

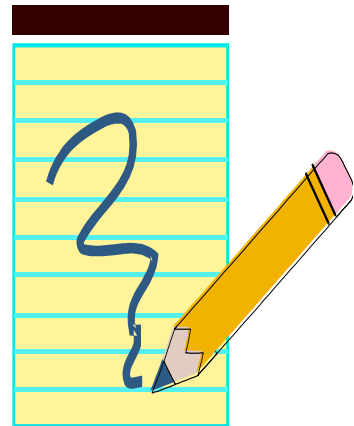
4-H

Creative

Writing

4-H Member

Project Handbook



Purdue Extension

LaPorte County

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4-H CREATIVE WRITING

This project is designed to help you explore and develop your writing talents. To develop good writing skills, practice is necessary! You will want to write several different pieces before you choose the one to submit for a particular category for 4-H judging. Although there are numerous categories, depending on your grade level to choose from, you should determine what you want to write about based on your own particular interest or subject. Whatever subject you choose to write about, be sure that you write in the style that is unique to you, rather than trying to imitate someone else's writing style. You can choose to be serious and factual, or humorous and light-hearted, with your approach. Do have fun writing by expressing yourself in a way that is you!

OVERVIEW

The 4-H Creative Writing project is offered to youth in the following grade divisions and category requirements:

Beginners-Grades 3-5

Submit four pieces of work, each from a different category. Choose from the following:

- Essay (200-600 words)
- Family biography (100-250 words about a person in your family that you never met personally)
- Greeting Card (~5 ½" x 8 ½") must contain a verse
- Illustrated Story or Poem (300-1000 words for story, 20-50 lines for poem)
- Poetry (20-50 lines) multiple works may be submitted toward the total number of lines
- Short Story (300-1000 words)
- Feature Article (200-600 words) news article on topic of public concern
- Personal History Story (100-250 words) A story, event, or occurrence that has taken place in your lifetime that has had an effect upon your life; this may or may not involve your immediate family.

Intermediate-Grades 6-8

Submit four pieces of work, each from a different category. Choose from the following:

- Essay (500-1500 words)
- Illustrated Story or Poem 600-1500 words
- Poetry (35-100 lines) multiple works may be submitted toward the total number of lines
- Short Story (800-1800 words)
- Book Review (200-500 words) a critical description, evaluation, or analysis of a book – not a book report
- Feature Article (300 word minimum) news article of public concern
- Local Historical Perspective (500-1500 words) A story about a local person, business, 4-H club or event that has occurred or been in existence for at least a decade prior to the writing. Person should be interviewed.
- Family Biography (350-600 words) About a person in your family, deceased or living that has made an impact or impression on how you will model your life. Facts about life. Importance to you. An interview would be helpful and notes should be behind piece for judging as a source.

Advanced-Grades 9-12

Submit three pieces of work, each from a different category. Choose from the following:

- Short Story (1300-3000 words)
- Illustrated Story or Poem (minimum of 800 words)
- Poetry (50-200 lines) multiple works may be submitted toward the total number of lines
- Critical Review of a literary work (600-1200 words)
- Essay (600-1500 words)
- Satirical Essay (600-1200 words) e.g. humor
- Dramatic Script (one that would require 15-30 minutes to perform)
- Feature Article of Local Concern (300-1000 words)
- National Historical Perspective (800-2000 words)

- Work of Your Choice (600-3000 words) may include chapter story writing
- Personal Research (600-3000 words) may combine original and library research of a topic of your interest
- Newsletter with embedded pictures

Note: The goal in all divisions of Creative Writing is to demonstrate ability and versatility in writing skills. The exhibit should demonstrate your mastery of different types of writing, the creative process and depth of ability, thought or feeling that is appropriate for the maturity level expected of students in your division. For example, if you write poetry, you might exhibit one poem that is 200 lines long in the Advanced Division, or you may exhibit three shorter poems, as long as they do not total more than 200 lines. In addition to your poetry, as an Advanced student, you must exhibit two more selections from two other categories. These could be a short story (1300-3000) words and a Dramatic Script that would require 15-30 minutes to perform, or any other combination of three different kinds of work from the categories listed.

A single piece of writing, or a single type of writing would not qualify for completion credit. For example, exhibiting *only* poetry, *only* short stories or *only* comic strips would not meet the exhibit requirements listed above. If you are in doubt as to whether your exhibit meets the requirements, you should contact the Extension Office at least thirty (30) days before the exhibit deadline of June 16.

NO STATE FAIR ENTRIES

AWARDS

Awards will consist of A, B, and C placing ribbons plus Division and Reserve Division Champions. There is no State Fair project for Creative Writing.

GETTING STARTED

It is important you gather all the tools together you will need. Paper, several pencils, an eraser, pen, and paper or notebook to start are the basic necessities. A dictionary and thesaurus will be helpful as well as a container to keep all your items together. “Practice makes perfect” and “learn by doing” are no exceptions when it comes to creative writing. You can practice developing your writing skills by keeping a notebook of descriptive observations to help you fully express what you are trying to get others to see as you write. Your notebook could also contain ideas, and thoughts which you may want to develop further with your writings.

