

CALIFORNIA 4-H PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST HANDBOOK



Revised March 15, 2024



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

■ 4-H Youth Development Program

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Introduction



“Connection” by Anneliese Yanez, Riverside County 4-H.

The California 4-H Photography Contest was developed in 2010 to provide regular 4-H youth members across the state with a new opportunity to showcase their photographs and to receive feedback from knowledgeable evaluators on their progress in learning a variety of photography concepts. Since its inception, over 1,700 youth have participated in the contest entering nearly 3,200 photographs (2010 - 2023). The contest is hosted as part of the California 4-H State Field Day that takes place annually at the University of California, Davis, every May. Beginning in 2024, the contest has been adapted into a virtual format to provide a more equitable opportunity for youth across the state.

This all-encompassing handbook provides contest participants with everything needed to successfully prepare and participate in the photography contest. Local, county, and regional 4-H events are invited to utilize these statewide guidelines to develop their own photography contest opportunities.

This handbook was developed by John Trammell, Contest Founder and Coordinator, March 2024.

General Contest Information

Beginning in 2024, the State 4-H Photography Contest will only be offered as a virtual contest to provide a more equitable opportunity for youth who lack the resources to print photographs for display and/or unable to travel long distances to State 4-H Field Day.

Regular 4-H members ages 9 - 19, as of December 31 of the current 4-H program year are invited to participate in the contest. There are no prior requirements to enter this state-level competition. Participants do not have to be a member of the photography project in order to participate.

Entries will be evaluated between the registration closure date and State 4-H Field Day in the month of May. A virtual gallery will be available to the public for viewing online. During State 4-H Field Day at UC Davis, an in-person viewing area will be available to showcase all of the participant's photographs. Winners will be announced during the virtual award ceremony.

2024 Contest Schedule

Registration Due	Evaluation Period	State Field Day Gallery Viewing	Virtual Award Ceremony
April 30, 2024	May 1 - 23, 2024	May 25, 10 am - 2 pm	May 26, 2024

Contest Rules

Entries that do not comply with the following rules are subject to being marked down in their evaluations or to be disqualified from the contest.

- ☐ All participants must be enrolled as a regular 4-H member (ages 9 - 19).
- ☐ A limit of 2 photographs per person may be entered.
- ☐ Photographs must be submitted digitally via the registration form.
- ☐ Photographs must be taken by the 4-H member entering the contest.
- ☐ Photographs can only be entered once in the contest. It is recommended that the entries were taken within the current 4-H year.
- ☐ Photographs must be submitted in a .jpeg, .jpg, or .png file format. Other formats including but not limited to .heic, .tiff, .raw will not be evaluated.

- ☐ Please name each photo with the following information:
Name_County_AgeDivision_PhotoTitle. (example:
JaneSmith_Mono_Senior_BodieGhostTown)
- ☐ Photographs should be submitted at the highest quality possible. It is recommended to submit photographs at a resolution of 150 dpi or higher. Photo files uploaded to the registration form can be up to _____ megabytes.
- ☐ Digital enhancements are allowed. It is recommended to use standard editing improvements such as cropping, lighting, color, noise reduction, sharpening, contrast, red eye removal, and other similar improvements. Substantially altered photographs should be done only if it improves the storytelling of the entry.
- ☐ No text including date stamps, comments, watermarks, or titles should be used on the photograph. Text or wording that is part of the original photograph (i.e. photo of a street sign, etc.) is acceptable.

Age Divisions

All entries are placed into age divisions. These divisions align with the standard 4-H youth member age groups utilized throughout the program. Evaluators will score entries based on the age level of the participants.

Junior Division

Ages 9 - 10

Intermediate Division

Ages 11 - 13

Senior Division

Ages 14 - 18

Awards and Recognition

The Danish System of Judging is used for the photography contest. All entries will receive a score when they are evaluated. Each photograph will be awarded a seal award that will be posted on their certificate or evaluation sheet. The following seals are awarded for the different score ranges:

Platinum

100 points

Gold

99 - 90 points

Blue

89 - 80 points

Red

79 - 70 points

White

69 - 0 points

Platinum and Gold Winners

Participants awarded a platinum or gold seal will receive a CA 4-H Photography Contest pin to wear on their 4-H hats. In addition, they will be considered for the Best of Division and Best of Show award.

Best of Show and Division Awards

When evaluation of all the entries are completed and tabulated, evaluators will review all platinum and gold winners. They will select one Best of Show and three Best of Division winners. These winners will be showcased during the State 4-H Field Day award ceremony and receive a beautiful rosette ribbon donated by John Trammell.



