



Family Guide to the Texas 4-H Recordbook



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Table of Contents

Family Guide to the Texas 4-H Recordbook.....	3
What is a Texas 4-H Recordbook?	3
Junior Order	3
Intermediate Order.....	4
Senior Order	4
Record-Keeping Process	4
Goal Setting - Getting Started.....	4
Journaling - As Things Happen.....	4
Reflecting – Looking Back	5
What will judges be looking for?	6
Definitions & Section Guidelines	6
General Rules.....	13
Competitive Recordbook Categories	14
Appendix A.....	14
Appendix B.....	17
Appendix C.....	19
Appendix D	21

Family Guide to the Texas 4-H Recordbook

Recordkeeping is a very valuable skill taught to members of the Texas 4-H program. Members are encouraged to keep project records and have these records reviewed annually by submitting a Texas 4-H Recordbook. The primary purposes of completing a recordbook are for a young person to develop the skills necessary to set goals, work toward achieving those goals, reflect on his/her experiences, and set new and higher goals for themselves. A secondary benefit is to prepare young people for the process of completing quality academic scholarship applications.

Beginning in the 2011-2012 4-H year, revisions were made and implemented to create:

1. More age appropriate forms
2. An **OPTIONAL** online system available for data entry (www.4hreports.com)
3. Identical Word and PDF forms available for download (http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/youth_recordbooks)
4. An updated evaluation process that focuses on personal achievement
5. Greater flexibility for members to move from one competitive recordbook category to another from year to year as he/she develops other project interests

What is a Texas 4-H Recordbook?

A recordbook consists of information that a 4-H member gathers over the course of a 4-H year that documents his/her goals, knowledge and skills gained, leadership experiences, awards earned, and service in his/her community. Those experiences are recorded into forms, narratives, and story written by the 4-H member. The information is printed, bound in a cover, and is typically submitted for evaluation.

Three different formats for recordbooks have been developed for junior, intermediate, and senior age divisions. Members can select to use the online forms that are available, the downloadable forms (in Word or fillable PDF formats), or any combination in order to develop a complete set of records. However, one of these form versions must be used.

Definitions and guidelines are to follow later in this guide, but what does each age division include in their recordbook? Below is an overview of each division.

Junior Order

- Check Sheet
- Personal Information Page
- Junior Report Form
- Up to 3 pages of photos
- Prior year's report forms (not judged)

- Additional Photo Pages (for those entering photography category only; up to 6 pages maximum)

Intermediate Order

- Check Sheet
- Personal Information Page
- Story and Photo Portfolio (10 page max.)
- Intermediate Report Form
- Prior year's report forms (prior year to be judged)
- Additional Photo Pages (for those entering photography category only; up to 6 pages maximum)

Senior Order

- Check Sheet
- Personal Information Page
- Story and Photo Portfolio (10 page max.)
- Senior Report Forms I-VII
- Prior year's report forms (previous 3 years to be judged)*
- Additional Photo Pages (for those entering photography category only; up to 6 pages maximum)

**Previous version of forms will be available for a senior 4-Her completing a first-time recordbook. Forms are available upon request by emailing: Derrick Bruton (d-bruton@tamu.edu) or Kyle Merten (kmerten@aq.tamu.edu).*

Record-Keeping Process

Goal Setting - Getting Started

Prior to or at the beginning of the 4-H year, a member should begin identifying, setting and recording personal goals for themselves in each project area. Parents, club managers, adult volunteers, and County Extension Agents play an important role in helping guide young people through this process. Members should record their personal goals and then begin work toward achieving those goals. Be sure to record anything the member would like to learn or do.

Journaling - As Things Happen

Record keeping is going to be an important part of a member's life. Members will keep records in high school, at work, in college, and even if they own their own business or work for someone else. Now is the time to learn how to keep good records. The most important thing about 4-H record keeping is to find a comfortable way to collect information. Some of the most common

ways of keeping up with 4-H records include a calendar, an index box and a notebook. These are further defined below.

- A. Calendar Method** - Keep a calendar in a handy location (such as on the refrigerator) and every time the member does something related to 4-H, school, church or other organizations, write it down. Then at the end of each month place the calendar in a safe place until it is time to assemble the recordbook.

