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# JOURNALISM



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NEWSPAPER  
MAGAZINE  
R A D I O  
TELEVISION  
INTERNET  
NEWSPAPER  
MAGAZINE  
R A D I O  
TELEVISION  
INTERNET

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Note to Project Helpers ..... 3

Introduction ..... 6

## Part 1: Exploring Journalism

You Have a Nose for News! ..... 7

What Makes News ... Newsworthy? ..... 8

Which News Source Is Best? ..... 9

Packaging the News ..... 12

Careers in Journalism ..... 14

The Business Side of Journalism ..... 16



## Part 2: Writing the News

Newswriting Basics ..... 18

Being a Responsible Reporter ..... 22

Kinds of Stories ..... 23

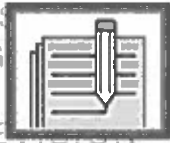
Writing Leads and Body Copy ..... 27

The Art of Interviewing ..... 31

Tips for Writing Newspaper Stories—Including Five Style Rules You Should Know . . 33

Formatting a News Story ..... 37

Newspaper Story Checklist ..... 38



## Part 3: Advanced Journalism Topics

Columns and Other Opinion Pieces ..... 39

Photojournalism Basics ..... 42

Newswriting for Radio and Television ..... 45



## Appendix

Sharpen Your Writing and Editing Skills ..... 49

Terms You Should Know ..... 55

Some Helpful References ..... 56

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# NOTE TO PROJECT HELPERS

We live in the age of information, 24-hour cable television news stations, news-talk radio, Internet news, news magazines and the old reliable daily newspaper. This project will explore the gathering and processing of news — both print and broadcast — for public consumption. It is a great opportunity for youth to explore “behind the scenes” to see what journalism is all about. More likely, this project will attract, and hold, youth who are bitten by the news bug. Those who stick with the project will not only develop writing skills, but also have taken the first step toward a career in journalism. You will be their guide.

## *Positive Youth Development*

Youth and adolescent development research has identified eight “critical elements” of youth programs that produce positive outcomes in youth.

- A positive relationship with a caring adult
- A welcoming/inclusive environment
- A physically and psychologically safe environment
- An appropriately structured environment
- Opportunities to achieve competency/mastery
- Opportunities for self-determination
- Opportunities to value and practice service to others
- Active participation in the future

By devoting your time and talents to helping youth in the Journalism Project, you have already shown that you care. Here are some things you can do to maintain a healthy learning environment:

- Learn every child’s name; call them by name.
- Divide your attention equally among all the members of the group.
- Allow everyone to speak his or her mind without being ridiculed.
- Make sure you have a safe place to meet, and that all youth have safe transportation to and from meetings.
- Set high expectations for behavior and enforce them.
- Encourage youth to complete project activities and celebrate successes along the way.
- Share your experiences and stories with them.
- Allow the youth to help make decisions.
- Encourage community service activities, and explain why serving others is important.
- Emphasize the importance of planning for the future, including career planning.

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## *Experiential Learning*

4-H is all about learning by doing. This manual contains 16 chapters filled with valuable information, but the fun (and the real learning) happens in the 69 learning activities that accompany the text. One of your important roles will be to help the 4-H'ers think about what they have learned in these activities and how that learning impacts their lives. This *experiential learning process* helps kids build their knowledge and skills and transfer what they have learned to other life situations. Important life skills, like communication and responsibility, are developed along with the journalism skills.

The five-stage experiential learning model is presented below



At the end of each chapter is a section called “Digging Deeper.” These questions help the 4-H’er process the learning activities from that chapter. Encourage 4-H’ers to think about and answer those questions. You might use them to guide a group discussion at a project meeting. Thinking about and answering these questions will help the 4-H’er to identify the important concepts and life skills learned, and their future applications. The Journalism Project is unique in that, as 4-H’ers progress through the manual, they also progress through the experiential cycle.

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## *Ages and Stages of Youth Development*

This project manual is targeted for grades 7-12, though it may be adapted for younger ages. Since youth do not all develop at the same rate, it is good to understand the general developmental patterns of youth in these age groups. Remember that every individual is different, with distinct personalities and abilities.

