



Competitive Events Day:

Bright Youth-Bright Futures

What do “bling bling,” a barbeque cookbook, a potato cannon, a hunter’s tree stand, and a knitted afghan all have in common? They are examples of things you can create as your Freestyle 4-H Showcase entry.

No two entries are alike, because no two 4-H’ers are alike. You think differently, have different interests, and want to achieve different things.

Choose which 4-H activity you most enjoy and show what you have learned and achieved. You can consider dozens of 4-H subjects, from Aerospace to Woodworking.

You pick the project; you pick the learning activities; and you design your showcase entry.

Freestyle 4-H Showcase lets you:

- Choose what you want to learn.
- Be creative.
- Celebrate your uniqueness.

What You Will Learn:

- To set goals and make plans.
- To gather information and make decisions.
- To solve problems.
- To decide what it means to do a good job.

Who Can Participate:

Any Alabama young person may participate in any 4-H competitive event. However, you must be a member of an Alabama 4-H Club. It’s easy and quick to join – just call or e-mail your county Alabama Cooperative Extension System Office for information.

If you and your friends would like, you might start a 4-H Interest Club that focuses on your topic. For more information, see [Starting a 4-H Club](#) (www.Alabama4H.com).

Freestyle Showcase

A youth self-directed project

Freestyle Showcase is a 4-H Event. Your local Extension Office has information on local and regional/area events, as well as other 4-H activities.

Levels of Competition:

Please refer to the [Alabama 4-H Competitive Events webpage](#) to review the **General Contest Policy** and the **Age & Eligibility Chart**.

The basics are pretty simple:

- Compete by yourself or on a two-person team. Youth on teams should be the same 4-H age level (e.g., Senior Level II).
- Your entry could be as small as jewelry you made or as large as a porch swing you built. If your entry is larger than 6 foot table space, talk with the Extension staff to make sure space is available.
- No live animals or endangered or threatened plants.
- Your work must be original. Do not use copyrighted images.
- Use safety in preparing and exhibiting your entry.
- Tables will be provided, but you must bring any other equipment.
- Your entry must be original and completed during the current 4-H year. Last year’s entry in another 4-H event CANNOT be this year’s Freestyle entry.
- Prepare for a 3-minute discussion with the judges about what you did and learned.



Please Note: Repeat Winners

A first place winner may compete again in Freestyle Showcase, but the subject of the presentation must be different. For example: natural resources one year and consumer science another year.

How to Get Started:

Your Freestyle 4-H Showcase entry should be based on what you have learned and done yourself. Your learning probably starts with a goal. Consider these options on how to select a learning goal.

Idea #1 – Your Family’s Needs

Talk with your parents about things that need to be done around your home or in your family. What new responsibility can you take on? What new skills or knowledge will you need? Could you learn to care for your younger brother or sister? Does someone need to organize the closets in your home? Learning to paint the outdoor furniture would sure be nice. How about repairing the lawn mower?

Idea #2 – Your Hobbies

What special interest or hobby do you have? Think of something new to “do” or “learn” about your hobby. If you like hunting, how about trying taxidermy? If you like gardening, try making jams and jellies. If you like computers, try designing your own webpage. You get the idea!

Idea #3 – Your 4-H Project Interest(s)

Remember that the highest awards in Alabama 4-H are project Achievement Awards for Seniors. These are based on learning, leadership, and community service in a project area. Freestyle 4-H Showcase is a great way to show-off your 4-H work each year. For example, besides showing cattle, you might learn to vaccinate them. Besides entering the public speaking event, maybe you’ve created a 4-H promotional skit and performed for youth audiences.

Idea #4 – Your Wants

Have you ever been inspired by a television make-over show? Maybe you’ve thought of what your room could look like...or maybe you are a gear-head who wants to design cars or trucks. Perhaps you have a friend who wants a style make-over. Your project could be based on what you want to learn and do. A good demonstration has four parts:

Your Event Entry:

We’ve said it before, but we’ll say it again...you decide! It’s freestyle; anything goes (within the rules we listed). Most entries in the **Freestyle 4-H Showcase** will be one of two types:

1. An item...made, repaired, refinished, cleaned, prepared, created, finished,

assembled, etc.

2. An exhibition of learning...a collection, display, scrapbook, report, poster, video, model, portfolio, collage, etc.

Competition is a Celebration of Your Learning:

Judges will base their evaluation on criteria such as time and effort, knowledge gained, problems solved, decision made, future learning goals, knowledge of quality standards, workmanship, completeness of entry, organization and clarity and creativity.

Be ready to informally discuss with the judges your learning experience. This discussion will take about 3 minutes. Judges will probably start by saying something like: “Tell me about your project and what you did”. Be prepared with about a 1 minute response. Be excited and confident!

4-H Regional/Area Awards will be determined by the planning committee for that event. Notice will be sent to each county involved.

State Competition and Awards

Each county may register one Senior Level I and one Senior Level II individual in each event that is offered.

On the state level, ribbons will be awarded to 50% of the participants in a contest using ordinal rankings up to a tenth place ranking. Example: If there are 10 participants, first place will receive the Alabama State Trophy and a first place ribbon; placing ribbons will be awarded for the next four ranked participants for placing of second through fifth. The other five participants will receive honorable mention ribbons.



