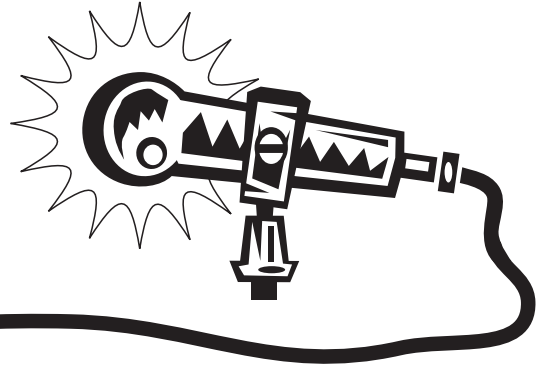


# PUBLIC SPEAKING

## 4-H Member Manual



The shakers and movers of this world are the men and women who get their ideas across convincingly. Seldom do we accomplish anything alone.

One must know how to ask for things, how to explain things, and how to speak persuasively enough to win the active support of others. Resourcefulness and adaptability in speech may be regarded as essential to success in every occupation.

### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The 4-H Public Speaking Program provides opportunities for 4-H'ers to learn skills in articulating a message. The objectives are to:

- Develop leadership talents and work toward character development and effective citizenship;
- Recognize the value of obtaining all available information on a given topic;
- Encourage careful organization of materials to be presented;
- Develop a pleasing personal appearance before an audience;
- Acquire the ability to speak convincingly in public.

### PREPARING A SPEECH

#### Select a Topic

To give a talk, you must have something to say. The ideas that can be generated from your own experiences are endless. The following examples are just a few of the many topics you might discuss in your speech:

Youth and Adults as Partners  
 The Environment—A Delicate Balance in the New Millennium  
 Human Rights Are Still an Issue  
 What Does 4-H Mean to Me?  
 What Is Teen Leadership?  
 The 4-H Club as a Microcosm of Society  
 Youth's Role in Community Action  
 Building Bridges to International Understanding

Love and Work Are Four-Letter Words  
 4-H Projects of Interest to Urban Youth  
 Alcohol and Drugs—A Problem for Teens

When you select a topic, focus on a main idea or theme. Build your speech around this focal point. Don't try to cover too broad a subject.

#### Research and Know Your Topic

Once you decide on a topic, spend some time just writing down any thoughts that come to mind. Do this quickly without thinking much about each individual idea.

You can write your speech from these many thoughts, but you must present them logically (in some order). However, you can make your talk more interesting by gathering information from a variety of sources. Draw on your own experiences, and talk to your teachers, other 4-H members, and leaders. Also, read textbooks, newspapers, magazines, or visit Web sites on the Internet to research current events that might tie into your speech. Be current.

#### Organizing Your Notes

Now you are ready to organize your speech. You should organize your talk in three main parts.

*Introduction*—Attract attention with a quotation, poem, joke, or a startling question or statement of fact. Those first few words count! Spark the interest of your audience and they will stay with you throughout your presentation. State the purpose of your speech and what you hope to accomplish. In other words, these suggestions are means for you to introduce your speech.

*Body*—The body is the meat of your talk. There are several ways you can present information to your audience. You might like to try one or more of the patterns described below.

- Time pattern: arrange your talk historically around the past, present, and future.

- **Space sequence:** arrange your talk geographically. For example, you might be interested in water pollution, and could trace it from its source as it moves downstream.
- **Problem-effect-solution:** this approach is very effective in speeches because your experiences tend to fall into these categories. For example, the oven was too hot, the biscuits burned, so the biscuits were fed to the birds. Arrange your talk by stating a problem, describing its effects, and suggesting ways to solve it.
- **Narrative sequence:** in simple terms, tell your story from beginning to end

Remember—it's your story, so be sure to put yourself into it.

### **Conclusions**

In your conclusion, briefly summarize your main points and appeal for specific action if that is the intent of your speech. This is your final opportunity to reach your audience, so make it count!

Here are a few tips for ending your speech.

- Never talk about stopping. Stop!
- Always stop while your audience still wants you to continue.
- Close with the idea you most want remembered.
- One good way to end is to summarize the main points. Another good technique is to pay your audience a sincere compliment. Still another method is to leave your audience laughing or smiling.

## **WRITING YOUR SPEECH**

Every speaker uses some type of written format for his or her speech. The most common questions are: "Should I write out my entire speech and memorize it?" "Should I use an outline of my most important points?" "Should I read my speech?"

All these techniques are used by professional speakers. Each has its good points and each has certain disadvantages. Ideally, you should know your subject well enough so you don't need notes, yet not have it memorized. Memorizing a speech is like building a fence around yourself because, often, all you know about your topic is what you have learned by memory. Try various techniques and select the best method for you.

Some speakers use a complete outline. If you do this, write some subpoints under each main point. Indicate

under each heading which facts or examples you will use. Outline your introduction and conclusion in the same way.

Some people like to write out just the important parts of a talk, but do not memorize them. This is a good background preparation for developing main points, transitions, and conclusions. If you use this method, you will find brief notes are helpful for practicing aloud.

Other speakers prefer to organize their thoughts, but find they can best choose their words when they are actually speaking. They start with an outline and talk it through many times, trying out different ways of developing the ideas.

Practice your speech at home in front of your family and friends. It is usually a good idea to also practice in front of a mirror so that you can see your expressions and mannerisms, and whether they add or detract from your speech. Or, you might have someone video tape your presentation, so you can see where you need improvement. Then, when you are ready for the public, a 4-H club meeting is a good place to start.

