

DISTRICT 8 4-H PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



Rules & Guidelines

PURPOSE

The 4-H Photography Contest encourages self-expression and allows youth to demonstrate skills learned in the area of photography, including the use of photographic equipment and process of photographs.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop life skills in composition, light, story line, posing, and awareness.
- To gain knowledge about cameras, camera settings, photography dimensions and resolution.
- To encourage 4-H members to use photography as a meaningful communication tool in their lives.
- To provide photography project showcase opportunity for 4-H members.
- To continue to share the message of 4-H.
- To utilize photographs which can promote and strengthen the 4-H program.

RESOURCES

- An extensive list of resources can be found on the Texas 4-H Photography Project page:
- <http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/photography-video/>

IMPORTANT DATES

County Entry Deadline:	Contact your County Extension Agent. Deadlines vary by county.
District Entry Deadline:	<i>Photos entered at District must qualify at the county level first!</i> Contact your County Extension Agent. Deadlines vary by county. 4-H Connect: https://texas.4honline.com
Display:	Photos to be posted online via the District 8 website and social media platforms, no later May 1, 2026.
Entry Fee:	\$5 per photo
	If a payment is declined via credit card, then that payment must be resubmitted for the District to have access to the photo for judging. <u>We cannot download or view photos that have incomplete payments.</u>
Late Entries:	Late entries will be permitted with an additional \$50 late fee per 4-H member up to 72 hours after the regular contest deadline. No additional entries will be accepted after the late entry deadline.

CONTEST RULES AND GUIDELINES

PLEASE READ ALL RULES AND GUIDELINES. PHOTOS NOT ADHERING TO GUIDELINES WILL NOT BE JUDGED.

1. **Eligibility.** Participants must be 4-H members currently enrolled and have an “active” status on 4-H Connect with the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program and actively participating in the Photography project.

2. **Age Divisions.** Age divisions are determined by a participant’s grade as of August 31, 2025 as follows:

Division	Grades	
Junior	3*, 4, or 5	*Must be at least 8 years old
Intermediate	6, 7, or 8	
Senior	9, 10, 11, or 12*	*Must not be older than 18 years old

3. **Eligibility of Photos.** All photographs must have been taken by the 4-H members between the dates of last year’s contest and time of entry. Photos may be submitted only one time and in only one category.

Important Note. This District 8 4-H Photography Contest is for all age divisions. It is NOT the qualifying contest for the Texas 4-H Photography Contest. **The Texas 4-H Photography Contest is for only Senior 4-H members. The Texas 4-H Contest has its own registration process with a deadline of April 15th, 2026.** Senior 4-H members wishing to enter the state contest should contact their County Extension Agent for details. The District 8 4-H Photography Contest is in addition to the state Senior contest.

4. **Number of Entries per County.** A county may have only one entry per category in each age division for a total of 30 entries per county. **Photos entered at District must qualify at the county level first!**

5. **Entry Deadline & Fee.** All entries for the District contest must be electronically submitted through 4-H Connect by the deadline. Deadlines vary by county, so you will need to contact your County Extension Agent. Each photo will have a \$5 entry fee. **Photos entered at District must qualify at the county level first!**

6. **Alteration of Photos.**

Color and Black & White photos are allowed in all categories. Although slight computer enhancements are allowed, such as cropping, minor adjustment of lighting, and red eye reduction; substantially altered photography, such as applying design styles, or using computer graphics will disqualify an entry. Any other alteration, manipulation, or edits to a photo would require the photo to be entered into the Enhanced category.

7. **Text on Photographs.** Photographs **MUST NOT** contain camera or user placed text. This includes such things as date stamps, comments, or titles. Text or wording that is part of the photograph (i.e. photo of a street sign, etc.) is acceptable.

8. **Format of Photograph.** Photographs must be in a .jpeg or .jpg format. No raw files allowed. *updated to remove the .png format.

