



# Types of Presentations for 4-H Competitions

There are many types of presentations, but most 4-H presentation contests use only these four:

- Demonstrations
- Illustrated Talks
- Public Speeches
- Impromptu Speeches

Remember to check the rules for the specific contest you will be entering as each contest will have slight variations.

## Demonstrations

A demonstration puts words into action. With this type of presentation, you will **show** how to do something at the same time you **tell** how to do it. There is a finished product at the end. If you have given a successful demonstration, the audience should leave knowing how to do what you have demonstrated.

Examples of demonstrations are:

- How to braid hair
- How to clean tack
- How to sew on a button
- How to pot a plant
- How to groom a show calf

A demonstration is usually the easiest type of presentation to do. It often has a step-by-step process that makes planning and organizing simple. The hardest part may be to remember to keep talking while you are demonstrating or doing something. Try not to have long periods of silence.

If time doesn't permit you to complete each step, it's okay to skip some as long as you tell about them. You might make examples of some parts ahead of time to show each stage of the process. An example would be demonstrating how to make bread. You wouldn't have time to let dough rise or to bake it, but you could show how to make the dough and then have a sample of a completed loaf. You might even be able to show a sample of risen dough, started earlier, and demonstrate how to punch it down.

## Illustrated Talks

An illustrated talk is a way to share information with the audience. The topic should be educational in nature, but it can be very basic.

No finished product is necessary, but visual aids must be used to help explain what is being said. Visual aids can include posters, slides, transparencies, models, or actual items.

Examples of illustrated talks are:

- Evolution of the horse using pictures of the various stages
- Nutritional requirements using charts and graphs
- Milking parlor requirements using a scale model
- Items in a first aid kit using samples of the items
- Tree identification using leaf/needle samples

## Public Speeches

A public speech is just talking. No visual aids or props can be used. A speech can be informative or persuasive with the purpose to stimulate thought or present a point of view. Speeches should not simply entertain. They need to persuade the audience to agree with you, educate the audience, or get an emotional reaction from the audience. Speeches often have a personal tie-in, a way the topic relates to something that happened in your life.

A speech may be the most difficult type of presentation. It requires careful planning and effective delivery. Since no visual aids are allowed, gestures and voice variety are very important. There also needs to be a clear theme or thesis and understandable points to follow. A speech is not an effective way to teach a difficult concept.

## Impromptu Speeches

As the name implies, impromptu speeches require the presenter to compose and deliver a speech with little previous preparation. Like public speeches, no visual aids are used unless the speaker is given an object to talk about.

Impromptu speeches require you to “think on your feet.” You need to be able to come up with ideas on the spur of the moment and quickly organize them in a logical manner. Acquiring the skill to express yourself quickly is extremely beneficial. You will encounter many situations where it will be helpful to be able to give input on the spot.

While younger members may have fun practicing impromptu speeches at a club meeting, contests are recommended for intermediates and seniors only. Examples of contest topics are:

- What is your favorite summer activity and why?
- If you could be any animal, what animal would you be and why?
- Should school uniforms be required? Why or why not?
- Draw an object from a bag and talk about its uses.

## Team Presentations

Demonstrations and illustrated talks may be done as an individual or team. (Public speaking and impromptu speeches are for individuals only.) A team usually consists of two members of the same age division.

Team presentations are good when four hands are needed to demonstrate something or when it is hard to do the work and talk at the same time. First-time presenters often like to work as a team because they don’t have to be in front of an audience by themselves. It can be comforting to have a friend up there with you.

When giving a team presentation, there needs to be a balance between the two team members. Both should talk equal amounts and/or demonstrate equal amounts. You should rotate between the speakers frequently without making it choppy. Shifts in speakers should seem natural. Don’t change speakers in the middle of a thought or a process. You can use a change in speakers to show transitions in the talk. At the end, the members should take turns answering questions. After giving an answer, ask if your partner has anything to add.

In addition to speaking to the audience, there should be interaction between the team members. Asking each other questions is an easy way to do this. It’s not good for one person to talk a long time and then the other to talk a long time. Approaching a team presentation as a conversation between two people is a good way to plan at least part of your talk.

Team presentations are a good way to learn teamwork and cooperation. You need to be aware, however, that it can be difficult to do a really good team presentation. They require a lot of planning and practice in order to flow smoothly. Also be aware that some topics

lend themselves to a team presentation better than others. Be sure that the topic you have chosen is one that works for a team and wouldn't better be done by one person.

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