

**Colorado  
State  
University**

**Colorado  
State  
University**

**Extension**



# **Guide for 4-H Photography Judges**



# Photography Criteria

Use the following criteria to help you judge 4-H photography.

## **TECHNICAL FOCUS**

Definition:

Adjustments of the distance setting on a lens to appropriately define the subject.

Standard:

The focus is appropriate to the theme/mood and/or photographic class.

## **EXPOSURE**

Definition:

The quantity of light allowed to act on a photographic material a product of the intensity and the duration of light striking the film or paper.

Standard:

The exposure compliments the composition and gives the picture a smooth feeling or a particular effect.

## **LIGHTING**

Definition:

The illumination of a subject.

Standard:

Use of light to produce the desired mood or effect.

## **PRINT QUALITY**

Definition:

The photo exhibits quality consistent with display.

Standard:

The absence of blemishes, scratches, overly enlarged (graininess), and pixilation. This also includes the quality of mounting.

## **SUBJECT**

### **CREATIVE USE OF SUBJECT**

Definition:

The photo uses the subject to deliver a message in a creative way.

Standard:

The photo clearly communicates the subject and fits the chosen category.

### **COMPOSITION**

Definition:

Placement of the subject in the photo demonstrating artistic ability.

Standard:

A pleasing balance exists among all components of the composition.

### **IMPACT**

Definition:

The photo clearly captures the attention of the viewer.

Standard:

The composition conveys a strong message.

## **UNIQUENESS**

Definition:

Use of originality, camera angle, lighting, character studies, and/or creativity.

Standard:

The photographer exhibits creativity through the photo.

## **PHOTO COMPOSITION**

Definition:

A photo with good composition has only the elements necessary to tell the story.

Standard:

Main subject and supporting elements are arranged in a pleasing, logical, and balanced way to tell the story. The subject will dominate an appropriate foreground and/or background. Remind youth of traditional compositional "rules," such as, rule of thirds, framing and leading line. A photo with good composition fills the frame, is close to the subject, the background is simple and the angle is changed to make for a more interesting photo.

## **STORYTELLING ABILITY**

Definition:

A photo with this quality has an interesting, clear message.

Standard:

A central idea, given simply, that you can grasp quickly and easily. It keeps your attention when you look at it a second or third time.

## **Technical Expectations/Standards**

- If image sharpness is desired, camera should be held steady with a tripod or other method.
- Fast shutter speeds are used to stop subject motion; slow speed to create blur that suggests motion.
- Choose appropriate aperture for the depth of field or depth of focus needed to achieve the desired effect. Small apertures yield greater depth of field; larger apertures yield shallow depth of field.
- Make notice of the exhibitor's equipment to make sure that he/she is aware of and has worked within the capabilities of their equipment.
- Human subjects should be posed to look natural and comfortable.

- Lighting should enhance and strengthen the purpose and impact of the photograph. Lighting is influenced by such factors as artificial methods used, time of day, weather conditions.
- Photographs should be properly exposed; not grossly over or underexposed.



### **Composition Expectations/Standards**

- Most photos can be improved by using the rule of thirds to compose the photo with the point of interest away from dead center.
- Cropping in the camera or on a finished photo (using the rule of thirds) can improve composition and help eliminate distracting elements in the photo.
- Photos with dominant vertical lines are usually stronger when shot in a vertical format (and horizontal subjects shot in the horizontal format).
- Camera position (point of view) can help eliminate background and foreground distractions.
- The camera position should be at an appropriate distance from subject (depends on exhibitor's goal).



## Suggested Questions For Interview Judging

What was your photography goal for this exhibit?

What were some of the things you did to work toward your goal?

What were some of the important things you learned?

Based on what you learned, what are your plans or ideas for what you would like to do next in photography?

If you could prepare this exhibit again, would you change it in any way?

Why did you choose photography as a project?

Why did you choose this type of lighting for your picture?

What other people helped you as you prepared your exhibit?

Did you think of any other ways to compose your picture before you shot it?

Is your photograph as you saw it in your camera, or did you crop it later?

How did the rule of thirds help you as you shot or cropped your photograph?

What feeling or response would you like to get from people as they look at your photographs?

Where do you get your ideas for your photography subjects?

How did you come up with the idea for taking this photograph?

What differences do you see in using a digital camera as compared to a traditional camera?

Tell me how you decided on the special effects you chose for your photo as you worked with your digital computer program?

What are 2-3 key points of advice you'd give to a beginning photographer?

How will you continue to use what you've learned in the photography project?

How did you decide where to place yourself and your camera (point of view) when you shot this photograph?

What could you do to eliminate some of the background in your picture?