9. **Size of Photographs.** Any size ration, except for panoramic, is acceptable. For this contest, panoramic is defined as a photo with an aspect ration of 3:1 or wider/taller. **File Size:** Photo must be a minimum of 1MB (1,000 KB) and a maximum of 20MB. **Tips:** Upload the highest resolution possible. Review your photo at 100% size before uploading. Check your photo’s file properties and/or metadata to ensure it meets the file size requirements. 1 MB (megabyte) is equivalent to 1,000 KB (kilobytes). Photos that are less than 1,000 KB do not meet the minimum file size requirement.

10. **Original Work of 4-H Member.** Entry must be the original photographic work of the 4-H member and not a photo taken by family members, other 4-H members, or secured from any other printed/electronic source. Any photo proven to be found as not original work will result in disqualification of ALL the 4-H member's entries into the Photography Contest. Additionally, actions may be taken against the 4-H member in regard to the Consequences of Misbehavior and Code of Conduct signed by the 4-H member.
11. **Content.** Photos that are deemed obscene, vulgar, sexually oriented, hateful, threatening, or otherwise violate any laws are strictly prohibited. The Texas 4-H Youth Development in District 8 reserves the right to refuse inappropriate or unsuitable entries.
12. **Copyright.** The Texas 4-H Youth Development Program in District 8 respects the rights related to copyright laws and intellectual property. All photos should be based on a participant's original photograph. Use of a photo from other sources/people without permission is not allowed.
13. **Display and Future Rights Use Rights.** By submitting an entry to the contest, the 4-H member grants permission to the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, the Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation, and any other public or private agency authorized by the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program, the use, and rights associated to the use of the photographic likeness, in promotional publications, and other media, without compensation. Certain photos maybe used for 4-H program and marketing uses.
14. **Release of Liability.** The Texas 4-H Youth Development Program, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, the Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation and/or its employees/agents involved in the contest will not be held liable for non-displayed photographs. By entry the 4-H member accepts this release.
15. **Model and Property Releases.** It is required that each participant have sufficient permission granted to both the photographer and the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program to publish and use as needed any recognizable locations or people photographed. Documentation should be retained by the participant and be available upon request from the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program.
16. **Disqualification of an Entry.** An entry that does not follow the rules or category guidelines will automatically be disqualified. Disqualifications forfeit all entry fees. A general notice specifying reason(s) for disqualification will be returned to the county. Reasons for disqualification:
 - Broken content rule. This includes inappropriate or unsuitable content.
 - Broken copyright rule. Photo is not the original work of the 4-H member. This action is considered theft, which is a major offense in the Texas 4-H Rules & Guidelines. Broken display and future rights usage rule.
 - Broken display and future rights usage rule.
 - Broken model and property release rule.
 - **Does not meet category criteria, rules, or guidelines. (see category descriptions) *Please make sure you read the category descriptions completely and enter your photo in the correct category.**
 - Multiple county entries into a category.
 - One photo entered into multiple categories.
 - County did not select/certify photograph to represent the county by the deadline.
 - Entry fee not paid, or only partial fee paid.
 - Extremely poor quality/resolution.
 - Manipulation of photo beyond what is allowed.
17. **Judging & Awards.** Each photograph will be evaluated against a set of judging criteria. Based on total points awarded for each photograph, the participant will be awarded either a blue, red, or a white ribbon. See Contest Judging Criteria. Judges will determine the point values and all decisions are final.

Category Champion & Category Reserve Champion. The photo with the highest point value in each category in each age division will be awarded as the Champion of their respective category. The photo with the second highest point value in each category in each age division will be awarded as the Reserve Champion of their respective category.

Age Division Best of Show. Best of Show awards will be given to one photo in each age division. The Champion photo from each category will be considered for the Best of Show award.

18. **Announcement of Results.** Results will be emailed after the judging to County Extension Agents and county offices. Results will also be on display at the District 8 4-H Roundup and will be posted on the District 8 4-H website.