## **TIPS ON DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH**

There is no "right" or "best" way to speak, except to be yourself and to show you are interested in your topic. It is only when you are natural that you communicate your real self—and all speeches need the personality you can give them.

Here are some suggestions to help you be at your best when you give your speech.

- Get plenty of rest before you meet your audience. Do not eat much before you speak—this can keep the butterflies in your stomach from bothering you too much.
- If you are nervous, breathe deeply and slowly several times just before you are introduced. Relax your arms, legs, and body as much as possible.
- When you are introduced, walk briskly to the lectern, smile, and look at the audience as though you are glad to be there.
- Stand tall—don't lean on the table, podium, or lectern.
- Be confident from the beginning—first impressions are important. Be sure you speak loudly enough to be heard by all.

- Use gestures only when they are natural to you. If you normally use your hands when you talk, use them when you give a speech. If not, don't try to act for the audience. It can make you uncomfortable and sometimes can make you look ridiculous.
- Look at your audience as much as possible. Glance around the room so all of your audience feels you have seen them sometime during the talk.

In 4-H you learn by doing—and you only learn how to give a speech in public by doing. To always “Make the Best Better,” have your 4-H leader, teen leader, teacher, parents, or friends rate your speech using the checksheet at the end of this publication. This sheet is very similar to the one used in public speaking contests.

Always remember one thing—RELAX—everyone is rooting for you!

## WHERE TO GIVE YOUR SPEECH

Spreading the 4-H message is one of your most important assignments as a speaker. You might give your speech in school, to your project group, in front of a local 4-H club, in a public speaking contest, or to a local organization. There are many service clubs and community groups that welcome 4-H speakers. When you speak before such groups, remember to thank them for inviting you.

### Reports

Committee reports and reports of meetings or events should be brief, usually not over three minutes. Still briefer reports are in order if the meeting agenda is lengthy. Complete reports should be presented in writing and distributed after you have read the report to the group. (Distributing the report before you speak will have the audience reading it instead of listening to you.)

### Introductions

Introduce the speaker by first and last names and affiliation. Tell where the speaker came from and where he or she lives at present. Briefly, state the speaker's qualifications related to the subject, as well as any unusual fact that will capture the audience's attention. Introduce the topic to be presented with a brief statement which will give the audience a sense of anticipation.

### Presentations

Tell why the honor is being awarded, by whom it is being awarded, and what was done to earn it. Mention other specific accomplishments of the person being honored and the influence this person's work

continues to have on others. Build anticipation for the introduction, then announce the person's name. Present the award, offer congratulations, and step away from the microphone so the recipient may acknowledge the presentation.

### Acceptance

Appreciation is the keynote of the acceptance speech. Thank the person presenting the gift, and the donor or donor organization. Express gratitude to those who helped you win the award or those who placed you in a position to achieve it. Express your regard for the significance of the award and for the responsibility it places on you to continue to live up to it. Express your thanks again briefly.

### Tips for Television Appearances

Some 4-H'ers have the opportunity and challenge of appearing on television. When you appear on television, you are inviting yourself into the homes of hundreds, maybe thousands, of viewers. It is important to convey the feeling you are right in the viewer's home. If you are invited to appear on television, TV station personnel will help you. But, here are a few tips worth remembering.

- Look at the camera. When you are looking at the camera, you are looking right at the viewer in his or her home—eyeball to eyeball. An exception is in an interview situation, where you look at the person with whom you're talking.
- Appear pleasant. You like visitors in your home to be friendly, and you should appear friendly, too.
- Have something visual to go with your presentation.
- You will have to use a microphone. Someone will assist you before you go on the air. Avoid clanky jewelry that may tap against the mike.
- Your actions and speech should be moderately slow in front of TV cameras. This helps give a relaxed atmosphere, and deliberate movement allows the camera to follow the action.
- Timing is crucial in TV. Make sure you know about time signals and who will give them.
- Wear something colorful. In general, avoid white and fine patterns that may cause a moiré effect. If you are in doubt about what to wear, check with TV station personnel.

**Now, it is up to you. Nobody else can give YOUR speech.**

## USE THIS CHECKSHEET TO RATE YOURSELF

### I. Composition & Content

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Comment
<p><b>Choice of Material</b> Did the speaker choose material which supported his or her central idea and made the talk interesting?</p>				
<p><b>Organization of Material</b> Was it possible to recognize a pattern in the talk which was useful in understanding the central idea?</p>				
<p><b>Clarity of Central Thought</b> Did the speaker have a single specific central thought he or she shared with the audience?</p>				
<p><b>Use of Language</b> Was the language used by the speaker clear and meaningful?</p>				

### II. Delivery & Impact

<p><b>Contact with Audience</b> Did the speaker talk with the audience conversationally and directly?</p>				
<p><b>Spontaneity, Fluency, and Voice Control</b> Did the speaker use his or her voice properly for a speaking situation?</p>				
<p><b>Pronunciation and Articulation</b> Did the speaker use appropriate standards of pronunciation and articulation?</p>				
<p><b>Effect on Audience</b> Was audience interest sustained throughout the talk?</p>				



Adapted by Bud Downing, Extension Youth Specialist (retired), Washington State University, from "Public Speaking, 4-H Members Manual," University of California Agricultural Extension Service, 1971; "The Organized Public Speaker—You," Union Oil Company of California; and the Thurston County 4-H Public Speaking Program.

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