



**4-H Member  
Guide  
on  
How to Make  
a  
4-H Public  
Presentation**

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# **Introduction**

A public presentation is a talk given by a 4-H member in front of a group. By giving a presentation, you will have the opportunity to tell others what you have learned. This is a very important part of your 4-H experience.

Each time you present, you learn to speak more easily before groups. Your ideas are relayed readily because you have learned how to organize a successful presentation. You are better informed about your subject than ever before.

4-H public presentations are divided into four general categories – demonstrations, illustrated talks, formal speech, and performing arts. All offer excellent opportunities for you to learn to speak effectively before groups.

## **Types of Presentations**

There are four types of public presentations: demonstration, illustrated talk, formal speech, and performing arts.

### **Demonstration**

A demonstration puts words into action. An effective demonstration teaches others how to do something by showing while telling. Showing is worth a thousand words. At the end of a demonstration, you should have a finish product to show to your audience.

Your age, skills, experience, and the amount of time you have available to practice are your major considerations when deciding what kind of demonstration to give. Demonstration subjects should be interesting, fun, and suitable for an audience.

### **Illustrated Talk**

Illustrated talks are given using a series of slides, pictures, or other visuals. They show how to do something or illustrate a process. While visuals must be used in an illustrated talk, no finished product is required.

Illustrated talks and demonstrations have the following in common:

- You learn to speak more easily before groups.
- Organization and preparation of visuals is a must.
- Your ability to tell a story improves with each presentation.

You could decide to do an illustrated talk instead of a demonstration for any number of reasons including the following:

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- Project is too large or too small to display during a demonstration.
  - Subject calls for development over months or years.
  - Demonstration time is too short to complete a finished product.
  - Animals necessary to the presentation might be frightened by the audience or are too large to use.

## **Formal Speech**

A formal speech is written by the presenter and given from memory. Brief notes or an outline on index cards may be used as an aid. Visuals aids are not used to illustrate the information being presented.

## **Performing Arts**

Performing Arts such as a song or dance

Although there are four categories mentioned for public presentations, this guide will mostly concentrate on demonstrations and illustrated talks. However, many of the suggestions can be followed when developing a formal speech or performing arts presentation.



## **Team Demonstrations**

Presentations can also be given by teams. Either way has its merits. When trying to decide, be sure your topic can be done with two or more people. Team presentations are a good way to learn team planning and cooperation. However, they are more difficult to prepare and practice. Nevertheless, team presentations have the advantage of allowing each team member to give an equal portion of the total presentation. At the same time, it gives the audience a contrast in voice and personality.

## **Getting Ready to Present**

### **Known Your Subject**

To make a good presentation, the selection of a topic is important. One main idea or theme should dominate your presentation and it should be fun to tell someone about something you like to do such as how to play a musical instrument. Confine the presentation to something that can be demonstrated or illustrated. Also, take into account the physical facilities that are needed and available when choosing your subject.

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## Good Title

Be creative when giving your presentation a title. For example, if you are going to do a demonstration on eye makeup, you might choose the title “The Eyes Have It” as opposed to “Applying Eye Makeup.”

## Time Limits

Minimum time	5 minutes
Maximum time	15 minutes
Prep time	3- 5 minutes
County level	5- 15 minutes
State level	8- 15 minutes



## Parts of the Presentation

You should prepare a written outline of the parts of your presentation. Include three main parts: **introduction**–the “why” of it; **body**–the “show and tell” portion; and **summary**–the “what” of it.

### Introduction

This should be brief, original, and a follow-up of the title. Tell why the topic was selected. Make your audience feel that the subject is important. Be sure to introduce yourself.

**Tell them  
what you're  
going to tell  
them.**

### Body

Ask yourself the following questions when you prepare the show and tell portion of your demonstration or illustrated talk:

- What are the steps that are necessary to carry out the presentation?
- What is the logical order of things that I should do in the presentation?
- What should I say to explain the order of events?
- What materials do I need to do the presentation?
- Can I use posters or other visual aids to illustrate the presentation and to stress the main points in a clear and effective way?

The body of the presentation should show and explain the necessary steps in the process. Develop the central ideas as each step is presented. Tell what is being done and why you are using a particular method. For example, imagine you are giving a demonstration on how to make a dessert using non-fat yogurt. You explain that non-

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fat yogurt is a substitute for sour cream and will make the dessert more healthful by eliminating the fat and cholesterol.

