



4-H Youth Development

4-H Portfolio Guidelines

What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a collection of some of your 4-H work. The purpose of the collection is to illustrate knowledge you have learned and the skills you have developed because you took part in 4-H. The portfolio is not the container, but the material in the container. The portfolio contains things that are collected at different times throughout the project year. It is a way to communicate. A portfolio allows you to tell a story of your journey to become a thoughtful, knowledgeable, flexible, productive 4-H'er.

What should be included in a portfolio?

First of all, there is no right answer to this question. The portfolio should include whatever will best tell your 4-H story. It is wise to ask, "Why am I including this? How does it help to tell the story I want to communicate?" Items may be work in progress or completed work. Items may be organized in order of completion.

By collecting items at different times and dating them, the portfolio will describe changes that occur as your 4-H experience unfolds.

A table of contents is a good tool to help organize what you include. Items may be written goals, photos, drawings, planning ideas and notes, samples of work, financial records, thoughts about a project, newspaper clippings, or whatever else you, the 4-H'er, feel is important. Evaluation of the 4-H experience during and at the end of the year will help you measure progress and achievement. Use the self-evaluation form on page 3 to help you and your leader.

What does a portfolio look like?

A portfolio can have many looks. There is no one kind of container or appearance that is right for all portfolios. The size and shape of the portfolio should be determined by the purpose and goals of the portfolio, the type of portfolio, and your needs as a 4-H'er.

Possible options for the portfolio container:

- 4-H'er-made construction paper folders
- Commercial file folders of various sizes/accordion file folders
- Cardboard boxes/wire baskets/stackable bins/plastic dishpans
- Large mailing envelopes
- Hanging file folders

Considerations for choosing the portfolio container:

- Manageable for use and storage
- Big and sturdy enough to hold all the elements to be included
- Small enough to transport easily
- Convenient to use

The 4-H'er is the deciding factor in the selection of the container.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

University Extension

Ames, Iowa

4H-97B | August 1997

Member Portfolio Self-evaluation

One of the most important forms of evaluation in the portfolio process is the 4-H'er's self-evaluation. If the portfolio is to be used in any way to measure achievement or progress, you will want to do this. This self-evaluation also can be called self-reflection.

Reflection is when you take time out—time to stop and think—about the strengths and weaknesses of the project, celebrate growth that occurred, note changes, and find areas needing improvement.

This self-reflection is perhaps the single most valuable step in the portfolio. Questions that you may want to think about:

- Why do I think this is my best work?
- How did I go about creating this?
- What was I thinking as I did this?
- What was the process I used to do this?
- Did I record expenses and/or compare costs of other alternatives?
- Did I have any problems as I did this?
- How did I solve problems?
- What did I learn from creating this?

Portfolio Progress Checklist

Once a month, review your portfolio for the following items. When you have these in your portfolio, check it off, date it, and write what it is. You may have more than one in any area.

- Something new that I learned _____

- Something creative _____

- Something very difficult _____

- Something that tested me in a different way than usual _____

- Something that shows self-evaluation _____

- Something I consider my best work _____

- Something I would like to do again _____

- Something that shows I know how to solve problems _____

- Something I wish I could improve _____

- Something I just like _____

- Something that shows my plan of action _____

Self-evaluation of My 4-H Project Experience

My project portfolio for _____

Years enrolled in this project _____ Grade _____ Year _____

I did well with _____

As shown by _____

I did okay with _____

but I could still improve by _____

I had trouble with _____

In looking at what I selected for my portfolio, I seem to _____

In the future I plan to _____

Prepared by 1995–1997 Record Keeping Club Task Force Subcommittee; Melva L. Berkland, extension communication specialist; Donna Fincham, composition consultant, Creative Services, Instructional Technology Center; and Lonna Nachtigal, illustrator.

And justice for all . . .

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Stanley R. Johnson, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.