



# 4-H Public Speaker's

# Handbook

A Guide  
to Preparing and  
Presenting Speeches  
and Demonstrations

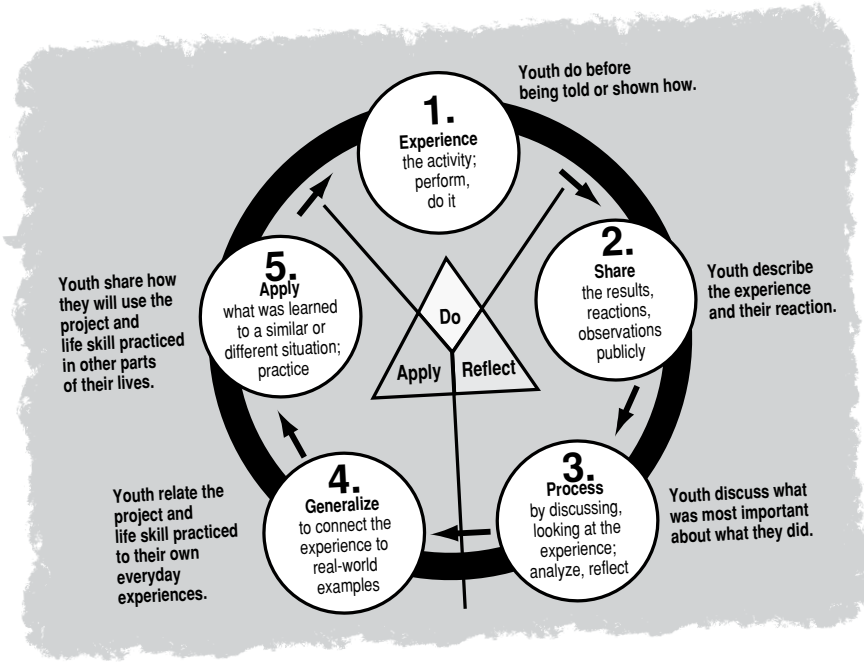
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# Experiential Learning Model

"Experiential learning" is what distinguishes 4-H Youth Development Education from many formal education methods. It involves providing opportunities for youth to practice what they are learning by sharing the experience, reflecting on its importance, connecting it to real life examples, and applying the knowledge that results to other situations.



The information and ideas in this manual have been designed with this model in mind. Your aim is to guide and support youth throughout the process. The following questions relate to the experiential learning model:

Examples of **sharing** questions:  
(What happened?)

- What kinds of things have you been doing to organize your speech and get ready to deliver it?
- What is the hardest part about planning your speech?
- What is something you really enjoy about putting a speech together?

Examples of **processing** questions:  
(What's important?)

- Why do you think it's important to take the time to be well prepared?
- What is something you want to work especially hard to remember to do when you give your speech?
- What is something important to keep in mind about being evaluated or judged?

Examples of **generalizing** questions:  
(So what?)

- What do you think are the best things about your speech?
- Why is it important to be able to have confidence in yourself?
- What are some things you would like to do to improve as a public speaker?

Examples of **application** questions:  
(Now what?)

- How have you used your public speaking skills in other places besides contests and speaking events?
- Describe a situation where it's been helpful to know how to plan a speech and speak in public.
- What kinds of things might you be able to do in the future with your public speaking skills?



# 4-H Public Speaker's *Handbook*

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## A Note to Adults

**T**his manual has been designed to guide youth through the process of planning, practicing, and presenting a speech or demonstration.

The manual is intended to be used by youth of various ages depending on their interests and abilities. Middle school and high school aged youth will require less direct assistance from you; however those who are younger will benefit from your support and guidance.

### **Communication as a Primary Life Skill**

This project focuses on the life skill of communication with a particular emphasis on helping youth acquire confidence in their abilities to speak in public.

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# Acknowledgments

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Special thanks to the following  
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# 4-H Public Speaker's Handbook

**M**ost adults are terrified of getting up in front of a bunch of people to give a speech.

Now you can be the envy of all of them. They'll admire your poise and marvel at your confidence and be inspired and impressed by the things you have to say.

They'll wonder how you learned to be such a dynamic speaker. And they'll wish they, too, could have learned the secrets to your success—secrets you'll discover by taking the time to use the information in this handbook!

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## Selecting a topic

**G**iving a speech starts long before you stand up in front of an audience. The first step is deciding what to use as a topic.

### Begin with yourself!

What are some interesting things you already know something about? Think about an unusual experience you've had, a special hobby or interest that fascinates you, or an exciting place you've visited.

Curious about something you'd like to find out a little more about? Learn more about it by using it as the topic for your speech!

### Write down your ideas.

Make a list of the things that interest you. It helps to see things in writing. Sometimes it's fun to take each of the things you've listed and see what other kinds of things they remind you of. Before you know it you'll have listed all sorts of possibilities for a speech.

### Brainstorm ideas with other people.

Talk with a friend or family member about your hobbies, beliefs, experiences, and ideas. Be sure to have a pencil and paper handy to jot down what you and your partner come up with.

What's hot?

### Visit the Internet.

If you have a computer handy at home or school, the World Wide Web will open up all kinds of possibilities for speech topics. Subject-based search engines like Yahoo present listings of major topics for you to click onto to get a display of all sorts of subcategories. Any one of them could end up becoming your topic!