- B. Index Box Method** - Get a 3-inch by 5-inch box, index cards and some dividers. Label each of the dividers as one of the sections in the report form discussed later in this guide. Then each time the member does something, write it down on an index card, then file the card in the section marked by the divider. For example: If the 4-H member were to go to the nursing home for recreation with the residents, then have him/her write it down and put the card behind the community service divider. After maintaining the “4-H File Box” for a year, pull the cards out and select the most important activities for the 4-H recordbook. Do not forget to date each card.

- C. Binder or Spiral Notebook Method** - Grab an old school binder or notebook and organize each of activity by type or by date. This is an easy first step to start out, until the member gets the hang of record keeping.

- D. Electronic Device** – If an electronic device is available, use an “app” or some other software to record or document activities, trainings, clinics, leadership roles, service activities, project experiences, etc.

- E. 4hreports.com** – Use a computer or smartphone to access online forms and enter information directly the system.

Reflecting – Looking Back

Below are some questions to help a member start reflecting on his/her project experiences as he or she prepares to complete a recordbook.

- What did you learn from your project?
- Did you meet any of your goals? If so, what helped you attain those? If not, what were some obstacles that might have prevented you reaching your goals.
- How did your project change or grow within the year or from previous years?
- What type of leadership capacity did you serve in?
- What impact did your involvement have on you, your club, or community?
- How has your project experiences influenced your future career choice?

What will judges be looking for?

Recordbooks submitted for competition will be evaluated based on project work, leadership, community service, awards, and non 4-H activities. Please refer to the appropriate age division's score sheet for judging criteria. (Junior—Appendix A; Intermediate—Appendix B; Senior-Appendix C)

Recordbooks will be judged primarily on content. Emphasis will be placed on the quality of the member's experiences, activities, leadership, service, and accomplishments. When readers look at a recordbook, they take into account the details in relation to how long the member has been in 4-H.

Don't forget to take pictures throughout the year of 4-H projects and activities. Waiting until the last minute and having to pose or create false photos is not recommended.

Definitions & Section Guidelines

Recordbook Cover: All types of covers or binders are accepted. Official 4-H recordbook covers can be ordered from [National 4-H Supply](#). Some county Extension offices may have a supply of these covers or may place county orders.

Check Sheet: A single page found at the front of the recordbook that designated individuals initial to verify that all information is included and complete. See Appendix D.

Personal Information Page: A single page that contains personal contact information such as name, address, 4-H information, and certification signatures. This page is used to verify the appropriate age division, category entered and that information contained within the recordbook reflects the work of the individual submitting the records for evaluation.

Junior Personal

Story and Photos: For juniors, the story is included within the form itself and members should not add any additional pages for their stories beyond the space that is provided. The story should focus on information for the current 4-H year; however, it may also include information from prior years. The junior story is broken down into six individual sections that include:

- **Family Information**
- **Why you joined 4-H**
- **Club or Project Activities**
- **Favorite Parts of 4-H**

- **Areas for Future Expansion or Future Goals**
- **Other Information**

Juniors may include up to 3 pages (single-sided) of photos. Photos should depict 4-H project work and activities with focus on the current year, but may also include previous year's photos. Photo captions may be used to help convey what is illustrated in the photo, but captions are not required. The photos used are a very important part of the 4-H recordbook. Photos should reflect growth, development and involvement throughout the 4-H career. Use photos that show the member doing things, learning and teaching others, and especially of the member having FUN in 4-H. Use photos that show the main project, other projects, leadership, community service and other 4-H related pictures. Photos depicting family activities, livestock auction, U.I.L., sports events, other school events (non 4-H related photos) are discouraged.

Intermediate and Senior
Story & Photo Portfolio:

For intermediate and senior age divisions, the 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio can be no more than 10 pages. The story should focus on information for the current 4-H year; however, it may also include information from prior years. The story must be at least three pages of double-spaced type and use a minimum of a 10-point or equivalent size font for the text. The story should also include a minimum equivalent of three pages of photos. Photos should depict 4-H project work and activities with focus on the current year, but may also include previous year's photos. Photo captions may be used to help convey what is illustrated in the photo, but captions are not required. Story and photos may be combined. The remaining four pages are up to the member, which can include additional text, photos or left out completely. There is no requirement to use all 10 pages.

