

SECTION 1

4-H Presentation Best Practices

INTRODUCTION

What is a 4-H presentation?

A presentation is a way to communicate an idea or topic by showing, telling, or expressing an opinion.

4-H Presentations help you learn to:

- Research a subject
- Organize ideas in a logical order
- Share with others
- Present to an audience either live or recorded

Why are public speaking skills important?

Giving presentations helps develop life skills including the ability to present to an audience, organize ideas and create and use graphics, visual aids, or supplies to support the spoken word. Communication skills are vital for career achievement and social success. Through public speaking youth can:

- Discover an important component of leadership development
- Increase self-esteem, self-confidence, and the ability to accept feedback
- Expand skills for planning, preparation and performance

4-H members can prepare for presentations by giving talks at 4-H meetings, practicing skills learned in a project and observing other people giving presentations, whether live or recorded.

Develop Your Skills

4-H offers opportunities for you to realize your skills. Every member is encouraged to give a presentation each year whether at club level, county level or beyond. Show what you've learned; give a presentation. Collecting information and ideas that can be shared with others is part of the learning process. 4-H members who combine the skills necessary for communication events develop their polish as a communicator.

Where to Get Started

One place to start finding presentation topics is with 4-H project areas or other interests. Project leaders, parents, and other adults also can be a source of ideas. Other sources for presentation ideas are project manuals, books, magazines, websites and video sites.

Presentation Type and Style

There are many ways to present your ideas and skills to the world. Many presentation styles require similar skills. Choose a communication event that best fits you and your topic for this year. Either stay with that event and polish specific skills for a few years, or try more than one event to broaden your skills.



PLANNING A 4-H PRESENTATION: a few easy steps

1. Choose the subject matter.

Select a subject that interests you.

2. Determine the audience.

Who will be learning? Adults, teens, younger 4-H members, experts, or novices - plan your presentation with your audience in mind.

3. Determine the purpose.

Determine the reason you are giving the presentation. Are you trying to inform, teach facts, motivate to action, stimulate thought, or show a process? Select a 4-H presentation format or contest that allows you to meet goals.

4. Research the topic.

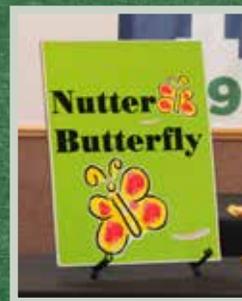
Find out the most accurate and recent information on the topic. Consult your project leader, topic experts, magazines, books or websites.

5. Develop an outline.

Divide your outline into the introduction, body and conclusion.

6. Develop a title.

- Is it an attention getter?
- Does it summarize the purpose?
- Is it short and direct (no more than four to five words)?



7. Prepare the materials.

Use poster boards, digital slides, video or other materials to illustrate the main points. Use the outline to determine how to prepare visual aids, posters or slides.

8. Organize the presentation.

Prepare supplies for the type of presentation. Brand names and commercial labels should be covered. Endorsement of a particular brand is not recommended in a public presentation. Make custom labels that are easy to read so the audience can identify supplies and ingredients. Avoid saying brand names. For instance, say a permanent marker, not Sharpie®, or tissue rather than Kleenex®. Arrange equipment and supplies so the audience can see all the steps clearly. Use clear equipment, such as glass bowls, so the audience can see the material and the process. Use a handheld mirror to reflect the top of the work surface to show the audience. Sometimes using a raised or slanted work surface can help the audience see.

Consider using trays to organize supplies. Keep the trays of supplies or ingredients covered until needed. Using a tray or box to group supplies looks neater and is easier to move onto and away from the main work area. Equipment and supplies should be placed on the table in the order you plan to use them. Plan how to deal with dirty or used supplies so they do not distract from the presentation. Place

extra equipment on a second table away from the presentation table. Keep a hand towel or wet cloth ready to wipe the area clean. Consider a bag taped to a table or work area to serve as a waste container if needed. Decide which supplies or ingredients should be pre-measured or prepared.

Models or collectibles should be large enough to be seen from the back of the room.

- If doing intricate work, a video camera on a tripod can be connected to a projector to show detail, but it takes considerable practice to keep the work in view of the lens.



9. Practice.

Practice helps to prepare. How will you set up the workspace? How will you handle the materials? Where will you place items when you put them down? Consider recording your presentation to practice and score yourself. Invite a small audience to watch and give feedback. Pay attention to small details, mispronunciations, and informal language such as “gonna” instead of “going to.”

Choose clothing that is simple and practical for the presentation. For instance, if showing how to change oil, wear coveralls, not dress clothes. Make sure clothing is clean, neat and pressed. Avoid distracting brand names or words on clothing, unless they have to do with the presentation. Keep accessories and hairstyle minimal to avoid distraction. If needed for safety or sanitation, wear long hair pulled back.

Chances are, if you practice enough, the things that can go wrong will happen during practice, so you can make changes. Practice keeps you from getting rattled if something does not go according to plan. Work around problems the best you can and keep going. When presenting live, put the audience at ease by working the mistake into the presentation. For example say, “I like to make the mistakes, so you won’t have to if you try this later.”

Practice enough to present entirely on your own. Adults, parents or leaders should be minimally involved. Adults should not prompt youth, use cue cards, or be involved in the youth’s delivery. If an adult is a prop, for instance sits quietly as a model for a demonstration on hairstyles, that would be acceptable; however, sometimes adults get overly involved doing set-up, sharing in presenting and answering questions. Adults need to remember to teach and guide and then allow the youth to shine on his or her own performance.

10. Prepare for questions.

Try to anticipate questions that may come up and find answers. Practice restating the question so all audience members can hear before you answer.

That was a great question.

The woman in the yellow shirt asked.....