

Job Description - 4-H Project Leader

Purpose

- teach 4-H members (aged 9 - 20) technical knowledge and project skills
- contribute to the mission of the 4-H Alberta program

Responsibilities

- determine project objectives and teaching methods; design and teach lessons
- ensure members and their families are informed of project requirements at the beginning of the year
- inform parents about cost and assistance required from them
- find meeting place and supplies for project meetings, provide a safe working environment for project activities, monitor risk associated with these activities
- evaluate members performance on an on-going basis. Offer encouragement and support.
- in cooperation with members and parents, develop and report project budget to the club for approval
- find resource people as needed
- attend general club meetings and functions; participate on committees as required by the club
- work with club leader and other project leaders (or designated committee) to plan achievement day
- ensure 4-H Alberta project guidelines are followed

Requirements

- minimum of 18 years of age
- positive, enthusiastic and honest
- new leaders and those being recertified must complete the 4-H Leader Screening process.
- new leaders must complete Level One Leader training as part of the Leader Screening process.
- valid drivers licence, if transporting youth

Other Skills that are helpful

- good organization, communication, delegation and time management skills
- ability to work with diverse age groups and a variety of learning levels
- combination of education and experience related to the project (or willingness to learn)

Time Commitment and Cost

- approximately 10 hours per month; time depends on project and leader's experience
- cost may include out of pocket expenses for project supplies that are usually reimbursed by club funds. (Receipts must be given to club treasurer.) Other personal expenses may include mileage, phone calls and meals.

Supervision

- must be elected or approved by the 4-H members each year
- responsible to general club leader
- supervises project members, resource people and judges
- new leaders are considered to be on probation until all screening procedures have been completed and approval is received from regional screening committee

Benefits

- fun!
- enhance leadership, communication and organizational skills
- opportunities for leadership training, personal growth and travel

What Do I Do Now?

Every new 4-H Project Leader begins the club year with a lot of questions, such as “*What have I gotten myself into?*” Hopefully, this outline of things that need to be done will be helpful as you work your way through the 4-H year. Every 4-H year has three parts: 1) the beginning; 2) the middle, and 3) the end. There are different duties associated with each part of the year.

1. The Beginning

Most clubs begin in the fall, are active through the winter months and wind up in late spring or early summer. So the “*beginning*” may be sometime in September, October or early November.

Here’s what needs to happen:

Read	through the materials for your project unit - manual, record book and leaders’ guide
Distribute	project materials that you receive from your General Leader to your members
Get to Know	your members - their background, experience in project area, abilities, etc.
Arrange	for a meeting place that can accommodate the equipment you will need for your project work
Assist	members in making a decision about the frequency of meetings, times and dates that they will be held
Discuss	with members and parents the number and type of project articles that will be worked on during the year
Outline	the approximate cost, equipment and materials needed by each member and inform parents
Draw Up	a tentative outline for the year (when various topics will be covered)
Let Parents Know	what kind of help you will need from them and get commitments, where possible
Search	for resources you could use in teaching the project (project kits, videos, local speakers, etc.)

2. The Middle

Meet regularly	with your project group
Planning the time	you will need in advance of each meeting
Introducing variety	in the meeting sessions by: mixing in recreational activities; varying the location; using different methods of presentation (such as skits, quizzes, tours, games, debates and case studies)
Working at your own pace	is important. The amount of project work actually done at the meetings will depend on the nature of the project, age and ability of members and support available from parents at home. The 4-H manuals only provide guidelines
Encourage	members to regularly work on their record books

What Do I Do Now? (continued)

3. The End

A 4-H club year winds up with an Achievement Day - a public display of work done during the year. You will have a number of responsibilities in connection with the wind-up of the 4-H year.

Assist	the General Leader in choosing a 4-H judge for your project area
Encourage members	to finish their project work and record books on time
Help members plan	their display space and any special activities they may be involved in at the Achievement Day program
Communicate	any special problems or considerations to the judge before evaluations begins
Work with club members and leaders	in setting up, conducting and cleaning up after the Achievement Day program

Give yourself and members a big pat on the back.

