



New Achievements Record Book Manual 2025-2026

Includes “no achievements”

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Looking for forms? Forms can now be found on the [State 4-H Resource Center](#).

Looking for support? Join the [CA 4-H Record Book Support Group](#) on Facebook. This is a private group; be sure to answer the membership questions for access.

Purpose of Record Books

History

The California 4-H Youth Development Program (YDP) has a long history of record-keeping as an activity by 4-H members. To move youth on a path toward thriving within their communities, the 4-H Record Book goes through periodic changes to meet the needs of youth and mission of 4-H YDP.

The Purpose of the 4-H Record Book

- Reflect on your yearly work by documenting your skill development, learning experiences and growth in 4-H.
- Set goals, pursue strategies to meet those goals and shift gears in the face of challenges and obstacles.
- Build competency by creating and preserving your records.
- Help you grow through continued exposure to positive experiences that support your development and thriving.

Positive Youth Development Terms

The California 4-H Record Book incorporates thriving language. Thriving is also called reaching your full potential—and that's what 4-H is all about—helping you be the best you! Here are some of the words and terms you will see that you may want to know more about while completing your Record Book:

Sparks are passions and skills that are meaningful and motivating to you. If you do or are something in 4-H or your life that brings you great joy AND you use that thing to make a positive difference in the world—then that's your Spark!

Growth mindset. The effort that you put into completing the Record Book helps strengthen the connections in your brain. A growth mindset includes viewing challenges as opportunities to learn even if it means changing or not reaching a goal or strategy.

GPS goal management skills. Throughout the 4-H Record Book, you set **G**oals, **P**ursue strategies to reach those goals and **S**hift gears in the face of challenges or obstacles.

Adult Volunteers are adults or staff members who have been appointed as leaders of a particular activity or group. They can be project leaders, community club leaders, advisors, coaches, mentors, etc. When a form asks for an adult volunteer signature, it means an appointed 4-H adult who may or may not be a parent or guardian.

Adult Mentors are adults that you have selected and invited to help you on your path to reach your goals, especially as they connect to your Spark. While you may have met your mentor in another area of your life, such as school, in order to be your 4-H Mentor, they must be willing to become a 4-H Adult Volunteer.

Formatting Instructions

If you plan to submit your Record Book to any competition, you must follow these guidelines to receive the maximum points for this section.

We highly recommend using a computer to complete your Record Book forms. However, handwritten forms are acceptable.

Google versions of the Record Book are encouraged. If you are using an electronic version of your Record Book, the instructions below for printed materials may be adjusted if you need to print your book for evaluation or competition. Check with your club and county to see if you can submit your book electronically so no printing is required.

All books submitted to the State Competition will be electronic. The required Cover Sheet and County Check Sheet will be submitted electronically.

For Printed Books:

Paper:

- 8 ½ inch x 11 inch plain white copier paper for most sections. The Title Page may be any color or special paper and still must be 8 ½ inch x 11 inch.
- Double-sided is okay.
- Photo quality paper is okay on pages where you are using photographs.

Margins:

- Pages may be printed in portrait or landscape. Use the setting that makes it read easily.
- If printing out Word or Google docs forms and placing your Record Book in the Record Book Cover or in a binder: Left margin between 1 inch and 1½ inch. The form templates are all set to 1 inch. All other margins (top, bottom, and right) can be whatever works for you. You can use the settings that are already set in the form templates.
- If sharing the URL to your digital Google forms and documents, use ½ inch to 1-inch margins all around.
- If used, headers, footers are preferably inside these margins, but acceptable outside of these margins. Just be aware if you are printing documents to place inside the green Record Book Cover or binder that you don't lose information to a hole punch.
- Page numbers can be outside the margins.

Typeface:

- Typed or handwritten words in black or blue ink.
- Color may be used on the Title Page, Table of Contents, Expression Pages and in multi-media reporting pages and methods.
- If handwritten, text must be written legibly. If typed, no less than 11 point in an easy-to-read font. Font size may increase for headings and emphasis in text.

Divide and Label Sections:

- For paper forms, consider using tabs and divider pages to separate sections and improve overall organization. Colored paper may be used as section dividers. Dividers are not required.

Graphics, Multi-media, Audio and Video:

- Graphics, and multi-media links may be included in multiple reports and sections.

Number the Pages:

- Use a logical system that matches your Table of Contents to number the pages of your Record Book. Hand numbering is acceptable due to the significant number of inserted pages. Numbering using printed stickers is okay.

Folder or Binder:

- Use an Acco fastener folder or 3-ring binder, not more than 1" wide. Acco Record Book Covers may be purchased from the [Shop 4-H](#).

