Communication Opportunities

Presentations as a part of 4-H helps youth acquire new knowledge, organize ideas, develop self-confidence, and display skills. A demonstration shows how to do something. Audience members watch and learn using actual objects or models. An illustrated talk uses technology or posters to tell how something was done. Public speaking selects a topic, prepares, and delivers a message to a large group without props.

Working Exhibits describe, demonstrate, or teach directly to a small audience. The audience takes away a product or skill and usually rotates from one working exhibit station to another.

Share the Fun develops performance skills and stage presence and is fun for both the performer and audience. It is often seen at the county and state fair, although it might be fun to do in clubs. One person or a group can do performances. It’s an old time/new time variety show! Choose one or more—dance • lip sync • band • juggle • instrumental music • gymnastics • vocal performance • ballet • magic • comedy

Extemporaneous Speaking choose a topic and prepare a speech in 30 minutes to give to a judge. 4-H’ers test their ability to think, organize, speak, and answer questions. Try it at a club meeting with groups developing speeches on a topic drawn from a hat.

4-H Posters communicate with the public in a visual rather than oral form. Posters can be displayed at county and state fairs or to create displays for recruitment or National 4-H Week. Club members create posters sharing their idea of 4-H or any other idea. Some poster ideas — My Pyramid • Parts of an animal • Steps to a process • 4-H Club project • Outdoor safety • Animal or plant selection • Colorful patterns • Nutrition in the animal kingdom • State vs. local government • Spanish • Science • Social studies • Wellness in your community

Sharing Extemporaneous Speaking

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Communication Activity

Who’s Listening?

Ask youth what type of listener they would like to be. (Active listeners are the most effective). Brainstorm some places where youth can listen to conversations (TV, a school activity, home, a play, etc.) Ask youth to watch others and see if they can figure out if those involved in conversations are passive, selective, attentive, or active listeners. Review the types of listening behaviors people exhibit.

Passive listener creates a one-way conversation with little effort to connect to the other person’s message.

Selective listener receives only a partial message; selects messages to match preferred ideas or interests; creates a barrier.

Attentive listener gets most of the intended message intended and is not judgmental about what the speaker has to say.

Active listener receives the speaker’s message; works with care and respect to confirm understanding; gets the facts as well as the feeling.

A detailed activity is included in Communications — Express Yourself; Putting It Together, 4H-486B.
5. Recreation

Communication

Pay attention while kids are doing recreation activities — you’ll observe youth using their communication skills with others. You can often learn more by watching a young person play games for 15 minutes than you can by watching that person in a classroom for days.

Moon Ball
Using a 10-inch or greater inflatable ball, the leader asks the group to stand in a circle. The objective is for each team member to hit the ball in the air while keeping it aloft without striking the ground. No player can hit the ball twice in row. Once the group has achieved this objective, ask them to select a more rigorous goal. As a leader stand back and watch your group. You will notice how the group communicates and problem-solves. With each other, who takes charge at first, who watches and makes suggestions, who is listened to and who is not. After the game is over, ask the group open-ended questions to see what they think about the team’s communication style and problem-solving abilities. Adapted from Rohnke, Carl. 1991. The Bottomless Bag Again. Kendall/Hunt.

Tiny Olympics
Create a scorecard for each athlete (or have them do it) and have markers, cotton balls, straws, paper plates, and a tape measure available. Divide the youth into teams and designate an older youth or adult be in charge of each team. The person in charge should measure and record distances and record first, second, and third on individual score cards. Add up each team’s scores.

Super Talks!
4-H’ers who have given presentations say it is easiest to organize material into three parts.

1. Introduction: Get your audience’s attention and briefly share with them what you are going to do and why you chose this topic.
2. Body: Give the details (3 to 4 points) of doing it, showing it, or telling it.
3. Conclusion: Repeat the main points and ask if there are any questions. Mention where you found the information, so others can learn more about the topic.

Tiny Olympics events

Cotton Ball Shot Put
Mark a line on the ground and have each athlete throw a cotton ball as far as possible. Taking the best of three tries, measure and record the distance.

Straw Javelin Toss
Mark a line on the ground and have each athlete step to the line and throw a straw as far as possible in three tries. Record the best distance with the measuring tape and record placement.

Paper Plate Discuss Throw
Mark a line on the ground and have each athlete throw a paper plate as far as possible. Give three tries and record the best.

Remember to watch how youth interact and communicate with each other. You can ask a variety of questions including “how does it feel to be cheered on and how does it feel to not be cheered on?” You can relate this game to the group being a team and how members of the group want to be treated.

Debrievng Topics
How did the group support each other during the activity? How could we support each other better in the future? How did competing enhance or detract from the experience? What different styles of communication did you see? What is the importance of active listening when playing?

Iowa 4-H Communication Resources

Project Manuals
Express Yourself! Series – communication activities
4H 848 A.B.C.LDR
https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/

Theatre Arts Adventures series – theatre arts activities
4H 855 A.B.C.D, LDR
https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/

Imagination Into Action series – theatre arts activities
4HCCS BU 08070 thru 08073 – National 4-H council
www.4houtreach.iu.edu

Activity Guide
Communications Toolkit – communication activity guide
Available from Michigan State University or National 4-H Council
www.4houtreach.iu.edu

ISU Extension 4-H Publications
4H 850A “I Have to do What?” (Pieces to a 4-H Presentation Puzzle) – for 4-H members.
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/4H850A.pdf

4H 850LDR, “See! You did it!” (leader activity guide) – for 4-H presentations
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/4H850LDR.pdf

4H 851, “Share a talent … Show off a skill … Do a working exhibit” – for 4-H members
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/4H851.pdf

Miscellaneous Resources
Evaluating 4-H Exhibits, Communications section (binder)
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/StateFair/EEHandbook.html

… and poster for all

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Many materials can be made available in alternative formats for ADA clients. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964.


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SCORE with Posters
Share with your 4-H’ers that they can create top-notch posters to communicate a variety of ideas to others.

Simple
Put one to two basic points on each poster.

Colorful
Use color for emphasis and variety.

Organized
Make your points easy to read and follow.

Readable
Make letters easy to read from a distance.

Educational
Only use a poster when it helps explain a point more clearly to your audience.

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