Selecting A Project

A 4-H project is:

- planned work in an area of interest to the 4-H member
- guided by a volunteer who is the project leader
- aimed at objectives that can be attained and measured
- summarized by some form of record keeping

Selecting a Project

With so many projects available, selection can be a difficult decision. Members, together with their parents and leaders should discuss the following:

- **Member's Interests** - Has the 4-H member chosen a project because he or she is interested, or because a friend is taking it?
- **Abilities** - A project should teach the member something new, so it should be chosen with a view to the development of new abilities and the increase of knowledge. The project should be challenging, but not out of reach.
- **Resources** - Does the member have access to the necessary equipment and resources, such as an animal, land or special tools that may be needed? Are these available for the duration of the project? Money and space required should also be considered.
- **Location and time** - Can the chosen project be carried out where the member lives and in the time that is available? Serious thought should be given to this by members who live away from home to go to school.
- **Project requirements** specify that the member, not the parents, is responsible for completing the project.
- **The family situation** - Does the chosen project fit the family situation and is it interesting to both the family and club member?
- **Some projects have age limits.** Check each project to determine the minimum age required.

About 40 projects are available to Alberta 4-H members. New projects are being added and old projects are reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. Your suggestions are welcome, they help keep the project materials contemporary and effective.

If you have comments or questions about 4-H projects and resources call the 4-H Specialist - Resource Development at 403-948-1521 (toll-free at 310-0000).

A list of available projects is found on the next page AND on www.4h.ab.ca or under Downloads.

Check out
Policy 6.02
Alberta 4-H
New Project
Policy

Projects

For a complete listing of 4-H Alberta's projects, visit www.4h.ab.ca/projects/index.html.

There are a variety of projects that fall within these categories:

- Active Living
- Agriculture & Environment
- For the Arts
- In and Around the Home
- Science, Technology and Trade
- Small Animals
- Take the Lead

Principles of Good Instruction

Set a positive example

Be enthusiastic and excited about what you are teaching and your members will be interested and motivated to learn.

Prepare

Be familiar with the material to be presented. Know the overall goal so you can give members a clear idea of what they are trying to accomplish.

Be concise, clear and simple

Give instructions in logical order. Explain new terms by relating them to old understood terms. Don't assume members know the meaning of the words you use.

Take advantage of every opportunity to praise

Members are individuals with different interests, values, and motives. But they all need to feel good about themselves. Give rewards for work done – a pat on the back or a word of praise.

Maintain interest by encouraging activity and participation

Demonstrate and have members follow as soon as possible by *“doing.”* Vary your teaching methods; get members actively involved whenever possible. Maintain order with firmness and patience.

Learning is a fun activity

Make sure both you and your members have fun. Young people love parties, so project meetings and recognition events can be fun.

Principles of Good Instruction (continued)

Teaching Tips

Here are some additional tips to keep in mind as you lead your project group:

- Let members know when you plan to start and get their attention first.
- Know your members and speak their language. Use examples related to their experiences. They appreciate it when you meet them at their level. Remember, children don't learn or mature at the same rate and come from different family influences and pressures.
- Establish a feeling of trust. Members should feel free to make a mistake. Don't be afraid to make a mistake yourself. Members will learn it's normal to make mistakes.
- Use visual aids if the real thing is not present.
- Give members time for feedback. Encourage it by giving it yourself. Help members see how close to their goal they are.
- Members aren't always free to pick their own schedules – holidays and school breaks must be taken into account.
- Ensure that you make decisions with members - not for them.

Relating the Five Principles of Leadership to 4-H

Model the Way

Act the way that your 4-H members should be acting at all times. From communicating with guests, parents and other members to demonstrating safe practices with animals, there are numerous opportunities to show members how to act appropriately. Be the good example others will remember!

Inspire a Shared Vision

Share with your members what you hope to achieve at the end of each project. Have a goal in mind with all activities and discussions. If you are hopeful and excited, your members will be too!