### Visit the library.

The reference room at your public library is a gold mine for speech topics. Some of the best places to look are encyclopedias and indexes. Browse through a volume of *World Book Encyclopedia* and see if anything grabs your attention. Or try the *New York Times* index. Be sure to have your pen and paper handy for listing ideas.

# Check it out


Still not sure what to use for your topic?  
Take some time to watch what's "hot" when you turn on TV,  
pick up a newspaper, or talk to friends and family members.

Use this survey to see if you can uncover a "hot" topic.



1. Things we've been talking about at home:
2. Things people at school have been talking about (in the cafeteria, parking lot, gym, etc.):
3. Newspaper or magazine headlines that grabbed my attention:
4. Ads, TV commercials, or billboards that caught my eye:
5. The most popular movies that people are attending:
6. What's hot on TV:
7. What kinds of things people are listening to on the radio talk shows:

Still can't think of a  
presentation idea?  
Turn the page  
for suggestions.



# Suggestions, suggestions, suggestions

How to take a soil sample

How to plant a tree seedling

Safety is a babysitter's watchword

What's in a sewing box

Horse anatomy

Setting a table

Accessorizing your outfit  
Choosing a pet  
First response: Treating accidents while hiking  
Grooming a dog, cat, sheep, etc.  
Healthy breakfasts  
Horse anatomy  
How a rabbit is judged  
How to fletch an arrow  
How to grade eggs  
How to make a rope halter  
How to plant a tree seedling  
How to prune a tree or shrub  
How to remove honey  
How to take a soil sample  
Making a dish garden  
Mounting insects  
Photography  
Planning your home landscape  
Preventing splash erosion  
Re-wiring a table lamp  
Safety is a babysitter's watch word  
Selecting a Pattern  
Setting a table  
Simple bike repairs keep you on the go  
The food pyramid  
The nutritional benefits of eating  
Using technology in your 4-H project  
What's in a sewing box  
Woodworking



## Beginning to plan your speech

Once you've selected a topic for your speech, you can start having fun putting it together. Start with these questions.

### Questions about yourself

#### **Am I really interested in this topic?**

If the topic doesn't interest you, you probably won't want to spend much time putting together a speech about it. It pays to be honest with yourself from the very beginning so that you'll get off to a good start.

#### **Am I comfortable talking about this topic?**

Being interested in something is one thing, but actually speaking about it in public is another. For example, say you want to give a speech about building a herd of cattle. Could you talk about sexual organs and describe the reproductive process without getting embarrassed?

#### **Do I really have time to put together a good speech on this topic?**

Think about what your schedule is going to be like for the next few weeks. How much homework do you need to do each day? And what about other things like soccer, basketball practice, band and choral rehearsals, concerts, play practice, church or synagogue activities, family responsibilities and chores, etc.? Will you have time for all these things and still be able to write a good speech?



## Questions about your audience

### **Will people be interested in the topic?**

If the topic doesn't interest people, they probably won't want to pay much attention to what you have to say about it. You might want to see what your family and friends think about your idea before going much further.

### **What can I do to make the speech meaningful for people?**

As you plan your speech, imagine the audience sitting there saying, "So what?" You'll need to make the topic interesting. A good way to do that is by sharing personal experiences or examples that will remind people of their own lives.

### **Will people understand the topic?**

Some speeches get so complicated that people stop trying to pay attention. That doesn't mean you should avoid a topic that is unfamiliar or complex. It just means you'll need to work extra hard to make it interesting and understandable. Be sure to define unfamiliar terms and repeat important ideas. Using visual aids might also help.

### **Will people be comfortable with the topic?**

If you think your topic may be a tough one for the audience, you may want to say so at the beginning. For example, you might say, "I know this subject may be uncomfortable for some people. Still, I think it's an important issue for all of us."

## Questions about the situation

### **Is the topic appropriate for the occasion?**

If it's a formal setting, people's expectations will probably be different than if it's a more informal gathering where you can talk about just about anything.

### **How much time will I have?**

It's frustrating to run out of time before you can finish delivering your speech. Trying to fit a long speech into a short time period is like trying to fit your foot into a shoe that is too small—you might be able to do it, but you'll feel uncomfortable about it.



# Organizing the body of your speech

**T**he goal is to make sure your listeners will be able to easily follow the main ideas of your presentation. Professional speakers usually organize the body of a speech before writing the introduction and conclusion.

Here are five ways to organize main points in a speech:

## Start to Finish (Chronological Order)

1

Presentations that are arranged this way follow a pattern or describe a sequence of events. They may begin at a certain time or date, or describe the steps in a process and then move forward or backward from that point.

Example:

“I’m going to tell you about the major steps involved in preparing for a successful speech presentation.”

## Directional Pattern (Spatial Order)

2

These presentations flow naturally from one thing to the next according to a pattern that moves from one direction to another. The speech might describe something that happens from top to bottom, inside to outside, front to back, or some other route.

Example:

“Here’s how snowmobilers can make sure they’re dressed warmly from the bottoms of their feet right on up to the tops of their heads.”

## Cause and Effect

3

This kind of presentation is organized around two main points. The first deals with the cause of an event. The second describes its effects.

Example:

“I want to describe some of the reasons speakers get nervous and what can happen as a result.”

## Tip

As the speech progresses, it helps to remind the audience of the major points being presented. Before moving on to the next point, repeat the one that has just been made.

“I’ve just told you what to avoid when you’re eating at a fast-food restaurant. Now I’m going to tell you what to look for instead.”

# 4

## Problem and Solution

This is another way of organizing a speech around two main points. The first part describes the situation and why it is a problem. The second part explains what should be done about it.

