

# 4-H Public Presentations General Guidelines & Tips<sup>1</sup>



## Why Do 4-Hers Make Public Presentations?

The logo above is a good reminder of the “4 Essential Elements” for youth development: a sense of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. In combination, these essential elements help youth to grow into competent, caring, and contributing adults. When it comes to the element of “mastery” in particular, all youth want to be good at something (adults do too!). Mastery is building knowledge, skills, and attitudes and then *demonstrating* the competent use of the knowledge and skills. Youth need to feel and believe that they are capable, and experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges to develop their self-confidence.

Practicing and offering 4-H public presentations give youth an ideal opportunity to stretch and grow in the “mastery” of the activities. Settings that promote mastery – like 4-H Club meetings, County Fair, State Fair – encourage youth to take risks, seek out challenges, and focus on self-improvement rather than comparing themselves to their peers.

## Types of 4-H Presentations

- A **DEMONSTRATION** puts words into action. An effective demonstration teaches others how to do something by showing while telling. At the end of a demonstration, you should have a finished product to show your audience.  
*Examples include:* how to cook an egg, how to groom a dog, how to needle-felt
- An **ILLUSTRATED TALK** makes use of posters, pictures, PowerPoint (at County Fair: for Intermediate and Senior 4-Hers only), or other visuals to show how to do something or illustrate a process. No finished product is required.  
*Example include:* how to plan a garden, how to distinguish horse markings, how to lead a fun and effective carwash
- **PUBLIC SPEAKING** is a prepared speech on a specific subject for an audience. Usually, no props or visual aids are used. 4-Hers use this type of presentation to teach, entertain, and/or inform their audiences.  
*Examples include:* why I like the 4-H cat project, 4-H around the world, what compassion looks like in my community  
(For more on Public Speaking, please see “Public Speaking 4-H Member Manual,” WSU Publication #EM4903E.)

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<sup>1</sup> This handout was produced by Jefferson County (WA) 4-H and is an adapted consolidation of three WSU resources: “How to Make a 4-H Public Presentation” (WSU publication #EM4787), “4-H Public Presentations,” and “How to Give a Public Demonstration.”

### **Individual and Team Presentations**

Presentations can be given by individuals or by teams. When trying to decide between the two, ask yourself, "Can I do this best by myself or with someone else?" While individual presentations tend to take less time in planning and presenting, team presentations are a great way to learn team planning and cooperation. And, they offer the viewing audience a change of voices and personalities and, perhaps, understand a subject from different perspectives. Teamwork is encouraged throughout the planning and presentation itself. Shifting the presentation from one team member to another should occur at natural, and relatively equal intervals.

Here are a few things to keep in mind with team presentations:

- If you plan to compete at State Fair, only members of the same age division should compete as a team.
- Be sure that all members of the team share in the preparation, doing, and telling.
- Team presentations take more practice in order to flow as if only one person is giving the demonstration. So, allow for plenty of practice time.

### **Recommended Time Limits for 4-H Presentations**

For demonstrations and illustrated talks the minimum time is 3 minutes and the maximum is 20 minutes, depending on 4-H "age" (your age on Oct. 1 of the current 4-H year). For public speeches the minimum time is 5 minutes and a maximum time is 10 minutes (at State Fair, a penalty of 5 points per minute under or over is deducted).

<b>4-H Age Division</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Time limits</b>
Cloverbuds	5-7 years old	Less than 5 minutes
Juniors	8-10 years old	3-8 minutes
Intermediates	11-13 years old	5-15 minutes
Seniors	14-<19 years old	10-20 minutes

### **Getting Ready to Present**

#### **Shaping the Presentation**

- (1) Choose a topic that is of great interest to you! If you need ideas, talk with your 4-H friends and Leader; talk with other adults and youth in your life; or look in the library, magazines, newspaper, and other media.
- (2) Choose a title that gives an interesting hint at what your topic is about. For example, if you are going to do an illustrated talk about rabbits' eyelids, you might want to call it "The Eyes Have It" instead of "Rabbit Eyelids."
- (3) Prepare a written outline of the 3 main parts of your presentation. You are welcome (and encouraged) to use your outline and brief notes as you present (no need to memorize!). You might want to use the template on the next page help you with your outline:

## ANATOMY OF A 4-H PRESENTATION

### INTRODUCTION

- Start with an **attention-grabbing line** (e.g., "I didn't know that the boat was going to sink... really I didn't!"), a quotation, or an appropriate trick.
- **Introduce yourself:** "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_.  
I am a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ 4-H Club/Project. This is my \_\_\_\_\_ year in 4-H, and my \_\_\_\_\_ year in the \_\_\_\_\_ project. This is my presentation on \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., "How To Keep Your Boat Afloat")."
- Share **WHY** you selected this topic and why you think this topic might be important to the audience.