Intermediate and Senior age divisions should title their story as follows: "My 4-H _____ (Recordbook Category) Story and Photo Portfolio". Example: "My 4-H Horse Story and Photo Portfolio". The member may add a subtitle to the story and photo portfolio; however, each story must begin with this title. The story should include such information as:

- Information about yourself, your family and your community
- When and why you joined 4-H
- Project Goals

- Things about your involvement in the recordbook category you are entering and the most important things that you have learned in 4-H
- Highlights of other 4-H projects and activities
- How 4-H has helped you become a better leader and citizen and what you have learned through your community service and leadership activities
- How being a 4-H member has helped you set goals (tell what the goals are) and develop new interests, and if 4-H has influenced your future plans or career goals

The photos used are a very important part of the 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio. Photos should reflect growth, development and involvement in the member's 4-H career. Use photos that show the member doing things, learning and teaching others, and especially having FUN in 4-H. Use photos that show the main project, other projects, leadership, community service and other 4-H related pictures. Photos depicting family activities, livestock auction, U.I.L., sports events, other school events (non-4-H related photos) are discouraged. Color and/or black and white photos, clear sharp copies of photos (scanned and/or color copied), and newspaper photo clippings can be used; however, they cannot overlap and must be fastened securely. No newspaper stories are allowed.

Report Forms:

Identical forms are available in an online version or can be downloaded as a Word or PDF document. Either version, or combination of versions, may be completed and submitted.

The Texas 4-H Report Form is the main form for the 4-H recordbook. It is used to report all of the neat and cool stuff that have been done in 4-H, along with school, church and other community groups. Always keep in mind that 4-H teaches growth, so show as much growth as possible when filling out the report form.

Some of the sections will require more time and thought, while a couple of the sections will be a breeze to complete. Each section highlights different parts of the member's 4-H career, such as projects, learning experiences, teaching experiences, community service, leadership, awards and recognition and non-4-H activities.

From this point forward, members should include copies of each year's report forms, so that by the end of the 4-H career, the member should have a complete history of his/her 4-H experiences.

Keep in mind, the following rules will apply for judging:

- Juniors will only be judged for the current year
- Intermediates will be judged for the current and previous year
- Seniors will be judged for the current and previous 3 years

Below are some important facts that families should know about the different forms for each age division.

For Juniors, the report form consists of 4 main sections:

- **Goals** (main project; current year only)
- **Diary** (all projects; current year only)
- **4-H Story** (all projects; all years)
- **Awards/Community Service/Leadership** (all projects; current year only)

Intermediate report forms include:

- **Goals** (main project; current year)
- **Personal Journal** (all projects; current year and previous year)
- **Summary of Accomplishments** (all projects; current and previous year)
- **Community Service, Leadership, and Project Summary** (all projects; current year only)

The Senior report forms consist of the following sections (current year's information only):

- **Section I: 4-H Project Experiences**
- **Section II: 4-H Leadership Experiences**
- **Section III: 4-H Community Service**
- **Section IV: Other 4-H Projects**
- **Section V: 4-H Recognition and Awards**
- **Section VI: Non 4-H Activities**
- **Section VII: College and Career Exploration**

Section I: 4-H Project Experiences (3 page maximum) asks: What is your project? How did your project change or grow? What have you done and what have you learned? This section includes the current year's information for four main projects.

Note: In the previous version, this section was divided into two parts; however, this has now been combined and is limited to three pages.

This section includes, but is not limited to, such things as: items bought, items made and/or raised, places visited, profits/losses, hours spent on the project, and number of people taught and/or served. Projects outlined in the Report Form must include the project or project(s) that match the recordbook category entered. Be sure to list the recordbook category entered as the first project.

List all of the cool and neat things that the member has done and learned that are related to his/her 4-H projects. This is the member's opportunity to tell the world: "Look at the cool stuff I have been doing!" Include such things as, but not limited to, workshops, contests, tours, research, computer learning programs, study of written material, interviews, etc.

Learning experiences are those activities in which the 4-H member has been a participant and not a teacher or instructor. Project related leadership experiences should be reported under Volunteer Leadership in Section II. Remember everything done in 4-H is at some level—local, county, district, state, national or international. The member needs to let others know the level of participation in 4-H activities. "Code" each experience by using "L" for local and/or club, "C" for county, "D" for district, "S" for state, "N" for national and an "I" for international.

Section I should include information on a maximum of four projects. Additional 4-H projects are listed in Section IV of the Report Form. This four-project report allows the member to write about his/her successes and to show a greater amount of growth.