Categories will be broken down per age division as follows: (Descriptions Below)

1) Junior Age Division 3 Categories

- a) Animals – Domestic/Wildlife
- b) Plant/Landscape/Nature
- c) People
- d) Catch All

2) Intermediate Age Division 6 Categories

- a) Animals – Domestic/Wildlife
- b) Plant/Landscape/Nature
- c) People
- d) Details/Macro
- e) Elements of Design
- f) Catch All
- g) Dominant Color
- h) Theme – Volunteers in Action

3) Senior Age Division All 18 Categories

DISTRICT 8 4-H PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



Description of Categories

It is extremely important that 4-H members, project leaders, parents, and county Extension agents review the descriptions of each category very carefully. Please do not enter photographs into categories that are duplicates from other categories or ones that do not clearly meet the category description. Photographs that do not meet the description of the category will be disqualified.

TEXAS 4-H PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

2025-2026 CATEGORIES

(all descriptions have been revised/simplified)

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	NOT ALLOWED
Animals – Domestic	Photos of domesticated animals adapted for human environments. Examples: dogs, cats, horses, pigs, chickens.	Wildlife, all waterfowl, zoo animals, or animals not under human care.
Animals – Wildlife	Photos of undomesticated animals in natural or zoo-like environments. Examples: deer, ducks, birds, snakes, whales.	Domesticated animals, livestock, or pets.
Catch-All	Photos that do not fit in any other category.	Duplicate entry of a photo already submitted in another category. Photo that belongs in another category.
Details & Macro	Close-up photos highlighting fine details or making small objects appear larger than life. Examples: insect eyes, veins on a leaf, water droplets.	Standard close-ups that don't emphasize fine details; digitally created "macro look" (heavily cropped to simulate a close-up)
Dominant Color	Photos where one specific color is the primary visual element. Examples: a bowl of lemons in strong yellow light.	Black & white, sepia, duotone, or multiple equally dominant colors.
Elements of Design	Photos emphasizing line, shape, pattern, form, texture, or perspective. Examples: repeating tile patterns, ripples in water showing repeating patterns, a spiral staircase showing perspective, textured bark on a tree, etc.	Digitally created or computer-generated designs (Photoshop, Illustrator, etc.).
Enhanced	Photos significantly manipulated or created using editing techniques. Examples: composites, stitched panoramas, artistic filters.	Use of stock, AI-generated, or non-original images.
Food	Still-life style photos highlighting food for artistic or commercial effect. Examples: meals, cakes, fruits, table settings.	Alcoholic beverages or photos where food is not the main subject.
Landscape & Nature (Non-Animal)	Photos of outdoor sceneries and natural settings without animals as the main focus. Examples: gardens, seascapes, cityscapes.	People, man-made structures, or animals as the main subject.
Leading Line	Photos using lines to guide the viewer's eye toward the subject. Example: a river leading to a bridge.	Weak or implied lines that do not clearly guide the eye.
Long Exposure	Photos using extended shutter speeds to capture motion effects or low-light scenes. Examples: fireworks, night skies, light trails, waterfalls.	Images with artificial blur or digital effects simulating long exposure.
Motion/Action	Photos that capture and freeze movement. Examples: sports, running animals, spinning rides.	Images of objects that are typically stationary or slow-moving. Blurry or poorly focused photos unless intentionally artistic.
People	Photos of individuals or groups across all ages and activities. Examples: families, children, portraits, fashion, sports.	Photos without model consent; animals or objects as main subject.
Plant/Flora	Photos of a single flower, tree, bush, or plant as the primary subject. Examples: a rose, a tree's canopy. <i>(Large landscapes with multiple plants belong in Landscape & Nature.)</i>	Large landscapes where a single plant is not the central focus.

Reflections	Photos capturing mirrored images in water, glass, metal, or other reflective surfaces. Examples: lakes, puddles, water droplet, building facades.	Images where the reflection is not the primary subject.
Shadow/ Silhouette	Photos where a shadow or silhouette is the primary subject against a brighter background. Examples: shadows of people, animals, or structures.	Images where the shadow or silhouette is not the primary subject.
Transportation	Photos showcasing vehicles or modes of travel. Examples: bustling urban streets, cars, buses, trains, boats, bicycles, airplanes, and rockets.	Images where transportation is background only, not the subject.
Theme – Volunteers in Action (New)	Celebrate the heart of Texas 4-H by capturing volunteers in meaningful moments of service. From mentoring youth and leading workshops to organizing events and supporting communities, showcasing the dedication, passion, and behind-the-scenes efforts of 4-H volunteers who make a difference every day.	Posed portraits without volunteer activity shown; photos where the subject is not a 4-H volunteer.

