

4-H SPIN (SPecial INterest) Club Curriculum: Potential Resources

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When it comes to finding curriculum for 4-H SPIN Clubs, there are many sources and options to choose from. These generally fall into four categories:

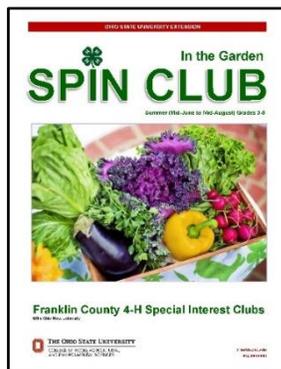
- Create/write your own or have a subject-matter volunteer create it for you
- Use an existing 4-H project book as curriculum
- Find SPIN Club curriculum on the web from other states and/or find lesson plans online that can be adapted to a 4-H SPIN Club
- Let it happen organically with some guidelines which may include using volunteers and 4-H members as impromptu presenters.

All four methods will be discussed in this handout, but first some general principles will be addressed to make it easier:

General principles: When selecting curriculum you want to be aware of your objectives, resources, potential teachers/volunteers, needs of site personnel, grade bands of youth, group size, time frame, site location, availability of supplies, budget, etc. For instance if a garden SPIN Club is your goal, then you might want to schedule it in the summer months and at an outdoor location where it is possible to have a garden. A 4-H SPIN Club curriculum should also include fun, educational activities that can incorporate leadership components.

A SPIN Club meets for a minimum of six hours, and can be spread out over a number of weeks. It is usually on a specific topic area. Supplies can be purchased by the Extension Educator, or site personnel. This should be clearly identified in advance of the program. It is a good idea to keep activities manageable and supplies low-cost and to a minimum. The four methods follow:

1. *Create/Write Your Own Curriculum:* You can create or write your own SPIN Club if you have very specific



The author of the “In the Garden” 4-H SPIN Club had very specific objectives in mind, so she decided to write the SPIN Club herself with other Extension professionals, and then pilot it for usability in Franklin County in 2016. This is a labor-intensive process, however.

objectives and the time to do so. An interested volunteer might also be willing to draft a curriculum. Franklin County 4-H has a both a garden and theater arts SPIN Club.

2. *Use an Existing 4-H Project Book as Curriculum:* Recently 4-H Educators from across the state teamed up by interest area to adapt project books to the SPIN Club format. Many, but not all, of the 4-H project books currently available can easily translate into a 4-H SPIN Club. For instance, “Rockets Away” would make for an ideal SPIN Club curriculum. Each activity could be used on a weekly basis and fill up an hour of time. The activities in “Geology: Can You Dig It” are another example of a ready-built curriculum. The Scratch coding book from National 4-H was purchased and used as the basis for a SPIN Club in Franklin County by an interested volunteer who was a retired university professor in computer science. It is not important to complete or judge the project book, just use or adapt the activities you need and make it work for your specific group.



3. Find SPIN Club curriculum on the web from other states and/or find lesson plans online that can be adapted to a 4-H SPIN Club: An amazing resource which can be used as is or adapted for your needs comes from Utah. 4-H SPIN Clubs in Utah are known as Discover Clubs, and their curriculum offerings are extensive. After completing a simple online submission form you are free to download the resources.

Go to: <https://utah4h.org/discover/> to learn more.



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You can also check out online lesson plans and then pull activities together to create a SPIN Club. One useful resource is Agriculture in the Classroom at:

<https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/>

4. Let it happen organically with some guidelines which may include using volunteers and 4-H members as impromptu presenters.

A SPIN Club curriculum can be easily pieced together by utilizing existing 4-H members and volunteers. For example, an “Animals in Agriculture” SPIN Club was created in Franklin County using activities from “Ag in the Classroom” for the introductory meetings. In later meetings interested 4-H youth and volunteers brought an animal to the SPIN Club and talked about the parts of the animal, care, agricultural use, etc. This provided an opportunity for the 4-H youth to engage in public speaking and prepare for competition. In addition, each youth presenter committed to only one SPIN Club meeting so that their time commitment was minimal.

In short, the opportunity to develop 4-H SPIN Club curriculum is endless.

Following are some other resources that Ohio 4-H Educators have used in creating SPIN Clubs:

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Computer Science and Coding Clubs

Google is partnering with 4-H to create a larger outreach with computer science and coding clubs*. Even if you do not know a lot about coding, ultimately it focuses on decision making, following instructions, and computational thinking. Most youth have grown up just pushing buttons on devices or typing words into search engines, so these types of club activities teaches them how to troubleshoot and move through a process to get results. Activities can be used from this Utah Extension site at:

https://4-hcspathway.org/cs_curriculum_activities or by creating a CS first classroom for your club. <https://csfirst.withgoogle.com/s/en/home> Several counties across the state have established coding or CS spin clubs and they help to attract new and existing youth.

Shoobox STEM Kits.

4-H Shoobox STEM kits provide easy, grab-and-go STEM activities that can be used in a variety of settings. The kits include nine different STEM activities, each activity fitting in a shoobox-sized container. Each activity kit will provide a 45-90 minute program that can easily be adapted for different user groups. A complete kit of nine shoe boxes activities were distributed across the state per region. The following kits were created and distributed: Makey-Makey, solar boats, soldering, Hexbugs, art bots, Sphero robotics, parrot drones, Ozobots, straw rockets, virtual reality, and tiny circuits.

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Robots 101

Youth dive into the world of robotics in this four--part series. Through using the Lego NXT Mindstorm robot kits and hands-on activities youth build and program robots to complete simple tasks. They learn the basics of robotics technology and how it is used in everyday life. Little to no prior knowledge of robotics is required.