Create Your Own 4-H Project!

A self-determined project worksheet

STEP 9

STEP 8

STEP 10

CREATE YOUR OWN 4-H PROJECT!

—Self-Determined Project Worksheet*

Are you creative?

Bored with the usual?

Held back by the ordinary?

Then break away...

Create your own **project**, **timeline**, and **goals**!

A 4-H project includes all the learning and activities that you do in one subject area during the entire year. It may include citizenship activities, leadership activities, or community service. A project is the whole **enchilada**! (See glossary on page 6 to compare how a "project" differs from an "**exhibit**"! They are NOT the same thing!)

A self-determined project (created by you) allows YOU to decide what you want to learn, what you want to do, and how you want to **share** what you learn. Yes, you can zoom in on your interests and create projects that are not included in the 4-H project list. You can get help from others and GO CREATIVE!

Go!

Here are some ideas!

- Design a weather station
- Paint and dress a porcelain doll
- Check out careers in the CIA or FBI
- Create a web site on something that interests you
- Learn about Iowa baseball players of the past
- Start a collection of rocks, signatures, maps, or ?????
- Explore the history of a building (or cemetery) in your community
- Create your own family fun night
- Design a family newsletter and e-mail it to your seldom-seen cousins
- Raise llamas
- Cook using a campfire
- Find out how to be an exchange student or IFYE (International Four-H Youth Exchange)

Here we go! Sharpen a pencil, find an eraser, and follow the steps. (Remember this is a worksheet—not a final report.)

Create!
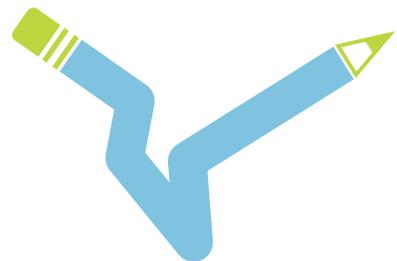
* to be used with your record-keeping system

LEARN

Step 1: Define topic

I would like to learn about...

_____
_____
_____
_____

(and/or) I would like to learn how to...

_____
_____
_____
_____

Step 2: Gather and evaluate information

I can get information on this topic from...

_____
_____
_____
_____

Need help?
How about...

- ☀ Attending a workshop?
- ☀ Going to summer camp?
- ☀ Asking for information at the county extension office?
- ☀ Checking the library?
- ☀ What key words will you look up?
- ☀ Interviewing an expert?
- ☀ Some possible experts are:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

- ☀ Surfing the Web?
- ☀ Record helpful Web sites here:

http:// _____
http:// _____
http:// _____

Follow me!

Warning! Information overload!

Is the information reliable?
See "Analyzing Information on the Internet" (PM 1789b) and "Online Health Information— Should you believe what you see?" (N-3418) at www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/pubs (Or request copies from your county extension office.)
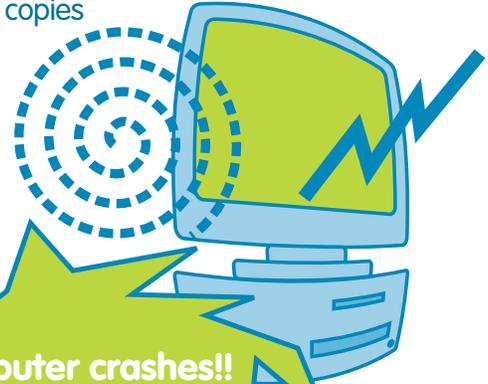
Computer crashes!!
Stop and brainstorm

DO

Step 3: Determine action

What might you do?
For example: (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Collect and organize information for my own reference
- ☐ Practice my new skill
- ☐ Plan and complete a community service project
- ☐ **Brainstorm** other ideas

What do you MOST want to do with this information?

so much information, so little time

Stop!

Is this realistic for the time and other resources you have available?

☐ yes

☐ no

☐ I think so

Which ONE thing will I do first?

1. _____

If time and resources allow, what one or two things would I also like to try to do?
Optional

2. _____

3. _____

Specifically, I am going to

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

by _____ (date).

GOAL SETTER

**Congratulations!
You just
set a goal!**

Step 4: Design action plan

To reach my goal by the **deadline** I set, I need to

Make a timeline

☐ Make a list of the steps

Will be done by _____

☐ Make a list of the supplies

Will be done by _____

☐ Gather the supplies

Will be done by _____

☐ Get additional help from others

Will be done by _____

Specifically: _____

☐ Other _____

Will be done by _____
Mark these assignments to yourself on the calendar, and/or copy the list and post it on the refrigerator.

Step 5: Anticipate roadblocks

Everybody has them. Check your family calendar and get advice from a parent or adult. What things might keep you from completing the tasks by the dates you set? What might you need to do differently?

Almost there!

