



4-H Presentations

What is a 4-H presentation?

Haven't you found that it is easier to learn something if someone shows you how instead of just telling you how? A 4-H presentation is:

- **Doing**
- **Showing**
- **Talking**
- **Telling how through visuals**

You are the teacher and the expert. A first-time 4-H presentation will be easier for you if you actually do something with your hands that gives you a finished product.

Why should you do a 4-H presentation?

Giving a 4-H presentation is a good way to share with others, learn new things, and have fun. By doing presentations, you will increase your self-confidence and ability to speak in front of a group. 4-H presentations can help you to:

- Create a plan of action that takes into consideration the subject matter, the audience, your strengths and weaknesses as a speaker, and the environment or space where the presentation will take place, including the time of day.
- Gather the information and supplies necessary for showing and telling how to do something.
- Organize the subject matter in a way that works well with the "how-to" approach.
- Teach and help others learn new or improved methods.
- Develop poise and confidence in speaking in front of an audience.

- Prepare effective visuals.
- Learn about different topics.
- Practice communication skills.

How to choose a 4-H presentation

The most important point is to choose a subject that interests you. A good place to get ideas is the 4-H projects in which you are working or have worked. Try to keep the subject broad enough so you will have enough material for your presentation, but try to limit the subject to one theme or idea, such as "How to Sew a Winter Parka" or "How to Make a First-rate Quiche."

Planning a 4-H presentation

4-H presentations require planning in advance. The planning can be as much fun as it is a learning experience. As you are planning your 4-H presentation, ask yourself these questions and plan to answer them in your presentation:

1. What will my 4-H presentation show?
2. Why do I want to know about it?
3. Why would my audience want to know about it?

There are other questions you need to ask yourself before you do your presentation. The answers to these questions will make your presentation more successful and more enjoyable for your audience:

1. For whom am I giving my presentation?
2. Where will I give the presentation?
3. What can I do to make the environment comfortable and appealing?

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4. What can I do to make the subject appealing?
5. What catchy title will I use to grab the audience's attention?

As you work on your 4-H presentation, you will find it helps a great deal to learn as much about your subject as you can, even if you think it is more information than you can use. This will give you the security that you are a lot more of an “expert” on your subject than is your audience. You can get information about your subject from your 4-H project book, your 4-H leader, an encyclopedia, the library, the Web, or by a phone call or visit to someone who is knowledgeable about your topic.

Organizing your 4-H presentation

Even though you know your subject and can actually do the steps to show someone how to do it, you will need to think of a 4-H presentation in three parts:

The Introduction — This is the interest-getter. Make your audience feel that your subject is worth your time to present and worth their time to listen and watch. You may tell why you feel this skill or subject is important. Keep your introduction brief, and allow it to lead into the next part.

The Body — This is the “action” part of your presentation. In the body, you will take the audience through the skill you are demonstrating **one step at a time**. As you do each step, tell what you are doing and why you are doing it. (If you have not completed a step, but have already finished talking about what you are doing and why, give extra information about the materials or equipment.)

Practice will help you fill the time with the right amount of material. Use your own words, and don't worry about trying to shout over a loud engine or drill. It is all right to have a few seconds of silence, but do try to spread your information almost continuously throughout your presentation.

Concentrate on keeping your action part simple and neat. This will be the longest of the three parts of your 4-H presentation.

Some presentations, such as cooking presentations without cooking facilities or electricity presentations without electrical outlets, could pose possible problems. For this reason it is important to know what your location has and does not have available for your use. You may need to adjust your 4-H presentation. An example of a problem you can adjust to is making bread, which

requires a lot more time than you would probably have. You could show the bread at different stages, which you would have prepared ahead of time, and use your presentation time to show proper kneading technique. You may even have a finished product waiting to bring out at the end to delight your audience.

The Summary — This is your last chance to sell your ideas and repeat your key points. The summary should be very brief. You would show your finished product and encourage your audience to use the information or method. You would make a closing statement, thanking the audience for their attention. Call for questions.

To help you in organizing your 4-H presentation, prepare the following presentation outline planning aid on a separate sheet of paper:

- 1. Introduction:**
 - Attention-Getter
 - Introduce Your Topic (why it is worthwhile)
- 2. Body:**
 - What I'll Do
 - Equipment and Supplies I'll Need
 - What I'll Say
- 3. Summary:**
 - Main Points
 - Closing Statement
 - Thank Audience and Ask for Questions

Suggestion: On the outline, list extra talking points or material in case you have any “dead air” while completing the steps of “showing” how to do your demonstration. This material could include facts, data, suggestions, alternative solutions to problems, etc.