Example:

“Homelessness is a serious problem in the United States. I am going to suggest some things that can be done by the government and individual citizens in order to solve it.”

# 5

## Piece by Piece (Topical Order)

Some presentations don't fit into any of the arrangements listed above. These kinds of speeches can often be divided into subtopics that fit together like the pieces of a puzzle. Each of the pieces (or subtopics) is an important part of the main subject.

Example:

“Here are five tips to keep in mind if you want to improve your speech performance.”

## Writing the introduction and the conclusion

**T**he first few minutes and the last few minutes of a speech are very important. Here are some tips for success.

### The Introduction (Approximately 15 percent of the speech)

The speaker needs to “sell” the idea to the audience so they’ll want to listen.

- Capture attention.

Begin with a brief story or example that relates directly to the speech. Or mention a startling statement, statistic, or fact. Or start with a question, quotation, or familiar saying that has to do with the topic of the speech. (“Someone once said that ‘service is the outstanding characteristic of the soul.’”)

- Relate the topic to the audience.

People pay attention to things that concern them. You might refer to a common experience, fear, or situation with which everyone is familiar. Or, challenge the audience with a question, invitation, or “quiz.” (*How often do you take time to help others in your community?*)

- Preview the main points of the speech.

Simply list them in the order they’ll be presented. (“I’m going to share three reasons you too should get involved in a community service project.”)

### Conclusion (Approximately 5 percent of the speech)

The speaker wraps up everything by summarizing the major points the audience needs to keep in mind. Just as first impressions are important, the same is true of final ones!

- Signal the close of the speech.

A simple transition sentence that says “In conclusion...” or “To end...” lets the audience know the speech is nearly finished. (“In conclusion, I’d like to summarize what I’ve said about the importance of community service projects.”)

- Reinforce the main points.

Remind the audience about the most important things they’ve just heard. (“Remember, there are three things to keep in mind about community service...”)

- End strongly

Use a brief story, example, or quotation. Or, encourage the audience to do something to follow up what they’ve just heard. Sometimes it’s helpful to mention where additional information can be obtained. (“So when it comes to creating strong communities, each one of us has an important role to play.”)

Finally, some speakers end by thanking the audience for their attention.

## Tip

Humorous stories, jokes, and anecdotes can add a lot to a speech—but unless they relate to the speaker, the topic of the speech, the audience, or the occasion, they can backfire. And there’s nothing worse than to tell a joke and get no response.

# Speech Planning Worksheet

## Introduction (approximately 15 percent)

Attention getter: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

State the topic: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Relate to audience: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Preview main points: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Body (approximately 80 percent)

Major point: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Major point: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Major point: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Conclusion (approximately 5 percent)

Signal close: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reinforce major ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

End strongly: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## *Tips* Using Language

Remember, the audience needs to immediately be able to understand everything you say, so the words you use are important. Here are some things to keep in mind about choosing words that will help make your speech sparkle:

- Use ordinary words that people are familiar hearing. In general, shorter rather than longer words are best.
- Avoid long, complicated sentences. You can vary the length of the sentences, but in general, try to keep them short and to the point.
- It's okay to use contractions ("can't" instead of "cannot") as long as you don't over do it.
- Use words that will help your listeners hear, see, feel, or even smell what you're describing.
- Try to avoid using slang. Never use words that will offend or insult your audience. It's never acceptable to use language to degrade or make fun of people.
- Use personal pronouns (I, me, mine, you, I, and our) when you want your speech to sound more personal.

# Tips

## Using Props and Equipment

Sometimes you will be giving an illustrated talk or demonstration instead of a public speech. You will need to follow all of the planning and presenting information in this book and also think about your props and equipment.

- You are demonstrating your topic while talking about it. Be sure to talk along with the action. This is the time to share interesting facts you learned. Long pauses are uncomfortable for the audience and you may lose their attention!
- Using posters is a good way to convey ideas and points in your presentation. Posters need to be readable and easily seen by the audience, even from the back of the room! Each poster should convey one main idea. Some easy-to-see colors for posters are:
  - Black on yellow
  - Black on orange
  - Yellow-orange on navy blue
  - Scarlet-red on white
  - Black or navy blue on white
- From 10 feet away, your letter size needs to be at least 1/2 inch. From 20 feet away, you need 3/4 inch lettering. And if you have audience members who will be 50 feet away, your letters need to be at least 2 inches high.
- If you are using a PowerPoint presentation, be sure that the room can be made dark enough for everyone to see your slides.
- Models, stuffed animals, or other replicas are a great way to demonstrate an idea or show how to do something.
- If you use food and equipment for foods presentations, use see-through containers, have all of your ingredients and equipment within reach, use shallow trays to group your items, and make sure you clear an area in your work space to display your final product.



## *Tips* Using Notes

You'll probably want to prepare a set of notes for your presentation. It's a good idea to do this well in advance so you'll have a chance to practice. That way you'll know when to look down at your notes and back up again at the audience.

Here are some secrets to using notes well:

- Use only one side of each card.
- Use a separate card for the introduction and the conclusion.
- Try to limit each main point in your speech to one card.
- Number your cards so you can straighten them out again if they get mixed up.
- Print largely and neatly so the cards will be readable at a glance.
- Don't use a pencil or a messy pen for copying out your notes. Consider using highlighters or different colors of ink to help you remember to emphasize certain points.
- Use a separate color ink to jot down short hints you want to remember when delivering the speech. That way you can remind yourself to do certain things—like making eye contact with the audience, or slowing down.

