

# 4-H Presentation Guide



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# 4-H Presentations

## A Guide for 4-H Members

### Introduction



#### What is a 4-H presentation?

A presentation is a method used to communicate an idea by showing and/or telling. It can be a demonstration or a talk that uses posters and other visual aids. A 4-H Presentation helps you learn to:

- Research a subject
- Organize ideas in a logical order
- Be a teacher and practice public speaking skills

#### Why are public speaking skills important?

Public speaking skills are ranked number one among the skill sets of professionals. Other guiding factors for developing public speaking skills include:

- Discovering an important component of leadership development
- Increasing self-esteem, self confidence, and ability to accept feedback

- Expanding skills for planning, preparation and performance

Story telling has been a traditional way of passing knowledge from group to group and youth enjoy participating in this activity. Young children begin by telling stories to friends, family, at school, and later as part of formal presentations.

As 4-H members participate in projects, they collect information and ideas that can be shared with others. This sharing of information is part of the process of learning. Teaching project skills in a presentation takes advanced skills and a deeper understanding of what you have learned.

Giving presentations helps develop many skills including the ability to speak in front of a group, organizing your ideas and creating and using graphics to support the spoken word.

Members prepare for presentations by giving talks to project groups and at community club meetings, practicing skills learned in a project, and observing other members giving presentations.

Members can get ideas for presentations from many different sources. The first place to start is with your project leaders. They will know what you have learned in your project and what you might enjoy presenting. Your

community club leader also can be a source of ideas. Your local librarian can help you develop your subject through research. Publications that can be sources for presentation ideas are project manuals, books, magazines, and brochures from various organizations.

Presentations are not just demonstrations. You have many options ranging from traditional demonstrations to problem solving for senior members. All of the various presentation styles require similar skills, but are designed to meet the interests and age-appropriate levels of the member. No style of presentation is better than any other. Choose the style that best fits you for your first presentation and then try other styles as you advance in 4-H.

Every member is encouraged to give a presentation each year. Show what you've learned; give a presentation.

Section 1 of this publication is intended to provide members, leaders and parents with general suggestions and strategies for developing and delivering presentations.

Section 2 is devoted to understanding how presentations are judged in the State 4-H Presentation Day Event.



## Mechanics of Presenting

The effectiveness of your presentation depends on:

**HOW YOU LOOK,  
HOW YOU SAY IT, and  
WHAT YOU SAY.**

Members should explore different ways to effectively communicate by using different presentation formats and styles. While each person is most effective when they become comfortable with their own unique style, the following materials on presentations mechanics are intended to get you started by providing a base of accepted presentation practices.

### **BODY POSITIONING AND BODY LANGUAGE**

When positioning yourself in the front of the room, stand slightly to your right side of the presentation area. Any posters or other visuals should be on your right side. You can then move closer to the audience for emphasis and closer to your visuals to emphasize the visuals. You will spend most of your time during the presentation halfway between the audience and the visuals. By staying left of the audience's center you are taking advantage of most people's visual preference since they read from left to right.

Use your visual aids as an outline to keep your presentation on track. The visuals are not the entire presentation. Try to minimize

the need for the audience to shift its view repeatedly from you to other parts of the presentation.

The presenter should look at the audience 80-90 percent of the time and make eye contact with them. The avoidance of visual contact with the audience leads to the perception of being unprepared, awkwardness, and dishonesty. Focus your eyes on the back third of the audience because this will keep your head up and help you project your voice.

Shoulders should be kept parallel to the ground with no dipping to one side or the other when moving. When resting, hold your shoulders 45 degrees to the audience to convey a non-threatening, casual sense of power. Standing, with shoulders square to a group, you will command the audience's attention.



Avoid upstaging, which includes turning your back to the audience, hiding your facial expression, or crossing your body with your hands. Stay open and exposed. Keep your hands to your side and in sight. This position may feel unnatural, but it looks best. Other hand positions limit gesturing. Never put your hands in your pockets.