Leadership and Citizenship are listed as projects just like Swine, Beef, Clothing and Textiles, etc.

Section II - 4-H Leadership Experiences (2 page maximum): 4-H leadership experiences are the most important things that tell others how the member has been involved in teaching and leading. The Texas 4-H Report Form provides one page for the member to tell about these leadership experiences for the current 4-H year. The 4-H member should be able to demonstrate leadership in three different areas:

- Promotion
- Volunteer
- Elected/Appointed

Promotion Leadership should explain, “How have you told someone about 4-H?” This includes such activities as wearing a 4-H T-shirt to school, getting a picture related to 4-H in the paper, speaking on the radio about 4-H, or riding on a 4-H float during a parade.

Volunteer leadership should explain, “How and what did I do to lead or teach others in 4-H?” Examples of volunteer leadership include: led the Pledge of Allegiance at the 4-H meeting, demonstrated how to measure a tablespoon at a 4-H club meeting, or organized a 4-H workshop.

Elected/appointed leadership explains, “What did you do to help?” This includes leadership in volunteering to serve on a committee like the telephone, recreation, and/or refreshment committee, and in serving in any elected office such as president or reporter of the local club, county 4-H council and or district/state council.

Section II should also include any leadership opportunities that occurred while performing community service. Do not report this as community service in Section III.

Explanation about contests:

Contests, such as livestock, dairy, horse judging and horse and nutrition bowls are considered learning experiences. They are not projects and therefore should not be listed in Section I. All of these types of activities are learning experiences that should be listed under a designated project (example: horse judging should be listed as an activity in the horse project).

Section III - 4-H Community Service (2 page maximum): Community service is the opportunity for 4-H members to go out into the community and help others, or to improve the quality of the town and the lives of those around them. How do you know if what you have been doing is community service? Ask yourself: “What did I do to help other people because of 4-H?”. The Texas 4-H Report Form provides one page to tell about these community service experiences for the current 4-H year.

Community service listed in the Texas 4-H Report Form should be limited to one page and should be “coded” by the amount of community service and number of persons involved in the activity.

There are three codes that reflect this:

- “Y” Yourself – this was a community service project that you did all by yourself with no help from other 4-H members or club.
- “P” Provided Primary Leadership – you were the organizer, you made all the arrangements, and recruited other 4-H members to help you.
- “M” Member of a Group – when another 4-H member called asking for help, you were there as a worker and helper.

This section is for community service activities only and not for citizenship experiences (citizenship is a project).

Section IV - Other 4-H Projects (1 page maximum): lets the member briefly tell about other 4-H projects. These may be projects that lasted 1 or 2 years. It’s okay to list projects that the member didn’t enjoy and did not continue past 1 year. Just be sure to include the number of years involved in the project and a summary of involvement. Don’t list any project(s) that are already listed in Section I. The Texas 4-H Report Form provides one-half page to tell about these other 4-H projects for the current 4-H year.

Section V - 4-H Recognition and Awards (1 page maximum): Awards and recognition are important in the 4-H program. They provide an opportunity for 4-H members to be recognized for all of their hard work and dedication to a 4-H project, leadership provided to others, community service activities, and of course for being the “best all around 4-H member.” This section allows 4-H members to say, “Look at what I have been recognized for!” In one-half page, list the awards that made the member proud, starting with the current year. Emphasize recognition received during the past year; however, the member can include information for any year. The Texas 4-H Report Form provides one-half page to tell about these recognitions and awards for the current 4-H year.

Section VI - Other Activities (1 page maximum): This section allows the member to show off school, church, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or other youth organization activities, leadership, community service, and awards and recognition. There is a one-page limit to tell about all of these exciting things. This section will also include all Clover Kids activities (no Clover Kids involvement should be reported in

prior sections). The Texas 4-H Report Form provides one page to tell about these other activities experiences for the current 4-H year.

Section VII - College and Career Exploration (1 page maximum): List activities that have helped the member learn more about careers or the necessary education to enter a career of interest. Examples of these activities include: interviews, tours, job shadowing, research, mentoring, work experience, skill development, course work, etc. The Texas 4-H Report Form provides one page to tell about these college and career exploration activities for the current 4-H year. Month and year is all that is needed.