### *A few words to the wise*

- Unless you're copying a direct quote or statistic, try to jot down key words and ideas instead of transferring the entire speech word for word onto cards.
- Beware of reading your note cards to your audience!
- Remember the purpose of a lectern or podium is not for you to lean on or hide behind! It's there to hold your speaking notes so your hands will be free to gesture.

# Getting ready to deliver your speech

Once you stand up to speak, everything you do and say can help you get your message across.

## Vocal Delivery

### Variety

A flat voice that never changes can put people to sleep! But if you speak with enthusiasm and confidence it will be reflected in the way you sound.

#### Tip

Keep your voice lively and varied so your audience will be more interested in listening to what you have to say.

### Volume

Make sure to speak loud enough so that every single person in the audience will hear. If you speak too softly, some people will get frustrated trying so hard to hear you. If you speak too loudly, people will wish you'd lower your voice a little!

#### Tip

Here's how to tell whether you're speaking too loudly or too softly: Simply glance at the people in the back of the room. You'll usually be able to tell if people are having a hard time hearing you because they'll be leaning forward or else they'll have puzzled expressions on their faces.

### Rate

If you race through your speech, people will have a hard time keeping up with you. If you go too slowly, they might become bored. A good way to check your tempo is to practice with a tape recorder. That way you can hear for yourself and decide whether you need to go a bit slower or speed things up.

#### Tip

Try writing "slow down" reminders on your note cards if you have a tendency to rush.

## Pronunciation

Mispronounced words jump right out at the audience and distract them from what you're saying. So it's a good idea to always check the dictionary to find out how to pronounce words you're not used to using.

### *Tip*

When you find yourself stumbling over a word that is hard to pronounce, try to replace it with something that's easier to say. If you can't find a substitute word, be sure to practice the new word until you've got it.

## Enunciation (speaking clearly)

Get into the habit of enunciating words crisply and distinctly. It will make a positive impression on your audience and help them understand what you're trying to say.

### *Tip*

Always make sure you pronounce the *ds*, *ts*, and *ings* at the end of words.

#### **Avoid saying:**

wanna  
dint  
hafta  
gonna  
woont

#### **Say this instead:**

want to  
didn't  
have to  
going to  
wouldn't

# Nonverbal Communication

## Personal appearance

People will see you before they hear you. Their first impression will be based on how you look. So, you'll want to look your best. Be neat and clean. You may want to dress in a special outfit for your topic. For example, you might dress in a fishing vest for a demonstration of fly fishing, or a lab coat is appropriate for a cooking demonstration.

## Eye contact

Making eye contact communicates that you're sincere and confident about what you're saying. It tells the audience you care about their reaction to your speech. When you look at people you'll be able to tell if they're bored, interested, confused, amused or inspired by what you say.

## Posture and movement

As you walk to the front of the room, remember that people will be watching you. Stand up straight and tall, and move with confidence and poise (even if you're nervous!).

You don't have to stand in the same place for your entire speech. You can move about—as long as you're careful. (If you pace back and forth the audience will get distracted.)

## Facial expression

Listeners usually focus on the speaker's face to get messages about his or her emotions and attitudes. Your expression should match what you say. Look serious when the speech calls for it, and be sure to smile when your message is more light-hearted.

## Tip

If there's a podium in the front of the room, don't lean on it because that can give the audience the impression you're bored or tired or not prepared to speak.

## Gestures

Rest your hands comfortably on the top of the podium or at your sides. Always use your hands as naturally as possible—using hand gestures the way you normally would when you talk to someone. Don't put your hands in your pockets, clasp them in front or behind you, or fidget with your notes. Try not to drum your fingers or play with rings or other jewelry.

**P**racticing will help you get comfortable with the way your speech sounds and how it feels to say it out loud. The more you practice, the better you'll get. That's why waiting until the last minute is almost as worthless as not practicing at all!

- Practice in front of a mirror so you can watch yourself as you go along. Decide how well your notes are working for you. Do you need to make some more? Or did you feel like you used too many?
- Since you'll be delivering your speech standing up, it makes sense to practice it that way, too. And be sure to use any visual aids you'll be including in your speech.
- Time yourself so you'll know if your speech is too long or too short.
- Try recording your speech with a tape recorder or video camera. Play back what you've recorded so you can check the rough spots and decide what needs to be done about them.
- Practice in front of friends or family members. Have them pay special attention to eye contact and whether you're speaking too fast or slowly. Don't get discouraged if they give you a lot of suggestions for how to improve your speech.
- Pay special attention to practicing the introduction of your speech. People are usually the most nervous during the beginning moments of their speeches. From then on things get easier.

## Practicing your speech

### *To memorize or not to memorize?*

Some speakers feel more comfortable speaking from memory. Others feel it makes the speech sound "canned" and prefer relying on note cards instead. It's really up to you to decide what you want to do.

You might consider memorizing only those parts of the speech where it is absolutely necessary that you say it exactly as you wrote it—for example, the introduction and the conclusion.

## Making speech anxiety work for you

**W**henver people have to speak in public, they get nervous. It's a normal reaction and it happens to even the best speakers. The secret is to control your nervousness and make it work for you rather against you.