Challenge the Process

By understanding more about how your members learn and use innovative ways to present project material, you can stimulate everybody. Thinking is healthy!

Enable Others to Act

Inspire your club members to participate in everything they can! Encourage your members to be a part of other clubs and fundraisers in your region, competitions and shows in your region and opportunities across Alberta that 4-H and other organizations offer. Encourage other volunteers as well by sharing resources, stories and advice!

Encourage the Heart

Show you care . . . really! Praise and recognize the work your members have done throughout their 4-H experience. Give senior members feedback on their skills and attitudes . . . this will help them in future endeavours!

Adapted from The Leadership Challenge, by Kouzes and Posner and Patsy Marshall, Train on Track Presentation

Decision Making Skills

The late teen years are a time of decision making for most young people. The bewildering range of options available and the complexity of the marketplace can make decision making even more problematic for young people just leaving high school. Members who have basic decision making skills are better able to handle the decisions facing them. They can be sure that they've made the best decision possible under the circumstances.

The decision making process has six steps and can be applied to virtually any decision. The steps of the process are presented in a linear sequence, but in practice people often move back and forth between the steps.

The following example of "*Choosing a Club Shirt*" illustrates the six steps in the process:

1. Identify the goal or define the problem.

Is the decision really which kind of club shirt is best, or is there another factor influencing your decision? Other reasons, which might be involved, include:

- ◇ "I feel that I don't fit in at 4-H. I think that if I had a club shirt the other kids would accept me more."
- ◇ "I never know what to wear to Achievement Day. A 4-H club shirt would make it easy."

2. Gather information about the goal or problem.

Assuming that the decision is "*which kind of 4-H club shirt is best?*" - The following types of information might be gathered:

- ◇ What different styles and colours are available?
- ◇ What is the price range?
- ◇ Is there a difference in quality between the most and least expensive?
- ◇ Do any come with a guarantee or other consumer protection?

3. Identify possible solutions or alternatives.

In most situations there is usually more than one possible solution or alternative. When you are buying a club shirt there may be three or four shirts that you really like that are in the right price range and offer similar quality.

4. Identify the consequences of each alternative and make a decision.

Is one shirt warmer than another? Will one last longer because it is better quality? Which of these factors is most important to you? The decision that you make should be the one that you'll be happy with later. Some things to consider when identifying the consequences of each alternative include:

- ◇ Cost.
- ◇ Amount of time and energy required implementing.
- ◇ Effects on other people or the community.
- ◇ Effects on the environment.
- ◇ Extent to which the solution is consistent with personal values, beliefs and goals.

5. Take action.

Draw up a plan of action on your decision and proceed. In this situation, action means buying your first choice of 4-H club shirt.

6. Evaluate the results of your decision. Finally, think about the results of your decision. Did you get enough information? What would you do differently next time? Has the shirt been worth the money? Do you still think that your decision was the best one?

Learn To Do By Doing

One of the principles behind all 4-H training is *“Learn to Do by Doing”*. The 4-H motto is based on sound principles - people learn by doing and achieving things.

People generally remember about 10% of what they read.

While some material can be simply read and understood by members, providing reading materials ahead of time is best. The project leader can then reinforce any written material passed to members.

People generally remember about 20% of what they hear.

Lectures should be kept very short. Always keep it under 30 minutes with younger children.

People generally remember about 30% of what they see.

Wherever practical make a demonstration part of every lesson. *“The eye is the window to the brain.”*

People generally remember about 50% of what they hear and see.

