



4KA-04PO  
Kentucky 4-H Communications Program

# 4-H Speeches



## Preparing you for your future!

Do you like to speak in front of a group? Have you ever had to make a speech in your classroom? Would you like to learn the skills and gain the confidence to be an outstanding public speaker? Then you should participate in the Kentucky 4-H Communications Program! 4-H members can learn how to prepare and present a speech on any topic they feel passionate about.

## What is a speech?

A **speech** or talk is 3 to 5 minutes long for junior 4-H members (9-13 years old) and 5 to 7 minutes for senior 4-H members (14-18 years old). No visual aids may be used.

## Preparation

The following steps will help you prepare to give a speech or demonstration.

- **Choose a topic.** Find a subject that you know something about or that is of interest to you. Make sure your topic is not too broad.
- **Select a Title.** Think of a title that relates to the subject and is catchy, original and short. It should suggest the subject without telling the whole story.
- **Collect information.** Think about what you already know about your topic. What examples do you know that will illustrate your speech or demonstration? Is there a poem, a song, or a joke that you can use to make a point clear? Why is the topic important?
- **Organize materials.** Separate your materials and ideas into three parts: introduction, body and conclusion. Use the **4-H Speech Guide** at the end of this publication.
  - **Introduction.** Get the attention of your audience, make them want to listen, inform them of your subject and show them how the subject concerns you. Tell a story or joke, or read a quote. Tell the audience what you are going to talk about and why that topic is important to them.
  - **Body.** Select two or three main points and explain each point. Use accurate and up-to-date information. Arrange key points in logical order.

# When using gestures, try to be natural and relaxed.

- **Conclusion.** Briefly restate your main ideas. Leave your audience with an attention-grabbing statement, question or wrap-up thought.
- **Make note cards.** Do not write your entire speech on cards. Have only the main points and key words written down. Note cards should help you organize your speech but should not be a distraction.
- **Practice!** Give your speech in front of a mirror and in front of friends and family.



## Delivery

- **Eye Contact.** Look directly into the eyes of your audience during your speech. Look at people in various parts of the audience.
  - **Posture.** Stand in a comfortable position with your feet several inches apart and your back straight.
  - **Voice.** Speak loudly and clearly enough for all to hear. Try to sound conversational. Do not yell or talk too softly.
  - **Gesture.** When using gestures, try to be natural and relaxed.
  - **Emphasis.** Pause just before and after an important point. You may also change your tone of voice or step closer to the audience.
  - **Quotations.** Give full credit to your source and pause before and after so the audience knows where the quote begins and ends.
- **Notes.** Do not write your entire speech on cards. Do not read from your note cards! Refer to your cards for the main points you want to make.
  - **Attire.** Dress appropriately for your audience and topic. Costumes are *not* allowed for speeches.

## Practice, Practice, Practice!

As you practice your speech or demonstration, ask your leader, teacher or family to evaluate it using the checklist below.

- Dress clean, neat and appropriate
- Posture erect but not stiff
- Gestures poised and natural
- Voice easily heard
- Voice expressive
- Introduction interesting, brief and gives purpose
- Body of speech well organized in logical order
- Eye contact with the audience
- Correct grammar and vocabulary
- Notes do not distract
- Talk flows smoothly from one point to the next
- Subject matter accurate and up to date
- Suitable for age

Contact your County Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development for more information on the 4-H Communications Program!

Adapted by Jennifer Tackett from Speak Up! Kentucky 4-H Talk Meet (4KA-01PB) by Jann Burks and Would You Like to Do a 4-H Demonstration? (4KA-02PA) by Anna B. Lucas and Susannah Denomme.

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# 4-H Speech Planning Guide

**Title** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Introduction**

Introduce your subject using a story, quote, or joke. Should be short and designed to get the attention of your audience. Tell the audience what you are going to talk about and why that topic is important to them.

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## **Body**

The most important part of your speech. Select one or two main points and give facts to explain or back them up.

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## **Conclusion**

Summarize your main points. Use a story or quote to express your point. Finish strong with an attention-grabbing statement, question or wrap-up thought!

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