### Calm Breathing

This is a great exercise to do in your place while waiting for your turn to speak. Place your hands on your stomach and feel it expand as you inhale deeply while counting slowly to 10. Exhale slowly for another count of 10 while feeling your stomach contract. After taking a few breaths this way, continue at the same rate but as you inhale think to yourself "I feel ...," and as you exhale "very calm."

### Loose Neck

Let your head fall back as far as it will go by pretending you're looking for footprints on the ceiling. Slowly bring your head forward again until your chin rests on your chest. Slowly lift your head and turn it to the right so you can glance over your shoulder. Then bring it around slowly to the left so you can look over your other shoulder. Repeat this as often as desired until your neck muscles feel relaxed.

### Hand Shakes

Let your arms hang loosely at your sides. Tighten your hands into fists and tense your arm muscles as you count slowly to five. Then relax and s-l-o-w-l-y begin to open your fists, letting your fingers stretch out as far as possible. Shake your hands and arms loosely and vigorously. Repeat this several times.

## **Shoulder Stretch**

Raise your shoulders as high as they will go and then let them fall back down again. Round your back by folding your shoulders toward your chest (like you do when it's cold outside). Push your shoulders back as if you're trying to rub your shoulder blades together. Repeat this several times.

## **Think positively!**

Picture yourself as a successful speaker standing in front of an admiring audience. Look at how relaxed and poised you are. Notice yourself making eye contact, smiling confidently at your audience, using gestures, standing tall, and moving purposefully. Hear your voice coming across clearly and assertively. Watch how your listeners are becoming more and more involved in what you're saying. Imagine the fun you're having as you move into your conclusion and end your speech. Listen to that applause and the smiles and nods from your friends and family in the audience.

## **Think about your audience.**

Your audience isn't there to criticize or make fun of you. They're there because they want to listen to what you have to say. Expect them to be helpful and attentive. They're on your side. They want you to succeed.

## **Be rested.**

It's important that you feel at your best for your speech. Public speaking takes a lot of energy, so make sure you've got it by getting a good night's sleep the night before.

## When the big day arrives

You've prepared your speech carefully, rehearsed it well, and followed all the advice you've gotten about handling your anxiety. Now it's almost your turn to give the speech and you're still nervous. Here are some last minute tips for controlling the jitters:

1

Find a private place (a restroom or corner back stage) where you can go to loosen up a few minutes before you speak. Shake your hands vigorously, roll your head from side to side, or stretch your arms high over your head.

2

Before you get up to speak, practice deep, slow breathing to help calm you down. As you breathe slowly and deeply, concentrate on telling yourself that you are relaxed and in control. Continue this pattern as you walk to the front of the room.

3

As you walk to the front of the room, act poised—even if your stomach is full of butterflies and your knees feel weak! Stand up tall and walk confidently forward. If you're using a lectern, put your notes on it. Look at your audience, smile, and begin your presentation.

4

As you speak, concentrate on what you are saying and how you are saying it, rather than worrying about how nervous you are. Remind yourself that you are well prepared and in control.

5

Don't worry about minor mistakes. Remember there is simply no such thing as a perfect speech. Even the professionals flub up now and then. It's only natural to say or do something during the presentation that does not come across exactly as planned. What's important is not to let minor blips worry you.

6

By the time you come to the last word in your speech, you may be feeling relieved to be finished. But remember, the last impression is as important as the first. So avoid heaving a big sigh of relief or rushing back to your seat. Instead, look up at your audience, smile, and then walk confidently back to take your place.



## Coping with criticism

**I**f you participate in a speech contest or festival, you'll receive a rating and possibly an oral or written critique from the judge. Remind yourself that regardless of what he or she says about your speech, you did the best job you could.

- Don't forget there is always more to learn about public speaking—even if you think you've done a great job. Read the judge's comments with an open mind.
- Remember, you don't have to agree with everything the judge says. He or she represents only one point of view, and other people might have an entirely different opinion.
- Sometimes the things a judge says aren't completely accurate. If you've worked hard and researched your topic well, you might know more about the subject than the judge does. On the other hand, don't be too quick to disagree with what the judge has to say just because you don't like it.
- If you have an opportunity to meet with the judge, take a deep breath and remind yourself to keep an open mind as you listen. Be sure to ask for clarification if you don't understand something.
- Use the judge's feedback so you'll become an even better speaker. Ask yourself these questions: What needs to be improved? What can be done differently next time? What should be done exactly the same way? How can you make sure you remember the judge's advice?

### *Tip*

Pay attention to what the judge liked instead of getting too upset about what he or she didn't like. Even though there might be a few negative comments, there will probably be just as many positive ones. So when you read or listen to the critique be sure to look for both.

On the following pages you will find score sheets for presentations, public speeches, and illustrated talks used in Pennsylvania 4-H. Review each one prior to the start of your speech or demonstration. Understanding how you are evaluated by the judges will help you prepare and feel more confident!

