

Genesee County
4H State Essay Rules and Scoring Criteria

(NOTE: this can also be used for the “My 4H Story” in the Horse Project Book!)

QUESTION for REFLECTIVE ESSAY:

What is something I learned this year?

What is a Reflective Essay?

Reflection Essays describe an event or experience, and then analyze the meaning of that experience and what can be or was learned from it.

Organizing Your Essay

Introduction: Either start with a vivid description of the place, your experience, or a summary of what you are reflecting about. End with your thesis idea. Sometimes you may want to put a question first and then the answer

Body: Each of the Reflective Questions you've answered can be a paragraph in the body of your essay. It is OK to only have one question or story line. Take your notes and expand them. Add more details and examples from your experience and your life story.

Conclusion: In the conclusion, you will want to explain and expand on your thesis idea. Tell how this experience taught you something new or how it helped you to understand something. Another way to conclude is to suggest where you might like to go from this point in thinking about your thesis idea.

The Proper Format for Essays

Below are guidelines for the formatting of essays based on recommendations from the MLA (the Modern Language Association).

- **(If typed...) Fonts:** Your essay should be word processed in 12-point Times New Roman fonts.
- **(If typed and written...) Double space:** Your entire essay should be double spaced, with no single spacing anywhere and no extra spacing anywhere. There should not be extra spaces between paragraphs.
- **Heading:** In the upper left corner of the first page of your essay, you should type your name, your club name, 4H State Essay, and the date, as follows:

Your Name

Club Name

4H State Essay

30 August 2013

- **Margins:** According to the MLA, your essay should have a one-inch margin on the top, bottom, left, and right.

- **Page Numbers:** Your last name and the page number should appear in the upper right corner of each page of your essay, including the first page, as in **Jones 3**. Insert your name and the page number as a "header." Do not type this information where the text of your essay should be.
- **Title:** Your essay should include a title. The title should be centered and should appear under the heading information on the first page and above the first line of your essay. The title should be in the same fonts as the rest of your essay, with no quotation marks, no underlining, no italics, and no bold.
- **Indentation:** The first line of each paragraph should be indented. According to the MLA, this indentation should be 1/2 inch or five spaces, but pressing [Tab] once should give you the correct indentation.
- **Align Left:** The text of your essay should be lined up evenly at the left margin but not at the right margin. In your word processor, choose "Align Left." Do not choose "Justify."
- You **DO NOT** have to type your essay. It can be either typed or hand written. These guidelines should be followed as allowed by the method used.

Putting all of the above together, you should have a first page that looks like the following:

Lahti 1

Kirsten Lahti

Mane Connection

4H State Essay

30 August 2013

The Day I Learned First Hand about Heaves in Horses

I thought I knew how to take care of my horse. Earlier this spring, I regretfully realized I did not know it all and I had an experience that changed the way I look at any horse, their care and myself as their care giver.

RUBRIC

**** Note **** The essay can be written by hand or typed.

An entry cannot be marked down for being written.

Feature	2 point per row	1 points per row	.50 points per row	.025 – 0 points per row
Title, Name, Conditions and Formatting	Title and Name were there in proper place and style. Exhibitors must write or type an essay at least a half page in length, Times New Roman 12 point font (if typed) and double spaced. Nothing wrong with formatting.	Title and Name were on the page in proper place. Less than ½ page in length, Times New Roman 12 point font (if typed), and double spaced.	Title and Name were visible, More than one thing wrong in formatting.	Parts were missing or incorrect. Many things wrong in formatting.
Quality of Writing / Organization	Written in an extraordinary style and voice. Very informative and well organized (intro, body, conclusion)	Written in an interesting style and voice. Somewhat informative and organized (intro, body, conclusion).	The essay had little style or voice. There was difficulty following the story.	No style or voice. No organization or structure to the essay,
Grammar / Spelling	No grammatical errors. No run on sentences. No spelling errors or wrong words used.	1-2 grammatical errors. 1-2 spelling errors.	3-4 grammatical errors. 3-4 spelling errors.	5 or more grammatical errors. 5 or more spelling errors

SCORING

6 maximum points possible (scored like an additional class for state points)

Scoring	Points
Title, Name Conditions and Formatting	
Quality of Writing / Organization	
Grammar / Spelling	
TOTAL	