Your weight should be distributed evenly with feet shoulder width apart and knees unlocked. If you become tired during the presentation, shift from front to back (put one foot behind) because this type of body movement does not introduce a swaying look to the presenter.

Gesturing should focus toward the audience. The best gestures are hands out and palms up. If the elbow is bent, the gesture will appear casual. If the elbow is straight, the gesture will appear forceful. Gestures should not attract attention or detract from your message. They should appear spontaneous and natural and enhance your speech.

### **THE POWER OF VOICE**

Add power to your presentation with well-planned pauses. Start with a hard consonant so people listen more attentively. Group ideas in threes and then insert a pause. Avoid vocalized pauses including "um," "er," and other vocalized fillers that detract from your presentation.

Volume should match your audience and room size. Remember, your voice is louder to you than the rest of the audience. If you speak too quietly your audience will not understand you, but do not yell at them or they will avoid what you are saying.

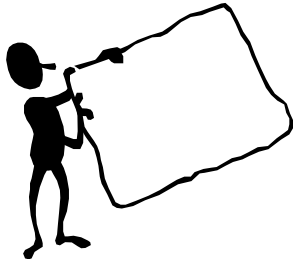
Pitch and vocal variation can be used to heighten the quality of your speech. You can use it to reflect on your message. One point to remember is to avoid using the same tone throughout your presentation.

Change the volume, speed, and tone of your voice. Project your voice to the audience in the back of the room. Present to individuals in the audience and check for understanding by the audience's facial and physical reactions. These reactions reflect their understanding of your presentation.

### REMEMBER:

- ❖ You want to succeed.
  - ❖ The audience wants you to succeed.
  - ❖ The judges want you to succeed.
- They are not there to trick you, only to support your effort.**

## Lettering for Posters and Charts



Words on posters and charts should be easy to read. People find it easier to read words running from left to right across the page rather than from top to bottom on a page. Be consistent in style.

The use of **UPPERCASE** (capitals) should be limited to **titles, headings**, or where you want to make a point. Use at the beginning of lists and for the start of each new item in a list. Any more than seven consecutive all-capitalized words cause the audience to slow their reading and re-read. Titles may be all capitalized.

Lettering should be bold enough to be easily read from a distance. Boldness is part line thickness, letter size, and letter style.

Demonstration posters and other visual aids including overhead slides and *PowerPoint* slides should have lettering at least 1 1/2 inches in height. In electronic presentations the projected height of letters should be comparable in size to poster lettering.

Printed poster lettering should use 125 point text minimum. Titles should be larger.

Use fancy letters for headings where you want to make a point. The eye moves slowly through fancy letters.

## Fancy Letters

The use of plain lowercase (small letters) makes charts easier to read. They should also be used for sub-items in a list and additional information. The eye moves quicker through them with a minimum delay in reading.

Use letters that are easy to read from the back of the room. **Avoid using stencils unless you fill in blank parts.** Leave at least an inch between lines of text and an inch between each word.

Use geometric shapes like bullet points to guide eye movement toward key points. The way to use geometric shapes is at the start of each line in a list of items or ideas instead of numbering items in a list.

Use colors that are vivid and stand out. Black on yellow is usually better than red on blue.

Use capital letters, italics, and/or color to provide inflection. Use strong and forceful headlines.

Use the text of your poster board illustrations as an outline. Elaborate from the FEW words you put on your poster. Say more than you show.

### RULES OF THREES:

- ❖ Use three main ideas per chart when possible.
- ❖ Keep your presentation understandable by limiting your presentation to three main ideas.
- ❖ Speak in threes, and people remember more.

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## Check your visual before you use it

1. **Visibility** Is it easy to see and read from where participants sit?
2. **Simple** Is the message easy to understand?
3. **Interest** Does it attract and hold attention or is it cluttered with too many words or pictures?
4. **Useful** Are the lettering, words, pictures, etc. suitable for the subject and audience?
5. **Structure** Are the ideas grouped in sequential order?
6. **Information** Is it factual?