A Note about the previous year's records:

All of your previous year's records can be inserted at the back of the current year's book in reverse chronological order (that means by year and the year you started is in the back, and you work forward to the current year in the front) or you can have a separate book for each year—the option is up to you. Some county competitions want to see your previous records—so be sure to find out what your county wants before you compete. This may mean that you have copies of your Achievement Reports in multiple years if you worked on that achievement across years. For example, if you worked on your Spark Achievements in the previous year, use the same form and either move it forward to the current year, or make a copy and put the current copy in the current year.

Sending to State Competition? Only submit the current year's records—don't send any previous year's records. The last section will be the 4-H Resume, there shouldn't be anything behind that.

Record Books Components

A complete Record Book for each level may include...

	Spark Achievement	Emerald Stars	Impact Stars
Cover Page	✓	✓	✓
Table of Contents	✓	✓	✓
Current Achievement Rank Forms (whatever you worked on this program year)	✓	✓	✓
My 4-H Story	✓	✓	+ optional
Annual Project Report + Expression Page + ONE Leadership Report (LR is optional)	✓	✓	✓
Activity Summary (Optional)	+	+	+
4-H Resume (Senior)	✓	✓	✓

Spark Achievement

- Spark Achievements Form: Place one form in front and add to it over time. No need for new copies annually but is permissible if preferred. Wherever you are in progress is fine, you do not need to have completed a level to be included in the Record Book.
- My 4-H Story: Junior: 250 - 500 words or 1-2 minutes video/audio; Intermediate and Senior: 500 - 1000 words or 2-4 minutes video/audio
- Annual Project Report(s): At least one must be included. Complete one for each project in which they are enrolled is preferred
- Each APR must include one expression page
- Include one Leadership Report if applicable, behind the 1st expression page.
- Optional Activity Summary
- Senior members add 4-H Resume

Emerald Stars

- Emerald Star Form(s): with described attachments, URLs and/or QR Codes
- My 4-H Story: 500 - 1000 words; Video/Audio: 2 – 4 minutes
- Annual Project Report(s): At least one must be included. Complete one for each project in which they are enrolled is preferred
- Each APR must include one expression page
- Include one Leadership Report if applicable, behind the 1st expression page.
- Optional Activity Summary
- Senior Members: 4-H Resume

Impact Stars

- Impact Star Form(s): Include all levels with described attachments, URLs and/or QR Codes
- Optional My 4-H Story: 500 - 1000 words; Video/Audio: 2 – 4 minutes
- Annual Project Report(s): At least one must be included. Complete one for each project in which they are enrolled is preferred
- Each APR must include one expression page
- Include one Leadership Report if applicable, behind the 1st expression page.
- Optional Activity Summary
- Senior Members: 4-H Resume

No Achievements

- My 4-H Story: Junior: 250 - 500 words or 1-2 minutes video/audio; Intermediate and Senior: 500 - 1000 words or 2-4 minutes video/audio
- Annual Project Report(s): At least one must be included. Complete one for each project in which they are enrolled is preferred
- Each APR must include one expression page
- Include one Leadership Report if applicable, behind the 1st expression page.
- Optional Activity Summary
- Senior members add 4-H Resume

Sections Details

Cover Page (one 8.5 x 11 inch page)

- Full Name
- Age on December 31st of 4-H program year
- Birthdate
- 4-H Unit (club, camp, etc.)
- County Name
- Program Year
- Graphics/artwork is acceptable, not required

Table of Contents

- Choose the sections from the above table (page 5) that you want to include in your Record Book, keep your Record Book in the order from the table, even if you skip a section
- Label each section of the Record Book on the Table of Contents page
- Include page numbers for each section

Achievement Reports

- For specific details on how to complete Achievement Forms, see the [Achievement Program Manual](#).
- Place all Achievement Reports you worked on this year in this section. Evaluations will be based on the highest level of completed achievement report submitted. Previous year's Achievement Reports should remain in the section of the year it was submitted.

My 4-H Story Instructions

- Your 4-H story is an opportunity to reflect on your 4-H experiences focusing on the current 4-H year. Your story can be printed on both sides and should meet these **minimum** word counts. Do not write more than 2000 words.
 - Junior: 250 - 500 words or 1-2 minutes video/audio;
 - Intermediate and Senior: 500 - 1000 words or 2-4 minutes video/audio
- Follow these formatting guidelines:
 - Double space.
 - Print single OR double sided, you choose.
 - Use an easy-to-read font such as Times New Roman or Garamond.
 - Keep the text size between 12 point and 14 point.
- The following may help in developing your story:
 - Pick a theme and build the story around that theme so the story flows naturally. If you are having trouble developing a theme, you may use the following questions to help think about what to say.
 - Senior members submitting your book to State Competition should focus your story on Parts 3 & 4 below for maximum points.

