

Ontario County 4-H

Public Presentations

Planning Document

This document is to assist you to with preparing your public presentation. Whether this is your first or tenth public presentation, it is good to have a process to follow. Print and use the following pages to brainstorm and build your speech as well as find some helpful tips.

If you need additional help, your 4-H Educator is always an available resource!

Getting Started: Choosing a topic

A public presentation can be about anything in which you have an interest. Using the spaces below, brainstorm ten topic ideas. While you are brainstorming, think about your hobbies, activities you enjoy, something you learned at school that fascinated you, something that you think that your peers should know more about, or a story that you would like to share.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Now, pick your favorite option to be your speech topic!

Getting Specific: Narrowing your topic

Now that you have a topic in mind, it is time to narrow that topic to a manageable size. For example, if you chose the topic of dogs, there are hundreds of different things that you could talk about. You need to pick a specific thing about dogs that you want to talk about. You might want to teach your audience about a specific dog breed, show your audience how to make dog treats, or explain the history of dogs in military service.

Write your narrowed topic below:

Speech Framework: Choosing a speech category

4-H has different categories of speeches with different structures and different purposes. Once you have a topic in mind, think of how you might want to deliver it. For example, if your topic is dogs, you might do a demonstration about how to make dog biscuits, an illustrated talk about training your dog, a recitation of a dog poem, or a motivational speech about adopting a dog. Review the speech descriptions below and circle the one that fits your speech goals.

Demonstration – A demonstration uses visuals such as posters, equipment, and props to teach the audience how to do something. There is a finished product to show at the end of your presentation. For example, you might say, “Let me show and tell you how to ...” (make a PB&J sandwich, sort laundry, put a worm on a hook, care for guinea pigs, etc.)

Illustrated Talk – An illustrated talk is a speech that uses visual aids (usually posters and/or powerpoint) to teach the audience about a particular topic. You will NOT have a finished product to show at the end of your presentation. For example, you might say, “Let me tell you about...” (fishing, dog nutrition, quilts, etc.).

Recitation – A recitation is a presentation that involves the acting out of a written work. The presenter has memorized the text. The presenter uses vocal inflection and body language to show the audience the meaning and feeling behind the work. Simple props are allowed. This form of presentation is suggested for more experienced presenters.

Speech or Public Address – These forms of presentation is suggested for more experienced presenters. There are no visual aids allowed. Presenters must have a firm understanding of their topic and who their audience is. The three forms of speech or public address are: persuasive, motivational, informative.

***Keep in mind that you can also do job interviews, impromptu speeches, or horse communications. See cceontario.org or call the 4-H office for more information about these public presentation categories.*

Your Thesis: What is your speech's goal?

Before you start writing your speech, you need to be clear about what you want to accomplish. Crafting a strong thesis (goal) statement will help your audience understand exactly what your speech is about and will also help you make sure that your speech follows a clear and logical order.

Answer the questions/statements below to help you write your thesis.

1. What do I want my audience to learn in this speech?

(Example: How to groom a dog)

2. Why is it important that they learn this?

(Example: So that their dog's coat and skin can be shiny and healthy)

3. Now write a sentence that combines these two ideas into a goal statement.

(Example: Today, I will teach you the proper process for grooming your dog so that you can keep your dog happy and healthy.)

Building your presentation: Determining your main points

Your speech should have 2-5 main points (3 is the most common). List your main points below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Once you have determined your main points, you should create a more specific outline that includes more detail about what you will cover in each of these sections. You may need to do some research at this point! Good places to find information are libraries, online search engines, and people you know who are experts in your topic area.

Starting Strong: Your introduction

Every speech needs to start with an introduction. The best introductions are clear but creative, so there are many different ways that you can write your introduction. However, there are three main parts of any introduction:

1. An attention-getter
2. A bridge (overview)
3. A thesis

Your attention-getter: There are many different methods for creating an attention-getter. Some common ways are: questions, stories, startling facts, quotes.

Write your attention-getter here:

Your bridge: Now that you have your audience's attention, you need to give them an overview of why they need to listen to your speech and what you will be covering.

Write your bridge here:

Your Thesis: Make sure that you include your thesis in your introduction to give your audience a clear idea of the goal of your speech.

Ending Well: Your Conclusion

Your conclusion is where you summarize your speech, thank your audience for their attention, and ask if there are any questions. Here is a checklist of things to keep in mind while you are writing your conclusion and preparing for the end of your speech.

- Reiterate why this topic is important
- Summarize briefly what you taught (Don't make this a list or repeat your points word-for-word. Just give a simple summary.)
- Thank your audience for their time
- List your sources of information
- Ask if there are any questions
- REPEAT questions before answering them
- If you don't know the answer to a question, admit this and offer to look up the answer and get back to them.

Preparing Visuals

If you are doing an Illustrated Speech or even a Demonstration, you will need to prepare a poster or powerpoint. Powerpoints have their own set of guidelines that you can find at cceontario.org. However, here are some guidelines for creating a good poster.

- Make sure that pictures and words are big enough to see at a distance.
- Use dark or bright colors that can be easily seen (stay away from yellow)
- Make sure that your poster is not cluttered. Organize your information to follow the same structure as your speech.
- Use stencils to trace letters so that your poster stays neat. You may also choose to print out words to paste onto the poster.
- Don't add pictures "just because". Make sure that your visuals add value to your presentation.
- If you have a lot of information to include, use multiple posters.
- Practice with your posters, especially if you are using multiple posters so that you can practice flipping them, pointing to them, etc.
- Double check all posters for spelling and grammar errors. Have an adult help you with this.

Practicing your Presentation

Now that your presentation is written, you will need to practice saying it in preparation for the public presentations event. Here are some tips for practicing your presentation.

- Practice multiple times in front of different people. Ask for feedback from parents, friends, or mentors.
- You do not need to memorize your speech word-for-word, but you should memorize your outline and any specific facts so that your presentation flows smoothly.
- Take deep breaths and make sure that project your voice so that everyone in the room can hear you.
- Use body language, don't be afraid to move, and smile.
- Make sure that you aren't talking too fast. Maintain an even rate of speaking.
- Ask parents or friends to watch you and point out if you are fidgeting, swaying, or have another habit that distracts from your presentation.
- Don't expect to master everything at once! There are a lot of elements that go into public speaking. Maybe this year you work on speaking more loudly and next year you will work on improving hand gestures. Set reasonable goals for yourself.
- Remember that you are not alone. Many people struggle with public speaking; however, public speaking is one of the most important skills that you will learn through the 4-H program. Just do your best and always strive to improve year after year!
- SMILE! Evaluators are really nice people and they understand how you feel. They are here to help you.

Basic Public Presentation Guidelines

Some general reminders:

- Presentations should be a minimum of two minutes and a maximum of 15 minutes with the exception of those youth who are doing an impromptu presentation which is a minimum of three minutes and a maximum of 8 minutes. Note that Horse Communications have different time limits.
- Note cards may be used but only as an outline or for specific factual information. They should not interrupt the flow of the presentation and should be used sparingly.
- Presenters will have to supply their own materials. Tables and easels will be available.
- Presenters should be well groomed. No slogan t-shirts, torn jeans, etc. Dress in business casual attire. All attire should follow 4-H modesty guidelines.
- Do not use containers with brand names. A separate container may be used or cover the brand name with tape.
- When answering questions, the presenter should repeat the question before giving the answer. This helps everyone in the room to hear the question.
- The sources of your information must be given at the end of the presentation (after the conclusion but before question). Specific sources must be given; for example, specific books, websites, etc.
- Presenters are encouraged to make the evaluator aware of any special accommodations that may need to be made.