## Color Combinations for Posters and Charts



Colors can create the desired mood or atmosphere for your message. Visual aids may do a good job when made in black and white, but color, when used well, will help them do a better job.

Use bright, intense colors for the smaller areas and possibly for the center of interest.

Limit colors to two or three in the visual so color does not become too obvious to the viewer. Have one dominant color and follow the rule, "the smaller the area, the brighter the color." Cool colors (green, blue, and gray) are best suited for backgrounds, while warm colors (red, yellow, orange) are best for emphasizing the message.

Complementary colors, red on green or yellow on violet, are hard to read. Consider

legibility when selecting colors. Although various combinations may harmonize, they may not make your message easy to read.

It is best to use dark colors on light backgrounds and light colors on dark backgrounds.

## Color combinations listed in order of legibility:

**1. Black on yellow**

**2. Green on white**

**3. Red on white**

**4. Blue on white**

5. White on blue

6. Black on white

7. Yellow on black

8. White on red

9. White on green

10. White on black

11. Red on yellow

12. Green on red

## What color means in the background!

gray	=	neutral, reporting - use for presentation with no emotional sway
blue	=	calm, conservative, loyal, reduces pulse and blood pressure use to present unfavorable information
green	=	analytical, precise, resistance to change use to encourage interaction, or want to be opinionated, assertive
red	=	vitality, urge to achieve results, impulse, raises our spirits use when want to motivate
yellow	=	bright, cheerful, may be too much light
violet	=	mystic union, unimportant and unrealistic, irresponsible and immature, humor, charm, delight
brown	=	decreased sense of vitality, projects dullness
black	=	negation of emotions; surrender, power, to discourage argument



# Planning a 4-H Presentation

## A Few Easy Steps



### Step One:

**WHAT** is the subject matter you wish to present? Select a subject in which YOU are interested and would like to teach to other people.

### Step Two:

**NARROW DOWN** the subject to a specific topic or process, i.e. types of seams or steps for a natural wood finish.

### Step Three:

**WHO** is your intended audience: adults, teens, primary members, experts, or novices, etc.?

### Step Four:

**RESEARCH** your topic. Find out the most accurate and recent information on your topic. Consult your project leader, member guides, magazines, books, web sites, encyclopedias.

### Step Five:

**WHY** are you giving the presentation – to inform, teach facts, motivate to action, to stimulate thought, to show a process? Write out in one sentence what you would like your audience to be able to do as a result of watching your presentation.

Suggestion: You may want to set up a self-evaluation test at the conclusion of your presentation; ask one member of the audience to participate with you in performing the skill. “Let’s see if you can identify poisonous plants with the techniques I have just demonstrated.”



### Step Six:

**DECIDE YOUR CONCLUSION FIRST.** Every piece tells the story. If a part does not fit the story objective, take it out.

### Step Seven:

**HOW WILL YOU DO** your presentation? Develop an outline of your presentation.

- State your purpose
- Write out your title
- Divide your outline into the introduction, body, and conclusion

**INTRODUCTION:** Use an opening device to create interest in your topic. Then present the main idea that can be the purpose of your presentation, thesis or topic sentence. Then preview the main points you intend to cover in the body of your presentation.

Example:

Problem: "One of the most common problems people have on hikes in the wilderness is that they are unable to distinguish between poisonous plants and nonpoisonous plants. For example, how often have you heard stories about people who sat down on a patch of Poison Oak?"

Solution: "Today I am going to show you how to identify three common poisonous plants. As a result of being able to identify these plants, you will be able to avoid them and thus enjoy your visits to the wilderness."

### **BODY:**

Tell them and show them. Tell them the three main points of your talk.

Example:

"Three common poisonous plants are:

1. poison oak
2. stinging nettle
3. oleander"

Show the plants as you talk.