What could you do to help viewers pay more attention to the main subject in your picture?

How do you think your photo would be changed if you shot it at a different time of day? Or in different weather or lighting conditions?



### POINTS TO REMEMBER

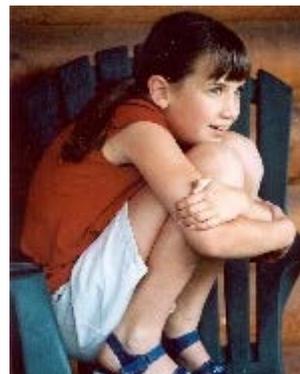
- Exhibit is only one part of the 4-H projects. Project is on-going.
- The exhibitor's goal should trigger certain expectation or standards for a judge.
- Concentrate on what the 4-H'er could control as he/she shot the pictures and prepared the exhibit.
- Know the county fair book where you judge.
- What photography resourced did the county provide?
- Sit side-by-side with exhibitor if possible

## EVALUATE WHAT THE 4-H'ER CAN CONTROL

A 4-H'er can never have complete control when he/she shoots a picture and prepares an exhibit, but the photographer can make decisions about many of the following factors.

Consider the photographer's goal....then evaluate based on:

- Point of View* ---location on camera in relation to subject. Did camera placement present a unique and interesting point of view? Did placement help eliminate distracting elements in the picture?
  - Distance from subject.* Did subject distance strengthen or weaken the picture?
  - Composition and cropping.* Did 4-H'er use the rule-of-thirds guideline to place the point of interest? Did cropping help strengthen the picture? Did 4-H'er recognize dominant lines and shoot or crop to strengthen the photo?
  - Camera movement.* If sharpness was desired, was camera held steady? If camera movement was intentional (panning with subject, for example), did the technique add to the impact of the picture?
  - Subject speed* (if adjustable). Was appropriate shutter speed used to stop movement, or to emphasize subject movement?
  - Aperture setting and resulting depth of field* (if adjustable). Did 4-H'er choose appropriate aperture setting to help achieve goal? A small aperture yields a greater range of depth of focus; a large aperture yields a shallower depth of focus. Also called depth of field.
  - Focus point* (if adjustable). Is the photo sharp where it is suppose to be sharp?
  - Posing a human subject.* Does the subject look natural and comfortable? Is the subject engaged in an activity or just staring at the camera?
  - Lighting* (flash vs. natural light). Did 4-H'er choose lighting to
- enhance the subject? Was bounce flash used to reduce harshness of flash?
  - Time of day photo was shot.* Lighting and atmospheric conditions vary greatly during the day. Did exhibitor choose a time of day that strengthens the photo's impact?
  - Digital manipulation.* Did 4-H'er choose appropriate manipulation to add interest and strength? Depending on the goal, was manipulation overdone?
  - Mat color, size, and neatness.* Does the mat color or size enhance the photo? Or, does the mat draw attention away from the photo?



## BEFORE JUDGING

Make sure you are familiar with:

The general exhibit requirements that can be found at [www.colorado4h.org](http://www.colorado4h.org)

The Photography score sheets you will be using when judging at Colorado County Fairs also found at [www.colorado4h.org](http://www.colorado4h.org)

General rules for all photography units:

For all units of photography submit only current unit materials. Either color or black and white prints may be entered for all exercises in Units 1, 2, and 3.

In Levels 1-3 pictures can be either mounted on the journal pages or on card stock. Use the tips on page 73 of the manuals for mounting the pictures.

Display photos in Units 1-3, and 6 should be no larger than 5" x 7". The photo must be mounted on a mat and suitable for hanging without additional frame. No other mounted materials (i.e. glass, wood, plastic, metal, etc.) can be used.

All photos in the notebook or manual should be 4"x7" unless otherwise indicated in the manual. If the photos do not fit on the page, add a page for the photo.

**Display photo will be used for display at state fair so be careful when picking your best photo. Notebooks will not be displayed.**

Binders/notebooks: use a hardback, three-ring notebook up to 3" in size for all units. No posters or oversized books. Do not use plastic covers on any pages in any unit. All materials must fit within the notebook. Additional pages can be added as needed to exhibit your photos. **Notebooks will be judged but will not be displayed.**

Videos must be appropriate for total family viewing.

For photo exhibits in levels 1-3 follow tips on page 73 of the manual. Photos can be mounted on the journal pages or cardstock. Label format for UNITS 1-4:

Camera used \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Film \_\_\_\_\_  
Exposure details \_\_\_\_\_  
Journal page # (if using cardstock to mount pictures ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Photo # (left to right and top to bottom) \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Photo Taken \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Label Format for Units 6-7  
Activity# \_\_\_\_\_  
Photo# \_\_\_\_\_

Subject \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Photo Taken \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit 4 Lightning Photography is not limited to only lightning photos. Youth can exhibit photos taken at night: moon light photos, fireworks, night-time photos. Photos using long exposure and high speed can also be exhibited. Be sure to check the requirements.

