

New
Jersey **4-H**

Leader Training Series



Devising a 4-H Club Constitution

Suggested Format

Why does a 4-H club need a constitution? For the same reasons our country needs one! By having fair and written rules, the rights of all members can be protected. The following is a suggested format for a 4-H club constitution. It may be adapted to meet local conditions. Be sure to send a copy of your club's approved constitution to your county 4-H office. Include in the constitution when it was approved and most recently revised.

ARTICLE I - Name/Identity

Section 1 - Name

The name of this organization shall be _____.

Section 2 - Motto

The club motto shall be "To Make the Best Better."

Section 3 - Emblem

The club emblem shall be a green four-leaf clover bearing a white "H" on each leaflet.



Section 4 - Pledge

The club pledge shall be:

I pledge. . .

My Head to clearer thinking,
My Heart to greater loyalty,
My Hands to larger service, and
My Health to better living, for
My club, community, my country, and my world.

ARTICLE II - Mission and Purpose

Section 1 - Mission of 4-H

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development program uses a learn by doing approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to become competent, caring and contributing citizens of the world.

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Affiliate Extension Specialist in
Educational Design, 1990, revised
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This mission is accomplished by using the knowledge and resources of the land grant university system, along with the involvement of caring adults. *(This is part of the official mission statement of the 4-H program.)*

Section 2 - Purpose of Club

The purpose of this club shall be to improve ourselves, our homes, our club, and our community. *(Different or additional purposes can be used.)*

ARTICLE III - Nonprofit status

This club is a nonprofit organization. Any funds received by the club for carrying out its purpose shall not accrue to the benefit of individuals, but to the benefit of the 4-H program.

ARTICLE IV - Membership

Section 1 - Eligibility

Any boy or girl in this county, grades 4-13, may become a member of this club by applying for membership in at least one of the approved club projects and agreeing to live up to the standards set by the club. (However, the size of the club may be limited due to space limitations or the leader's available time or ability to accommodate more members.) Youth, grades 1-3, may be 4-H Prep members. Membership shall not be denied on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or handicap.

Section 2 - Responsibility

Each member must attend at least 70 percent of the meetings during the year. If a member is unable to attend a meeting due to a valid excuse (such as sickness or an important school or family event), the member must contact the club leader, secretary, or president in advance to be excused. Each member should also complete an approved club project and keep a project record.

(Additional or different membership requirements may be used. However, the non-discrimination statement must be included exactly as printed in section 1. Club dues are optional and determined by the club's membership. Note that 4-H Prep members are often members of separate Prep clubs. Therefore, clubs will generally not have both standard and Prep members. Due to the nature of Prep, a constitution for a 4-H Prep Club will probably differ from this example in several ways.)

ARTICLE V - Meetings

Section 1 - Dates

The club shall meet regularly every _____(day/week) at _____(time) at _____(place).

Special meetings may be called by the president and 4-H leader as needed. Adequate notice is needed.

Section 2 - Quorum

A simple majority (one-half plus one) of members must be present to conduct official business of the club.

Section 3 - Order of business

The following order of business shall be followed at regular club meetings:

1. Meeting called to order
2. Club rises, salutes the American flag with the Pledge of Allegiance and then recites the 4-H pledge (to the 4-H flag)
3. Roll call
4. Minutes of last meeting
5. Treasurer's report
6. Report of committees
7. Old or unfinished business
8. New business
9. 4-H leader's report
10. Announcements
11. Adjournment
12. Educational program/project work
13. Recreation/refreshments

ARTICLE VI - Committees

Standing and/or special committees will be created as needed. Members are expected to volunteer for committee assignments. The president has the authority to appoint committee chairs and members.

ARTICLE VII - Officers

The officers of this club shall include: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and reporter. Their duties shall be as follows:

- The president will preside at all meetings, uphold the constitution and adhere to parliamentary procedure. The president shall appoint committee chairs and members.

- The vice-president shall preside over the club in the absence of the president. The vice-president shall assist the president and serve as a link to all committees.
- The secretary shall write minutes of each meeting and report at the next meeting. The secretary will also keep attendance records and write club correspondence.
- The treasurer shall be responsible for all club funds and property, along with the club leader. The treasurer will give a report of the club's finances at each meeting.
- The reporter shall collect newspaper and county newsletter clippings, photos, etc. for a club scrapbook/bulletin board/history. The reporter writes club meeting reports and sends them to the county 4-H office, and also may write and send club news to local newspapers, radio stations, etc.

(A club may have more or fewer officers. In any case, duties of each one should be written and included in this article.)

ARTICLE VIII - Election of Officers

The officers of this club shall be elected at the first regular meeting in _____ (month). They shall hold office for one year. All active members are eligible to run for an office and to vote. Voting is by majority rule and done by secret ballot.

ARTICLE IV - Amendments

This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting by a two-thirds vote cast by those in attendance, providing notice has been given at the previous meeting.

ARTICLE V - Dissolution

If this club disbands, all club assets shall be assigned to _____ *(non-profit countywide 4-H organization. Ask your county 4-H staff the name of this organization.)*

Reference:

Parts were adapted from a former New Jersey State 4-H publication, author unknown, dated 5/78.

**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
N.J. AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
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