1. "Three types of poison oak are:"
2. "Three characteristics of nettles are:"

### **CONCLUSION:**

Include a summary of the body's main points and use a closing device to make your presentation memorable.

Example:

"Three common poisonous plants are... "

### **Step Eight:**

**DEVELOP A TITLE** which

1. is an attention getter
2. summarizes your purpose
3. is short and to the point (4 to 5 short words)

Examples:

"**Leaf** These Plants Alone"  
"Look, but Don't Touch!"

### **Step Nine:**

**PREPARE YOUR MATERIALS** for the presentation

- Use poster board or other materials to illustrate the main points of your presentation;
- Use your outline to serve as the text of your poster board illustrations; and
- Select models and hand-held objects to be used in the presentation.



### **Step Ten:**

**PRACTICE** your presentation. How will you set up your workspace? How will you handle the materials as you show them? Where will you place them when you put them down?

### **Step Eleven:**

Try to anticipate questions that may come up and find answers to those questions.

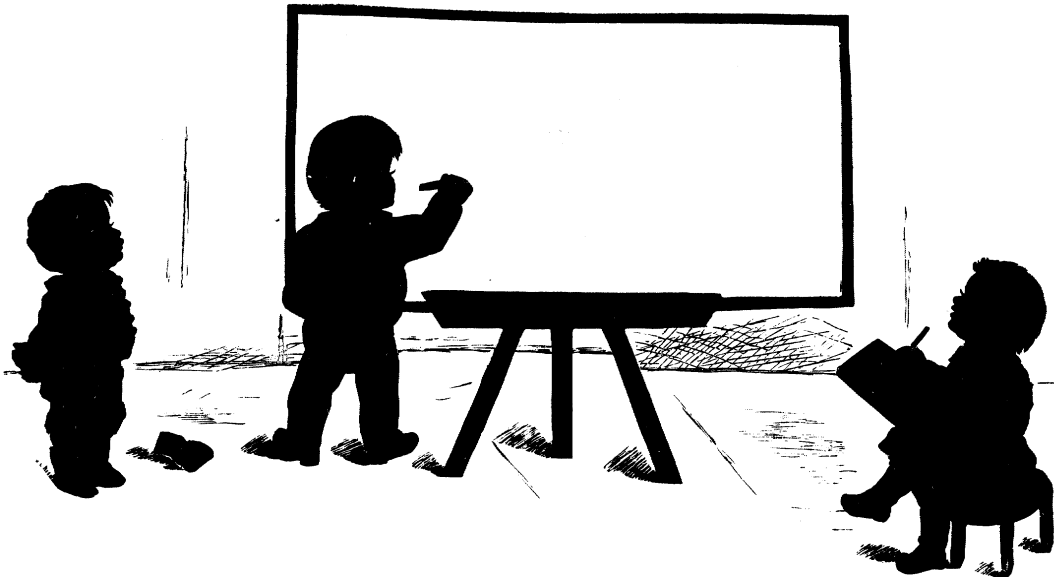
### **Step Twelve:**

**PRACTICE** your presentation again, and again, and again! While practicing, try not to memorize your presentation word for word. Keep your delivery fresh and exciting.



## 10 Days to a Better Presentation...

- **10 days before:** Create your visuals and begin practicing for 20 minutes a day by reading out loud. (This will help you work on volume, pacing, and intonation.)
- **8 days before:** Examine the clothes you will be wearing and look for tears, frays, loose buttons, and spots.
- **6 days before:** Do a rehearsal of the speech in front of friends, your 4-H group, your parents or another safe group. Let them guide you in areas that need a little more work. Practice makes perfect!
- **2 days before:** Do a full dress rehearsal of the speech or presentation (even if it's just in front of the mirror).
- **The big day:** Think winning thoughts.



# Concerns for All Presentation Formats

## Setup

The participant is responsible for supplying and setting up all equipment for the presentation. Room Hosts can assist the participant during set up and take down. If the participant cannot set up the equipment necessary for the presentation without adult assistance, judges may infer that the participant did not prepare the visual portion of the presentation.

