



News Coordinator's Guide

Reporting news can be an exciting adventure for everyone. The news coordinator's job is to tell the community about the club, its activities, and special member activities such as a member who takes flowers to a person who is ill.

Involve a number of members in the news committee. As chairman, it is important to make each person feel a part of the group.

One of the main things for a news coordinator to remember is the difference between news and publicity. News is something which answers the questions "who, what, when, where, why, and how." News is timely and of interest to a number of people. Publicity is promoting an event by using posters, paid advertising, etc. An example of a news item is a member who has won an award. Publicity is the information gathered to promote a club fish fry.

A story should be:

- (1) reported promptly,
- (2) important,
- (3) have local interest,
- (4) unusual, and
- (5) interesting.



Preparing News Stories

- Get acquainted with the newspaper editor or other person who handles club news. Find out how he/she wants the story written.
- Determine in which format the newspaper prefers to receive the story: hand-delivered, submitted electronically via e-mail, or in some other format.
- Study some news stories in the paper. This helps in writing better stories and intensifying the kind of stories that the newspaper wants.
- Newspaper material is called "copy." Handwrite or type on every other line and on one side of the paper only.
- Put the writer's name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number at the top of the page so that the editor can call if he/she has a question about the copy.
- Write in the third person. Say: "The members decided," not "We decided."
- Make sentences short. Leave out personal opinions. Don't say, "Everyone had a good time." Let the reader judge.
- Check that all names are spelled correctly. Tell who the guest speakers are and what they talked about.
- In the first paragraph, feature some interesting or important fact. Always answer the question "who, what, when, where, why, and how." Write no more than 40 to 50 words in any paragraph.
- In the paragraphs that follow, give the information in the order of importance. Taper off your story with the least important details at the end. This is known as the pyramid style of writing. The end is where the editor starts cutting if there isn't room for the whole story.



- Write the story on an event before the event rather than after it, if at all possible. If a story is not turned into the newspaper office within 12 hours after an event, it usually is too late for use.
- Do not feel badly if the story you write is cut down, changed, or does not appear. Every editor has only so much space. In order to get news and feature stories into that space, he/she must be selective with what is included.



Questions for Thought

1. What is the job of the news coordinator?
2. What ways can the club benefit from news?
3. Which club activities are newsworthy?
4. How can the reader's curiosity and interest be aroused?
5. What are some ideas for feature stories on members' projects?
6. How can the entire club be involved in writing new stories?
7. How can news stories help your club in the community?

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This material may be available in alternative formats.



Suggestions For 4-H Club News Reporters

The job of 4-H Club News Reporter can be a lot of fun! You will be proud to see your work in print in the local newspaper, and your club will benefit from the publicity that it receives.

Here is a list of your job responsibilities and some tips on making your job easier.

You should...

1. See that newspaper articles are written to describe your club's activities. Be sure to submit the articles promptly.
2. Take pictures at your club meetings and activities.
3. Keep pictures and slides of your club's activities in a scrapbook.
4. Assist the President and Secretary with reports as needed.
5. Work with the other officers in the activities of the club.

Follow these helpful hints...

1. Get acquainted with the editor or person in charge of club news at the local newspaper.
2. Know the daily or weekly deadline for submitting a news article.
3. Familiarize yourself with good newspaper writing habits.
4. Develop a writing style suitable to the newspaper and the editor. (This will probably take some practice.)
5. Remember to answer each of these questions in each story you write: Who? What? When? Where? How? and Why?
6. Your story may have to be cut down to fit the space available in the paper. Don't feel bad about that! So you don't lose important information if this happens, always include the most important information in the first part of the article. Save the less important details for the end of your story.

Have fun with this position as you keep your community informed about the activities of your club!

Read and study the pamphlet entitled "News Coordinator's Guide" (4-H 452) for more ideas and suggestions.

Suggestions for Newspaper Articles

1. Send your articles to the newspaper as soon as possible after your meeting. People don't like stale news!
2. Remember that young people like to see their names in print. Include names in your article whenever possible.
3. Your articles let the community know that 4-H is active in your county.
4. Let the local newspaper know when your club plans a "big event" and invite them to come take pictures. If they cannot come, take pictures with your own camera and send them with your article about the event. Or, check to see if the paper has a community camera that they will let you borrow to take pictures of your event. Remember that small town newspapers have few employees and cannot always come to your activities, but that does not mean that they do not want the news!
5. Take credit for your efforts. Sign your name to the article and include your phone number so the paper can contact you with further questions.
6. Be sure to keep copies of the articles you write and record them on your "My Record of 4-H Achievement" pages.

Include in your article such things as:

1. Name of 4-H Club
2. Date/time/place of meeting or event
3. Who presided over the meeting.
4. Who led pledges to the flags.
5. Mention that the secretary's report, roll call, and treasurer's report were given.
6. Mention all things decided upon by the club members. (Do not include who made motions, etc. or the amount of money given in the treasurer's report.)
7. Always mention upcoming events. This will serve as a reminder to the members and parents when they read it in the newspaper.
8. Give credit to anyone who:
 - a. Gives a demonstration or speech;
 - b. Has taken a trip and gives a report to the club;
 - c. Gives a Health & Safety Report;
 - d. Serves refreshments; or
 - e. Leads singing and/or recreation.

AN EXAMPLE NEWS STORY

Below is the first paragraph of a news story that describes this Officer Training Workshop. Read this paragraph, and discuss the following questions.

4-H OFFICERS' TRAINING WORKSHOP

All 4-H Club Officers are invited to attend the _____ County 4-H Club Officers' Training Workshop on _____, from _____ at the _____
(date) (time)
_____. The workshop will give officers the opportunity to learn more
(location)
about their duties and responsibilities as an officer.

Identify the answers to the following questions that could be asked about the above news story.

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

How?

Why?

Were you able to answer each of these questions after reading the news story?

If not, how would you improve the news story?

What other information do you think should be included in a news story about the Officers' Training Workshop?

For practice, write some additional lines that you think would help to finish this story.

REPORT OF 4-H MEETING

(Please Print)

News Reporter

_____ 4-H Club met _____
(club name) *(date)*
at _____ with _____ as host/hostess
(place) *(name of person)*

Number of 4-H'ers and guests in attendance: _____

The Pledge to the American flag was given by: _____

The 4-H Pledge was given by: _____

Roll Call was answered by: _____

Secretary and Treasurer Reports were given by: _____

Health and Safety reports were given by: _____

Demonstrations were given by: _____

Business discussed: _____

Program: _____

The next meeting will be on _____
(date and time)
at _____
(place)

Reported by: _____ Reporter
_____ Address/Phone

REPORT SHOULD BE AT YOUR LOCAL NEWS OFFICE WITHIN ONE WEEK OF THE MEETING.
(You may send the above, printed neatly or typed, to your local paper)