## COLORADO 4-H PHOTO CONTEST

Requirements for this contest can be found at:  
[http://www.colorado4h.org/project\\_resource/StateFairContestRequirements.pdf](http://www.colorado4h.org/project_resource/StateFairContestRequirements.pdf) on page 26.

The Best Photo Contest is open to any 4-H member (does not have to be enrolled in Photography). No e-record is required. **Submitted pictures must have been taken in Colorado to be eligible for the contest.**

The picture must be a 5" x 7" print.

The photo must be mounted on a mat and suitable for hanging without additional frame. No other mounted materials (i.e. foam core, glass, wood, plastic, metal, etc.) can be used.

The maximum size for the matted only picture is no larger than 8"x10" (no frame or glass).

The photo must be labeled on the back with:

Name  
County  
Date, time and location of photo  
Make and model of camera used  
ASA film speed (for film cameras) or ISO resolution setting (for digital cameras)  
Title of photo

The Grand and Reserve Grand Champion photos will be taken to the state 4-H office and a screen saver will be made. Once the screen saver is made the photos will be returned.

Photos will be judged according to the following criteria:

Composition/Presentation  
Focus/Sharpness  
Lighting  
Creativity

All units are divided into junior (ages 8-10) intermediate (11-13) and senior (14 and older) divisions. The requirements are the same in every case, but the judge should be certain that the divisions are separate and that they are not judge against each other.

The development of young people is the first consideration in any 4-H project. The photography exhibit is the means to an end, not an end in itself.

All photography units are required to complete a 4-H Project e-record.



## Unit (Level) 1 Focus On Photography

Unit 1 ---Focus on Photography---

May use either a simple or digital camera

Completed e-record. Including the following in your story: what camera you used this year (brand name, film size, etc.), how you stored your pictures and why you picked you Display Photo. **(Also include photos of you working on your project in the e-record photo page.) Completion of pages 4-7 in the manual.**

Level 1 photo exhibits will consist of the following photo journal pages from the manual (a minimum of 60 and maximum of 66 photos). Photos may be mounted on cardstock with reference to journal pages.

1. Photo Journal Page 7 --- 1 photo (Display Photo) will be displayed – must be matted.
2. Photo Journal Page 12 –5 Photos
3. Photo Journal Page 16—6 photos
4. Photo Journal Page 20---6 photos –3 photos of outdoor scene taken different times (explained in manual pg. 18); 3 photos of inside scene taken different times (explained in the manual pg. 18) (minimum of 6 photos)
5. Photo Journal Page 24—5 photos
6. Photo Journal Page 28 ---4 photos
7. Photo Journal Page 32 ---3 photos
8. Photo Journal Page 36---3 photos
9. Photo Journal Page 40---3photos
10. Photo Journal Page 44—3 to 5 Photos.
11. Photo Journal Page 48--4photos
12. Photo Journal Page 52--4 photos
13. Photo Journal Page 56--3 photos
14. Photo Journal Page60-3 to 5 story format
15. Photo Journal Page 64-3 to 5 photos
16. Photo Journal Page 68-4 photos

Display photo-may be up to 5"x 7" in size but not larger than 8" x 10" matted. This photo will be used for displaying and must be matted.

Project will be evaluated on the quality of the information completed in the e-record (25 percent) and quality of the exhibit (75 percent)



## UNIT (Level) 2 Controlling The Image

### Unit 2 – Controlling The Image

May use either a simple and digital camera.

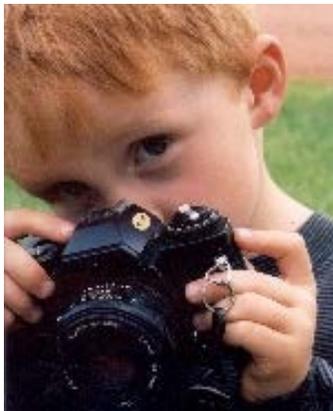
Completed e-record. Also include photos of you working on your project in the e-record photo page. **Completion of pages 4-7 in the manual.**

Level 2 photo exhibits will consist of the following Photo Journal pages in the Manual. (A minimum of 48 photos) Note: This level is for cameras that can be adjusted for speed and lighting). Photos may be mounted on cardstock with reference to journal pages.