The participant may not receive assistance during the presentation. If equipment used in the presentation malfunctions, then the member may request an opportunity to restart their presentation once they have had a chance to repair the equipment. Parents may assist with equipment malfunctions. Judges should give the member the opportunity to relax and regroup their thoughts prior to restarting their presentation.

## Personal Appearance

4-H does not have an official uniform. Clothing is to be neat, clean and appropriate for the presentation being given. Members should practice good personal hygiene and be well groomed when giving their presentation. Members can improve their appearance by having shirts tucked in, no holes in clothing or shoes, no logos or slogans on clothing, and clean and combed hair.

## Questions

In most presentation formats, the judges may ask questions. Participants are expected to handle questions related to the presentation. The purpose of questions is to evaluate how the participant thinks using presentation information. Judges should make sure that the entire audience hears questions by repeating the question, paraphrasing the question, or including the question in the answer. Repeating gives the presenter the chance to make sure they understand the question. The participant has given an acceptable response when he/she admits he/she is unable to answer the question, but provides a resource for finding the answer. The asking of questions is limited to judges.

## Award Systems

The Danish System of judging is commonly used in 4-H competitions. Entries are placed based on merit by how well the entry performed the basic skills of public speaking. Each entry has an equal chance to receive each placing based on the quality of the entry. All entries receive a placing. The Danish System uses color placing starting with blue and then continuing with red and white. All presentation formats use the Danish System of judging.

A “Blue Award” is required for moving up to the next level of competition. Members may not be disqualified from competitions. Any serious defects should be reflected on the evaluation rubric in the appropriate skill area.

Cloverbuds who participate will receive Participation ribbons only.

### **Age Classifications of Entries**

Members of teams and group presentations will be judged using the age of the oldest team member.

***Junior: Ages 9 - 11***

***Intermediate: Ages 12- 14***

***Senior: Ages 15 - 19***

Cloverbud members may not be judged. Cloverbud members are encouraged to participate and receive participation ribbons. Older youth may “help” Cloverbud members by holding posters, etc., but may not take an active part in the actual presentation. Any team presentations that include any Cloverbud members may not be judged.

### **Member Accommodation**

If a member has special physical or educational needs that affect the delivery of the presentation, the member, parent or leader needs to note on the presentation application the special needs of the member and how the presentation format has been adapted to assist the member to participate in the presentation program.

Accommodations will be made by the Event Coordinator to fully implement the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as per OSU Extension policy.

### **Research and Citation**

Research on the topic may be conducted through 4-H Leaders, parents, experts, the library, internet and many other sources. The member should remember to cite their sources.



## Presentation Format Description:

# Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks

### State Fair Qualifying for Intermediates & Seniors

A **demonstration** teaches a skill by the “show how” method. Posters or equivalent visual aids are used by the member to enhance the teaching process. The demonstration will include at least a title, materials, process, and summary posters or visual aids.

An **illustrated talk** teaches a concept or skill that would be impractical to demonstrate in a classroom setting. Posters or equivalent visual aids should include at least an introduction/title card, information card, and a summary card. Models or other visual aids can be used to enhance the presentation.

An **individual presentation** has one member deliver the entire presentation. A **team presentation** in Oregon, has two members deliver the presentation. Team members should divide work and speaking parts equally. An uneven distribution of work or speaking parts will impact the scoring of the “Presentation” skill.

The presentation can range in length from Cloverbuds (0-5 min.), 3 - 10 minutes for an individual or team junior presentation and 10 - 15 minutes for an Intermediate or Senior individual or team presentation. The complexity of the topic, age of participants, and audience interest should dictate the appropriate length. Each team or individual will have 20 minutes total to present, set up, and clear.

