

PHOTO ACTIVITY IDEAS

CONTESTS

Contests help 4-H'ers follow directions for entering photos, labeling photos correctly, and meeting deadlines. In a photo contest photographers are asked to take pictures that fit into pre-selected categories. A judge then places and critiques the entries and awards prizes.

In Jefferson County, for example, a photo contest was held in conjunction with the spring 4-H Cultural Arts Festival. All photos had to be 5 x 7 inches and mounted on 8 x 10-inch poster board. The nine categories included winter activities, texture, animals, winter landscape, structures, horticulture, and "my favorite photo." Classes were divided into 35mm manual, 35mm automatic, and non-35mm. A professional photographer judged the photo entries.

Watch the news media for contest opportunities. For example the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association sponsored a photo contest on "barns," the Wisconsin Division of Tourism one on "autumn," and Parade magazine one on "The American Family." The *Wisconsin State Journal* invited photographers 18 and under to send "your best shot."

You can design and hold your own photo contest. First, select your contest categories, such as animals, people, landscapes, youth working on 4-H projects, and people working in your community. Then decide on deadlines and guidelines for entries, including number of entries, picture size, mounting, and matting. Before you start, give younger 4-H'ers some suggested photo ideas and reminders on good photo composition rules. Have an unbiased person judge the photos and present prizes (e.g., photo book or camera accessory for the winners, participation certificates for all).

COUNTY FAIRS

A 4-H'er doesn't have to take part in a county fair to complete the photography project, but the fair can be a fun way for members to apply and showcase what they've learned.

Hold a pre-fair meeting with your 4-H'ers to help them select the photos they will take to the fair. Give each member a chance to show his or her pictures to the rest of the group. Encourage the group to point out strengths and weaknesses of the photos and suggest which pictures they would take to the fair - but the final selection is to be made by the exhibitor. At this same meeting review the county fair rules and perhaps help members mount their photos and prepare their entries.

Once the fair starts, visit as a project group. Attend any photo classes being conference judged. Listen to the judge's comments. Look at all county photo entries when they're exhibited. Does your group agree with the judge's decisions? Take slides of the best entries for discussion at future photo meetings. Judge these slides on the basis of technical quality, composition, and story-telling ability.

After the fair have members bring their entries to a project meeting. Discuss their placings and reasons, then celebrate their efforts and accomplishments!

Going Further

- As a group visit a neighboring county fair. How does its photo rules differ from your county? How does the quality of their entries compare? Discuss.
- Create a display of the best county fair photos taken by your group. Make sure all are represented on the display. Show the display at school, library, etc. Use it as a training tool for your new project members next year.

DEMONSTRATIONS

4-H members of any age can learn more about photography by doing “show and tell” demonstrations.

Formal Demonstrations

A formal demonstration has an opening, body, and conclusion, supported with visuals and a question-and-answer period at the end. Formal demonstrations usually last 5 to 10 minutes and work well with a captive audience at a club or project meeting.

Topics are endless. For example, a demonstrator could show a collection of old and new cameras, pointing out that though cameras have changed a lot, their basic parts have stayed the same. Make a list of who will give demonstrations at future project or club meetings.

Action Demonstrations

Informal or action demonstrations, which put more emphasis on the “showing” than the “telling,” work well at malls and county fairs where the audience is on the move. A 4-H'er may hold an action demonstration on how to mount a photograph, for example. As she goes through the process several times, the demonstrator invites those passing by to watch, listen, try it themselves, ask questions, etc.

You might encourage members to develop camera and photographic “models” that people can touch during 4-H action demonstrations without handling the actual equipment. 4-H'ers could teach how to clean cameras, clean a lens, etc., without using the real thing.

Electric quiz boards and computers make ideal interactive tools for action demonstrations. Make up a set of questions that guests can answer within a few minutes. Don't make the questions too difficult.

Going Further

- Schedule a 4-H club “photo night” sponsored by your photo project members. Have them set up a number of action demonstration stations that club members can visit, such as, how to hold a camera steady, parts of a camera, basic rules of composition, types of film, and types of cameras.

