

CREATIVE WRITING GUIDELINES

These guides are designed to help 4-H members learn creative writing skills. Three age levels of project experience are suggested for the numerous project exercises. In addition, six areas of exhibit entries are listed. These areas coincide with the fair book.

4-H members planning to exhibit examples of their creative writing project should submit a copy of the creative writing comment sheet with their exhibit. Exhibits should be presented in person to the judge between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Saturday of non-livestock judging day. Members should be prepared to leave the exhibit with the judge (be sure all items are marked with member and club name). If possible, we will have the judge review the entries and return them for placement in the member's club booth early the following week.

The judge will be asked to write comments about each exhibit. We may also ask local media to publish "Best of Class" winners.

PHASE I: Ages 12 and under Objectives: To enable the members to express themselves in a well-organized manner, following a logical sequence of events, with vivid sense impression. Creative imagery in poetic form.

PHASE II: Ages 13-15 Objectives: To enable the members to pursue further the experience of self-expression via the written word. Use of the senses can be expanded to include descriptive writing. With logical order as a background, narration and dialogue can be employed to bring life to this self-expression.

PHASE III: Ages 16 and older Objectives: To enable the high school age members to completely acquaint themselves with the basic and advanced forms of creative writing. Building on previous experience in organization, sense imagery, description, and dialogue, imagination is the only limitation. Satire, serious tragedy, comedy, via essay, poetry, and drama are possible and acceptable.

NOTE: Objectives are guides and by no means rules. Each individual's level need not be determined by age, but the projects presented must fall within the realm of the stated objectives.

Poetry is both accepted and encouraged on ALL levels! Rhyming is sometimes the least important aspect in the written verse, but it can instill confidence for the first level member.

1st and 2nd level. Poetry will be most successful with sense imagery. (Ex: A horse's tale is....Love is...)

3rd level. Poetry can be extended to include ballads and even modern song lyrics.

AREAS OF ENTRY

Writing may be entered in any of the following six areas. It will be judged on correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, organization, clarity, originality and neatness.

1. Poetry--a collection of four or more poems. They can all be about the same subject or theme, or they can illustrate different types of poetry styles.
2. News articles, features or editorials--Entries should demonstrate knowledge of proper newspaper story form. For instance:
News articles should use an inverted pyramid style with a well-written lead which includes the 5-w's (who, what, when, where and why).
Features should focus on a significant topic, person or place.
Editorials should take a stand for or against a contemporary problem or issue. The stand must be supported by well-explained reasons.
3. Short stories should have a plot. This is not a report about something that happened or might happen. If you write a short story be sure it also has well-developed characters, a setting, a climax to the action, conflict and a conclusion. Short stories can be based on fact or imagination.
4. Non-fiction can center on any topic. Be sure it is well-supported by facts. Advanced writers should use quotations and include the sources of their information when quotes and statistics are used or when authorities are cited for references. The work should also include a title page and a bibliography.
5. Plays must have well-developed characters, settings and a plot. Entries must be written in the form of a play which could be performed on stage.
6. Music should be submitted on music composition paper. It is also suggested that a cassette tape of its performance be submitted with the sheet music. The tape can be made by the composer using his or her musical instrument.

SUGGESTED RULES COVERING AREAS OF ENTRY

- a. All work is to be neatly written on 8½ by 11 loose leaf paper in BLACK ink.
- b. Writing should be done on alternating lines to enable the judge to comment.
- c. Any typing is to be double spaced with correct margins.
- d. All work is to be entered in a normal sized portfolio.
- e. All work is to be titled.
- f. Illustration of work is optional.
- g. All work is to be original and creative. No summary or retelling of a story will be accepted.
- h. Project work should be done out of school. 4-H'ers should work on this at least one project meeting.

Presented below is a series of ideas or guides proven to be successful in any Creative Writing Program. Asterisks suggest the level at which the various programs can be tried. Any particular guideline can be adapted to any level.

(*1st **2nd ***3rd)

1. TOPIC OUTLINE (*)

Directions:

Choose any organizational activity and have the member put it in an outline form.

(Ex: A. Getting Up

1. Open eyes

2. Get out of bed

B. Washing

1. Adjust the hot and cold water

2. Brushing the teeth, etc.

For a rough draft fill in the outline with words making a story. Encourage a free flow of words. Discourage expressions such as...."then," "so," "and then," etc. Final draft will be a clever use of ordinary, organized details that will be quite humorous.

2. SENSE IMAGERY (**)

Directions:

Make use of all the senses: Sight, Sound, Smell, Taste, Touch. Use motivating questions to provoke sense thought.

1. Describe a breakfast of words

2. The taste of ginger ale

3. Pass a bakery

4. The sounds of nature

3. DIALOGUE (***)

Directions:

Present a conversation between two interesting personages. Use inverted sentence structure to add variety. Vivid expression, some use of slang, conversational tone: all add to the readability of the work. This idea can be further expanded to include a dramatic play, either serious or comical. Stage directions are part of the presentation.