CHOOSING A SUBJECT

Choosing a subject that interests you is important and ideas for your subject may come from numerous places. What excites you? Makes you happy? Sad? Or angry? What story would you like to tell others that you feel they should know? Whatever subject you choose, be sure it is something **YOU** want to write about.

CHOOSING A CATEGORY

Review the project requirements (found in this handbook or the current LaPorte County Project Handbook), and decide what type of writing you will do. Some authors are excited about creating a short story while others enjoy writing poetry or an essay. 4-H is a good time to “learn by doing” and experiment with different types of writing. There’s no risk on your part, no teachers, no grades, so go for it! You may want to write a piece in several categories and choose your best work for your 4-H exhibit. Although the choices for category vary depending on the division (beginner, intermediate, advanced), you will be writing in prose or poetry. Prose is defined as ordinary speech or writing and is different from poetry that is written in a rhythm or beat.

PROSE

Prose is usually written in paragraph form rather than stanzas that you may see in poetry. In considering what you want to write you should pick a subject you are excited about. Do utilize all the things your teachers have taught you in school about putting together a writing piece. There are many books available at the library that can assist you in constructing your piece of work. Feel free to visit the library and ask a librarian for some help preparing. Workshops will also be scheduled to assist you with your Creative Writing Project.

1. Planning what you are going to write is very important, no matter what you will exhibit for your project. Pre-writing your ideas is a good way to start. You should brainstorm and not be concerned about each idea at the time you write it down. Just keep your thoughts moving with your ideas. Outlining is a way of putting your story into major points or events with an ending in mind. You may change your outline as you so desire, but organizing your piece in outline form gets you off to a good start. How do you want your piece to start? To end? What do you want the reader to experience?
2. Who is telling the story? How will you tell it? It is easier to tell a story in the third person (I). It is easier to describe he, she, or it than I. If characters are your major focus about what you are writing, you may want to develop them fully by writing detailed descriptions of each. Description is another way you as the writer can set the mood, make the characters' personalities more understandable, or just help the reader more fully enjoy your story. Remember to use words that tell the feeling and mood, or show the picture you want portrayed about your characters. Conversation is a way of giving your story some "flavor" or to indicate the mood. Conversation between characters can also be used to reveal the type of character (personality) that exists. Use conversations sparingly in your writings, being careful not to become too lengthy or use it when it has nothing to do with your purpose in writing the story. Use descriptive words and remember to change paragraphs when speaker changes.
3. How will you end your writing piece? How you decide to end your writing piece will decide how the reader will feel. Will the reader feel satisfied, stimulated or still wondering what the purpose of your writing is? Your ending should satisfy what the purpose of your writing was and leave the reader feeling content and fulfilled about the questions you missed earlier in the story.

COMPLETING YOUR PROSE WRITING

Once you have finished writing your piece it is a good idea to have someone else, like your teacher or another interested adult, read what you have written. By having someone else read your writing piece before submitting it for judging, will allow for comments and suggestions to help you improve what you have written. It is important to remember not to get discouraged when someone points out what they see as a mistake or error. What we are really trying to do is, "make it better"! So listen to what they have to say and use it if you think it will improve your writing. It is also important to remember that no one else should actually write any of your project, when using their suggestions. It is your project, you are the author, and it is up to you to decide to use the suggestions or not in your own words.

Illustrations are ways of expressing by means of a picture, a particular aspect of your writing. A picture is sometimes very much worth a thousand words and you may include illustrations to help draw interest or invoke a mood with your writing. The comic strip category available may require illustrations as a major part of your project.

Once you have your prose piece for your 4-H exhibit, prepare it for judging by following the directions (general rules) given at the end of this Creative Writing Project Handbook. Your entry must have the following items indicated in order:

1. A title page consisting of the following: Title, author, date, project category, grade in school, and club.
2. Your actual writing project.
3. A closure page with the following: title, project category, and total number of words or lines (for poetry) in this particular project being exhibited.

POETRY

Poetry may be defined as writing in measured rhythmic verse but more importantly, poetry is a concentrated way of telling a story, reporting an event, or expressing a feeling. A poet often writes based on his/her emotional response to a stimulation, event, person, or object in a very unique way. A poet chooses words carefully to express what he/she wants to say in a few words, as in a line or two.

You may have learned in school about many different types of poems and you should feel free use any of the types you have learned. The library has books to describe different forms of poetry as well as instructions for writing them. Ask the librarian for assistance in finding these books.

As you learn about poetry you will find out that there are poems with a set rhythm or beat that is called the meter. Meter is organized by syllables and accents. Poems also have form such as stanzas of set length.

Free verse is a form of poetry that has no particular pattern, but still has a rhythm or a beat.

Blank verse is a form of poetry and is a common type of poetry that consists of unrhymed lines with beat and rhythm. Use a style you are familiar with from school or research a new style and try it. Any style of poetry is acceptable for this project.

