

PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS

One of the most important life skills a 4-H member can learn is how to give a talk before a group of people without being scared. Teachers are always impressed by 4-H members who can stand before their class and give an organized report without being nervous. Your parents and friends will be impressed too!!

DEMONSTRATIONS – The first speaking most 4-Hers do is a demonstration (also known as a visual presentation) at a club meeting. Demonstrations are easy, a lot like “show and tell”. Show and tell your fellow club members how to do something you’ve learned in a project. Every good demonstration has a beginning (introduction), middle (body) and end (conclusion).

The ***INTRODUCTION*** should include something to get everyone’s attention followed by your name, age, club and what the demonstration is about. For example, a demonstration on making cookies might begin with the bell on a kitchen timer ringing. After stopping the bell, you could say. “Those cookies sure smell good. I hope they’re done! Hi, I’m Chris Smith. I’m ten years old and a member of the Green Clover 4-H Club. In my demonstration I’ll tell you everything you need to know to make delicious chocolate chip cookies.”

In the ***BODY*** of the demonstration you show and tell, step by step, how to make the cookies. Your talk might include how to read a recipe and how to measure dry and liquid ingredients, tips on nutrition, kitchen safety, etc. Your demonstration should be well organized and follow a logical order.

Use 4x6 inch ***NOTE CARDS*** with an outline of “key” words to keep from leaving something out. Don’t “read” your demonstration and don’t try to memorize it. Eye contact with the audience is important. Practice in front of a mirror. Practice on your family too, but don’t give your talk so much you’re tired of it.

POSTERS should be used to show things that can’t easily be seen or to stress important items. In a cooking demonstration, it’s good to include a recipe poster. Title, introduction and conclusion posters may also be used. Only use posters when you need them and keep them simple. The fewer words the better. Use dark colors on light poster board. Don’t use too many colors, Your posters should have at least a 1 inch border on all sides and be neat and readable from the back of the room. Always do your own work.

The ***CONCLUSION*** just repeats the major parts of your talk. For example, you might say, “In conclusion, remember to wash your hands before beginning, check to see you have everything before starting, etc.”

Ages and Times – 4-Hers compete with others in their same age group. These are the same age groups as for most 4-H activities. Juniors: ages 8 to 10; Intermediates: Ages 11 to 13; and Seniors: ages 14 to 18. The time limits for Juniors is 5 to 10 minutes. The time limit for Intermediates and Seniors is 10 to 15 minutes. Judges may deduct points for demonstrations that are too long or too short. Time limits do not include set-up or clean-up.

PREPARED & EXTEMPORANEOUS TALKS & RADIO SPOTS

Prepared Talks, Extemporaneous Talks and Radio Spots are the three categories in the County, Regional and State Public Speaking Contests. Within each category there are the same three age groups as for demonstration. 4-Hers compete with others in their same age group giving the same category of talk. Winners of the County Contest advance to the Regional Contest (nine Eastern Shore Counties). Regional winners advance to the State Contest.

PREPARED SPEECHES – are a little like demonstrations, but they’re different too. Like a demonstration you should have an introduction, middle and conclusion. Use 4 x 6 note cards with a key word outline. Again, don’t read your speech and don’t memorize it. Posters aren’t used in the public speaking contest. Instead of “show and tell”, you’ll talk about something you’re interested in. A good subject for your talk is something you believe in strongly and want to convince others to change their minds. For example, if you believe it’s important to protect endangered animals, you might want to name those that are endangered, why we can’t afford to lose them and how they should be protected. Prepared speech time limits are: Jr/3-5 minutes, Intermediates and Seniors/4-6 minutes.

Many 4-Hers like to give ***EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEECHES*** because they don’t have to do any work in advance. Each member draws 3 topics (examples: What do you like best about 4-H?, Why did you join 4-H?, What do you hope to learn in 4-H?) chooses one topic and then has 30 minutes to write a short talk. Note cards are permitted and encouraged. Your talk should include an introduction, middle and conclusion. Extemporaneous time limits are: Jr & Int/2-3 minutes, Sr/3-5 minutes.

A RADIO SPOT is a 30 second advertisement promoting 4-H. Pretend you’re a “DJ” and you’re doing a commercial for 4-H. You’ll want to tell what 4-H is, who can join and why and give the 4-H Office telephone number. Timing is very important with radio spots. Try to be exactly 30 seconds long. Some 4-Hers like doing radio spots because they get to read their short talk into a microphone with no one watching them. Time limits are the same for all age groups – exactly 30 seconds.