FIELD TRIPS

On photo field trips members learn to understand the workings of their cameras and equipment, practice rules of composition, and take pictures that interest them.

Allow members to decide where they would like to go for their field trips. Opportunities include zoos, playgrounds, farms, parks, and more.

Make arrangements for the field trip. Before the trip send a reminder to members and parents, along with instructions of what they need to bring. Involve parents in the trips so families can learn together.

The youth should take photos of subjects that interest them and make them happy. Encourage them to take lots of pictures, experiment, move around the subject, and shoot from several angles.

At a follow-up meeting, have members compare and critique pictures, which is an effective tool for developing their language skills. They might also pick out the best ones for county fair entries.

Going Further

- Have youth make “photo stories” of their field trip. Remind them to include beginning, middle, and ending photos.
- Have your group take a photo field trip to someone’s backyard. Challenge them to find photo opportunities within the limited space. The lesson: you don’t have to wait until vacation time to take pictures. Good photo opportunities are right in your own backyard anytime!
- Photographers often use senses other than sight to uncover good picture possibilities. Take your 4-H members to a community festival or location where there are lots of activities going on. Find a good spot where they can sit down, close their eyes, and “listen” for photo opportunities. For example, on a summer visit to a zoo the youth may hear the happy screams of a youngster petting a lamb or a zoo worker calling to the elephants at feeding time – tip-offs to good pictures that they may not actually “see.” Are there photo opportunities they can discover through other senses?
- Schedule a field trip to a one-hour photo lab, portrait studio, or camera store. Prepare them for what they might learn at each site.
- Take your group to a scenic area. Have them visually explore the area for interesting objects (trees, rocks, flowers, people, etc.). As a group, decide upon one object that all agree is “interesting” and all can photograph. Explain that the subject the group has chosen to photograph has a “personality” which they are going to capture on film. Each person will take one photo, trying to capture the essence of that personality. Tell them that no two photos can be alike! Set a deadline and proceed with the photographing. After all have completed their photos, gather around the subject and discuss the perspectives each photographer took and how it affected the subject’s personality. Make a display of the photos, e. g., “Ten Views of an Oak.”

JUDGING

Judging is a good way to teach and reinforce important photography concepts. It also helps youth understand and appreciate the decisions that judges must make at shows and county fairs.

Make five photo-judging stations, numbered 1 through 5. Each station should have at least four mounted photos (could be personal photos or pictures cut out of magazines) that would fall into the same category at a 4-H photo show or county fair (e. g., landscapes, sports, animals, or portraits). Assign each photo a number - pictures at station one might be 1-A, 1-B, 1-C, and 1-D. Pictures at station two might be 2-A, 2-B, etc. Use small Post-It notes to place the number on each picture. Direct your project members to judge the photos at each station, awarding blue, red, white, and pink ribbons. Ask them each to give oral reasons for their placings.

If your group is large, divide into subgroups. Each group should select a recorder to give oral reasons for the subgroup when the total group reassembles.

Going Further

- Use any of the state 4-H photo displays available through the Coop Media Collection to run a photo judging activity. Have a panel of pictures serve as one station. Since each panel represents a variety of pictures, the photo class could be “my favorite enlargement.” Ask groups to select the first, second, and third place photos on each panel and give reasons why.
- Have each 4-H'er bring in two mounted pictures, then have the members decide how to group the pictures into categories. Then judge the categories.
- Have members do this judging activity at home with family members with photos from the family photo album. They can use any number of photos and stations. Teams may have as few as one or two people in them or the family can form one large team to judge each station together.

PHOTO BINGO

Photo Bingo is designed to help beginners remember photo terms. It's also a nice refresher for advanced photo members and a fun way to finish project meetings.

Draw a bingo card with five columns down and five rows across. Make several copies. Fill in the blanks with photo terms. You can use the following list as a guide or create your own list. Remember to mix the terms under the appropriate letter – just as a regular bingo card mixes numbers – but keep all B terms under B, all I terms under I, etc. Make enough cards so each member has one or two. (For a more permanent set of bingo cards, laminate them.)