Part 1 - About You

What might be one of your Sparks: interests or passions?

What are your plans for the future?

Part 2 – 4-H Projects and Activities

What goals did you set in your projects and which ones did you reach?

What would you do differently if you were to try it again?

What skills have you learned in 4-H?

How have you handled financing your projects, if needed?

Who was especially helpful to you? How?

Part 3 – Leadership and Civic Engagement

How has 4-H helped you become a better leader and citizen?

What types of civic engagement projects or leadership roles have you been involved in?

How did you work with others to contribute to your community or your school?

What have you learned from working with other 4-H'ers through your leadership positions?

Part 4 – 4-H's Impact on You

What kinds of relationships have you had with your 4-H leaders?

How has your 4-H participation changed how you feel about yourself?

How has your participation influenced your school and career goals?

What has being a 4-H member meant to you?

How has 4-H helped you identify your Spark?

Annual Project Report (APR) Instructions

Projects are about learning new things, improving skills and knowledge, and teaching others. Each year, you will participate in at least one project.

As the project leader requires, at least six hours of project instruction or more must be completed.

Completing this Section

This section is used to document your specific project experiences.

Place items in the following order for each separate project:

1. Annual Project Report (APR) form for every project you have completed.
2. Expression page for that project behind the APR.
3. Leadership Report (if applicable) behind the first Expression Page in this section.

Annual Project Report Form

- In the Learning Experiences box, record every project-related activity or event where you learned something new or developed a skill related to the project. Write about what you did, where you did it and what you learned or the skill you practiced. Be sure to list the hours of work you dedicated to that event or activity. Even if you and another family member did the same project, attended the same meetings, etc. you must use your own thinking and words to document what YOU learned. Just because a sibling learned something, you may have learned something completely different during the same meeting. (Evaluators notice if a book is word for word like another book. Copying another person's work is not allowable.)
 - Tip: To get maximum points at the County evaluation level, record activities where you taught others about your project skills. This can be something like mentoring another youth on a project skill or making an informal or formal talk or presentation about something you learned.
- In the second, third and fourth tables in the APR:
 - List things raised, grown or improved, honors and awards, civic engagement and leadership activities and keep track of your income and expenses related to that project. To find the value of something you made, you might ask an adult volunteer to help you research a similar item.

*You may not participate as a 4-H member in jackpot or prospector shows that do not comply with the 4-H Policy. Participation in these shows should **NOT** be recorded as a 4-H experience or as an "Outside 4-H" experience. Events that do not comply with the 4-H Policy may not be recorded in the Record Book at all.*

Expression Page

- Include one Expression page for each Annual Project Report. The Expression page must:
 - Teach the reader something that you learned that was interesting to you
 - Show how you identified your Spark(s) through this project
 - Use photos, drawings, graphics, a slide deck, a video or audio recording, and/or written documentation demonstrating something that you learned that was interesting to you and that you are now teaching the reader/viewer/listener. The design should be age-appropriate and creative.
- If the Expression page is a drawing, written words, photos or other graphic images, the page must be one side of an 8 ½" x 11" piece of paper. You may draw, write, use graphic design elements, or other creative elements, etc.
- If the Expression page is a slide deck, provide the URL to the slide deck for viewing electronically or make a PDF of the slide deck and insert it into the record book. Slide deck slides are limited to 4 pages.
- If the Expression page is a video or audio recording, provide the URL to the item. Videos and audio recordings should be less than 5 minutes.

Leadership Report

- You will complete the Leadership Report only **once** if you are a junior or teen leader or have another youth leadership roles.
- Complete this section if you hold any leadership position in the categories listed on the Leadership Report Form, even if those roles are not related to the Project in that APR.
- Insert the Leadership Report immediately behind the Expression Page of the first APR in this section.
- Include all leadership roles on one Leadership Report by checking the appropriate boxes and discussing those roles in your entries to the prompts.
- Answer the prompts for all leadership roles you hold this year.

Annual Activity Summary (Optional)

List the dates of your 4-H activities in a new form each year in calendar order. Indicate the category of the activity using your primary reason for participation. Some categories you can use are leadership, event attended, honor or award, healthy living, project skills, civic engagement, life readiness, work readiness, etc. You can make up your own categories.

4-H Resume (Senior Members Only)

First Name Last Name

Address, City, CA 9##### | (###) ### - #####| emailaddress@gmail.com

Personal Development Statement

One to three sentences that describe who you are and where you are headed.

