

Portfolio Training 2009

Tips for creating your best Portfolio: Here is your opportunity to learn from the most common mistakes of past Portfolio preparers, and to benefit from my many years of Portfolio judging.

- 1) **Follow the Instructions!** There is plenty of opportunity for you to express your creativity within these guidelines. The instructions will help you prepare a well organized and complete Portfolio which will not only be pleasing to the judges and earn maximum points, but will be pleasing to your “future self.” This is your personal record of your 4-H year... don’t you want to be proud of it, and to know you did your best, when you look at it five years from now? Trust me... you do!
- 2) **Use our Project Record forms.** Please submit the forms required by Prince William County 4-H with your Project Record(s). There are a *lot* of fine 4-H record keeping forms out there..., especially now that we can access other 4-H communities through the internet, but our forms have been created to give you certain prompts for goal setting, recording your accomplishments, and for summarizing your Project. These help you to earn the maximum points because they match our scoring guidelines. If you find another form, and you feel you like it better than our form, go ahead and include *both* forms and try to complete them both to the best of your ability. This applies to forms from Honolulu, Timbuktu, and even from the great Commonwealth of Virginia!
Horse Project members: Submit all the records and forms required at the state level, and top it off with our country Project Record form. Repetition and redundancy are preferable to omissions! Find these forms at: pwc4h.org
- 3) **Project Records:**
 - a. **Goals and Accomplishments:** I can’t tell you how many times I have seen goals that are identical to achievements! (It’s fairly obvious what is going on here!) What purpose does it serve to write goals at the end of the Project just so can fill up the blank spaces in your Project Record? Write your goals at the *beginning* of the Project. If this is hard for you, ask an adult or teen to help you. You lose absolutely no points if your goals don’t match your

achievements. In fact, that is almost always the case... and usually you will find you have accomplished more than you expected. And, don't forget to record your accomplishments! For example: If you completed a dress in a sewing project, don't simply record: "completed a dress." Instead, record: "Installed a zipper (after 7 tries!)", "Made pockets!", "Created facings!", and "Sewed a hem!" Don't short change yourself on accomplishments!

b. Include all Project related activities within your Project Record. Be particularly aware of photos and community service activities that apply to the Project. For example: If your club is doing a Project on the environment, and you participate in a stream clean-up (either with your club, Project group, other group, or even on your own) record that as community service within the Environment Project's Record. If you write letters to active military, record that later in your Portfolio in a separate community service section. If your club does a Project entitled "Community Service," then *all* your community service activities may be recorded within your Project Record!

c. Consider combining Projects. If you don't have a lot of documentation, but feel you have completed several Projects, you may combine them to create a more complete Project Record. For example: camping, hiking, climbing, sailing... each might have very little documentation, but combined they would make a very nice "Outdoor Activities" Project. This idea would also work well for several craft Projects. Here's an idea: One year, my club did a Project called "Life Skills" which allowed for numerous small projects, none of which met the six instruction hours requirement, but together they made an outstanding Project for our 4-H year.

d. Consider including a "Project Story." For those submitting a complete Portfolio, you might consider limiting the Project discussion within your 4-H story and expanding it in a Project Story within your Project Record. For those who are submitting a stand-alone Project Record, this would be even more valuable. Write a journal, of sorts, about the Project experience with special attention to a Project summary.

If you have questions, you are welcome to contact me: Leslie-Ann Stevens:
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