4-H
Presentation
Manual

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

4-H Youth DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CITIZENSHIP
LEADERSHIP
LIFE SKILLS

Mechanics of Presenting

The effectiveness of your presentation
depends on:
HOW YOU LOOK,
HOW YOU SAY IT, and
WHAT YOU SAY.

As a speaker you should explore different
ways to effectively communicate by using
different presentation formats and styles.
While each person is most effective when
he/she becomes comfortable with his/her own
unique style, the following materials on
presentation mechanics are intended to
provide a base of accepted presentation
practices with which to start.

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.
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.

You 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 unpreparedness, 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.

Your 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. Stand with shoulders square to the group to 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 to 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.

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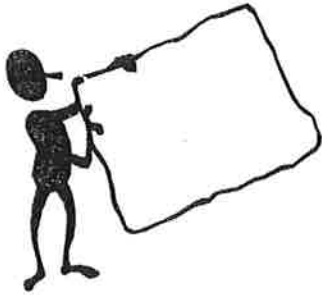
Words on posters and charts should be easy to read. People find it easier to read words running from left to right across the page rather than from top to bottom on a page. Be consistent in style.

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

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 transparencies and Power Point 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 or larger.

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

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 and is the data current?

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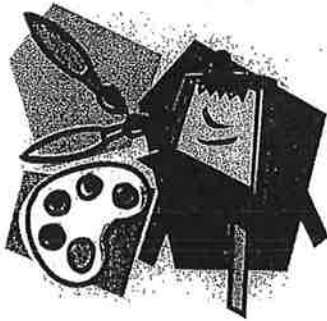
Colors can create the desired mood or atmosphere for your message. Visual aids may do a good job when made in black and white, but color, when used well, will help them do a better job.

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

Limit colors to two or three in visual aids so color does not become too obvious to the viewer. Use 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.

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.

Color combinations listed in order of legibility:

1. Black on yellow	5. White on blue	9. White on green
2. Green on white	6. Black on white	10. White on black
3. Red on white	7. Yellow on black	11. Red on yellow
4. Blue on white	8. White on red	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

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Helper's Hints

1. Plan visual aids for the room in which you speak. If the room will be classroom size, think about what can easily be seen from the back of the room.

2. Distance makes visuals harder to read and neatness becomes even more important.

3. Select materials for posters that are easy to use. If poster board is thin, wind can make the board difficult to control. Try foam board or matte board for better results.

4. Keep work areas neat with as few items as possible. Remove items from the table when complete. Do not place any items in front of your work area.

5. Use elevated work surfaces or mirrors if your work area is flat or difficult to see from the audience.

POSTERS

The main purpose of a poster or chart is to make it easier for your audience to understand your topic. A chart is used when a picture, such as a graph, best explains your topic. A poster is most useful when you want your audience to remember important facts or steps

Helpful Hints for Making a Good Poster

1. Use dark letters on white or light-colored paper.
2. Make sure everything is large enough to see from the back row of a room.
3. Make your poster in pencil first then trace over the letters with a dark marker.
4. Use a ruler to keep your letters straight.
5. Make your poster neat and easy to read.
6. Do not put too much information on one poster or chart.

Remember, visuals must be visible. The following tables could be used to choose the best letter size and thickness, colors of letters, and background.

Letter Size for Visibility*

Distance	Letter Size	Line Thickness
10 Feet	1/2 inch	3/32 inch
20 Feet	3/4 inch	1/8 inch
50 Feet	2 inches	8/16 inch
100 Feet	3 ½ inches	11/18 inch
300 Feet	11 inches	2 inches

* Assuming good light, good eyes, and good color

Color Combinations for Visibility

1. black on yellow
2. black on orange
3. yellow-orange on navy blue
4. bottle green on white
5. scarlet-red on white
6. black on white
7. navy blue on white
8. white on navy blue
9. yellow-orange on black
10. white on black
11. white on bottle green
12. white on scarlet-red
13. white on purple
14. purple on white
15. navy on yellow
16. navy blue on orange
17. yellow on navy blue
18. scarlet-red on orange
19. emerald green on white
20. purple on yellow
21. purple on orange
22. white on emerald green
23. bottle green on yellow
24. scarlet-red on orange
25. emerald green on white
26. yellow on purple
27. orange on purple
28. bottle green on orange
29. emerald green on yellow
30. orange on yellow

A Closer Look

4-H Public Speaking Work Sheet

If you are planning to enter the 4-H Club Public Speaking Program, first read Extension publication YM-57, "Speak Up." Then use this work sheet to help you get started.

Give yourself two to three weeks to work on your speech, if possible. A good speech grows on you. If you work on it a little each day, it will become better fixed in your mind.

Select a Topic

Select a subject that interests you such as Energy Conservation. It should be one that will inform and be interesting to others.

My Subject: _____

After you select a subject, think about one main topic within that subject. Build your speech around this one topic. Don't try to cover too broad a topic. For example, if your subject is Energy Conservation, your speech could be on "New Developments in Energy-Saving Equipment," "The Return of the Windmill," or "Pros and Cons of Solar Energy Use."

Possible Topics Within My Subject:

_____

_____

_____

Research Your Topic

First, write down any thoughts that come to mind. Draw from your own knowledge. Then talk to people who might help you with your topic. For example, someone at your local electric or gas company could help you with energy. Go to your school or public library for help. And read newspapers and magazines for current events that might tie into your speech. Be up to date.

Questions I Want Answered:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

While doing your research, you should be able to make a final decision about the topic you will use for your speech.

My Speech Will Be: _____

Sources of Information I Used:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Organize Your Material

Decide on your main points—no more than three or four. Write them down.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Decide on the most logical sequence for these points. For each main point, list two or three minor points. This will put the body of your speech in outline form.

A. _____
   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____

B. _____
   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____

C. _____
   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____

D. _____
   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____

Now, think about how to introduce your speech. Make your opening friendly, casual, and short. You might ask a question, use a short story or meaningful quotation, or show how your topic directly affects your audience.

For your conclusion, plan a brief summary of what you have said. Close with the idea you want to be remembered longest.

Idea I Want People To Remember: _____

_____

_____

After preparing your outline, you may find some questions that need answering. Go back to the library and finish your research. Then write your speech.

Write Your Speech

As you write, use words that create a clear mental picture. Give examples and use stories to make your point. Be as original as you can. Original phrasing and ideas help hold the interest of your listeners.

Practice Your Speech

Read your speech aloud to check the timing. Try to read it with the same pauses and emphases that you will use in your presentation. Then make any changes needed to fit your time limits.

Length of Speech: _____

Learn your speech. You don't need to memorize it word for word. But, know the main points and the information you want to tell about each point.

Have someone listen to your speech. Ask them to fill out the Listener Evaluation in Extension publication YM-57. Take your listener's comments seriously. Then make any changes needed to improve your speech.

My Listener's Name: _____

Continue to practice your speech till you feel comfortable giving it.

Times I Practiced: ❑ 1 ❑ 2 ❑ 3 ❑ 4 ❑ 5 ❑ 6

Keep a Record

Keep a record of the times and places you presented your speech.

Date	Place	Audience