Length of time

A 4-H presentation should be long enough to make all of your steps clear and easy to follow, but not so long that it bores the audience. In most cases, the time range will be:

- 2 - 5 minutes for Juniors (9 - 11 years)
- 5 - 10 minutes for Intermediate (12 - 13 years)
- 10 - 15 minutes for Seniors (14 - 19 years)

Adequate practice will guarantee your timing will be perfect. Five (5) points will be deducted for presentations outside of time length.

Using visual aids

Well-prepared and properly used visual aids, such as posters, models, charts, and miniatures will add a great deal to your 4-H presentation. They will help your audience learn faster, understand better, and remember the information longer. You may use visuals to introduce your subject, to give a recipe, or to sum up your main points.

Important points to remember about posters and poster use are:

1. Keep your visuals simple and neat. (Limit the amount of material on each poster for easy reading.)
2. Posters should be at least 22" x 28" to be large enough to be seen. PowerPoint slides can be made into posters effectively.
3. Use simple block letters. They are easier to read than script or fancy lettering.
4. Use larger letters (2 1/2" - 3") for the title and smaller (1" - 2") for the other print.
5. Stick to two or three colors (too many colors can distract from your ideas).
6. Dark color letters on a light color background are easier to read than light color letters. However, white letters on a dark background are seen easily.
7. Plan your poster *carefully* (outline letters and figures first in pencil, then go over in ink or markers. PowerPoint slides can be used as a format for posters using a plotter.
8. Use a ruler for straight lines.
9. Leave even margins on both sides.
10. Practice using your posters in your demonstration. Remember, a poster can be a useful tool.
11. **Trick** — Show the audience your poster, one point at a time, using a blank sheet of poster board to cover the other points. This keeps the audience's attention on your present point instead of jumping ahead.

Points for a good 4-H presentation

1. Practice! Nothing ensures success more than this important step. This is the time to see that all of your steps flow and that your timing is correct. When practicing, use all of the equipment and posters your "real" presentation will need.
2. Check your equipment. Get all of your equipment together in advance and make sure it is all in working order. You may want to list all of your equipment and supplies on a card so you can make sure you have it all for your presentation.
3. Sell yourself. Your audience is buying not only your 4-H presentation, but also you. Make it a neat package. Dress appropriately for the type of presentation you are doing. It's all right and normal to be scared, but try to act like you're not. Remember to get enough rest, stretch your shoulders, loosen your neck, and breath deeply a few times.
4. Start with a smile. There is nothing that will warm up an audience more than taking a moment at the opening of your demonstration (after you set up) to step back, look across your audience, and smile. This will let them know that you are comfortable and that you are now beginning.
5. Keep your area neat. Use trays to keep your materials together. Clean your work area as you go if possible. Use a towel or sponge kept nearby to wipe up any unexpected mess or spill. Clean up your area fully at the end of your presentation so the person following you will have a clean area with which to start.
6. Be natural. Use your own words and speaking manner.
7. Be enthusiastic. People will want to learn more about your subject if you appear to like it yourself by showing your enthusiasm through your voice and body language.
8. Keep going. If you do make a mistake, such as a forgotten word or thought, act confidently and keep your presentation going. Take a moment to get yourself on track if necessary, and continue with your topic.
9. Have samples. Especially in foods demonstrations, nothing speaks to the judges as well as a taste of what the person has prepared. Bring some small paper plates and plastic ware so the judges can sample your finished product.

10. Thank the audience. At the conclusion, a simple, sincere thank you tells the audience your presentation is over and that you appreciate their attention. Pause and smile again.

Scoring the 4-H presentation

The 4-H member will be scored on many different factors concerning the 4-H presentation.

Basically, the factors are:

1. *The 4-H Member* (20 points). This includes appearance, voice, poise, and grammar.
2. *The 4-H Presentation* (35 points). This includes the introduction, method, verbal presentation, teaching aids, organization, audience view, and the summary.
3. *The Subject Matter* (45 points). This part includes:
(1) the selection of the subject including the reason

for the choice: Did it follow one basic theme? Is it practical? (2) Is the information accurate? Is it up to date? and (3) knowledge of the subject. Did the 4-H member understand the principles, information, and practices that he/she was explaining?

In Conclusion

Congratulations! You are about to participate in a 4-H presentation and grow. You will find out more about a 4-H project, and you will teach others about what you have learned. Remember to record in your project record that you have participated in this most important 4-H event. The confidence that you will gain as a result of choosing a topic, researching the subject, following the steps that lead to a logical conclusion, practicing your presentation, and finally, teaching the information through a 4-H presentation, will be valuable to you throughout your life. Helping others “to make the best better” actually helps you improve yourself.