Then write all the photo terms you've used on separate small pieces of paper. You will put these pieces of paper in a bowl and draw them out, as you would in bingo. (These too can be laminated.)

Give participants some air-popped popcorn to use as tokens. Read the term aloud and have the players cover the appropriate square – if they have it.

Tell participants that a bingo can be across, down or diagonal. When players have a bingo, they should yell, “Bingo,” then stand up and read the photo terms under their bingo. Ask them to give brief definitions of the photo terms. A fun finale is a blackout (all spaces blocked out).

Possible Photo Terms

<u>"B" Column</u>	<u>"I" Column</u>	<u>"N" Column</u>	<u>"G" Column</u>	<u>"O" Column</u>
Action	Darkroom	35mm camera	Negative file	Rule of thirds
Adjustable camera	Depth of field	110 film	Negative sleeve	Shutter
Aperture	Emulsion	Digital camera	Negatives	Shutter release
ASA	Enlargement	Grain	Operator's manual	Shutter speed
Background	Expiration date	High angle	Overexposed	Side lighting
Back lighting	F/stop	Image	Panning	Slide
Black and white	Film advance lever	ISO	Photo	Subject
Camera	Film box	L-tools	Photo album	Sun
Camera angles	Film merger	Leading lines	Photo story	Telephoto lens
Camera case	Filters	Lens	Pinhole camera	Underexposed
Chemicals	Flash	Lens cap	Print	Untouched photo
Close-up	Focus	Light	Processing	Viewfinder
Color photos	Foreground	Low angle	Proof sheet	Zoom lens
Composition	Framing	Matte board	Resolution	
Contact sheet	Front lighting	Pixels		
Crop				

Going Further

- On a piece of paper list several photo terms and make a copy for every member. Then distribute blank bingo cards to each member and let them fill in squares with terms of their choice from the list you assembled. Allow several free spaces. When everyone is finished, read off definitions that match these terms. As members recognize the definitions, they block out or cross off the appropriate squares. You can play until one member reaches blackout, five in a row, or any other pre-determined combination.

SCAVENGER HUNTS

Photo scavenger or "treasure" hunts are one of the most successful activities you can try. Hunts are fun ways to encourage beginning photography members to take a variety of pictures, sharpen their observation skills, and show creativity when photographing commonplace subjects. Photo members can go on hunts again and again, and never seem to get tired of them.

Scavenger hunts can be run many different ways, but here are some steps that are common to most scavenger hunts:

1. Make sure everyone has access to a camera and has a roll of 200 ASA color print film with 24 exposures.
2. Create a list of items they should photograph. The list depends somewhat on the geographical area in which they will be taking pictures. Five to 10 items are about right, but you may want to have more. Pass out a copy of the list to all members of the group.

3. Create a Scavenger Hunt Checklist. For example, you might direct participants to shoot at least two each of the following subjects and then use the rest of the film on subjects of your choice.
 - Animal
 - Building
 - Landscape
 - People in action
 - People up close
 - Sidewalk, road, or bridge
 - Something smooth
 - Water
4. Encourage 4-H'ers to be as creative as possible. Give them some reminders: hold camera steady unless panning, follow the rule of thirds, try framing and unusual camera angles, move in close to the subject, keep the horizon level, keep backgrounds simple and uncluttered, relax, and have fun.
5. Start early in the day. Set a time and place to return. Give them two hours to take the pictures. All film is to be returned to you for processing.
6. Take their film to a one-hour photo-processing lab. Allow the lab extra time for processing more than five rolls of film. Have the developing and finish time pre-arranged with the one-hour store. It's also a good idea to know the price of processing a roll of 24-exposure film so 4-H'ers can pay for the processing when they turn in the roll. Otherwise, this activity could get expensive for you.
7. When the 4-H'ers return later that day for their processed rolls of film, have poster board, rulers, and rubber cement ready for them. Ask them to select their best photo for each of the assigned areas and mount these photos on the poster board. Have them write their names on the boards and set the boards up for display. (Invite parents to this session and let them see the works also.) Note: If you don't live near a one-hour photo shop, give the assignment at a photo meeting, then have the 4-H'ers return in two weeks with their processed roll of film (negatives and pictures).