# 4-H Presentations/Illustrated Talk Score Sheet\*

Presenter(s) \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Category \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Award \_\_\_\_\_

Age, Jan. 1, current year \_\_\_\_\_

Age, Jan. 1, current year \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Presentation/Illustrated Talk \_\_\_\_\_

	Potential Score	Judges Score	Comments
Introduction—interesting, short, complete, original	5		
Topic—practical, related to project or activity	5		
Appearance—appropriate dress, well-groomed, good posture	10		
Voice, grammar, and vocabulary	10		
Presentation—shows poise; uses time and material well; work and speech coordinated; workmanship skillful and orderly. Shows originality	30		
Subject matter—Information accurate, complete, usable; knows subject; emphasizes important points.	20		
Equipment—suitable, good charts, posters, or models	10		
Summary—stresses important points; shows finished product if possible; has definite closing, questions answered satisfactorily	10		

Total Score \_\_\_\_\_ 100 \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes Deduction \_\_\_\_\_ = Final Score \_\_\_\_\_

NUMERICAL RATING:

- 90–100 Excellent (Blue)
- 80–89 Good (Red)
- 70–79 Worthy (White)

\*See: "Definition of Terms" Judged by \_\_\_\_\_

## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN SCORE SHEET

Introduction	This is not an introduction of the person. Rather, it explains why the topic is important to the person and the audience. Usually a presentation shows knowledge learned in a 4-H club project.
Topic	Should be closely related to category entered.
Appearance	Neat, properly dressed for the job. Good posture but at ease.
Voice, Grammar, and Vocabulary	Voice should be natural; words distinct, reasonably clear, and correct grammar; should have proper choice of words for a clear meaning.
Presentation	Poised, friendly, confident, convincing. Material presented with logical sequence. Originality and creativity shown throughout. Workmanship in presentation skillful; time and materials well used; work and speech coordinated; table top neat and orderly; easily viewed by audience. Good teamwork if working as a team.
Subject	Should be sufficient depth to show member's knowledge of subject matter.
Equipment, Charts, Posters, Models	Equipment should be well chosen for the job, conveniently arranged, and used in a generally accepted manner. It is not necessary to recite a list of equipment to be used but rather to identify it as used.  Charts, posters, and models should be neat, concise, appropriate, and easily seen by audience. They are often a reduced scale model or a cross section and are used to summarize steps in a process or list pertinent information such as a formula or recipe.  Members need not have made charts or posters themselves.
Summary	A concise review of the main points of the presentation. It should not include new material.
Time	Points are deducted for each full minute over or under allotted time. This time does not include audience question period.

# Pennsylvania 4-H Public Speaking Contest Score Sheet

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>				
Introduction was attention-getting				
Opening introduced purpose and subject				
Title tied with subject purpose				
<b>CONTENT</b>				
Main points were logically arranged				
Important points were easy to follow				
Appropriate supporting information				
Content was suitable for subject and purpose				
Sentences were short, easy to understand				
<b>CONCLUSION</b>				
Conclusion was logical, supported by content				
Conclusion was short, interesting, and final				
<b>DELIVERY</b>				
Friendliness				
Eye contact				
Rate of delivery				
Volume of delivery, pronunciation and diction				
Use of notes				
Natural, conversational				
Use of gestures				
<b>GENERAL</b>				
Communication				
Posture and presence				
Word choice, grammar, vocabulary				

Excellent    \_\_\_\_\_ x 5 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Good        \_\_\_\_\_ x 4 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fair         \_\_\_\_\_ x 3 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Poor         \_\_\_\_\_ x 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:




# **Adult Helper Section**

## Information for adult helpers

The following section is for adult helpers to help youth as they prepare their speeches and presentations. Some of the information will also help youth further develop their skills to plan, prepare, and practice their speeches even if an adult helper is not available to help.

*A*s an adult helper, you can do a great deal to help your child make the most of public speaking opportunities. Just remember the 4 “Ps” so you can help youth succeed: Plan, Prepare, Practice, and Provide support so youth can develop the confidence and skills needed to be a good speaker.



# Plan

Adults often hear kids protest, “I can’t think of anything to give a speech about!” Instead of telling a child what you think would make a fantastic topic for a speech, try a different approach. Help them explore the following four types of speeches they might want to give.

## **It could be a speech to inform, explain, demonstrate, or teach.**

- What’s something you can do particularly well that other people might like to know how to do, too?
- Think of your favorite hobby or recreational activity. Why do you enjoy it and what kinds of things are most interesting about it?
- Think about something you learned at school or in 4-H that you never knew before. How might you go about sharing that information with other people?
- What are some other things you would like to be able to teach or explain to an audience?

## *Read* **more about it!**

For more information about selecting a topic for a speech, check out page 2 in this manual.

## **It could be a speech to persuade or convince.**

- Think of something you think is important. How can you encourage other people to become more aware of what needs to be done about it?
- What is something in our society or world that ought to be changed? How can you encourage people to do their part?
- Think of something you believe very strongly is either right or wrong. How can you get other people to agree with you?
- What is something else you would like to persuade or convince other people to do or think?



Plan

**It could be a speech to *inspire* or bring about an *emotional response*.**

- Think of someone you admire a great deal because of something courageous (or inspiring or unselfish) he or she has done. What can other people learn from his or her example?
- Do you know anyone who has had to deal with a difficult obstacle in his or her life? What did that person do to overcome the hardships he or she endured? How did other people help?
- What can people do to make this world a better place?
- What is a value or principle that guides your own life (love, kindness toward others, courage, etc.)? Why is this so important?

**It could be a speech to *entertain*.**

- Imagine looking 50 years into the future. What might be the same and what might be different?
- Think of someone (alive or dead, real or make-believe) you would like to visit? What would it be like to spend time with that person? What would you like to say to or ask that person? How do you think he or she would respond?
- Have you had an interesting experience recently that other people might enjoy hearing about? (Perhaps it was a trip or vacation, or maybe you had visitors from another country.) What made that experience unique? What lessons did you learn?
- Instead of telling jokes, can you think of other things you could talk about to entertain people?