Like all 4-H projects, this activity is just for young people. It is expected that the young person create an original quilted object. The role of adult helpers is to support and encourage youth in their efforts, to ask and answer questions about the project, and to help youth learn specific techniques that they might use in their project.



Identification of Entry

Name(s), county and level of participation should be displayed with each entry.



Disqualification for Freestyle Showcase

- Using animal or endangered plants
- Using copyright materials



Deduction for Freestyle Showcase

- Using a space larger than a 6 foot area without permission from the Extension Staff.

Suggestions for Event Facilitators:

1. If the Freestyle 4-H Showcase has lots of entries, the event facilitator might want to group like projects together and create sub-categories or showcases.
2. Hearing youth talk about their learning is really fun, and seeing the results of their learning is exciting. Event facilitators should try to have **Freestyle 4-H Showcase** entries open for public viewing.
3. The selection of judges is important to the success of the event. The ideal judge chats easily with young people and is interested in learning new things. Basically, in **Freestyle 4-H Showcase** the judge is the learner and the 4-H participant is the teacher. Judges should begin by prompting the 4-H'er..."Tell me about your entry". Sample follow-up questions might be:
 - "Where did you get your idea or information?"
 - "What equipment did you use?"
 - "How did you select your materials?"
 - "What were some of the difficulties or problems you had?"
 - "What would you change or do better if you could?"
4. The **Freestyle 4-H Showcase** Score Sheet is designed to make judging easy, uniform, and educational for the 4-Her. A description of each standard (white, red, blue) for each criteria of

evaluation is provided. Descriptions are written in youth friendly terms and should be given to the 4-Her at the end of the competition after the awards have been presented.



Career Connections

Someone once said, "Choose a career doing what you love and you will never work a day in your life". 4-H allows you to explore different project areas until you find one you love, then use your 4-H experiences to learn and do all you can in a 4-H project area. Ryan enjoys public speaking and wants to be a politician. Dustin participates in shooting sports and wants to be a game warden. What 4-H project area do you like best, and how is it preparing you for a career?



Above & Beyond

Sometimes it is nice to know a little about a lot of things, but 4-H encourages you to know a lot about just a few things. Consider taking your project interest to the next level. What additional skills and knowledge can you learn? Try to "master" your 4-H project area. Be among the youth in Alabama 4-H who are "expert" in entomology, robotics, sewing and textiles, goats...or another topic. Your first year's sewing project may be an apron, your second year pajama pants, your third year a baby's outfit, your fourth year a dress, and so on. Make sure you are building on your skills and knowledge by trying something new each year.



Freestyle Ideas

- **Youth Art:** Sketches & Paintings, Sculpture, Mosaics, Calligraphy
- **Sewing & Needle Arts:** Knitting, Cross stitch, Embroidery, Heritage Garments
- **Life Skills:** Safety/emergency Preparedness, Communications, Technology
- **Wood Science:** Craving, Wood Burning, Furniture restorations
- **Power:** Automotive, Small Engines, Electronics, Welding
- **Natural Resources:** Environmental Safety, Water Quality, Air Quality, Radon, Rocks, Wildflowers,
- **Lost Arts:** American Heritage, Handspun Yarn, Family Records, History of local community
- **Animal Science:** Pocket Pets, Herdsmanship, Veterinary Science, Companion Animals
- **Crafts:** Ceramics, Cake Decorating, Porcelain, Metal Tooling
- **Miscellaneous:** Creative Writing, Collections, Model Rocketry, Model Cars/Airplanes

Score Sheet: Freestyle 4-H Showcase

Name of Participant: _____ County: _____

Level: ___ **Junior** (Age 9-11) ___ **Intermediate** (Age 12-13) ___ **Senior I** (Age 14-15) ___ **Senior II** (Age 16-18)

Description of Entry: _____ 4-H Project Area: _____

	Knowledge & Skills (Check Column)	Excellent	Good	Could Improve	Points Received	Comments
Minds On Learning (3 min discussion)	Time & Effort - 5 points Time spent in learning new skills					
	Knowledge - 10 points Demonstrated full knowledge of subject with explanations and elaboration					
	Problems Solved & Decisions Made - 10 points Learning by trial & error has taught you important skills and made you independent.					
	Future Learning - 5 points Your detailed plans for continued learning will make you successful.					
	Standard of Quality - 10 points You have full knowledge of quality standards pertaining to your entry; and have used accurate sources of information					

Hands-On Learning (contest entry)	Self Assessment - 10 points You told me your workmanship was excellent					
	Workmanship - 10 points Excellent workmanship					
	Suitable for use - 10 points It is constructed well for intended use.					
	Content - 10 points By looking at your entry I have a complete idea of what you've done and learned					
	Organization - 10 points Logical and interesting sequence. Easy to understand					
	Creativity - 10 points Your entry has lots of appeal and is an original idea					

Total Score _____

Disqualification for Freestyle Showcase

- Using animal or endangered plants
 - Using copyright materials

Deduction for Freestyle Showcase (10 points)

- Using a space larger than a 6 foot area without permission from the Extension Staff. (senior level only)
 - Using a space larger than 3 foot area in the junior/intermediate levels.