

4-H CLUB MEETINGS

WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

The design of your club is completely up to the youth members involved. Club gatherings can look however you would like, as long as they involve the key club meeting components. The way club meetings are structured depends largely on the size of the group and the age of the members. Remember to keep the meeting interesting and to change the pace of the meeting every 15 minutes or so. The average attention span for youth ranges from 10 to 20 minutes. In general, 4-H meetings are divided into four parts:

Key Meeting Components:

1. **Pre-Meeting:** bridges the gap between the time members begin to arrive and the time the actual meeting begins. Activities for the pre-meeting time can include mixers, word games, puzzles, etc.
2. **Business Meeting:** members learn how to conduct a meeting and practice democratic decision-making.
3. **Educational Program:** usually project work, but may involve special presentations or activities conducted by resource people, parents or older members.
4. **Recreation/Refreshment/Social Activities:** provides members an opportunity to develop and practice social skills.

The order of these segments and the amount of time devoted to each may be varied to suit the specific activities planned, the time and place the meeting is held, etc. Here are some specific suggestions:

1. Clubs that meet right after school may want to have refreshments available as the members arrive. Quiet recreational activities such as two-person pencil and paper games can be used to keep order and foster interaction until the start of the meeting.
2. When members can't settle down and focus on the task at hand, a short, active game followed by a quiet one can release energy and get the group ready for more "serious business."
3. While Cloverbud groups do not conduct business meetings, starting each meeting with the same opening ritual establishes a structured routine that is important for this age group. Use of a closing ritual is also recommended.

Members can be assigned "officers of the day" to help conduct these rituals.

4. The timing of meeting segments must relate to both the attention span of the age group and the nature of the activities planned.
5. Sharing club leadership with your members is important. It makes your job easier and it

References:

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develops life skills for the members.

6. Beyond the four segments there are many little things you can do to make your 4-H club meeting fun and educational. Contact your local 4-H office for ideas.

Be sure to focus on parts that meet the club's needs for each meeting. Some meetings may focus more heavily on project work to help members accomplish their goals and learn new skills. Remember 4-H should be fun! Celebrate accomplishments or just take time to focus on recreation once in a while. It's a great way to build a club team. Field trips and service-learning, etc. can put spice into your club, providing opportunities for youth to plan and organize while having fun.

Sample 4-H Club Meeting Agenda:

1. Snack & Chat (15 minutes before starting meeting)
2. Business Meeting (20- 30 Minutes)
 - Call to Order: President
 - Pledges:
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - 4-H Pledge
 - Roll Call: Secretary
 - Introduction of Visitors: Vice President
 - Secretary' minutes: Secretary
 - Approval of Previous Minutes: Whole group
 - Treasurer's report: Treasurer
 - Committee Reports: Chairperson(s)
 - Old Business
 - New Business
 - Announcements
3. Enrichment (30 minutes, Organized by Vice President, if age appropriate. Program conducted by youth members)
 - Presentation of topic to group
 - Project Report (plan or progress)
 - Educational program
4. Closing social opportunity

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