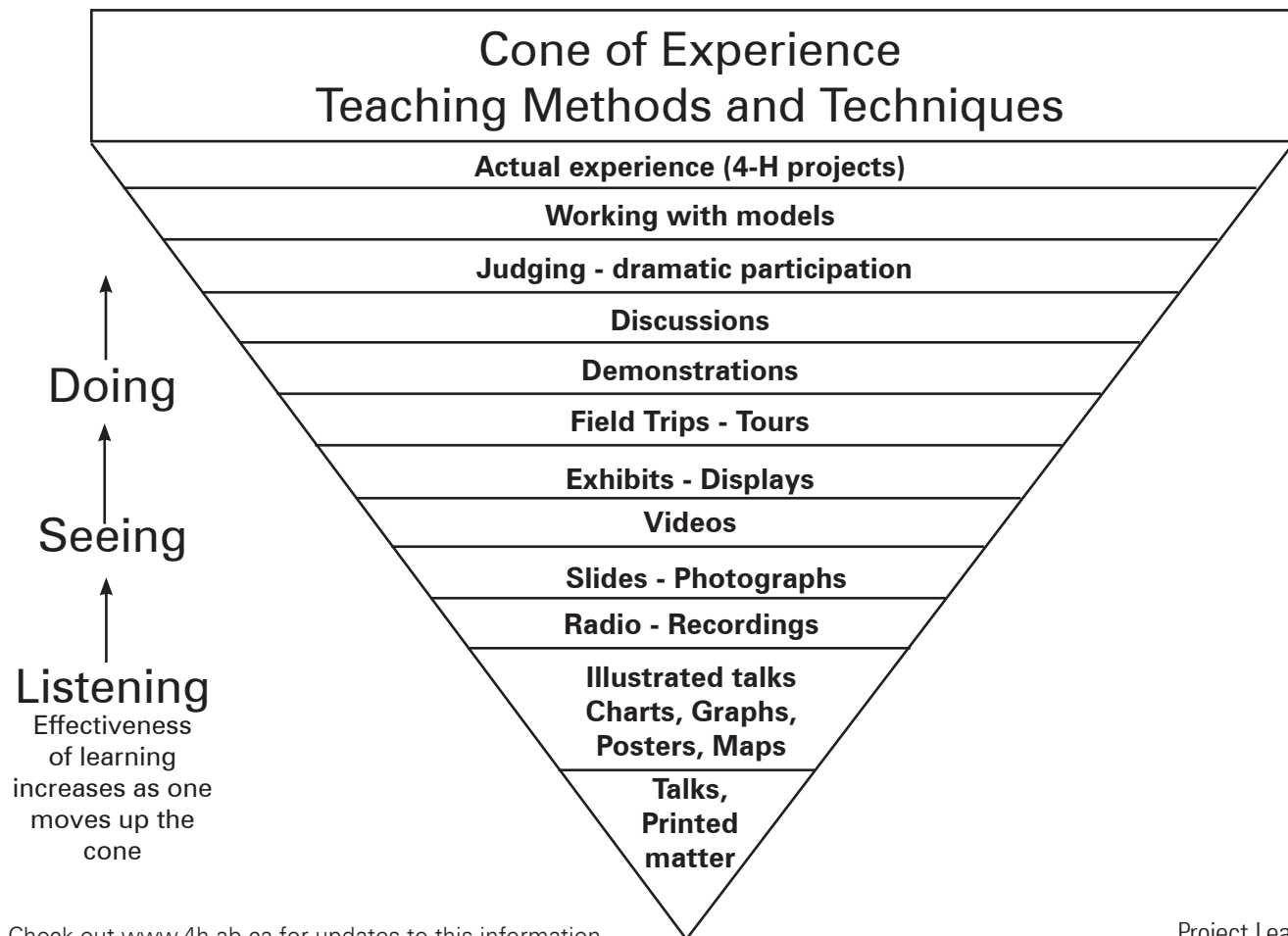
Explain and demonstrate the principle.

People generally remember about 70% of what they say and write.

Explain the principle, demonstrate the principle, have the member write it down and repeat it back. Record books and journals will also reinforce the project concepts.

People generally remember about 90% of what they say and do.

Whenever possible the member should have the opportunity to practice. The ideal lesson is five minutes of explanation, ten minutes of demonstration and fifteen minutes of practice.



Age Characteristics

9-11 Year Olds (Juniors)

- Many have excess energy.
- Very sociable and as the age increases there is rising interest in people rather than activities; seldom want to be alone.
- Popularity and group acceptance is very important.
- Coordination is becoming well developed and the ability to use equipment increases.
- May be prone to take risks.
- Tend to avoid the opposite sex.
- Beginning to develop their personal value system and fair play is an important factor to them.
- Wide range of individual differences as maturity levels differ dramatically.
- Sense of humour is well developed by the end of age group.