Step 6: Act

List **all** the things you do for your project:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
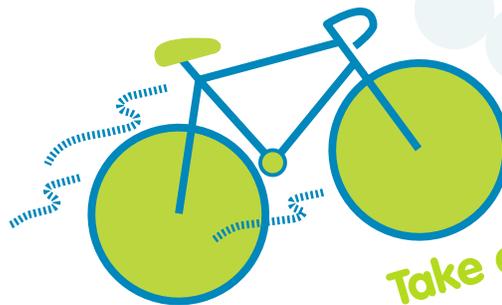
Take a break

REFLECT

Step 7: Evaluate
Did you reach your
goal in the timeline
you set?_____
Why?_____
_____
_____
Why not?_____
_____
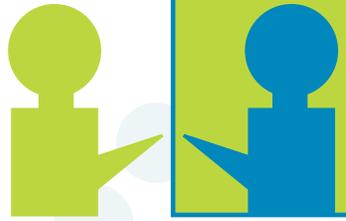
On this project, my **roadblocks** were:
_____
_____
_____

The thing(s) that was easier than I imagined was:
_____
_____
_____

The thing(s) that was harder than I imagined it
would be was: _____
_____
_____
_____

Things I learned were: _____
_____
_____
_____

Some things I would do differently next time are:
_____
_____
_____

Things I would like to learn/do as a result are:
_____
_____
_____

How does this match what you originally wrote
for Step 3? Are they all new ideas? If you have
time and energy, try another idea, repeating the
questions in steps 4-6.

SHARE

**Step 8: Share what you've learned with
someone else**
I will share what I learned by:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Still need ideas?
How about...
✦ giving a presentation
✦ writing a description
about it in a letter to a friend
✦ creating a Web site
✦ showing others how to do (skill) at a club
workshop or at a party for friends
✦ designing a poster
✦ making an exhibit

Dear Friend

APPLY

Step 9: Tell someone else
I shared what I learned by:
_____
_____
_____

on _____ (date).
Write a thank you note to the person(s) who
helped you!

CELEBRATE

Step 10: Recognize completion
Congratulations! You set a goal and worked
toward reaching it. Your final
"product" may or may not
be exactly as you imagined
it, but you practiced
several very important
skills in the process.
And doesn't it feel good
to have finished something
you set out to do? Enjoy it!

GOAL

Way to go!

Glossary for "Create Your Own 4-H Project!"

Apply: Using what you've learned in another situation. A simple example is measuring dry and liquid ingredients. You might learn how to do it the first time you make cookies, but you apply it again whenever you bake or cook.

Brainstorm: Letting your mind wander and listing all the things you can think of about the topic. Anything is possible at this point—no judging allowed!

Deadline: Completion date that you set for yourself or that is set by someone else. For example, the county fair entry day and the record book due date are both deadlines you can't change. But you can change the deadlines you set for working on your goals.

Enchilada: Tortilla usually rolled with meat and/or beans inside and served with chili-flavored sauce. In slang terms, it means the whole thing, the big picture, the whole ball of wax, etc.

Exhibit: What you take to the fair to show one part of what you have learned in your entire project. Smaller and more specific than a project.

Goal: Sentence that defines what you want to do by a specific date. A project is likely to have one overall goal plus several smaller and more specific goals.

Project: All the learning and activities in one area or subject. Usually summarized by year and may continue for more than one year. Often includes activities in leadership, citizenship, or community service. For example, a project in geology could include a leadership activity, such as organizing a group of club members to go rock hunting; a citizenship (and communication) activity, such as sharing a rock collection with a third grade class; and a community service (and communication) activity, such as setting up a rock identification booth at a county conservation park open house. Exhibits are usually designed to show a part of what has been learned in a project.

Roadblock: Anything that gets in the way of achieving your goals or finishing what you wanted by a deadline. Some—but not all—roadblocks can be anticipated. Getting sick, breaking an arm, or receiving a last-minute invitation to vacation with a friend are surprise roadblocks. Other possible roadblocks might involve being unable to get needed supplies because the supplier has gone out of business or because they cost more than anticipated; learning that your expert is on vacation for six weeks; or discovering that a skill takes more practice time than you planned for.

Rules: For the "Create Your Own 4-H Project!" the rules are to have fun, work with others to share what you have learned, and try again!

Share: One of the most fun parts of learning something new. A few of the ways sharing can be done include conversations with friends, speeches to a class or club meeting, writing a report, or creating an exhibit.

Timeline: A calendar or list that shows the steps needed to reach a goal by a deadline. Making a timeline helps you anticipate and prepare for roadblocks that otherwise might prevent you from meeting your deadline.

Additional words you want to add:

_____

_____

_____

STEP
3

STEP
1

STEP
4

STEP
2

STEP
5

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STEP
6

STEP
7