

Project Report Writing Guide



a program of the Jane Goodall Institute

Submitting Project Reports to the online Project Database helps other Roots & Shoots members around the world come up with projects to do in their own communities. However, in order for the Project Database to become a truly useful resource, it must contain clear, complete and applicable information about projects so that members who read the reports will understand how to reproduce the projects. Here are some guidelines for writing great Project Reports.

How to Submit

To submit a Project Report you must first login as a member to the Roots & Shoots website. If you're a group member and don't already have a login, ask your group leader to provide you with one by going to "group members" under "my profile" where he or she can send you an email requesting that you join the group. Once you are logged in, you can submit your Project Report at www.rootsandshoots.org/resources/projectdatabase/submitproject.

Remember: Follow the basic "W"s and the all-important "H."

Who:

This can be as simple as your group name, number of members and contact person. However, don't forget to mention partners that you worked with or community organizations that helped you out. This way, your partners get the recognition they deserve, and other Roots & Shoots groups can learn how to find similar organizations in their community to partner with. If you worked in conjunction with another Roots & Shoots group, don't forget to acknowledge them too!

What:

This is the "meat" or "tofu" of your report! Let's take a recycling project as an example. Pretend you are the leader for a group of sixth-graders who just established a recycling program in place at their school. When you submit a Project Report, you could just write, "We implemented a recycling program at our school." But, we'd love to read more details.

For example:

“We (15 students in the sixth grade) implemented a recycling program at our school, Hunter Lake Elementary. In order to raise awareness, we made a 10-minute presentation about why recycling is important and then presented it in each classroom with the teacher’s permission. We talked to 300 students in grades K-6 about why we should recycle. We divided up the responsibilities, so that different people were in charge of making and giving the presentation to different grade levels. We also explained to the students what a petition is and gave them a chance to sign our petition to the principal. Two hundred fifty nine students signed the petition. Then we wrote a letter to the principal explaining why we hoped he would implement a recycling program. He said that he thought it was a great idea, and after he spoke with our janitor and trash collection service, we were able to get glass, aluminum, paper and plastic recycling bins placed next to every trash can in our school—that’s 40 recycling bins total!”

This Project Report is not only an inspiring story: it makes the reader think, “Hey, maybe I can do that too!”

When:

Write the date(s) of your event or project, or “ongoing” if it is a continuing or repeating project.

Where:

Again, try to be detailed! It’s really helpful when you elaborate because it gives a much clearer picture of your project. For example, instead of “Hunter Lake Elementary,” you might instead write, “We started a recycling program at our school, Hunter Lake Elementary. Hunter Lake has 300 students in grades K-6 and is part of the Washoe County School District.”

Why:

Explain how you identified the community need for your project and inspire others to do similar projects in their communities. For example, you might explain, “One day in our science class, we learned what ‘biodegradable’ means and why plastic bottles are harmful to the environment. Then we realized that at our school plastic bottles were just being thrown out and added to landfills!”

How:

Here is your opportunity to give other Roots & Shoots groups the tools to reproduce your success in their own communities. Some projects will have shorter “how” sections than others, but always try to be as detailed and helpful as you can. For example, with this recycling project, you would need to tell readers where you found the information to put in your presentation (Websites? Recycling Center? Your science teacher?), and what materials you used to make the presentation (PowerPoint? A display board? A skit?). If you used any online resources, share them here. This helps other groups learn about free resources that can help them with projects. List the materials you used so that other groups have a complete “shopping list” to work from! Let others know how many hours you worked on your project, both to plan it and to complete it.

Go for it!

Now you're set to start writing! Remember, the Project Report form doesn't have separate spaces in which to enter "Who," "What," "When," "Where," "Why" and "How." You will need to integrate them into the available fields. Need more examples? Check out the Project Reports submitted by other Roots & Shoots groups. What information did you find helpful while reading through the Project Reports? Was there more information that you wanted to know? Finally, before you click that "submit" button, make sure to spell-check your report. Many web browsers have a "spell-check" option built right in, but you can also ask a friend or group member to check for you.

When should I submit Project Reports?

As often as you can! Submit a Project Report any time you participate in a Roots & Shoots project. Project Reports can be submitted for all kinds of projects, from spending an afternoon picking up trash in your neighborhood to going to an Earth Day festival with your group to implementing a recycling program at your school.

A Note About Numbers

To help support the goals of the Roots & Shoots program, there is an optional section of the Project Report submission form that asks demographic questions about your project regarding the communities that participated in and benefited from your project. Information that you enter here is not posted along with the rest of your report and is kept completely confidential. Having more information about who is doing projects and whom those projects are serving helps the Roots & Shoots staff reach out to communities who are not currently served by our program, and furthers our ability to secure funding for the future.