

Guidelines and Tips for 4-H Communication Arts

Consider your audience: Targeting your message to your audience increases the likelihood your presentation will be a success.

Choosing a topic: Your topic should be something you are familiar with and excited about. If you are excited about your topic, it will be more interesting and impactful for your audience.

Develop an outline: Keep in mind the three basic parts: introduction, body or discussion, conclusion.

Remember the high points: write down certain phrases or points you want to be sure to include.

Use the introduction to grab attention: Choose a quotation, joke, challenging question or something surprising to get the audience interested. The introduction should also outline important parts of your presentation and let the audience know what you will be talking about.

Be logical and thorough: Present your material in a logical order and be sure to cover the areas you outlined in your introduction.

Get personal: Use personal examples, illustrations and stories in your talk.

Summarize: The conclusion summarizes your presentation. It should stress the most important points and tie everything together.

Speak up: Project your voice so everyone can hear you. Voice projection is not shouting, and you can do it without straining.

Conversational style: Try to sound like yourself. Use a tone with familiar words like you do in most conversations.

Comfortable pace: The speed of your presentation should be such that everyone can hear and understand what you are saying. Don't rush, we hear you better when speak at an even comfortable pace.

Enunciate: Pronounce all vowels and consonants clearly. Practice words you are not as familiar with and those ending with "d", "t", or "ing."

Get feedback: When you are rehearsing, have someone near the back of the room to give you feedback on your projection and delivery, as well as content.

Eye contact: Be sure to look at your audience. If it helps, find a couple of places in the room to direct your eyes. Try to memorize your opening and closing statements, so you can maintain steady eye contact.

Smile: Your smile will help you relax and help your audience focus on your presentation.

Audio and visual aids: Choose these tools thoughtfully, keeping in mind the size and share of the room, the expected size of your audience, and available equipment.

Practice with equipment: Become familiar with the equipment you will be using so you are comfortable with how it works. This will help reduce stress and be valuable if there are equipment failures.

Rehearse your presentation: Getting comfortable with your visuals and props and having a plan on when to use each will enhance your presentation and not distract the audience from your primary message.

Posters and other visuals: Make these attractive, readable from the farthest distance they will be viewed, and are easy to use. They should be simple and neat while highlighting the most important points.

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Electronic presentations have some additional points to consider:

Use the 4-H emblem properly: The basic rules for use of the 4-H emblem 1) nothing can be superimposed over the 4-H emblem, 2) must be one of these color combinations – green with white H's, green with gold H's, black with white H's, white with green H's, or white with gold H's. 3) the stem of the clover must be curved to the right, 4) The name and emblem are protected and 18 USC 707 must appear with the clover in one of the accepted positions.

Photo release forms: Using photos or video of people requires their permission. Each person in your photo or video must sign a release form.

Electronic files: Submit video or other electronic presentations on a flash drive.

Appropriate images and sound: All music, video images, and computer animation must be 4-H appropriate, suitable for an audience from 5 to 85 years of age.

Recording: Plan your goals for recording. Be selective and resist the temptation to record everything that is happening.

Lighting: Pay attention to light sources and try to place your subject so the light falls evenly across it. Shoot so your back or side is to the light sources and your subject is facing the light.

Sound: Pay attention to where the microphone is in relation to your subject. Eliminate distracting room noise such as blowers, equipment, or other voices.

Camera technique: Use a tripod for a stable shot. Get close to your subject, only rely on the zoom when you want to be really close to the subject.

Credits: Your video, website or other presentation must include credits showing who participated or contributed to the presentation and their roles. Include the title of the presentation with participant names.

Copyright permission: Use of graphics, photos, video clips, music created by others is allowed, but permission must be obtained to use any copyrighted material.