Education and Professional Development

Name of School Highest Year Completed to Date

Additional Course Work, Name of School or Organization

Leadership Skills

Position Title, Group or Program, Month/Year Started – Month/Year Completed

Short description of what you did. Explanation of what you learned or skills you developed.

Civic Engagement Skills

Position Title, Group or Program, Month/Year Started – Month/Year Completed

Short description of what you did. Explanation of what you learned or skills you developed.

Other Skills

These can include instruments, dance, sports, or other hobbies you have spent a significant amount of time perfecting.

Certificates & Honors

List name of certificates and who issued it

Evaluations & Competitions

4-H Record Book evaluations and competitions measure your achievements and growth in 4-H, particularly in the areas of leadership and civic engagement. 4-H Record Books may be evaluated at the unit, county and state levels.

The Purpose of Record Book Evaluations and Competitions

- Provide an incentive to record your project work and personal achievements
- Receive feedback and encouragement on your 4-H project skill development, leadership, and civic engagement
- Develop record-keeping skills
- Recognition for outstanding 4-H work

Unit (Club) Review and Evaluation

Record Books are usually reviewed and may be evaluated by 4-H adult volunteers and/or parents (this varies between units). If books are evaluated, it must follow the State guidelines for evaluation. All Achievements are awarded at the unit level and may include a county review and verification process, which could be a different process than County Competition. An administration guide and forms are available to unit leaders from the County 4-H office.

County Evaluation and/or Competition

This level of competition is not the same in all counties, so check with your County 4-H Office to find out what your county does. If the County holds a competition, the State guidelines for evaluation and competition must be followed. An administration guide and forms are available to the coordinator of the county competition from the County 4-H office.

State Competition

Only Senior members may enter their Record Books to state competition. Members do not need to compete at the unit or county level to enter state level competition. All guidelines to enter state competition are found on the [state resource webpage](#).

Record Books are OPTIONAL!

It is not necessary to complete a Record Book to be a member in 4-H. If you want to earn Achievements, you must complete Sparks and Stars forms, but do not need to complete a full Record Book.

By 4-H policy, Record Books **may not** be required to:

- participate in any other 4-H activity or event.
- be elected as an officer or to serve in any other leadership role.
- be awarded scholarships at any level.
- exhibit at fairs.

General Information

Your Record Book is YOURS...

4-H Record Books must be completed by the 4-H member – that means you! This includes completing forms, creating your 4-H Showcase (for Emerald and Impact Stars) and other records. In Emerald Stars and Impact Stars, your adult mentor should fill out the section for their comments and nothing else. Your mentor and other adults may assist by guiding, explaining, helping to compile information and proofreading, but they may not fill out the forms for you.

...And it Goes Where You Go!

4-H Achievements transfer from one California county to other counties.

Autographs, please!

You'll need to get signatures on some forms from an adult volunteer and mentor after they review the 4-H work you have documented in your forms. Signatures can be collected electronically or with a wet signature.

Special Accommodations

The core values of the California 4-H Youth Development Program state that we “appreciate, respect and value diversity through a commitment to inclusion of diverse Californians.” If you cannot complete your Record Book in the standard format, 4-H will accommodate you. Accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis. Speak with your County 4-H Community Education Specialist to make a request.

Questions?

If you have questions while completing your Record Book, ask a 4-H adult volunteer in your unit or county to help you. This Record Book Manual is designed for 4-H adult volunteers, parents and members.

How to Upload Your Work

You must attach files to your forms in the Record Book. This could be a slideshow, a video of you presenting, a link to your article or social media post, photos, etc. It needs to be somehow attached to your form, not sent in separately as an email. Examples are given below, but if you think of another way to attach your evidence to the form, feel free to use that.

Documents

- **Google Docs/Slides:** make sure the sharing permissions on your document are set to “anyone with the link can view,” then paste the link into the designated spot on your form.
- **Word documents and PDFs:**
 - You can upload them to Google Drive and then paste a link - be sure to check the sharing permissions
 - If you have Microsoft Office 365 you can save your work to your One Drive or upload a Word/Excel/Powerpoint Online Document. Check that sharing permissions are set to “anyone with the link can view” and paste a link

Photos

- Paste the photos into the form
- Put the photos onto a Google Doc and then link it
- Put the photos in a Google Photos album and link it
- Use another internet photo sharing service and link

Videos

- Upload to YouTube as an unlisted video and paste the link
- Upload to vimeo or another video service and paste the link

Social Media Posts/Blog Posts/Internet Articles

- Paste a link
- If your social media page is private to followers only, please screenshot the post and paste the screenshot into your form