## *Keys to success*

The topic youth select has a lot to do with how well they will do preparing and delivering the speech. One sure way to turn the experience into a nightmare is for youth to choose a topic that's not appropriate.

- Be realistic about the time it will take to research the topic and prepare any necessary posters, charts or visuals. Unless there will be plenty of time for following through with a complicated idea, it would be better to choose something a bit less time consuming.
- Will youth have access to the information and supplies they will need to develop the speech?
- Is the child going to be comfortable with the topic—or is it something that he or she might not really want to talk about? Will the audience want to hear a speech on that subject?
- Will you be able to help when needed?



# Prepare

Even speakers who appear to be talking naturally and spontaneously have usually given a great deal of thought to what they were going to say ahead of time. That's why they're able to stand up to speak feeling confident and in control. Here's how you can help.

## Hint

### Resist the urge to write the speech yourself.

Once you've helped a child select the topic and begin organizing the speech, it's time to stand back for awhile and give him or her a chance to put together a first draft. Remember—the speech will be much more effective if the child speaks in his or her own words rather than yours.

### Focus on what to say about the topic.

Ask youth to list two or three important ideas about the topic they have chosen. (It's only necessary to tell people what's most important about the topic rather than trying to cover everything.)

### Help pick out a method of delivery.

A *speech* can be read from a prepared text, a set of brief notes, or presented from memory.

A *demonstration* shows how to do something or explains the steps in a process. It might also include visual aids to help illustrate the process being discussed.

An *illustrated talk* includes the use of props or visual aids to make it easier for the audience to keep track of the information being presented.

### Help organize what to say.

Think about how long the speech needs to be. Some speakers recommend using 15 percent of that time on the introduction; 80 percent on the body of the speech; and 5 percent on the conclusion.

Ask the child to mention a few things he or she already knows about the topic in order to start making some plans for how to organize the speech. Help him or her decide whether additional information is needed and if so where to find it. (The library? The Internet? A teacher or other expert?)

# Prepare

## Read more about it!

For more information about planning and organizing a speech, check out pages 7–8 in this manual.

# Practice

**P**racticing a speech will help youth develop confidence and poise. You can help by providing constructive feedback. Just remember, being supportive depends both on what you say and how you say it. Here's how to help youth succeed:

- Remind youth that good posture, a pleasant and confident expression, and a neat, well-groomed appearance are important.
- Since eye contact is a must, encourage youth to look at the audience and not to be afraid to smile!
- Vocal expression, gestures, facial expressions, and posture reflect personal style. Youth will make the best impression by acting as natural as possible rather than by using phony or overly dramatic gestures and expressions.
- Encourage youth to speak naturally—as if they were having a conversation with the audience. There's no need to shout, but on the other hand it's frustrating not being able to understand someone who's speaking too softly.
- Tell youth to stand still and avoid shifting from side to side. It's okay to move around while speaking, but make sure to move deliberately—rather than roaming from place to place.
- Remind youth not to stuff their hands into their pockets or clasp them together in front or in back. Try to hold them naturally at the side or rest them on top of the podium or lectern.
- Tell youth not to worry too much about making mistakes. Even experienced speakers slip up, stumble on a word, or even forget what they intended to say.

## *Read* more about it!

For more information about practicing a speech, check out page 17 in this manual.

*Hint*  
**Keep in mind your role isn't to criticize but rather to review and provide constructive advice. The form on the next page can help you point out the progress a child is making each time you listen to the speech.**

# Practice

# Adult Helper Feedback Form

What was said?	Could be improved	Good	Excellent	Comments
Did the introduction capture my attention?				
Was the main idea of the speech discussed?				
Was the speech well organized?				
Did the conclusion sum up the main idea?				

How was it said?	Could be improved	Good	Excellent	Comments
Eye contact and facial expression				
Gestures and body language				
Did speaker seem relaxed, confident?				
Did speaker use correct pronunciation?				
Did speaker use correct grammar?				
Was speaker easy to understand?				
Did speaker handle mistakes?				

Overall rating	Could be improved	Good	Excellent	Comments
Comments and suggestions for improvement				

**A**nyone who has ever had to speak in public knows that it can be scary. Some of that tension can actually help maintain focus and alertness, but too much of it can be a problem. Experienced speakers have learned to have confidence in their abilities. Adults are in a good position to help children develop this valuable asset.

### **Point out what youth are doing right.**

People who feel relaxed and confident about themselves often do better when they stand up to speak. While it's only natural for adults to notice children's shortcomings, it's a good idea to get in the habit of recognizing the positive as well.

- When listening to youth practice, be sure to comment on specific things you like about the speech instead of dwelling only on what needs improvement. ("You really did a great job introducing your topic.")
- Mention something about the child's appearance and speech delivery that others are bound to notice ("Your smile is so warm and friendly, and your gestures look very natural.")
- Mention the progress you've noticed and what a difference it has made. ("I've noticed how you've really worked on improving your eye contact and it's really looking good!")

### **Be constructive when you must be critical.**

When you must point out mistakes and shortcomings, do so in a positive manner. Instead of concentrating on what needs improvement, add a couple of encouraging comments as well. The "sandwich" approach is a good way to do this. Here's how it works:

- Begin with a positive observation. "I really like how you introduced the first main point of your speech."
- Make a suggestion about what needs to be improved. "I think you could use another example to support that particular point."
- Then add another positive comment. "It's great the way you've introduced and developed the rest of the speech!"

## **Provide support**

### *Hint*

Remember that it takes courage to give a speech. Positive and constructive support from family and friends has a lot to do with whether a child will feel good about the experience.