General Rules

- Handwriting:** Handwriting any part of the recordbook is acceptable. When doing so, make sure to write legibly.
- Grammar and Punctuation:** For all age divisions, members are encouraged to write in complete sentences and use proper grammar and punctuation.
- Text Margins:** Top, bottom and right margins must be between 1/2 and 1 inch. The left margin must be 1 1/2 inches to allow for hole punching and/or binding (if using the 4-H recordbook cover).
- Paper Type:** Typing paper and bond weight paper are acceptable. Do not paste typing paper to construction paper, and do not use sheet protectors or dividers.
- Creativity:** This is encouraged, and can include the use of backgrounds, decorative elements, construction paper cutouts, etc. throughout the story and photo sections. Creativity can also come in the form of writing.
- Font:** Color or black fonts are acceptable. Use a minimum of a 10-point font (equivalent in size to 10-point Arial).
- Web vs. Downloaded Forms:** Either version is acceptable. Judges will be looking at and focusing on the content and quality of the records rather than the format.

Competitive Recordbook Categories

Beef
Citizenship & Civic Education
Clothing & Textiles
Communication and Expressive Arts
Companion Animals
Consumer Education
Dairy
Entomology
Family Life
Food & Nutrition
Gardening & Horticulture
Goat
Health
Horse
Housing & Home Environment
Leadership
Natural Resources

Personal Development
Photography
Plant & Soil Science
Poultry
Public Speaking
Rabbit
Recreation
Safety
Science, Engineering & Technology
Sheep
Shooting Sports
Swine
Veterinary Science
Wildlife & Fisheries

(List revised 2012)

Portions of this guide have been adapted from the Texas 4-H “Record Improvement Guide” (May 2000).

Appendix A

Record-Keeping Score Sheet

JUNIOR LEVEL

Name: _____	County: _____	District: _____
Category: _____		

Instructions: Check one box (or award the point value) for the statement on each row that best describes each recordbook section/criteria. Total the check or point value at the bottom of the chart. Provide specific details in the comment boxes if necessary.

	Not at all (1 Point)	Somewhat (2 Points)	Mostly (3 Points)	Completely (4 Points)	
Personal Information - Complete; no additions or corrections necessary					Comments
Selection, Goals and Diary					
Project Selection – Member clearly describes reason for selecting main project.					
Project Goals – Current and future goals are clearly outlined for 4-H project(s).					
Diary of 4-H Events - Member effectively demonstrates high level of involvement in 4-H and non 4-H activities.					
My 4-H Story					
Organization - The story sections are well organized. One idea follows another in a logical sequence with clear transitions.					
4-H Focus - The story emphasizes 4-H project work and experiences					
Main Project – The story summarizes activities and learning experiences within the main project category.					
Spelling/Punctuation/Grammar - There are minimal spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors in the story.					
Creativity - The story contains creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to					

the reader's enjoyment.					
Awards, Service, and Leadership					
Awards - 4-H member effectively describes what the recognition or award means to them.					
Service - Engaged in wide array of activities impacting individuals and groups.					
Leadership — Member describes appropriate type, number, and level of leadership activities suitable for age/experience level.					
Photographs					
Photographs - Photos are detailed, attractive, creative, and relate to the member's 4-H involvement.					
TOTAL POINTS					
GRAND TOTAL (out of 64)					

Please include any other specific comments or suggestions for improvement here:

RIBBON COLOR: _____

PLACING/RANK: _____

ADVANCE TO NEXT LEVEL: Yes / No

Judge's Initials: _____

Record-Keeping Score Sheet

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Name: _____	County: _____	District: _____
Category: _____		

Instructions: Check one box (or award the point value) for the statement on each row that best describes each recordbook section/criteria. Total the check or point value at the bottom of the chart. Provide specific details in the comment boxes if necessary.

	Not at all (1 Point)	Somewhat (2 Points)	Mostly (3 Points)	Completely (4 Points)	Comments
Personal Information - Complete; no additions or corrections necessary					
STORY & PHOTO PORTFOLIO					
Organization - The story is very well organized. One idea follows another in a logical sequence with clear transitions.					
4-H Focus - The story emphasizes 4-H project work and experiences					
Main Project - The story summarizes activities and learning experiences within the main project category.					
Project Goals - Current and future goals are clearly outlined for 4-H project(s).					
Leadership & Service - The story shows leadership and service growth through 4-H project experiences.					
Spelling/Punctuation/Grammar - There are minimal spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors in the story.					
Creativity - The story contains creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment.					
Photographs - Photos are detailed, attractive, creative, and relate to the 4-H story.					