### **Young Teens (12-13 years)**

- Growth spurts beginning with adolescence occur at a wide range of ages, with girls usually maturing before boys. These rapid changes in physical appearance may make some teens uncomfortable. Be sensitive — a mature appearance doesn't guarantee a mature attitude.
- Young teens are moving from concrete to more abstract thinking. Playing with ideas can be as much fun as playing sports. Young teens often prefer to find their own solutions rather than having the answers "given to them." Provide guidance without interference.
- Social interaction and peer opinions are very important to young teens. Small groups provide a great opportunity for teens to test their ideas.
- Young teens are beginning to define themselves, test their values, and accept responsibility. Avoid comparing them to one another, or putting them in situations that may embarrass them.

### **Middle Teens (14-15 years)**

- Mid-teens are absorbed in themselves and their peer group. Relationship skills are usually more developed than in younger teens.
- Vocational and career goals are beginning to come into focus, and will influence the activities mid-teens select.
- Allow input from youth in making decisions planning activities. Facilitate the learning process without dominating it.
- Emotions are unpredictable. Consider the impact of your words and actions on youth.

### **Late Teens (16-18 years)**

- These youth are aware of their abilities and interests. They are moving away from the family and into the community as independent people.
- Career goals are coming more into focus. Some may have chosen a career and are working toward it. They will reject goals set for them by others.
- Late teens are mastering abstract thinking. They may come up with solutions to problems that you would not. They need little supervision to carry out tasks, and will reject what they perceive as "busy work."

### **References:**

4HCCS Personal Finance design team. (2002). *Financial Champions*. (p. 4-5) (4HCCS BU-07712-2002)

4HCCS Woodworking design team. (2002, revised). *Woodworking Wonders*. (p. 3) (4HCCS BU-06879-2002)

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Illinois 4-H Journalism Project! Whether you are interested in a career in journalism, are the reporter for your 4-H club or school newspaper or are just curious, this project is for you. With 69 interesting learning activities, the 4-H Journalism Project will keep you busy and having fun as you learn all about newswriting and much more.

The 4-H Journalism Project book is divided into three parts: In Part 1, *Exploring Journalism*, you will be introduced to different types of news, learn how news is packaged for print and broadcast, learn how newspapers and news programs pay the bills, and explore careers in journalism. In Part 2, *Writing the News*, you will apply what you have learned while developing and practicing skills needed to gather news and write news stories. Part 3, *Advanced Journalism Topics* lets you apply your journalism skills further as you study opinion pieces, photojournalism and writing broadcast news.

There are 69 learning activities for you to choose from as you develop your journalism knowledge and skill. The activities are divided into two levels of difficulty and labeled with stars, as illustrated in the chart below:

- ★★ An activity that is suitable for younger 4-H'ers or those beginning in the Journalism project, as well as older or more experienced 4-H members.
- 
- ★★★ A more complex activity that may interest older, more experienced 4-H'ers or those who are considering a career in journalism.

The activities you choose to complete, and the order in which you complete them, is strictly up to you. However, the skills you need to complete the actual writing activities in Part 2 and 3 can be developed by doing the activities in Part 1. With that in mind, here is a suggested four-year plan for completing the Journalism project.

- Year 1 Complete all of the ★★ activities from Part 1. (9 activities)
- Year 2 Complete all of the ★★ activities from Part 2. (17 activities)
- Year 3 Complete the ★★★ activities from Parts 1 and 2. (20 activities)
- Year 4 Complete at least 12 activities from Part 3.  
You may select activities according to your particular area of interest.

Additional exercises are provided in the Appendix. Complete the exercises to sharpen your writing and editing skills.

- ⋮ **SUGGESTION:** Keep and organize a portfolio of all the work you do in this project. It will include the copy you clip from newspapers, stories and/or captions you write, and the photographs you take or collect. Use your portfolio as a project exhibit. It may also come in handy as you explore career opportunities in journalism.