

WHAT IS A "COMPLETED" PROJECT IN 4-H?

One of the five fundamental life skills in 4-H is described as "making decisions and taking responsibility for choices." Another life skill important in Montana 4-H is "developing an inquiring mind." Both of these life skills are related to project completion. By learning how to complete a project, youngsters can work toward another of the life skills: fostering positive self-concept.

Here are some commonly asked questions about project completion:

When is a 4-H project "complete" ?

Each 4-H project has unique and specific guidelines for project completion. Over the past several years, however, we have been moving toward a system that is more uniform and consistent regarding project completion. For all the animal science projects, foods, sewing & textiles, child development, entomology, woodworking, electricity, aerospace and others, the following general guidelines apply:

- Complete a minimum of seven activities found in the project book within the 4-H year.
 - There are usually 21 activities required to complete the book; therefore completing the project for the year does not necessarily mean completing the level).
- Complete the appropriate minimum number of required and optional activities in each level within at least 3 years.
 - Many will move along more quickly, but all 4-H members should aim to complete their project book in at least 3 years. Usually this means completing 14 of the required activities found in most project books and 7 of the optional. The number of required and optional activities many vary from project to project.
- Complete a minimum of three learning experiences each year (such as a demonstration, tour, exhibiting, participating in showmanship, etc.);
- Complete a set of records for the project (including My 4-H Year, Project & Financial Journal and, if applicable, Animal Journal).

What if my project doesn't have these kinds of requirements?

Some of our older 4-H projects still don't have specific completion requirements. In this case, there are a couple of options. First, sit down with the individual 4-H member and help him/her set some specific goals and objectives for the year. These become the requirements for completion. Second, you could use the Montana 4-H Clover Project Selection Guide along with the project manuals to determine specific project requirements. For example, photography and leathercraft both list suggested guidelines that are designed to serve as a basis for project completion. However, you will want to negotiate this with each 4-H'er at the beginning of the year and have him/her record these expectations on the record forms (My 4-H Year and the Project & Financial Journal).

When are records complete?

Records must be completed in order to complete a project. The minimum set of records that must be completed consist of at least two and perhaps three forms: My 4-H Year, Project & Financial Journal and the Animal Journal. In order to receive a "Gold Seal of Excellence," each member must complete a set of records for EACH project in which he/she is enrolled after your county "drop/add" deadline. Complete sets of records include the eight criteria listed on the Record Book Completion Check Sheet.