Each presentation should have clearly identifiable sections including an introduction, main body, and conclusion. Members are strongly encouraged to relate the presentation to their current 4-H project work or 4-H activities. However, school related topics or other topics are acceptable as long as they are ‘legal’ for a minor.

The work areas of the presentation should be used to the member’s best advantage. Product labels should be limited to generic names and product names should be covered. Elevation boards and mirrors may be used by the member to enhance the visibility of the work area.

Handing out flyers and samples should not cause a distraction to other presentations. Refer to the room host as to an appropriate time.

Posters or PowerPoint should provide all necessary prompting.

Judges may ask questions in this format.

Contestants should cite their major references at the conclusion of their presentation.

## Presentation Format Description:

# Public Speech

### State Fair Qualifying for Intermediates & Seniors

This format requires that the member write and deliver his/her own speech. The speaker will persuade, inform, or educate the audience on a single issue or topic. The topic is only limited by age appropriateness of the topic for the member and good taste. Advocacy of political or religious views is not appropriate. The purpose of this category is to encourage members to give a speech in which they seek out accurate information, organize it into a useful form and competently present the information.

A speech has a clear and understandable theme or thesis. Citing sources can increase the credibility of the speech if it does not interfere with the delivery of the prepared speech. The member is expected to discuss intelligently, with a degree of originality, in an interesting manner, and with some benefit to the audience, the topic chosen.

A speech should last from 0 – 5 minutes for Cloverbuds and 3 - 8 minutes for juniors. Senior and intermediate speeches should extend from 7 – 10 minutes.

No props or costumes are allowed. No visual aids will be used by the member to assist with the delivery of the prepared speech. Notes may be used by the member to assist with the delivery of the speech, but they should be inconspicuous and not detract from the speech.

A public speech should have a clearly defined introduction, body and summation. The body contains the development of the main ideas of the prepared speech. The summation should not introduce new material, but should be used to reinforce the ideas developed in the body and cement the theme and main ideas in the minds of the audience.

Judges may ask questions in this format.

Contestants should cite their major references at the conclusion of their presentation.

## Presentation Format Description:

# Impromptu Speech

## State Fair Qualifying for Intermediates & Seniors

Impromptu speaking involves speeches that the member has written him/herself at the competition. One at a time, the members will randomly draw a piece of paper with a topic on it. The topics will be developed from the pre-announced categories for the event. From the time that the member is given the topic, he/she will have five minutes to prepare a speech.

The speaking time is 1-3 minutes for Cloverbuds and Juniors; 3 to 5 minutes for Intermediate and Seniors. Any time used in excess of the five minute time limit should be considered a fault against the member's performance, but is not grounds for disqualification.

Senior Impromptu Speaking is limited to members ages 15 - 19. These members will select from questions related to 4-H Life Skills. Intermediate Impromptu Speaking is limited to members ages 12 - 14. Junior Impromptu Speaking is limited to members ages 9 - 11. These members will select from questions related to participation in the 4-H Youth Development Program. This format is limited to individual participants.

The member is allowed one note card (single sided) to organize their thoughts on the selected topic. The member may use

this single note card during the delivery of the impromptu speech.

The member may not use props or costumes in the delivery of the speech.

The member should incorporate an introduction, a body and a summation in the delivery of the speech. The body of the speech should be used for the development of the thesis or topic of the speech.

There will be no questions during this category. The entire category involves the unrehearsed delivery of information and ideas.

Guidelines for preparing an impromptu speech:

1. Clearly state the topic as it was given to the presenter.
2. Give a reasonable interpretation of the topic. Neither exaggerates by reading more into the issue than is there, nor understate the issue.
3. Give the speech a clear central purpose.
4. What is the strategy? A speech can inform or persuade. Persuasion is suggested as it provides a direction and purpose to the speech. The judges do not consider the position taken by the member, but may consider how well the position is stated, developed, and supported.

For more information on Presentations, visit the State 4-H Website

<http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/projects/communication/Presentations> and click on "A Primer on Presentations".



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