Going Further

- Have each group member take 24 exposures in which every picture shows the main subject "framed" by something - piece of furniture, tree branch, part of a building, window, door, bicycle wheel, etc.
- Have each group member take 24 exposures of a tree. For example, they might be asked to take two exposures each of the whole tree, looking up the trunk, looking down the trunk, a limb, a clump of leaves, one leaf, the bark, branches joining trunk or limb, through leaves to sky, and through leaves to the sun.
- Have each group member pick a word and take a roll of pictures to illustrate that word: sharp, dull, leaves, fences, water, soil, love, friendship, solitude, anger, solid, flimsy, caring, etc.
- Find pictures to take of a circle, oval, square, "S" curve, triangle, "Y" shape, and tube.
- Find natural objects to photograph (not printed or written letters) that look like each of the letters of the alphabet, e.g., the letter "A" in an A-frame house.

- Find objects to photograph the name of which start with or sound like each of the letters of the alphabet. For instance, photograph a boy for “B” or an eye for “I.” Extra points for most original idea for each letter.

SKILL-A-THONS

A skill-a-thon is a learning station where 4-H’ers perform a task. A facilitator at the station lets the youth test their knowledge and skills before giving them any hints. (Sample skill-a-thon stations for the dog project are available from the Coop Media Collection.)

Skill-a-thons work well at 4-H club and project meetings. They involve 4-H’ers in challenging, non-competitive, learn-by-doing activities. In a successful skill-a-thon, 4-H’ers will evaluate their abilities and discover what they need to know to solve the task, learn teamwork, practice making decisions and speaking with others, and receive recognition and praise for their efforts.

Possible Situations

Situations for skill-a-thons are endless. For example you could set up skill-a-thons for the following situations:

- Your camera lens has a big thumb print on it. What are you going to do?
- There’s a beautiful rainbow over your house, but how do you take pictures in the rain!
- You promised your sister you’d take her picture for the school yearbook but your flash won’t work.

To Run a Skill-a-thon

Divide 4-H’ers into teams of two to five members. Make supplies available. Provide 4-H’ers with a realistic situation and task to respond to. Step back and allow members time to discover their own solution. Respond to 4-H’ers questions with questions so the answers are their own. Listen to the members’ presentation. Accept their solutions. Ask questions to help them build on what they presented. Reinforce their efforts with praise.

Responsibilities of Station Facilitator

Familiarize yourself with the topic. Compile a list of questions to ask each team. Set up your station to include signs that give the task and supplies to do the task. Allow team members to discover for themselves how to accomplish the task, instead of first telling or showing them how.

QUIZ BOWL

Quiz bowls are based on the old TV program “College Bowl.” Photo bowls give 4-H photo project members a chance to demonstrate their knowledge of photography in a friendly but competitive setting.

Contest procedures and rules of play are simple; vary them to meet your needs. Equipment needs are minimal, particularly at the project and club level. Participants can raise their hands, ring a bell, or squeak a toy if they think they know the answer. However, there are sophisticated responding devices that you can use for countywide photo bowls. Contact the Coop Media Collection for the “Horse Bowl Buzzers.”

Divide the questions into categories – film, cameras, history of photography, composition, etc. If you want, further divide participants by photo project unit or age (juniors and seniors) and hold separate bowls for each. It's usually easier to have a policy that the whole answer must be correct or no credit.

Sample Question

Question: What does the word “photography” mean?

Answer: Drawing with light to make pictures

Category: History of photography

Source: PHOTO 1, Adventures with Your Camera – A, pg. 1

Rules

Teams consist of four members, including a captain. Teams submit 20 questions, with answers, categories, and sources of the questions to you before the bowl. Sources of questions should be the 4-H photo literature and other sources if spelled out in advance. The contest itself will consist of two phases of questions.

Phase A - 24 One-on-one Questions

Starting with the captains of each team, the moderator asks one question of each team member. Questions alternate between the two teams, so there are actually three “rounds.”

