

WRITING BLUE RIBBON “THANK YOU” LETTERS!

When should “thank you” letters be sent?

In 4-H you will most often write “thank you” letters when you earn a sponsored award and when you sell a market animal. A thank you letter should be sent to award sponsors and auction buyers to express your appreciation of their generosity and support. Letters should be written and mailed immediately after receiving the donation (no more than two weeks later).

What should they look like?

The best “thank you” letters are written on paper or inside personalized cards. They should always be handwritten in your very best handwriting! Envelopes should be addressed properly in your handwriting.

What should be included?

1. **Salutation:** Be sure you personalize the letter and spell donor names correctly. If an individual made the donation, write “Dear Mr. XXXXX” or “Dear Ms. XXXXX.” If a business made the donation, call to find out who at that business should receive your letter and use their name in your salutation rather than writing it to the business name. Writing “Dear Sponsor” or “Dear Buyer” is never okay!
2. **Introduce yourself:** Give your full name, your age or grade, tell them you are a 4-H member, your project area, and which club you are in.
3. **Express gratitude and name the donation:** The second sentence should thank the donor and remind them what they did. For example, “Thank you for purchasing my pig at this year’s fair auction.” Or, “Thank you for sponsoring the award for Grand Champion Market Steer at this year’s fair.”
4. **Tell how the donation will be used:** Let the donor know what you plan to do with the money received from auction or how you will use the award they donated so they know how appreciative you are. This should be personalized, like “The money I earned at the auction will be used to pay for college in the future.” Or, “The rope halter you donated will be used to train my next market animal.”
5. **Repeat your appreciation:** Reinforce your gratitude to the donor. You could say, “Thanks again for supporting the 4-H program.” Or, “Your generosity is very much appreciated.”
6. **Sign your name:** At the bottom of your letter, write “Sincerely,” and sign your name.

How can I elaborate?

The sections above are the bare minimum for what should be included in your letter. You are encouraged to elaborate and further personalize your letter. Additional things you could include are: a personal connection you have to the business or donor, how many years you’ve been in 4-H, why the 4-H program means so much to you, your goals for the next year, something interesting about your project, why you appreciate what they did, why 4-H benefits from donations like theirs, or elaborate on what you did to earn the donation.

Samples

Basic Letter:

Dear Mr. Jones,

My name is Jane Doe and I'm a 4th grader in the Bodacious Buckaroos 4-H horse club. Thank you for sponsoring the award for Junior Showmanship Champion. I am excited to use the saddle blanket you donated when I show at fair next year. Thanks again for supporting the 4-H program!

Sincerely,
Jane Doe

Elaborated Letter:

Dear Ms. Jones and Jones' Construction Company,

My name is John Doe, I'm a 17 year old 4-H member and I have been showing goats with the Livestock Lifers club for the past 8 years. Thank you so much for purchasing my market goat at this year's fair auction! The money I earned from selling my goat will go into my college fund and help me pay tuition at Oregon State University in the future. 4-H has taught me so much over the years and it's support from business owners like you that allow 4-H to continue helping so many kids in our county. Thanks again, your generosity is very much appreciated!

Sincerely,
John Doe

Envelope:

Your Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

[Stamp]

Name of Person
Name of Business (if appropriate)
Street Address
City, State, Zip