

Kansas 

So you are

SONG LEADER

of your club . . .



Tips for Being a Good Leader

1. Be a team player
2. Be thoughtful of others
3. Be helpful
4. Be a good sport
5. Be reliable and responsible
6. Celebrate others' success
7. Be fair
8. Have fun with 4-H!!!

Congratulations! Now that your club has chosen you as the song leader, you, and all other officers of your 4-H club are representatives. As a 4-H officer, you represent not only your club, but also the 4-H program throughout the state. Your skills and abilities, standards and ideals, grooming, speech and even smiles represent Kansas 4-H members. Representing others is one of your most important responsibilities because it exists at all times — not just while you are at 4-H events.

Song Leader Job Description:

- Lead the group in singing at each meeting and, when requested, at special events.
- Teach the club new songs.
- Keep a file of songs with words and music. (Be sure to remember that the words and music to many songs are copyright protected. You must follow copyright laws if you make copies of music. Ask your club leader or extension agent to help you with this.)
- Work cooperatively with the other officers and leaders of the club.
- Create a feeling of friendship, teamwork and 4-H spirit at club meetings through the use of music.
- Help club members to show their enthusiasm, use their energy for fun and enjoy the group meetings by singing together.

To Get the Club's Attention:

- Softly say "If you can hear me, clap once" and then clap. A bit more loudly say "If you can hear me, clap twice" and clap twice. Then say "If you can hear me, clap three times" and clap three times.
- Arrange a quick method of catching the club's attention by having one assigned member yell one half of a phrase that the rest of the club finishes. For example: "To make the best..." "BETTER." This works best if you use it throughout the year at various events.
- Ask the president to tap the gavel. This usually works because the club is used to hearing the gavel and understands what it means.
- Don't just wait for the club to get quiet. This often takes much more time than you want to spend.

When you have the club's attention, immediately begin the song. If you don't, you will lose their attention and have to work even harder to gain it again.

Guidelines for Song Leaders

Before the meeting

- Know how much time has been allowed for singing and be sure not to use more time than that.
- Choose songs ahead of time that fit the theme or mood of the meeting.
- Have the words (and music, if possible) ready to hand out.
- Begin and end with a familiar song. Teach only one new song each meeting.
- Practice leading songs in front of a mirror or record yourself. You will learn how you look and sound to your club members and also gain confidence.

At the meeting

- Be confident and relaxed.
- Stand where everyone can see you and speak loudly so everyone can hear you.
- Hand out the song sheet and get the attention of the club by using one of the previous suggestions.
- Start the song in a comfortable key. If you begin too high or too low, stop everyone and start over.
- Sing enthusiastically along with the group. Your energy will encourage others to enjoy singing!
- An easy rule is to sing three songs:
 - Starter song — one the club already knows to get them singing.
 - Action song — a song with good rhythm and actions to "loosen" the group up.
 - Quiet song — a slow or soothing song to calm the group before the next agenda item.

Leading Club Singing

Singing will be easier if you lead the club. Professional directors use hand motions to keep the singers together. You can learn to do this, too. By using this method, an older 4-H member can take the role of director for your club choir instead of a parent or leader.

Use the whole arm to show the regular beat of the song. Your movements should be smooth and natural.

Only one arm is used to show the beat. Use the other hand to point out when a part should be sung more loudly or softly. This is done by:

- Palm down — soft or softer
- Palm up — loud or louder

Before you teach your club what the motions mean, you should practice them. If you practice in front of a mirror, you can see what you will look like to the club.

For your club to understand what your hand motions mean, you will need to take a few minutes to teach them. It is easier for members to learn by demonstrating with a song that most members know. The members will probably not understand fully right away, so keep reminding them each meeting.

Give a get ready signal. Say, “One, two, ready, sing.”

The first time you lead a song with your hands, you will probably feel silly. Keep practicing to build up your confidence. Also, remember that if you make a mistake, you will probably be the only person who knows it.

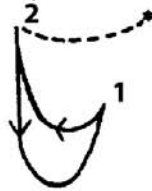
Try the hand motions shown for the “time” of the songs you sing.

If you don’t know how to read music or get confused, ask your club leader, a music teacher at your school or your county/district K-State Research and Extension agent for help or for a resource.

Teaching New Songs Can Be Fun!

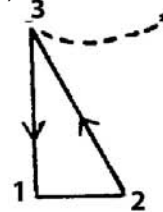
- First, download the *Kansas 4-H Songbook* from <http://4-h.k-state.edu/Resources/Officers/>.
- Everyone will need a song sheet with the words or should be able to read them from large posters.
- If you have a piano or tape to sing along with, play the song through once while the club listens.
- Practice the song line by line. Practice by singing it through once and then stand and sing it one last time.

2/4 time (two beats per measure) or fast 6/8 time (six beats per measure)

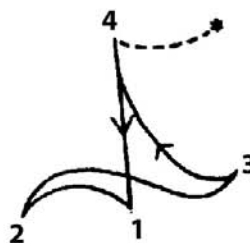


* Represents the preparatory beat in which you should take a breath before singing. The dotted line represents the movement during the breath to the first beat of the song (always a downward motion)

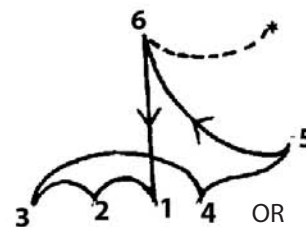
3/4 time (three beats per measure)



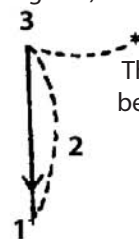
4/4 time (four beats per measure)



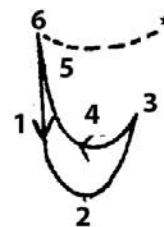
6/8 time (six beats per measure)



Fast 3/4 time (like a bouncing ball).



This way you only beat the accents.



Practice for Song Leaders

Problem:

Select three activities (other than club meetings) that your club usually participates in. Select three songs for each activity and plan the singing portion of each one.

Solution:

Activity 1: _____

Activity 2: _____

Activity 3: _____

Problem:

Your club does not know the words to any songs. Think of some ways you could teach them the words.

Solution: _____

Print *The Kansas 4-H Songbook: A Century in the Making* from <http://4-h.k-state.edu/Resources/Officers/>.

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