On Your Own:  
A 4-H Project That You Design

Name ___________________________________ Date of Birth ________________________________

County ________________________________ 4-H Leader ________________________________

Name of 4-H club, after-school program, or group
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Years enrolled in 4-H_____

Date project started __________ Date project completed __________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

What Can I Do in My 4-H “Self-Started” Project?

Have you ever thought “I wonder why?” or “How can I do THAT?” or maybe “That looks neat! I would like to try it!” If you have, then you have begun a self-started project. You can investigate hurricanes, study the history of football, raise and study goldfish or gerbils, or explore a thousand other ideas. And you can share what you discover with others. With a self-started project you do not follow someone else’s idea of what is good learning; you decide for yourself!

You will have to be your own researcher, your own scientist, your own artist, your own communicator, and your own evaluator. Are you curious about why snowflakes have six sides? Do you ever WONDER? Then go for it!

Planning

The self-started project begins with things you really care about. Make a list of all the things you would like to know, to do, and to understand.

• __________________________________________________________________________________________
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Review your list of interests and choose the one that is the most exciting to you. Turn that interest into a question. For instance, you may have written: “One day, I want to climb the highest mountain in the world.” This interest could become the question: “What do you need to do to get ready to climb the highest mountain in the world?” This question then becomes the goal of your 4-H project. Take this question to the library, to your computer, to a teacher, and to other places where answers might be found. Write the question that will lead your project.

My Question:

**Identifying Resources**
Make a list of the people and places you could visit to find answers to your question. For example:

1. Public or school library

2. Local historical society

3. The Internet [try http://www.yahooligans.com](http://www.yahooligans.com) by entering your term, such as mountain climbing, in the search box.

4. County Extension office

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

10.
Keeping a Record
As you visit your resources to find answers to your project question, keep a record of what you have done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Work Done</th>
<th>Number of Hours Spent (Estimate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 3, __</td>
<td>Interviewed John Smith, who has hiked the Appalachian Trail</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My Personal Touch
To share the story of your 4-H project, choose one of the activities below:

- Create a mini-scrapbook about your project. Be creative. Include pictures, newspaper clippings, drawings, poems, or anything else you have collected or written while completing your project.

- Create a collage of pictures that demonstrate what you learned while completing your project.

- Prepare and present an informational speech for your school, church, club, or county public speaking contest.

- Write a rap about your project and perform it for your class, club, or friends.

- Write a poem about your project then read it to your class, club, or friends.

- Write a play about your project and get some fellow 4-H’ers to help perform it.

- Produce an informational video about what you learned.

- Use any other creative method you choose.
**Project Summary**

The value of a 4-H project depends on what you have learned, the amount of thought and work you have put into the project, and how much you enjoyed it. Its value is also found in how you shared your experience with other people.

1. What have you done and what have you learned by doing this project?

2. What was your favorite part of the project?

3. Did you “show” or “tell” other people what you did in your project? If so, how?

4. If you were going to do this project again, what would you do differently?

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Molly Gregg and Chuck Hill, 4-H Program Specialists

For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county’s name to find the number.

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