Members have 15 seconds to answer each question. No consultation or coaching from other team members allowed. Teams get 10 points for correct answers, but lose 10 points for wrong answers.

Phase B - 10 Toss-up and Bonus Questions

Usually questions are tougher in Phase B than Phase A. Any of the eight contestants can answer a toss-up question. The first contestant to signal must answer immediately. No consultation or coaching is allowed.

If a team member signals before the question is completed, the moderator will discontinue the question at once. At that point, the team member must answer immediately.

Teams get 10 points for correct answers to toss-up questions, but lose 10 points for wrong answers. If a team fails to answer a toss-up, the opposing team can try to answer it. The complete question is re-read before they have to answer. When a team correctly answers a toss-up, it gets a bonus question worth 10 points. There is no penalty for a wrong answer to a bonus question.

Consultation among team members is permitted on bonus questions only. A team has 30 seconds to answer a bonus question. In case of a tie, three toss-up questions will be used for a sudden death play-off. The team with the most points wins.

WORD GAMES

Photo word games are terrific time-fillers when meetings run short. Ask your youth leaders to create word games aimed at different levels of difficulty.

Word Scramble for Beginners

The following words are commonly used in beginning photography. Give 4-H members 10 minutes to unscramble them. Look in the project literature glossaries to expand the list.

imfl - film

mrceaa - camera

nesl - lens

ocsfu - focus

prtni - print

rthsute - shutter

tepareru - aperture

tnevegai - negative

vrienedwif -

viewfinder

Word Scramble for Advanced

The following words are commonly used in advanced units. Give 4-H members 10 minutes to unscramble them. Look in the project literature glossaries to expand the list.

cotropjer - projector

earpp - paper

eeudcrr - reducer

giaem - image

gnria - grain

luemnois - emulsion

miceslahc - chemicals

notisluo - solution

poxsuree - exposure

protid - tripod

sfuco - focus

tasgenvie - negatives

tinghlig - lighting

trifle - filter

trnpi - print

Going Further

- Have your group make its own “pictionary” of photo terms by taking pictures that represent the term (e. g., double-exposure).
- Take some photos or collect some pictures and have the 4-H’ers write captions for them. A caption is like a title. It can name something important in a photograph or tell what is going on. Captions should not be too long.

MISCELLANEOUS

Need an idea for a project meeting or a project year? Here is a grab bag of ideas to try. Add your own.

Camera: Care

- Give everyone a large, clear plastic bag and rubber band for taking pictures in rainy weather. Cut a hole in the bag big enough for the lens to poke through; tighten the bag around the lens with the rubber band. For some cameras you may have to cut a hole for the viewfinder and flash, and tape the bag in place.
- Help 4-H’ers put their names on their cameras and camera cases. Try marking pens, gummed labels, and luggage nametags. Many police departments will engrave names on cameras.

Camera: Parts

- Have each member draw a camera and identify the different parts of a camera. Display their drawings. Discuss.
- Mount a large picture of a camera on poster board. Cut it into puzzle pieces. Have group members identify parts of the camera as you reassemble the puzzle.

Camera: Types

- List the popular cameras on the market and their uses. Explain why some cameras cost less than others did. Visit a camera store to see each kind of camera. Discuss the differences.

- Schedule speakers to talk on types of cameras. Encourage them to discuss subjects in simple terms that all can understand. Set up displays (parts of a camera, how a camera works, types of cameras, etc.) to create interest, help answer questions, and point out resources available.
- Visit a camera store. Have 4-H members look through instruction booklets for various kinds of cameras.

Careers

- Explore various job opportunities in the area of photography. Interview a person that has a job related to photography, e.g., photo lab technician, police officer, professional photographer, realtor, newspaper reporter, and camera store sales clerk. Check the library to find out all you can about the job that you are investigating. Prepare a list of questions to ask during the interview. Report back to the group.
- Invite a professional photographer to your club or project meeting to discuss what it's like to "make a living" making pictures.
- Look at some photographs by famous photographers. Ask 4-H'ers to describe the photo and how it was taken. Try to take a picture just like it.