Before you begin, plan and decide what you hope to accomplish with your poem. Do you wish to humor? Educate? Entertain, describe, or report an event, or express a feeling?

Write down your thoughts prior to creating your poem and plan what you want the reader to experience.

After you have finished writing your poem, check your spelling, punctuation, and capitalization on your final draft.

COMPLETING YOUR POEM

Poetry is meant to be read aloud and for this reason it becomes important for you to not only read your poem aloud to yourself, but to read it to another interested adult (or teacher) to obtain comments as to how your poem sounds. If it does not sound right to you, decide which changes you should make. Again, it is very important that when you make the suggested changes that you make the changes yourself and not the person who is doing the suggesting. It is your project and you are the author.

You may want to include illustrations on the page(s) containing your poem. These may be either hand drawn or copied. Such illustrations could enhance the presentation of your work, but are not required.

Once you have finished your poem for your 4-H exhibit, prepare it for judging by following the directions (general rules) given at the end of this Creative Writing Project Handbook. Your entry must have the following items indicated in the order:

1. A title page consisting of the following: title, author, date, project category, grade in school, and club.
2. Your actual writing project
3. A closure page with the following: title, project category, and total number of lines for this poem being exhibited.

SPECIAL NOTES

The Creative Writing project offers numerous categories for you to choose from when determining your exhibits. Reviews, feature articles, and historical perspectives are opportunities for you to study, look back on, or re-examine an event or action that has taken place. In choosing one of these categories, you are asked to use your critical thinking skills to evaluate a work or performance. You may want to keep in mind a standard format of questions as you critique or comment on a particular piece (who, what, where, when, how well are a few). Project workshops may be of further help in writing a review, feature article or historical perspective.

GRAMMAR

You will obviously want to look for problem areas in grammar and if you use a computer, the spell check will not always catch the mistakes. Words such as their, there, they're, or themselves, himself, herself, itself, or was and were, can be a challenge to use them properly. You will want to check your usage of these words as you complete your writing piece.

GIVING CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Plagiarism is taking the thoughts or writings of another person and using them as your own. It is also against the law when a written piece is copyrighted (one person only has permission to use, sell, or publish the piece). You cannot copy the work of another author or person. This is stealing! Be sure what you write are your own thoughts and words. When you do research for your writing and will be giving information from these sources, make sure you write these down in the bibliography). You may also simply give credit to your sources by mentioning them in your writing piece.

Indiana Has Produced Many Famous Writers

James Whitcomb Riley (1849-1916) wrote poetry about life in the Midwest and won fame as a Hoosier Poet.

George Ade (1866-1944) from Kentland, Indiana, was a Purdue Alumnus as well as a famous playwright and journalist who wrote about life in the Midwest.

Meredith Nicholson (1866-1947) was from Crawfordsville, Indiana and was a journalist who then wrote novels, essays, poetry and a play.

Booth Tarkington (1869-1946) from Indianapolis, Indiana, wrote novels, plays, short stories and essays. He was awarded two Pulitzer Prizes for literature.

Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) was a novelist who has some works that are considered classics of American literature.

Cole Porter (1891-1964) was famous for his witty lyrics and imaginative melodies. He was 11 years old when his first song was published.

Jim Davis (1945-) has won world-wide fame for his comic strip, "Garfield."

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (1922-) was born in Indianapolis, Indiana and is famous for his writing of "Slaughterhouse Five".

There are many famous writers right here in Indiana. Many of them began their writing as students in school. Creative writing can be a lot of fun so get started and enjoy it!

GENERAL RULES/EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS

1. 4-H Creative Writing projects will be judged prior to the LaPorte County Fair on a date to be announced. Judging will be by grade level. Make note of the deadline for submitting your Creative Writing Project to the Extension Office! This **deadline** is published in the LaPorte County Project Handbook and **is at least one month prior to the LaPorte County Fair**.
2. Each 4-H member will be exhibiting 3 or 4 different writing pieces as defined in the LaPorte County Project Handbook according to the appropriate grade level (beginner, intermediate, advanced).
3. All entries are to be hand written neatly and legibly, in ink or typed. Typed entries should be double spaced.
4. All entries must have been written during the current calendar year. Work that has been judged in any other writing contest is ineligible for 4-H competition. All entries must be the exclusive work of the 4-H member, no group projects or collaborations should be submitted for judging. Papers written for school assignments may be reworked and used for exhibit (papers with a grade on them may not be exhibited).
5. Each entry must have a title page with the following: title, author, date, project category, grade in school, and club.
6. Each entry must have a closure page with the following: title, project category, and total number of words or lines (for poetry) for the work being exhibited.
7. Each entry must be bound to keep it neat and clean during judging and display at the LaPorte County Fair. School report covers, or binders, are recommended for use while spiral notebooks are not.
8. The Creative Writing Project handbook (available from Extension Office) should be consulted as a guide when completing this project.
9. All writing submitted is to be of high moral standards and not contain any offensive or profane language, nor depict any objectionable situations. This includes the use of gross subjects or actions.

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