



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**

Correspondence



Thank-you notes have a great role in relationship building and connecting with others personally and professionally. Recipients feel recognized and appreciated when they receive thank-you notes. Sending a thank you is seen as a courteous and thoughtful gesture and can influence the future of a relationship.

Writing thank-you notes can help youth develop this skill, which is useful in their personal and professional lives. As an example, youth will eventually thank potential employers for job interviews, use thank-you notes to be successful in their chosen field or send notes of gratitude for gifts and acts of kindness.

A good thank-you note includes:

1. A greeting to the recipient (example: Dear Mr. Smith, Dear Ms. Jones or Dear Clover County Farm Bureau).
2. An acknowledgement of the specific reason for your thanks – being a guest speaker at your club meeting. This is always important to do first!
3. The reason why you appreciate the recipient or the business (example: the recipient or the business has supported you and/or the 4-H program, has been generous to 4-H, and took time out of the day to benefit youth, etc.)
4. How you plan to use the information received, or gift of money to the 4-H club (plan to construct a 4-H project, help pay for summer camp, etc.)
5. A comment or detail about yourself or an update on your life (explain what you love about 4-H and what you learned this year and enjoyed the most this year; this can also include an opportunity for future partnerships).
6. A repeat of your thank-you (may be left out IF you sign “With thanks”).
7. A closing and signature (With thanks, Your Name; or Sincerely, Your Name, etc.)

An example:

Dear Mr. Jolly Roger (1),

Thank you for being a guest speaker at our 4-H club meeting (2). I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to highlight your profession (3). I was fascinated by what I learned that I plan to create 4-H project highlighting career opportunities in electrical engineering (4). I graduate from high school and graduate from 4-H this year. I plan to study electrical engineering at college (5). Thanks again for your time and support for the 4-H program! (6)

Sincerely, (7)

(Your signed name)

Your note should:

- Be handwritten by you.
- Be neat and legible.
- Be on a note card or a nice piece of paper (lined paper or index card are not a good choice).
- Be in blue or black ink.

(Reference: Michigan State University Extension)

You are given the opportunity to raise awareness about the 4-H program in your club and county – the work you and your members are doing, the fun you and your club members are having, and the help you and your members are giving to the community.

Share a News Story

- Submit announcements for events planned by you and your club, as appropriate
- Prepare a news article after event or activity
- Share why 4-H is important to you through a news article.

News Story Format

- The first time you refer to a person, use their full name (and title if appropriate).
- The next time you refer to a person under age 18, refer to them by their first name. The next time you refer to a person age 18 and over, refer to them by their last name.
- Write in the third person. Use pronouns he, she, him, her, they, them – not the words I or you or we.
- Use simple language – active verbs, concrete, and colorful words. Do not use long words or phrases when a short word will do. Paragraphs should contain no more than two or three sentences.
- Do not write your news article in chronological order.

Important Pieces of a News Story

The important parts of a news story are the five W's and the H.

- **WHO** is the story about? Who can be multi-focused – who participated or who is invited?
- **WHAT** is the story about?
- **WHEN** will (did) it happen?
- **WHERE** will (did) it happen?
- **WHY** will (did) it happen?
- **HOW** will (did) it happen?





The Upside-Down Pyramid Format

The Upside-Down Pyramid format puts the facts in “news order” so that the story starts with the most critical information that the reader needs first.

- The first paragraph should contain enough information to give a good overview of the entire story.
- The rest of the story explains and provides additional information.
- You must assume that the story might be cut due to space limitations, so ask yourself if the story is satisfactory if the editor decides to include only the first two paragraphs. If not, rearrange it so that it does.

Other Pieces to Include

- Include contact information.
- If you include a photo with your news article, identify who is in the photo.
- Thank the media organization for the support.
- Be aware of the media outlets’ print deadlines. (For example: if the newspaper comes out on Wednesday, they print their newspaper on Tuesday; therefore, your news information should be submitted the week before.