2020 Best of Show Winner

“Welding”

By Taylor Ludwig, Butte County

Evaluation Criteria

Impact



Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling photographs invoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder, or another intense emotion. There can be impact in any of the judging elements.

“At the time I took this picture of my sister Lydia we had been sheltering-in-place in our home in Lodi, CA for over a year. My parents had us wearing masks in the house to get us use to doing it in public. I think my sister is dreaming of the day she can go back out.” - Rachel Salters.

Rachel Salters of San Joaquin County 4-H captured this photograph titled “Shelter in Place” during the Coronavirus 2019 Pandemic. Rachel’s photograph was very impactful to the 2021 contest evaluators as the image had them reminisce on the challenges everyone faced during the pandemic. This photograph received a perfect score under the impact category. The image was awarded Best of Division, Intermediate.

Creativity



Creativity is the original, fresh, and external expression of imagination of the photographer to convey an idea, message, or through. The subject should be easily identifiable by viewers and be captured in a creative way. Photograph should not be over cluttered with many subjects.

Bailey Morris of Ventura County 4-H captured “Crazy Eye Art” and won the Intermediate Best of Division in 2012 for this creative image. “This picture was taken of my math teacher, Mr. Vaglica's eyes. He was one of the chaperones

on our 8th grade trip to Washington DC. My best friend is holding one of the cameras and I'm holding the other.” - Bailey Morris.

Focus



Focus is the adjustment of the distance setting on a lens to appropriately define the subject. The subject(s) of the image should be in focus and sharp unless blurriness is obviously intentional (i.e. to show motion).

Colton Masters of Tuolumne County 4-H won Senior Best of Division in 2013 for “Love’s Creation.” He creatively told a story through keeping the subject in the foreground in focus and the second subject in the background out of focus.

Exposure



Exposure is the amount of light collected by your camera when taking a photograph. When a photograph is perfectly exposed, the image captures all the details in the highlights and shadows. Evaluators will look for photographs with good exposure that is not overexposed or underexposed unless the photographer obviously intended.

Overexposure is when the shutter is open for too long exposing the camera sensor to too much light. This results in images that become washed out.

Underexposure is when the shutter is open for too short of a time not giving the camera sensor enough light to produce a good image. This results in the image losing shadow details and the dark areas becoming nearly black in an image.

This photograph named “Trudy” taken by Zoey Wilkerson of Kern County 4-H received a high score in exposure. The subject is perfectly exposed and the

background highlights doesn't distract the viewers eyes.

Composition



Composition brings all of the visual elements of a photograph together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Good composition grabs the attention of the viewer and prompts them to look where the photographer intends. Composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the photographer. The most common composition techniques include the rule of thirds, leading lines, symmetry, framing, repetition and pattern, and depth of field. “Orange You Sweet” by Neha Gaddam of Alameda County 4-H used the Rule of Thirds composition technique for their 2021 photography contest entry.

Story Telling



A photography is worth a thousand words. Story telling focuses on the image's ability to invoke imagination or emotion. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect their own message or read their own story in an image.

“Brothers” by Ruby Robbins of Imperial County 4-H tells the story of childhood and the bond siblings share. Viewers might experience emotions of joy and reflect on the fun times they experienced with their own family members during childhood.

Contest Evaluation Sheet

This is an example evaluation sheet for the photography contest. The layout of the evaluation sheet may change to accommodate for mail merge capabilities from a spreadsheet utilized from the online form used by the contest evaluators.

CALIFORNIA 4-H PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST EVALUATION SHEET



Member Name: _____ County: _____

Jr. _____ Int. _____ Sr. _____ Photo Title: _____

CATEGORY	EVALUATION ELEMENT	POINT RANGE	POINTS AWARDED
Composition	The image is designed with good composition that assists the viewer in understanding the intention of the photograph. Photographer used a concept including but not limited to the rule of thirds, leading lines, framing, symmetry, depth of field, or others.	0 - 20	
Creativity	Creativity is the original, fresh, and external expression of imagination of the photographer to convey an idea, message, or through. Photograph should not be over cluttered with many subjects.	0 - 15	
Exposure	Photograph is properly exposed. The image is not over exposed or under exposed; unless the photographer obviously intended.	0 - 15	
Focus	The subject(s) of the image are in focus and sharp unless blurriness is obviously intentional.	0 - 15	
Impact	Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling photographs invoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder, or another intense emotion.	0 - 10	
Rules	All the rules for the photography contest have been followed by the participant.	0 - 10	
Story Telling	Story telling focuses on the image's ability to invoke imagination or emotion.	0 - 15	

Total Score: _____

100 Points Possible.

Placing: Platinum: 100, Gold: 99-90

Blue: 89-80; Red: 79-70;

White: 69-0

Comments: _____

Evaluator Signature: _____