



4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING

WHAT IS 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING?

Public speaking benefits are almost too numerous to count, but perhaps the most important one is the confidence that you develop in yourself. Effective public speaking skills will benefit almost every area of your life and contribute to your overall success. They require careful planning and effective delivery with gestures, voice variety, and proper grammar. Your life will be richer if you develop skillful communication with other people. Almost every profession that comes in contact with the public needs people like you with speaking skills. The purpose of your speech should be to communicate your ideas to your audience. You should appear as a credible source to your audience, that is, a person to be trusted for accurate and truthful information. Do not make a statement of fact without proper documentation or evidence of research, giving credit to sources used.

PREPARATION:

An outline can be helpful in preparing your speech. This format helps get your thoughts onto paper in an organized manner.

Consider time limits when preparing your speech, as 1 point is deducted for each minute (or fraction of) under or over the time limit. Intermediates (ages 11-13) have 5- 8 minutes; Seniors (ages 14-18) have 7 – 10 minutes. There are approximately 150 words in each speaking minute. If you want your speech to last seven minutes, prepare approximately 1,050 words and begin timing your practices. Consider this time schedule as a guide:

- 5-10% Introduction (50-115 words)
- 80% Body (850 words)
- 10-15% Conclusion (115-150 words)

ORGANIZATION:

PURPOSE

Each of the four speech types have a different function.

1. Informative speeches provide information and facts on a subject.
2. Persuasive speeches attempt to convince or persuade audience that your opinion is best.
3. Motivational speeches promote a call-to-action.
4. Entertaining speeches amuse the audience, but can also communicate a message.

TOPIC

Consider the following subject areas when choosing your topic:

- Something you like to do
- Something learned in 4-H or about 4-H
- One single idea or theme
- Something educational
- Timely and seasonal
- Something interesting and worthwhile
- Something you can do in a limited time
- Something of significance to your audience
- A topic you would like to explore more
- A subject suitable to your age and experience.

CONSTRUCTION

Speeches have three main parts:

1. Introduction – *“Tell them what you’re going to tell them.”*
 2. This is where you introduce yourself and your topic. If speaking in a competition or other formal setting, this may be done for you. A good introduction is like a handshake; it introduces you in a friendly way. An attention-getter during the introduction captures the listener’s attention, making them want to hear more. The other purpose of the introduction is to inform the audience of your subject. This is where you will state the main points of your speech. Do not expand on them yet; just state them so that the audience knows what your speech is about. The length of the introduction should never exceed the body of the speech.
 3. To capture the attention and interest of the audience, you might begin your speech by:
 - Challenging them with a question
 - Giving startling (non-offensive) statement
 - Recounting a personal experience or story
 - Referencing a common experience with humor
 - Relating statistics pertaining to a cause
2. Body– *“Tell them what you want to tell them.”*

Justify your position on the subject. Be sure all information and statistics are accurate and current. The body of your speech is where you support the main points of your topic. It contains the main content of your information, and is the longest section of the speech. It can be helpful to plan this part of your speech first, then develop the introduction and conclusion. Three to five main points are a good number to use so the audience will not get confused. Try to keep your ideas well defined to make them more memorable.
3. Conclusion – *“Tell them what you just told them.”*

Restate and summarize the major highlights of the speech. This is the “final thought” and the last chance to impress the audience. It is the part of your speech that the audience will remember the most. It should summarize the main points made in the body, briefly giving your audience one more chance to hear what you have said. The conclusion may motivate your audience to action, or just round out your thoughts bringing the speech to a smooth ending. Do not expand on your points or provide new information in this section. While experts recommend that you not memorize your entire speech, it is helpful to memorize your introduction and conclusion. This insures you will get off to a good start, even if you are nervous.

Smooth transitions create the perception of a more polished speech. Consider the examples below:

- Further, besides, also, finally, again - *to add a point*
- But, despite, however, on the contrary, yet - *to contrast one point with another*
- Consequently, therefore, accordingly - *to identify a result of an activity*
- Either, both, not only, on the other hand - *to link two alternate points*
- When, then, inasmuch as - *to identify a cause of a major point*
- So this means, to be sure, in reality - *to repeat and emphasize a point*
- Points are, first, the, follow by, next - *to call attention to next point*

DELIVERY:

Delivery is a very important aspect of public speaking. It includes how well you use your voice and nonverbal communication or body actions. You have probably heard it one time or another, “It’s not what you said, but how you said it.” The following qualities contribute to the outcome of your speech.

- Speak slowly and clearly
- Enunciate so you will be heard by all
- Keep hands folded or at sides (unless gesturing purposefully)
- Make good eye contact with the audience
- Maintain good posture
- Sit or stand still (not rocking or shifting)
- Use words everyone understands
- Appear calm and relaxed, but enthusiastic about your topic

Practice! Practice! Practice! Do not wait until the last minute to start practicing. You will need plenty of time to get comfortable with your material and work the kinks out. Practice in different environments, how to take questions and field abrasive comments, and dealing with the unexpected.

Body actions can convey thoughts and feelings to the audience almost as effectively as words. Use facial expressions and make direct eye contact with your audience. Smile, frown, etc., just as you would in normal conversation. Work toward a natural look when making gestures and movements for emphasis.

Nervousness before giving a speech is a natural reaction that most people experience. Contrary to popular belief, nervousness is good for you and your speech—that is, up to a certain point. The challenge is to manage the nervousness so it gives you a performance edge. Your senses will be alert, and you will be able to talk with animation and liveliness. If you are nervous, do not announce it. Once you do, your audience feels obligated to worry about you. Do not give up if you do stumble over words or forget what to say next. Pause just a few seconds and smile naturally to relieve tension before speaking.

TIPS:

- Use your own words as much as possible (vs. a written script) to achieve a conversational tone.
- Simplify ideas and main points so that the audience can understand and remember them.
- Use examples, stories, dialogue, or anything to help your audience visualize what you are telling them.
- Practice your speech aloud and in a physical setting that is similar to your speech-making situation. The more you practice, the better you will perform. If you know just what you are going to say (know it, do not memorize it), you will not need to worry about going blank. Try practicing once a day for two weeks. Practice before a full-length mirror to improve eye contact and poise.
- Try deep breathing for two minutes before your speech.
- Use a relaxed and balanced posture, feet by 10 to 12 inches apart with one foot slightly forward. This is a “home base” posture. It is your starting point for the speech. You do not have to stay planted the entire time, however. You can move around. Move back and forward, going to and from the home base.
- Get “a little bit dressed up”—reflect to your audience that this is an important event for you. Make a special effort to be well groomed. Wear attractive, comfortable clothes and footwear.

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