PROJECT RECORD FORMS					
Project Goals – Member has outlined attainable goals for the current year.					
Personal Journal - Member effectively demonstrates high level of involvement in 4-H and non 4-H activities.					
Summary of Activities and Accomplishments –Member effectively describes learning experiences and accomplishments.					
Recognition and Awards - 4-H member effectively describes what the recognition or award means to them.					
4-H Community Service and Citizenship Activities - Engaged in wide array of activities impacting individuals and groups.					
Leadership Experiences – Age/experience level-appropriate type, number, and level of leadership described.					
Project Summary – Member effectively provides an overview of project experiences.					
POINTS PER COLUMN					
GRAND TOTAL (out of 64)					

Please include any other specific comments or suggestions for improvement here:

RIBBON COLOR: _____

PLACING/RANK: _____

ADVANCE TO NEXT LEVEL: Yes / No

Judge's Initials: _____

Record-Keeping Score Sheet

SENIOR LEVEL

Name: _____	County: _____	District: _____
Category: _____		

Instructions: Check one box (or award the point value) for the statement on each row that best describes each recordbook section/criteria. Total the check or point value at the bottom of the chart. Provide specific details in the comment boxes if necessary.						
	Not at all (1 Point)	Somewhat (2 Points)	Mostly (3 Points)	Completely (4 Points)		
Personal Information - Complete; no additions or corrections necessary					Comments	
STORY & PHOTO PORTFOLIO						
Organization - The story is very well organized. One idea follows another in a logical sequence with clear transitions.						
4-H Focus - The story emphasizes 4-H project work and experiences						
Main Project – The story summarizes activities and learning experiences within the main project category.						
Project Goals – Current and future goals are clearly outlined for 4-H project(s).						
Leadership & Service – The story shows leadership and service growth through 4-H project experiences.						
Spelling/Punctuation/Grammar - There are minimal spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors in the story.						
Creativity - The story contains creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment.						
Photographs - Photos are						

detailed, attractive, creative, and relate to the 4-H story.					
PROJECT RECORD FORMS					
Section I – 4-H PROJECT EXPERIENCES – Section shows growth in all projects listed. Detailed learning experiences documented.					
Section II – 4-H Leadership Experiences –Age/experience level-appropriate type, number, and level of leadership described.					
Section III – 4-H Community Service -Engaged in wide array of activities impacting individuals and groups.					
Section IV – Other 4-H Projects - Other projects listed depict a balance of growth and learning					
Section V – 4-H Recognition and Awards 4-H member effectively describes what the recognition or award means to them.					
Section VI – Non 4-H Activities Member is active outside of 4-H; provides leadership and service routinely					
Section VII – College and Career Exploration – The member effectively describes events and activities that promote college and career exploration.					
TOTAL POINTS					
GRAND TOTAL (out of 64)					

Please include any other specific comments or suggestions for improvement here:

RIBBON COLOR: _____

PLACING/RANK: _____

ADVANCE TO NEXT LEVEL: Yes / No

Appendix D

4-H Recordbook Check Sheet

Name: _____

Program: _____

County: _____

District: _____

Review the specific regulations for award programs as found in the Texas 4-H Clover Opportunities Handbook before checking 4-H recordbooks.

ITEM	REQUIRED AT STATE	COUNTY	DISTRICT	STATE
1. Personal Information Page	Appropriate Signatures (Books not signed at State Competition will not be judged)			
	Birth date – meets program requirements			
2. My 4-H Story and Photo Portfolio (Intermediate and Seniors only)	Maximum 10 pages, typed, double-spaced. No smaller than a 10-point font.			
3. Texas 4-H Report Form	Included – no additional pages.			
4. Additional Information (Photography only)	Six additional pages of pictures taken through photography project.			
INITIALS OF CHECKER → → → →				

Refer to the current year's Texas 4-H Clover Opportunities Handbook and Texas 4-H Member Record Keeping System Guidelines and Instructions for any additional information required with the 4-H Recordbook.

Attach this page in front of each recordbook before being judged at the county level. The same check sheet should be used at all levels of judging.