



In this project area, 4-H members will understand multiple writing genres and work on the development of themes, plot, character, and more.



## Exploring 4-H Creative Writing

### Spark Activity: Writing Prompts

Short writing prompts are an excellent way to get ideas flowing, especially if you're experiencing writer's block. The following are just a few ideas to get you started.

In 100 years, people will open a time capsule you created. What items did you put inside it and why?

Write a short 1-2 paragraph story in which you have to use at least four unrelated items somewhere within the story. (For example: Lunch Tray, Headphones, Owl, 4 Leaf Clover); and/or...

Write a short 1-2 paragraph story in which you speak from the perspective of another person, telling your story with future generations.

Normally, you would title your chapters last, but try creating a fun title first, then begin writing. For example: your story's first chapter is entitled, "The Ground Gave Way". Write what happens next!



## 4-H Project Levels and Goals

### Beginner

- Define the terms genre, perspective, story arc, and character
- Learn about different genres of creative writing
- Experiment with different writing prompts
- Create simple story arcs
- Basic character descriptions
- Write in first person perspective
- Start a writing portfolio

### Intermediate

- Explore writing through different perspectives (First/Second/Third Person)
- Write in different genres (poetry, non-fiction, fiction, scripts, etc.)
- Experiment with different sentence structures and lengths
- Create and maintain a daily writing journal/diary

### Advanced

- Identify your writer's voice
- Have a strong command of grammar
- Refine editing process
- Organize master portfolio

## Put Your Project Into Action

### Show Your Skills

- Exhibit your work at your local 4-H Show
- Submit something to a creative writing contest
- Publish a poem in your town paper/ youth poetry venue
- Develop a script for a youth-led community play

### Service and Leadership

- Choose your favorite genre in which to write and share your writing with nursing home residents
- Host an open mic night for your peers and/or community members
- Research and publish a story highlighting a local veteran
- Serve as the 4-H reporter or historian and document the significant events of your club and community

### Entrepreneurship

- Submit a story to a publishing company
- Begin a writing blog
- Start an editing service

### Technology Connection

- Start an online writing blog
- Facebook groups geared for writers
- Online writing labs

### Connecting with a Mentor

- Connect with a school English teacher
- Reach out to university or community college writing faculty/ writing lab
- Local authors / poets
- Community theater directors/ script writers
- Local library

### Events

- 4-H writing workshops
- Local and state 4-H exhibit opportunities
- Local writing contests
- Local newspaper's community column



### Careers for People Interested in Creative Writing

Teacher	Copywriter
Editor	Advertising
Poet	Public Relations
Librarian	Communications
Novelist	Specialist
Script Writer	

## Start a Conversation

What kinds of books spark your interest? What don't you like to read? Why?

What makes you turn the page while reading?

Who is your favorite author and why? What about their writing style do you like?

What ideas, or what in your environment, inspires you? If you had the opportunity to tell one story to the world, what would it be? How would you tell it?

## Want to learn more?

[go.illinois.edu/4Hcreativewriting](http://go.illinois.edu/4Hcreativewriting)

## Explore more at Illinois 4-H!

[4-H.extension.illinois.edu](http://4-H.extension.illinois.edu)



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**Credits:** Iowa State University Extension 4-H Hot Sheet | "The Writer in You" 4-H Manual | Alcha Corban, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development | Reid Young, Extension Program Coordinator | Samantha Klumb, Extension Office Support Assistant | Sara Attig, Extension Program Coordinator, 4-H Youth Development | Afiwa Tete, Extension Program Coordinator, 4-H Youth Development | 4-H Spark Sheets are a collaborative effort of 4-H staff, volunteers, alumni, and teens from across Illinois. A big thanks to the many contributors and reviewers!