### BODY

This is the part of the presentation in which you show and/or tell **HOW you will address the heart of your topic** – your MAIN IDEA. What do you need to DO, SHOW, and/or SAY to express your main idea? Pay close attention to the ORDER in which you put your ideas – your audience should be able to follow your ideas in a logical, natural order.

WHAT WILL YOU...

DO or SHOW?

SAY?

NEED (supplies, equipment, visuals)?

### SUMMARY STATEMENT and Q&A

- This is your last chance to express your main idea to your audience. **What do you really want your audience to remember?** What was accomplished? What does this really mean to you? (Never introduce new material in the summary.)
- Then ask your audience **"Do you have any questions?"** The audience will have 3-5 minutes to ask questions. Before responding, always **REPEAT** the question being asked. If you do not know an answer, you might say something like, "I don't know, but I suspect that you can find your answer [on \_\_\_ website, in the library, etc.]."
- Tell your audience **where you found your information** (e.g., \_\_\_\_\_ website, \_\_\_ library).
- **Thank your audience** for listening to your presentation on: \_\_\_\_\_  
[restate the title of your presentation].

## **General Preparation Tips**

- (1) Choose a different topic each year.
- (2) Decide whether you'd like to present as an individual or as a team.
- (3) Use the template on the previous page to help you structure your presentation.
- (4) Use illustrations, posters, and visuals (including models, tools, etc.) to help your audience understand your presentation – avoid any visuals that DISTRACT attention from your main idea. Make sure lettering and images on graphics can be viewed from the back of the room and at every angle (easels are available). Live animals are not permitted in 4-H public demonstrations.
- (5) Have your material well organized in a logical order. Perhaps trays, boxes, bowls etc. will help you to manage your materials. If you use these, look for transparent containers so that your audience can see the contents. Also consider labeling containers so that your audience sees the materials and the process.
- (6) Plan what you'll wear. Your clothes should be simple, neat, and clean. Those doing food presentations should wear short sleeves. Hair should be under control. Don't wear DISTRACTING clothes, jewelry, or makeup. Choose clothing appropriate for your presentation: e.g., clown gear for a clowning presentation, period clothing for a presentation on John Muir.
- (7) Prepare to bring any reference materials to your presentation and be prepared to share your references with your audience at the end of your presentation.
- (8) PRACTICE often, out loud, and pull in lots of different people to serve as your audience. Be sure to ask your practice audience questions like: "What was not clear in my presentation?" "What really struck you?" "How can I make my presentation even better?"

## **Presentation Day!**

### **Gearing Up Tips**

- (1) Attend to your basic needs. Get a good night sleep and healthy meal before your presentation. If you think you'll need a glass of water, have one ready. (No gum chewing please. And clean hands and nails are a plus!)
- (2) Get to know your equipment well – especially if you're planning to use computer and/or projection equipment.
- (3) Arrange equipment and supplies neatly and so that the audience can see clearly. Place any extra equipment on a second table away from the main demonstration table. Keep a hand towel, paper towels, garbage can, etc. handy if needed.
- (4) If using posters, be prepared to remove or turn posters as soon as you have made your point.

### **Presentation Tips**

You'll find lots of tips in the "38 Tips for Persuasive Presentations" handout; here are a few more:

- (1) Show enthusiasm for your topic. Look like you enjoy what you're presenting (others will too). Weave personal experience into your presentation where appropriate.
- (2) Have good, gentle eye contact with your audience. Stand tall.
- (3) Again, bring notes, but do not read directly from them (this cuts down on eye contact.)
- (4) Make your voice gentle, appropriately loud, and clear. (You'll have a microphone at Fair.)
- (5) Name any supplies and hold them up so that your audience can see.
- (6) Keep your work/demonstration area organized – move materials from right to left if you are right-handed, or left to right if you are left-handed.
- (7) Label the backs of posters, books, etc. that you'll want to reference during your presentation (but you don't want your audience to necessarily see).
- (8) Goof-ups happen to everyone! Go right ahead with your presentation; explain what happened.
- (9) Thank your audience for their attention.

