
5. Be sure all spelling is correct. Use a dictionary. Check (or *proof*) your story carefully. Double-check the spelling of all names.
6. Spell out all abbreviations. Spell out numbers from one to nine except for exact measurements... 2 inches or 3 years. Use figures for 10 and above. Spell out any number which begins a sentence.

## REPORTER

### WHERE DO I SUBMIT MY 4-H ARTICLES?

Sonoma County 4-H Reporter – 565-3443  
133 Aviation Blvd. #109. Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
or email it to [jeludovise@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jeludovise@ucdavis.edu)

Press Democrat – 427 Mendocino Ave. Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
575-7500 – [pressdemo.com](http://pressdemo.com)

Argus Courier – PO Box 1091, Petaluma, CA 94953  
762-4541 – [arguscourier.com](http://arguscourier.com)

Community Voice – PO Box 747, Penngrove, CA 94951  
[thecommunityvoice.com](http://thecommunityvoice.com)

Healdsburg Tribune – PO Box 518, Healdsburg, CA 95448  
433-4451 – [sonomawest.com](http://sonomawest.com)

Windsor Times – PO Box 799, Windsor, CA 95492  
838-9211 – [sonomawest.com](http://sonomawest.com)

Cloverdale Reveille – PO Box 157, Cloverdale, CA 95425  
894-3330 – [reveille@cloverdalereveille.com](mailto:reveille@cloverdalereveille.com)

Sonoma Index Tribune – PO Box C, Sonoma, CA 95476  
938-2111 – [sonomanews.com](http://sonomanews.com)

Sonoma West Times – PO Box 521, Sebastopol, CA 95473  
823-7845 – [sonomawest.com](http://sonomawest.com)

You can find more information in the Yellow Pages under “Newspapers”  
or by searching on [google.com](http://google.com).