

Iowa 4-H Youth Development

So you're the

CLUB PHOTOGRAPHER



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

Tell the 4-H Story with Photos

You are an important 4-H officer. As photographer, you can tell your club's story with photographs. That's important. Your photos can help your historian keep a more interesting history of your 4-H group. Members may rely on you to take photos of their presentations, exhibits, and activities for their record books. When your photos appear in local media or online, you and your group's reporter will help tell the 4-H story to the whole community.

CHECKLIST FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

- ☐ I am enrolled in the 4-H photography project.
- ☐ I know how to operate my camera.
- ☐ If my camera or flash uses batteries, I know that they are fresh or fully charged.
- ☐ I know that, if I'm using film, I have the correct kind for the photo assignment.
- ☐ I know how to download my photos, if I am using a digital camera.
- ☐ I know where to have my photos processed and printed.
- ☐ I work with our 4-H club's reporter to send photos with 4-H news releases.
- ☐ I work with our 4-H club's historian to provide photos for the historian's book.
- ☐ I have made a list of photo opportunities in our 4-H club.
- ☐ I know the names, addresses, and phone numbers of newspaper editors in our county or city.
- ☐ I know the deadlines for submitting stories and photos to our city or county news media.
- ☐ I know how to write a cutline/caption for a photo.
- ☐ I make sure that names are spelled correctly and that people are identified correctly in photos.
- ☐ I know how to electronically submit stories and photos to local media.



Show 4-H'ers in action



Look at pictures that other 4-H photographers take in their clubs. Talk with your 4-H leaders. Ask them to suggest ideas. Look at your 4-H club's monthly program for the year. Your program might include group events or tours that offer chances for photos. Your club meetings offer possibilities, too, like presentations by 4-H'ers, guest speakers, or recreational and service activities.

PHOTO IDEAS

- ✓ New officer installation
- ✓ New members of your 4-H club as they are welcomed by others
- ✓ Presentations, working exhibits, or Share-the-Fun activities by group members
- ✓ 4-H club tours
- ✓ 4-H'ers as they accept awards at your 4-H club's award night
- ✓ Members of your 4-H club working during a community service project
- ✓ Conference judging between the judge and 4-H'er at the county fair
- ✓ Leaders working with 4-H'ers at project workshops
- ✓ Guest speaker presentations
- ✓ 4-H'ers preparing for their presentations
- ✓ 4-H'ers putting finishing touches on their exhibits
- ✓ Parents and 4-H'ers working together on club projects or activities
- ✓ 4-H'ers, parents, and leaders working together on 4-H record books
- ✓ Parties

List Some Photo Ideas for Your Club

Talk with your 4-H leader and look at your 4-H club's program for the year.

List some times and events that offer chances for good action photos of your friends.

PHOTO IDEAS

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September



Take top-notch photos

Most of your photos will have people in them. They may be other 4-H'ers, 4-H leaders, parents, or guests at your club's events. Many photographers ask people to stand in rows and look at the camera (see the group line-up at right). That usually makes people look stiff and uncomfortable.

Some clubs, however, may want group photos for the history book or as a record of attendance at an event. If you must include every member of the club in one photo, be sure you can see their faces. The **group line-up** shows how. You can vary the length of rows and pose some of the members kneeling (in front), others sitting (perhaps in rows two and three), and others standing (as in rows four and five). Such a photo doesn't tell a story, but does create a visual record of club membership.

There's a better way to take top-notch photos. Your photo subjects will look more natural, and the photo does a better job of telling the story, if you pose people so that they can pay attention to something other than your camera. If it's your club's new officers, try setting up the photo with the new president using a gavel to call a meeting to order. If it's a club tour, arrange your subjects so they are focusing on an element of the tour, such as a painting, garden plants, animals, or butterfly collection.

If your subject is just one person, include an item in the photo that says something about what the person did with your group. Perhaps your club had a presentation on cutting and sewing clothing or on farm safety. Your photo can show the person working with members of your club. Almost anything is better than having people stare stiffly at the camera.

You also can take photos while the action is in progress, like the **focus on function** photo at right. Your subjects will look natural because they are paying attention to the activity, not your camera.

THE GROUP LINE-UP



FOCUS ON FUNCTION



Write Cutlines or Captions to Go with Your Photos

Historically, cutlines were descriptions found in newspapers for illustrations, which were cut from wood blocks. The term caption is usually used in yearbook and magazine production. A cutline or caption should give information to help readers understand more about the photo. Because photos capture a moment in time, the cutlines are usually written in the present tense. Media will be more likely to use your photos if your cutlines are easy to understand. Be sure to identify people in the photo from left to right as well as from front to back or clockwise (see Hilltop Hustlers example below left). Spell names correctly; it's a good idea to write the names and hometowns of people in your photo before you take the picture. Also note that not all people in a photo need to be identified, as in crowd shots (you do not need to identify onlookers in the caption you write for the photo below).

Note the complete cutline below the photo.



Members of Hilltop Hustlers 4-H Club learn about landscape methods while performing community service at the Green City recreation center. Clockwise from left front are Blake Johnson, Mike Green, Joe Washington, Hal Richards (landscape architect), and Jim Marks, all of Green City.

Write a cutline for the photo below.





LOOK FOR GREAT EXAMPLES

Look for news photos in magazines and newspapers . . . especially those with people. How many show people staring straight at the camera? Clip several photos that are great examples of “people pictures.” Look for people pictures that show a small group involved in an activity . . . or one person doing something instead of looking at the camera. Think about these examples when you plan the photos of your 4-H group. Use the next page to tape the best examples of photos that show people focused on an activity rather than looking at the camera.

The background features a stylized rainbow with a red stripe at the top. The rainbow is composed of several concentric arcs in shades of blue, light blue, and white. The red stripe is a solid horizontal band at the very top. The text "Great photo examples" is written in a black, cursive font, positioned within the upper part of the rainbow's arc.

Great photo examples

How to Get Your Photos in the Media

All of your efforts will be wasted if you miss media deadlines. Work with your 4-H group's reporter to submit your 4-H news and photos together . . . and on time. Visit or call the newspaper editors in your city or county. Ask about 4-H news and photo deadlines. Ask about the kinds of stories editors want. Ask how they want stories or photos submitted. The editors will have story and photo ideas to make your job easier. Also check with your local county extension office. Find out whether they publish 4-H news in a monthly newsletter. If so, note the deadline to submit photos.

County or Neighborhood Newspapers/Media

Newspaper/Media	Editor	Address	
	E-mail	Phone	4-H News Deadline

Newspaper/Media	Editor	Address	
	E-mail	Phone	4-H News Deadline



Other Photography Resources

Ask for 4-H publications at your county extension office

4H 640A	Focus on Photography, Level 1
4H 640B	Controlling the Image, Level 2
4H 640C	Mastering Photography, Level 3

Find more resources at the Web site of the Journalism Education Association (JEA)

www.jea.org

Ask for the following publications at your local library

ISBN 0071363874	Associated Press Guide to Photojournalism, 2nd ed., Brian Horton, McGraw-Hill, 2001
ISSN 0199-2422	Best of Photojournalism 2007, Donald R. Winslow, ed., National Press Photographers Association
ISBN 13:978-1579909468	Kodak New Pocket Guide to Digital Photography, Eastman Kodak Company

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. . . and justice for all

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