Community Projects

- Document your neighborhood. Take pictures of people at work and play, people of different ages, and buildings where you and others live, work, and spend time.
- Develop exhibits on local history for display in the library, government offices, and shopping areas.
- Photographers interested in exploring videotape skills can develop a skit based on local historic events or individuals, or make a taped "walking tour" of your community.
- Hold "A Day in the Life" of your community. Choose the shooting day and list important community people, places, and things as subjects. Conduct photo training meetings so 4-H'ers and youth leaders are prepared. Begin the shooting at sunrise. Process the film and choose prints. Display enlargements at county fair and other community events. Photos not enlarged can be displayed in an album.
- Work with your local chamber of commerce to produce a promotional brochure. Take photos of local businesses and other points of interest. Try to capture the sights that make your town special.

Cropping

- As a group, cut out magazine pictures that need cropping (e. g., subjects too far away, distracting items in the foreground, objects at edge of photos that distract). Use L-tools to decide on the best way to crop the photo. Use scissors to crop the photo. If you have two copies of the photo, mount the "before" and "after" pictures.

Film

- Have members list the most commonly available film types and their uses (print and slide films; color and black-and-white films; slow, medium, and fast speed films).

Lighting

- Ask your youth leaders to cut out photos from magazines that illustrate front lighting, side lighting, backlighting, and diffused lighting, and then label the pictures. You will need magazines, scissors, and pencils or pens.
- Create reflectors from white cardboard, aluminum foil, white cloth, mirrors, etc. Experiment. Which reflect the most light? The least light? Why?

Photo Story

- Discuss how to make “photo stories.” Divide the 4-H’ers into pairs or groups of three. Hand out several sheets of paper and pencils to each group. Ask each group to decide on a photo story topic. Encourage them to brainstorm, write down many ideas, and vote on the best photo idea. Then have each group write down the steps needed to tell their complete story. Remind them that a beginning, middle, and end are needed. Next have each group draw pictures of their steps as they would shoot them. Stick figures are fine. Give a time limit. Have some photo story ideas at hand in case groups cannot think of one (e. g., bathing a dog, building a campfire, coloring Easter eggs, wrapping a present). Ask each group to stand before the others and discuss their photo story idea. Encourage the listeners to recommend steps if any are overlooked.

Pinhole Camera

- With the aid of a photo book, make and use a pinhole camera. In addition to learning more about photography through this activity, 4-H’ers will have a good subject for photography displays, action exhibits, and demonstrations.

Portfolio

- Have the 4-H’ers make a group portfolio with each member selecting their five best pictures from the project year.
- A portfolio is a collection of photographs, placed in an album, to express a personal interest or to show your best work. Have the 4-H’ers make portfolios. Help each member select a theme. Spell out the number, types (color and/or black and white), and sizes of prints that can be included. Specify if photos should be titled or explained in short paragraphs (captions). The first page should introduce the subject and explain reasons for doing the portfolio. All members should include enough photographs to fully express their ideas. Have a showing of portfolios at the end of the project year.

Portraits

- Schedule a fun portrait night. Before the meeting ask members to bring old hats, dolls, coats, and other props. Set up a camera on one side of the room. The members, one at a time, play the photographer and are allowed to take several pictures. The photographer can pose other members in whatever costumes and positions he or she wants. Have the film processed and review pictures at the next meeting. Members learn about lighting, framing, focusing, and generally what makes a good picture.
- Have your 4-H’ers explore their own images with a self-portrait. The photographer can either use a tripod or other stabilizing device or may ask a friend for assistance in holding the camera and pushing the button.

Viewfinder Test

- Many camera viewfinders have frame lines to help photographers “see” what they’re going to photograph. These frame lines are helpful, but only if they’re accurate. Help your project members test their viewfinders for accuracy. They should look through their viewfinders at a wall that has pictures and a doorway or window. Before taking the picture, they should make a sketch of exactly what they see through the viewfinder – top, bottom, and both sides. Then take the picture. When they get the prints back, compare them to their sketches. Did they see more (or less) through the viewfinder than the cameras did through the lens? With this information they can make compensations in all future compositions.