

# HOW TO MAKE A 4-H PUBLIC PRESENTATION

You are expected to give public presentations as a part of your 4-H experience. And in 4-H, that makes you a winner!

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 two general categories—demonstrations and illustrated talks. Both offer excellent opportunities for you to learn to speak effectively before groups.

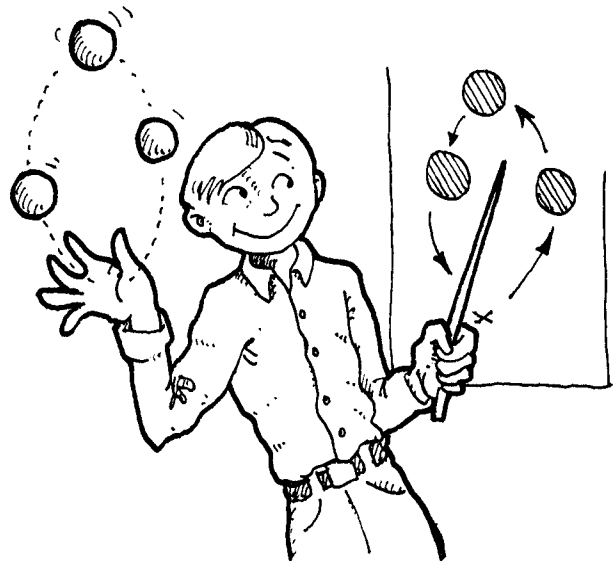
## **DEMONSTRATIONS**

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

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

## **ILLUSTRATED TALKS**

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.

Some of the same features are found both in illustrated talks and in demonstrations.

- You learn to speak more easily before groups.
- Organization and preparation of visuals is a must.
- Your ability to describe vividly increases with each presentation.

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

- Size of project—your project is too large or too small to display during a demonstration.
- Subject required 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, are too large to use with the group, etc.

## INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM DEMONSTRATIONS

Presentations can be given by individuals or by teams. Either way has its merits. When trying to decide, ask yourself, "Can I do this best by myself or with someone else?"

Individual presentations are flexible and are fitted to both the topic and the circumstances. Planning and presenting an individual presentation is fairly simple and is less time consuming than a team presentation.

Team presentations are a good way to learn team planning and cooperation. They are, however, more difficult to prepare, practice, and give than an individual effort. Nevertheless, team presentations have the advantage of allowing each team member to give a portion of the total presentation and at the same time giving the viewing audience a change of voices and personalities.

Teamwork is encouraged throughout the presentation. Shifting the presentation from one team member to another should occur at natural intervals. A team presentation should include all team members.



## GETTING READY TO PRESENT

Know your subject. Because it is impossible to show and tell everything there is to know about a subject during a presentation, you should be prepared to answer questions your audience may ask. One main idea or theme should dominate your presentation. You should confine the presentation to something that can be demonstrated

or illustrated. Take into account the physical facilities that are needed and available when choosing your subject.

The title of your presentation should give a hint about your topic. 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."

### Recommended Time Limits for 4-H Public Presentations

Minimum time is 3 minutes; maximum time is 20 minutes.

Juniors	3– 8 minutes
Intermediates	5–15 minutes
Seniors	8–20 minutes

## Shaping 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 if that has not already been done by the MC.

**Body.** Ask yourself the following questions when you prepare the show-and-tell portion of your demonstration/ 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 idea 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 blouse using french seams on a very thin fabric. You explain that french seams enclose the raw edges and will make the see-through garment more pleasing to the eye.

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 French seams...." it is better to say, "French seams are best because...." Also, be sure to speak in complete sentences throughout your explanations.

Use proper equipment for the job at hand. Show skill in operating equipment. Work for simplicity and attractiveness. Keep housekeeping 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.

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 was 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.

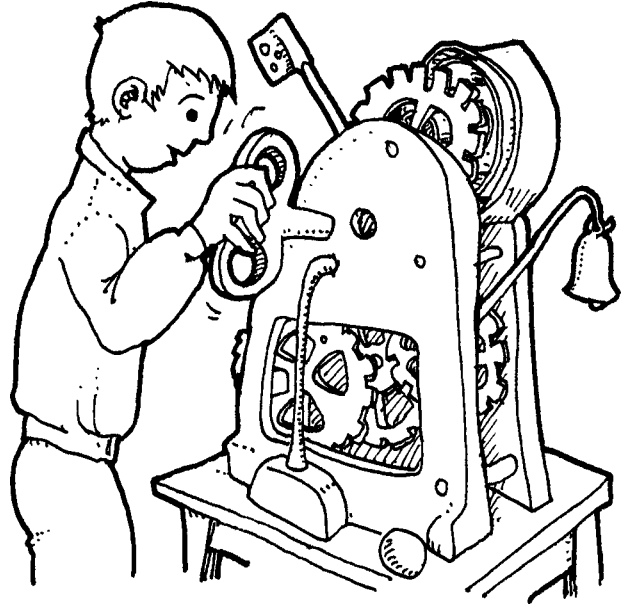
When there are no more questions, thank the audience and invite them to sample and/or in-

spect the finished product. Having copies of recipes or some sort of handout available for the audience is a popular gesture.

## **PRACTICAL HINTS**

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When preparing your presentation, follow these guidelines to add polish to your demonstration/illustrated talk.



### **Setting Up**

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- Arrange equipment and supplies so that the audience can see clearly.
- Place extra equipment on a second table away from the demonstration table.
- Use trays to group your supplies and equipment. It is easier to move materials on trays and it looks neater.
- When possible, use transparent equipment such as glass bowls so the audience sees the material and the process.
- Label containers clearly and be sure your labels are visible to the audience.
- 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**

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First impressions are *very* important.

- Choose simple, practical clothing so that your audience will be attracted to your demonstra-

tion, not distracted by your clothes. Team members might want to dress alike.

- Make sure your clothing is clean, neat, and well pressed
- Be sure that your hands and fingernails are clean and well kept.
- Keep jewelry to a minimum. Avoid excessive makeup.

## Visuals

Use visuals only when they enhance your demonstration/illustrated talk. If visuals will not make the demonstration better, you should *not* be required to use them.

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

When using visuals, keep these points in mind:

- Keep them simple. Use large lettering so that people in the back of the room can read them.
- Remove posters as soon as you have made your point.
- Blend the posters in with your demonstration.

## Showmanship

- Make a slant board or slant the table toward the audience.
- Hold mirrors over the finished product.
- Use racks to display garments on hangers.
- Make, use, and display name tags that give the title of your demonstration.
- 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.



## YOU ARE ON

Most people remember what they see rather than what they hear, so the way you make your presentation is very 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.

Poise and confidence are also important factors in a successful presentation. Always begin your presentation with a smile. In addition:

- Look at the audience.
- Stand erect
- 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 and explain what happened.
- Act and look like you enjoy presenting. Motivate the audience to want to do what you are doing.
- Weave personal experience into your presentation .
- Keep notes available, but never read from them or rely on them too heavily.

Keep these guidelines in mind as you prepare your presentation. Then select a topic, a theme, and a title. Develop them through the beginning, middle, and end of your presentation. Add some polish with aids and you, too, will end up a winner!