SMART Goal Setting

A Guide to Writing Strong Goals for Your 4-H Record Book

Why Do We Write Goals in 4-H?

Every 4-H project is an opportunity to learn new skills, challenge yourself, and grow! Setting goals helps you decide what you want to accomplish and track your progress throughout the year. **Remember:** Focus on what YOU want to learn or improve, not just winning a ribbon or competition.

Building a 4-H SMART Goal

Example: Improving my goat showmanship skills

SMART	ASK YOURSELF	MY 4-H GOAL
S — Specific	**What do I want to accomplish?**	**Improve my goat showmanship by practicing leading and setting up my goat.**
M — Measurable	**How will I track my progress?**	**Practice for 15 minutes, three times a week.**
A — Achievable	**Is my goal realistic?**	**I can practice after school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.**
R — Relevant	**Why does this matter to me?**	**Build confidence handling my goat and prepare for the fair.**
T — Time-Bound	**When will I finish?**	**By July 1.**

✓ MY COMPLETED SMART GOAL

By July 1, I will improve my goat showmanship skills by practicing leading and setting up my goat for 15 minutes, three times a week, so that I can confidently handle my goat at the county fair.

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The 4-H SMART Goal Formula

WHEN + WHAT + HOW + WHY = YOUR SMART GOAL!

By [WHEN], I will [WHAT] by [HOW] so that [WHY].

- **WHEN:** My deadline or completion date
- **WHAT:** The skill I want to learn or improve
- **HOW:** The measurable actions I will take
- **WHY:** Why this matters to me and my 4-H project

Don't forget the A! Make sure your goal is achievable with the time and resources you have.

More 4-H SMART Goal Examples

Foods & Nutrition: By June 1, I will learn three baking techniques and prepare three new recipes independently to improve my cooking and baking skills.

Rocketry: *By June 15, I will build my first model rocket by following the instructions, learning how each part works, and completing one supervised launch so I can better understand how rockets fly.*

Photography: *By July 1, I will improve my photography skills by taking at least 20 pictures of animals using different lighting and angles, then selecting my five best photos for feedback from my project leader.*

Archery: *By June 10, I will improve my archery consistency by attending at least three leader-led practices, focusing on my stance and anchor point, and recording my scores during three practice rounds to track my progress.*

Public Speaking: *By June 1, I will become more comfortable speaking in front of others by preparing a three-minute speech about my 4-H project, practicing it with my family three times, attending workshops and presenting it at a club meeting.*

Your Turn! Write Your Own SMART Goal

My 4-H Project: _____

Step 1: Brainstorm Your Goal

S — Specific: What do I want to learn or accomplish?

M — Measurable: How will I measure my progress?

A — Achievable: Is my goal realistic? What will help me succeed?

R — Relevant: Why is this important to me and my project?

T — Time-Bound: When will I accomplish my goal?

Step 2: Build Your Goal Using the Formula

WHEN: By _____

WHAT: I will _____

HOW: By _____

WHY: So that _____

Step 3: Write Your One-Sentence SMART Goal

By _____, **I will** _____

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by _____

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so that _____

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