# Presentation Score Card

This is the "score card" that Judges use to evaluate 4-H Demonstrations, Illustrated Talks, and Presentations



## JUDGING PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS (DEMONSTRATIONS AND ILLUSTRATED TALKS)

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Placing \_\_\_\_\_ Total Score \_\_\_\_\_  
 4-H Club # \_\_\_\_\_ Club Name \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Lot \_\_\_\_\_  
 Project or Activity \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: (3-5) (6-8) (9-12)  
 Names of Members \_\_\_\_\_ Grade in School \_\_\_\_\_ Jr. \_\_\_\_\_ Int. \_\_\_\_\_ Sr. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade in School \_\_\_\_\_ Jr. \_\_\_\_\_ Int. \_\_\_\_\_ Sr. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade in School \_\_\_\_\_ Jr. \_\_\_\_\_ Int. \_\_\_\_\_ Sr. \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Matter (50 points)	Excellent	Good	Fair	No Placing
Purpose of demonstration accomplished effectively				
Knowledge of subject (ask questions at end of demo to help you find out)				
<b>Remarks:</b>				
Techniques (35 points)	Excellent	Good	Fair	No Placing
Attention-grabbing introduction				
Suitable subject matter				
Adequate experience				
Organization of topic				
Suitable length for topic covered				
Organized work area				
Clear, effective AV aids				
Clarity of voice				
Ability to answer questions				
Brief, adequate closing				
Team (only): work and presentation equally divided				
<b>Remarks:</b>				
Personal Traits (15 points)	Excellent	Good	Fair	No Placing
Appearance, expressions, mannerisms				
Composure, posture				
Personality, friendliness				
Questions repeated (if necessary)				
<b>Remarks:</b>				
<b>Overall comments:</b>				



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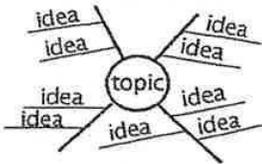
## PREPARATION

**1. Talks are like fruit,** they take time to ripen. Begin planning your presentation as **soon** as you know you'll be speaking. How?



**2. Think yourself dry.** Write down everything you know about the topic, and every question you have about it... **before** you research what others have written. Audiences want **original** thoughts, not book reports.

**3. Want more ideas?** Try "mind mapping." Name your topic on the center of a page and let your mind free-associate related ideas that you capture as spokes from a wheel's center. Write down everything. Organize and sequence later.



**4. Get the facts.** Find out the essentials: date you'll be speaking, time of day, place (address, room). And **how long** you'll be expected to speak. Ten minutes, half-hour, an hour? Honor your given time.

**5. Speak 150 wpm.** Average speaking rate for business topics is 150 words per minute (120 for complicated material to 180+ words for stories and easy topics), including pauses.

**6. Get excited** about a key word or image you will be using in the talk. Look up the **roots** of a word: "development" for example, comes from old French and means "to unwrap, to unfold, and set free."

**7. Gather quotations** about your topic, both **serious** and **humorous**. Read books or Web sites with quotations. What's the reason people often disagree with us? I quote Goethe who said: "Every word that is uttered evokes the idea of its opposite."

**8. Talk out loud** in your car to create what you want to say in your presentation. Private automobiles are great sound chambers for **creating** ideas and **rehearsing** out loud.

**9. Write it out** or make notes, an outline, or visuals such as PowerPoint. Use whatever method works for you to get your ideas **down**.

**10. Create a handout.** Develop at least one page to give each person in the audience—an outline or summary of main ideas, a quiz or bibliography.

**11. To tell a story.** Include 4 key elements.

- 1) Somebody..**  
Person, group
- 2) wanted...**  
desired, yearned for
- 3) but...**  
conflict, problem
- 4) so...**  
solution, learning

## AUDIENCES

**12. Worry about the audience** and their needs more than you worry about yourself or your topic. "I don't care what you know until I know that you care," is their silent cry.

**13. Be audience-centered,** not speaker- or subject-centered. Audience members care about themselves. They hunger for clear, honest, accurate, relevant, and interesting information they can use to achieve their dreams, dissolve fears, solve problems, reach understanding. **Presentations should be about audiences, not just topics.**

**14. Use the word "you"** or *your* (we, us or our) continually as you speak to connect with the listeners. Not the blaming "you."

**15. Think of audiences** as equals, not as superiors/inferiors. Like you, they seek the truth.

**16. Audiences want to be amused.** They want to enjoy themselves with interesting information.

**\* Avoid telling jokes** when you speak, most especially jokes with a **victim**. Use humor, but not offensive jokes.

**17. Know that listeners** are on your side. They want to be moved, informed, inspired, and encouraged.

# 38 TIPS FOR PERSUASIVE PRESENTATIONS

## FEAR/ANXIETY

**18. Drink lots of fluids** before and during talks. Intense fear creates thirst. Visit the restroom close to speaking time.

**19. Wear something lucky.** "Dress well and you'll speak well," is an old saying. Dress up for your audience.

**20. Squeeze a marker** to control nerves when you speak. Squeeze it, don't play with it.

**21. Rehearse out loud** and know your opening lines by heart. Rehearse out loud *twice* is the old advice to fix things.