Design explanations to fill the action time. Give them in your own words. Memorizing material is not recommended. However, since presentations are somewhat formal, avoid personalizing the explanations. Instead of saying, "You should use non-fat yogurt..," it is better to say, "Non-fat yogurt is better because..."

**This is the  
TELL THEM  
stage.**

Use proper equipment for the job at hand. Show skill in operating equipment. Work for simplicity and attractiveness. Keep cleanup to a minimum. Build to a climax.

Some demonstrations pose special problems such as long intervals between steps. Avoid this problem by having the item or product available at various stages of development. For example, show dinner rolls at the preparation and completion stages.

## **Summary**

This is your last chance to put your message across. Confine your summary to points of the presentation you want the audience to remember such as ways the topic can be valuable to them. Never introduce new material in the summary. Just highlight the key points you discussed in your body.

**Tell them  
what you  
TOLD**

The last thing to say is, "Thank you. Are there are questions?" Then be prepared to answer questions. The audience may have missed some point or a step of the presentation. Or, they may want to test your knowledge. When a question is asked, let the entire audience know what the question is by repeating it or by incorporating it in the answer.

If questions are asked that you can't answer, don't worry. Simply say you don't know the answer. Unless the presentation is a contest, you may ask the audience to help with answers.

When there are no more questions, thank the audience and invite them to sample and/or inspect the finished product. Having copies of recipes or some sort of handout available for the audience is a gesture that will add to the total presentation.

## **Practical Hints**

When preparing your presentation, follow these guidelines to add polish to your demonstration or illustrated talk:

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## Setting Up

- Arrange equipment and supplies so that the audience can see clearly.
- Place extra equipment on a second table away from the demonstration table.
- Use a tray or a box to group your supplies and equipment. It is easier to move materials and it looks neater.
- When possible, use transparent equipment such as glass bowls so the audience sees the material and the process.
- Commercial labels on products must be covered. Endorsement of any particular brand name is not permitted in a public presentation. However, if using your own container, make sure it is labeled clearly.
- Keep a hand towel or paper towels handy if needed. A paper bag taped or tacked to the table or working area serves as a handy waste container.

## What to Wear

- Business casual attire – dress pants or slacks, skirts (not mini), and a professional looking top
- Choose simple, practical clothing so that your audience will be attracted to your demonstration, not distracted by your clothes. Team members might want to dress alike.
- Make sure your clothing is clean and neat.
- Be sure that your hands and fingernails are clean and well kept.
- Keep jewelry to a minimum. Avoid excessive makeup.
- Avoid belly shirts, tank tops, or ripped clothing.



## Visuals

When using visuals, keep these points in mind:

- Keep them simple. Use large, dark lettering so that people in the back of the room can read them.
- Pictures should also be large enough to be seen from the back of the room.
- Remove posters as soon as your point has been made.
- Blend the posters in with your demonstration.
- Mount poster board on a hard surface such as foam board or cardboard to prevent them from falling over.

Use visuals or posters only when they enhance your presentation. If visuals will not make the demonstration better, do not use them.

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Simple, well- prepared visuals or posters help the audience learn faster, understand better, and remember longer. Visuals may be used to introduce the demonstration, to present the main points, or to give the summary.

## **Tricks of the Trade**

- Make a slant board or slant the table towards the audience.
- Hold mirrors over the finished products.
- Use racks to display garments on hangers.
- Use trays and attractive dishes to display the finished product.
- Number the backs of posters for easy identification when using several charts of identical size and colors.
- Refer to your project materials for catchy titles for your demonstration.
- Number note cards.
- Only put key words or phrases on note cards. Do not try to write your entire speech on the cards.

## **Showmanship – You’re Up Front**

Most people remember what they see rather than what they hear, so the way you make your presentation is important. With practice, you can learn to give an effective presentation. Practice enables you to know the subject, to complete the presentation effectively, and to avoid hurrying.

- Always begin your presentation with a smile.
- Look at the audience.
- Stand up straight!
- Show enthusiasm for your subject.
- Talk directly to the audience in a clear, conversational tone (not too soft and not too loud).
- Goofs do happen – go right on with your presentation.
- Act and look like you enjoy presenting. Motivate the audience to want to do what you are doing.
- Weave personal experience into your presentation, if appropriate.
- Keep notes available, but never read from them or rely on them too heavily.
- Remember, pick a topic you’ll love to talk about.



Keep these guidelines in mind as you prepare your presentation from beginning to end. Visuals add the finishing touch to a polished presentation.