Some specifics for 11 year olds

- May be extremely touchy and prone to mood swings (enthusiasm-apathy; love-hate; selfish-thoughtful).
- Interest in opposite sex begins to show.
- Fear independence, yet want it.

Implications for leadership and programming for 9-11 year olds

- Fair play is vital and they respect a consistent, reliable and trustworthy leader. Guard against favouritism.
- Demonstrate strong democratic and group consensus leadership.
- Group work is essential; incorporate team activities to encourage a sense of belonging.
- Include very active games.
- Provide a range of activities to accommodate difference maturity and skill levels.
- Increase personal responsibility.
- Well-planned programs are essential to maintain interest; include some activities that mix the sexes.
- Allow for questions.
- Guided competition can lead to development of sportsmanship.

12-14 Year Olds (Intermediates)

- This group is nearing physical maturity.
- They may be self-conscious due to changes in voice or appearance. Appearance is very important.
- Interest in the opposite sex.
- Heightened emotions.
- The opinion of others is very important, particularly with a peer group.
- Individual personality is becoming more obvious. Development of philosophy of life and other personal values. Sense of identity – begin to doubt and question everything that they have learned.
- Beginning independence from family.
- Cliques may develop as they become selective with friendships.
- May daydream more.
- Fluctuate between childish and adult behaviour.

continued . . .

Age Characteristics (continued)

Implications for leadership and programming for 12-14 year olds

- Youth should be given the opportunity for leadership. Allow them to plan their own program with skilled guidance.
- Personality and character of the leader is most important. They value the importance of the individual; will question authoritative leadership and may rebel against it.
- Encourage team work and group activities.
- Offer a broad program of activities; require activities that are mentally stimulating and challenging. Have opportunity for mixing of sexes.
- Informality is important in programming.

15+ Years (Seniors)

- This age is reaching physical maturity.
- May be prone to idealism and expression of rash thought. Periods of intense emotions.
- Interested in all aspects of life.
- Establishing a moral code. Will become very dedicated to a cause they feel worthy.
- Growing independence from family.
- Individualism is marked. Prize one or two dependable friends.
- Cooperation in interpersonal relationships.
- Choice for vocation may take place and interest in activities that complement this.

Implications for leadership and programming

- High ideals are expected of a leader.
- Democratic leadership is essential.
- Goals must be seen as worthy and agreed upon together.
- Program must provide challenge, opportunity for mixing of the sexes and allowance for individual differences.
- Allow opportunities for independence.
- Must allow for and encourage the acceptance of oneself as an individual.

TIP! At all 4-H gatherings, have a calendar of local, regional, and provincial events available. This can be a great resource when encouraging members to participate in opportunities beyond the club level.



Get Feedback!

The best way to really understand the perception of your strengths and weaknesses is to get those around you to provide feedback.

Evaluation is the process used to assess the quality of what has gone on or what is going on. Evaluation in 4-H is important for individual growth and development. A member who can see how far he has come from the first of the year will be encouraged to continue.

Steps to Constructive Feedback

1. **Purpose** - Point out strengths and weaknesses
2. **Attitude** - Have the goal of giving feedback to help
3. **Be Specific!** - Suggest alternatives to help the person next time
4. **Be Positive!** - Give credit where credit is due
5. **Be Understood!** - Use words and expressions everybody understands
6. **Be Fair!** - Know the standards by which the person is guided

As a volunteer, you need feedback as well! Perhaps ask a senior club member or peer volunteer to let you know what they think.

Create a feedback form or ask questions similar to the following:

- What are my strengths as a 4-H volunteer?
- What are my weaknesses as a 4-H volunteer?
- How could I improve?
- What was one thing that I successfully prepared for as part of this project/event?
- What should I do differently if I was to plan this project/event again?

Adapted
from the
Saskatchewan
4-H Leader
Binder
resource