**22. Use large notes** written in huge print readable from your waist. Don't staple or paper clip pages. Keep them loose, numbered. Slide the top page to the left as you finish it.

**23. Write speeches not** in paragraphs, but line by line. End each line with a pause and breath:

We observe today  
not a victory of party  
but a celebration of freedom  
symbolizing an end  
as well as a beginning  
signifying renewal  
as well as change.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

## OPENING

**24. Look friendly.** Relax, open your face by lifting your eyebrows. Look as if you're happy to be here. Smile when you open and close. Let a smile be the bookends of your talk.

**25. Talk to eyes.** Speak every word looking into someone's eyes, one person at a time, for one or two seconds. Don't talk to your notes.

**26. Follow this 6 step** recipe for opening your presentations.

### 1) GREETING

"Good morning. Thank you for inviting me." Or whatever is friendly, complimentary.

### 2) QUESTION

Open talks with one of 3 kinds of questions.

• **Direct:** "How many of you...?"

• **Framed:** "The question before us today is, How can we...?"

• **Story-question:** Tell a brief story or state facts and follow with a direct or framed question.

### 3) PROMISE LINE

Preview what you'll cover and *promise* what they'll gain. "**Today I will...** (introduce, explain, teach, demonstrate, explore, share)...**three** (use a number if you have countable information) **ways to...** (and follow with a promise of the rewards or benefits they'll get by listening or participating) "**so that you will....**" Promise 2 or 3 rewards for listening.

### 4) NAME

Say your name here—after the promise or after the question, not at the start of the talk.

### 5) CREDENTIALS

Give your *professional* credentials that qualify you to speak. Add *personal* credentials, things you have in common with listeners. If you use a job title, say, "**What I really do in my job is, I help people....**"

### 6) QUESTIONS

Let them know up front **when** you'll take comments and questions: while you're speaking, or after you speak.

**27. Explain clearly.** Answer three questions.

- **What** you're talking about: what it is what it **isn't** what it's **like**
- **How** it works, or is organized, or sequence
- **Why:** reasons why—causes, purposes.

**28. Persuade with benefits.** To persuade, *begin with benefits* and rewards **before** you suggest actions. Try my original formula:

- 1) **So that you** (name at least two benefits)...
- 2) **do this** (specific, visible action to take)...
- 3) **instead of** (what not to do)...
- 4) **because** (reasons, facts, features, laws).

**Remember:** *Begin with benefits;* follow with requests, advice, or features. Benefits must outweigh 4 costs: time, money, effort, and risks.

## VOICE TIPS

**29. Talk loud and fast:** Loud enough to be heard easily (articulate with an active mouth), and with a lively, conversational speed (slow is boring).

**30. Speak in short phrases** of from 2 to 14 words at a time (ideal is a 7-word average), not long rambling sentences.

**31. Followed by a brief pause.** Pauses show poise, confidence. "When the words cease, the meaning flows on," says a Chinese proverb.

**32. Pitch down on endings.** To sound confident and decisive, drop the pitch [musical note] of your voice on the **last syllable** of final words (drop pitch not volume). To introduce yourself, try this method:

I'm Sue An der son Kai Woo

Pitch down on the ends of almost everything, *including questions.*

**33. Pitch UP for emphasis.** To communicate ideas, emphasize key words. Raise the pitch on the *accented syllable* of key words. Notice how the following sentence changes as you emphasize each word:  
Homer doesn't kiss his wife.

It's: at Wash  
Se the ing ton

Excitement is in the *upper* range. Go **UP** to emphasize, go down on endings to sound great.

## BODY TIPS

**34. Move naturally.** Let hands and body move naturally. Gesture shoulder-high. **Stand steady**, in one spot, animated, with feet planted shoulder-width, toes fanned out slightly. Avoid aimless wandering.

## CONFLICT TIPS

**35. Listen longer** when you are criticized: say: "Tell me more." Or, "Can you give me an example?" Complain rhymes with *pain*; react to his hurt with compassion.

**36. Appeal to what's fair.** It's not fair when one person dominates.

**37. Replace "but" with "and."** Instead of "I hear what you're saying, **but**," say, "I hear what you're saying, **and** I would like to add a different idea." The words but and how-ever are evil in conflict situations. "And" is an invisible lubricant that allows you to disagree without being disagreeable. *But* creates enemies. Say, "Yes," "and," and "I'd like to add...."

## THE ENDING

**38. Conclude strongly.** End with a summary or an invitation to act to gain the benefits you promised. Speak final words with high energy. End all talks on a note of positive **hope**.

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