Youth who are constantly corrected, criticized, or blamed for their mistakes may have a harder time developing confidence.

*Provide support*

# Handling Stress

## Encourage youth to find their own way of handling stress and tension.

Let youth know that even the most experienced speakers get nervous before walking out on the stage to speak. What's important is finding a way to handle those feelings. That's why it's a good idea to make sure youth has learned some healthy stress reduction and relaxation techniques ahead of time. Here's a good opportunity for you to share some of the things you do personally when you're feeling nervous and uptight.

### *Read* more about it!

For more information about relaxation techniques that can calm jittery nerves, check out pages 18–19 in this manual.

## To memorize or not to memorize?

Many people feel it makes a speech sound “canned” or “mechanical” to recite it from memory. It can also be stressful for a child to have to worry about what will happen if he or she should forget something. So there is definitely good reason for discouraging word-for-word memorization on the grounds that it puts tremendous pressure on a child.

One option is to practice the speech as it's been written until the child is completely familiar with it. Then use note cards to jot down words and phrases that can be used as reminders.

## A healthy approach to competition.

If youth will be participating in a competitive event, most likely their speeches will be evaluated in terms of content and delivery. It's a chance to receive constructive feedback from judges and evaluators who are themselves experienced speakers.

- Help youth take a positive approach to constructive criticism. Look for a way to use evaluation feedback to improve their performances the next time.
- If you or the child disagree with the way the judge rated the speech, keep in mind that people react to things differently and their likes and dislikes aren't the same.
- Instead of putting all the emphasis on what the judge says, encourage the child to self-evaluate his or her speeches.

Some children leave public speaking competitions feeling foolish and embarrassed because of low scores. Perceptive adults use these opportunities to remind children there's always something to be gained by trying one's best. Wise people know there's much to be learned from “failures” because they provide opportunities to improve and to grow.

### *Hint*

It's important for youth to develop healthy attitudes about competition. Their lives will be filled with situations where what they do will be judged and measured in comparison with what other people do. Competition can be an exciting and stimulating experience. When handled constructively it can motivate youth to work hard and put forth their very best effort.

## Keep winning in perspective.

Sometimes competition gets out of hand. The “winning is everything” attitude can cause excessive stress for children if they believe a parent’s love or adult’s approval is at stake. Further, every adult has seen instances where other adults have pushed youth to win at all costs—in spite of what’s good for the child and sometimes at the expense of what’s ethical. Such conduct undermines the spirit of competition and severely interferes with what the child stands to gain from the experience.

The value of competition depends on the things youth are learning about themselves. Here are some pointers for adult helpers:

- Acknowledge the goals the child has set for him or herself. Let the child know that regardless of the outcome, you’re proud of him or her for making the decision to be a competitor.
- Make sure the child knows that while you are hoping he or she will do well in the competition, you will still feel the same way about him or her regardless of the judge’s decision.
- Help the child develop a healthy approach to winning or losing by stressing the importance of doing one’s best even if it ends up not being the best.

### *Hint*

When all is said and done, it’s not what the judge says that matters. Rather, the effort the child has put into the speech, as well as the progress he or she has made as a result of the experience, are what really make the most difference.

## 4-H ACTIVITIES REPORT

This report will help you keep a better record of your club activities. Fill it in as you complete each assignment. Refer to this record when you are entering county, state, and national programs. Ask your 4-H leader to explain these programs to you.

Projects taken \_\_\_\_\_

Office held \_\_\_\_\_

Club \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Committees \_\_\_\_\_

“Show-and-tells” or presentations given to:

Local club \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Region \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Others \_\_\_\_\_

News articles \_\_\_\_\_

Radio \_\_\_\_\_

TV \_\_\_\_\_

Displays or exhibits \_\_\_\_\_

Things done to improve your health \_\_\_\_\_

Community service or citizenship work done:

By yourself \_\_\_\_\_

With club \_\_\_\_\_

Number of meetings your club(s) held this year \_\_\_\_\_

Number you attended \_\_\_\_\_

Number of persons you encouraged to join 4-H \_\_\_\_\_

Number of 4-H'ers you helped with projects \_\_\_\_\_

In what way \_\_\_\_\_

Check activities in which you participated and tell how you helped:

Camp \_\_\_\_\_

Club or county tours \_\_\_\_\_

Club picnic \_\_\_\_\_

County fair \_\_\_\_\_

Achievement programs \_\_\_\_\_

Roundup \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership training \_\_\_\_\_

State 4-H Capital Days \_\_\_\_\_

Penn State 4-H Achievement Days \_\_\_\_\_

Pennsylvania Farm Show \_\_\_\_\_

National 4-H Week \_\_\_\_\_

State Ambassador Conference \_\_\_\_\_

Quiz bowls \_\_\_\_\_

Hippology \_\_\_\_\_

Judging \_\_\_\_\_

Others \_\_\_\_\_

## 4-H Club Motto

"To make the best better"

## 4-H Club Pledge

I pledge  
my head to clearer thinking,  
my heart to greater loyalty,  
my hands to larger service, and  
my health to better living, for  
my club,  
my community,  
my country, and  
my world.

## 4-H Club Colors

Green and White



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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of Congress May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Legislature. T. R. Alter, Director of Cooperative Extension, The Pennsylvania State University.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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Produced by Information and Communication Technologies in the College of Agricultural Sciences  
CATS6004 3M103ps