Judging Criteria

Each photograph will be evaluated against the following set of criteria. Based on total points awarded for each photograph, the participant will be awarded a blue, red, or white ribbon. The criteria for evaluating the photographs will be:

IMPACT (Max Points: 15)	Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling images evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion. There can be impact in any of the judging elements.
CREATIVITY (Max Points: 15)	Creativity is the original, fresh, and external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought.
TECHNICAL (Max Points: 20)	Technical is the quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing, which includes the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none">allowable amounts of retouching and adjustments (removal of red eye, cropping, minor straightening)sharpness and correct color balancelighting, which includes the use and control of light. The use of lighting whether natural or man-made and its proper use to enhance the image.Posing and capturing of the image
DIFFICULTY (Max Points: 5)	Difficulty is the level of challenge in capturing the image. It takes into account factors such as lighting conditions, subject movement, timing, and setting. Higher scores reflect images where the photographer successfully managed more complex or demanding conditions.
COMPOSITION (Max Points: 20)	Composition is important to the design of an image, bringing all of the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Proper composition holds the viewer in the image and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image maker.
SUBJECT MATTER (Max Points: 15)	Subject Matter should always be appropriate to the story being told (i.e. category the photo is entered into) in an image. Subject matter also includes the center of interest for the photograph or where the maker wants the viewer to stop and they view the image.
STORY TELLING (Max Points: 10)	Story Telling refers to the image's ability to evoke imagination. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his own message or read her own story in an image.

DISTRICT 8 4-H PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



Name: _____ County: _____

Category: _____

You are competing against standards of excellence outlined below, not against your peers. Before preparing your entry for submission please carefully review the judging criteria. Based on total points awarded for each photograph, the participant will be awarded either a blue, red, white, or a participation ribbon.

JUDGES, PLEASE INDICATE POINTS AWARDED IN FAR RIGHT COLUMN:

CATEGORY	JUDGING ELEMENT	POINT RANGE	POINTS AWARDED
Impact (Max Points: 15)	Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling images evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion. There can be impact in any of the judging elements.	0-15	
Creativity (Max Points: 15)	Creativity is the original, fresh, and external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought.	0-15	
Technical (Max Points: 25)	Technical is the quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing, which includes the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> allowable amounts of retouching and adjustments (removal of red eye, cropping, minor straightening) sharpness and correct color balance. lighting, which includes the use and control of light. The use of lighting whether natural or man-made and its proper use to enhance the image. posing and capturing of the image. 	0-25	
DIFFICULTY (Max Points: 5)	Difficulty is the level of challenge in capturing the image. It takes into account factors such as lighting conditions, subject movement, timing, and setting. Higher scores reflect images where the photographer successfully managed more complex or demanding conditions.	0-5	
Composition (Max Points: 20)	Composition is important to the design of an image, bringing all of the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Proper composition holds the viewer in the image and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image maker.	0-20	
Subject Matter (Max Points: 15)	Subject Matter should always be appropriate to the story being told (i.e. category the photo is entered into) in an image. Subject matter also includes the center of interest for the photograph or where the maker wants the viewer to stop and they view the image.	0-15	
Story Telling (Max Points: 10)	Story Telling refers to the image's ability to evoke imagination. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his own message or read her own story in an image.	0-10	
TOTAL POINTS AWARDED			

AWARD (circle one)	Blue Award (100 points to 81 pts)	Red Award (80 to 51 pts)	White Award (50 to 31 pts)	Participant Award (30 to 0 pts)
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JUDGES COMMENTS