1. Photo Journal page 7—1 **Display Photo—will be displayed –must be matted.**
2. Photo Journal page 12—3 still subject with different aperture settings (explained in manual page 10); 3 moving subjects with different shutter speeds (explained in manual page 10).
3. Photo Journal page 16 –6 photos
4. Photo Journal page 20—3 photos as explained in manual page 18.
5. Photo Journal page 24—2 photos with hard light and 2 photos with soft light.
6. Photo Journal page 28 –3 photos
7. Photo Journal page 32 –3 photos
8. Photo Journal page 36 –3 photos
9. Photo Journal page 40 –3 photos
10. Photo Journal page 44-3 to 5 photos
11. Photo Journal page 48 –1 photo
12. Photo Journal page 52 – 2 photos
13. Photo Journal page 56 – 2 photos
14. Photo Journal page 60 –3 photos
15. Photo Journal page 64 –3 photos
16. Photo Journal page 68 –panorama

Display photo –may be up to 5"x7" in size but not larger than 8" x 10" matted. This photo will be used for displaying and must be matted.

Project will be evaluated on the quality of the information completed in the e-record (25 percent) and quality of the exhibit (75 percent).



## UNIT (Level 3) Mastering Photography

### Unit 3 ---Mastering Photography

Completed e-record. Also include photos of you working on your project in the e-record photo page. **Completion of pages 4-7 in the manual.**

Level 3 photo exhibits will consist of the following Photo Journal pages from the manual (minimum of 48 photos). Photos may be mounted on cardstock with reference to journal pages.

1. Photo Journal page 7 –1 **Display Photo—this will be displayed—must be matted.**
2. Photo Journal page 12 –3 photos
3. Photo Journal page 16 –3 photos
4. Photo Journal page 20 –3 photos
5. Photo Journal page 24 –2 photos
6. Photo Journal page 28 –3 photos
7. Photo Journal page 32 –2 photos
8. Photo Journal page 36 –4 photos
9. Photo Journal page 40 –4 photos
10. Photo Journal page 44 –6 photos
11. Photo Journal page 48 –4 photos
12. Photo Journal page 52 –3 photos
13. Photo Journal page 56 –4 photos
14. Photo Journal page 60 –3 to 5 photos
15. Photo Journal page 64—Brochure—is not include in total photo count
16. Photo Journal page 68 –3 photos

Display photo-may be up to 5" x 7" in size but not larger than 8" x 10" matted. This photo will be used for displaying and must be matted.

Project will be evaluated on the quality of the information completed in the e-record (25 percent) and quality of the exhibit (75 percent).



## UNIT 4---Lightning Photography

Completed e-record with emphasis on accomplishments in your story. Include photos in the e-record photo page of you working on your project.

Three 5" x7" photos mounted on a mat. No other mounted materials (i.e. glass, wood, plastic, metal, etc.) can be used.

These three photos can be taken from any of these categories: lightning, night-time, fireworks, and moon-light, long exposure and high speed photos. For example: 2 lightning photos and one moon-light photo; or one lightning, one firework, one long exposure, and so on. Any combination can be done.

Maximum size for the matted picture is no larger than 8" x 10".

Attached to the back of the submitted print should be:

Name  
County  
Date, time and location of photo  
Make and model of camera used  
Shutter speed and aperture setting  
ASA film speed (for film cameras) or  
ISO resolution setting (for digital  
cameras)

Project will be evaluated on the quality of the information completed in the e-record (25 percent) and quality of the exhibit (75 percent).



## UNIT 6---Advanced Photography

Unit 6 --Advanced Photography

Note: This unit is for those 4-H members who have advanced photography experiences (i.e. creative darkroom work, publishing, careers, etc.).

Completed Photography Unit 6 e-record with emphasis on accomplishments in your story. Include photos in the e-record photo page of you working on your project.

Include the following information on the Photography page:

Goals  
Plans  
Accomplishments  
Evaluation

Photos should show your progress and be labeled as successful or not, plus reasons.

Notebook which illustrations achievements.

Display photo-may be up to 5" x 7" in size but not larger than 8" x 10" matted. This photo will be used for displaying and must be matted.

Project will be evaluated on the quality of the information completed in the e-record (25 percent) and quality of the exhibit (75 percent).

## UNIT 7---4-H Filmmaking

Completed e-record and photography notebook/binder including story board.

Video as required (3-5 minute limitation).

The video should be DVD media only and ready for viewing. Also the video must be appropriate for family viewing. Be sure that the DVD can be viewed on various computer operating systems (ex: Windows, MAC, OS-X, etc.)

Project will be evaluated on the quality of the information completed in the e-record (25 percent) and quality of the exhibit (75 percent).

