



10 Keys to Your First Presentation

Show and tell is something you may remember from your early school years, but it's also a way to describe 4-H presentations. This resource has been written to help you give your first 4-H presentation for your club, county communication event, or some other group. What you learn in 4-H about giving presentations (public speaking) can be used in school and all your life.

There are some good reasons why you should learn how to give a 4-H presentation.

- ✓ You will find it can be fun. Like “Show and Tell”, it is easy to stand in front of your 4-H club with something in your hands and show how to do something or use posters and explain a topic that is of interest to you.
- ✓ You will find it easy to learn in 4-H. It will help you to find out more about your project area.
- ✓ You will learn how to speak before a group.
- ✓ You will learn how to organize your thoughts.
- ✓ You will be teaching others in your club or audience.
- ✓ You will have an opportunity to meet other people your own age.

Now...It's Time to Begin

You can't just stand up in front of a group and expect to know what to say. You need to plan ahead and think through the ideas you want to cover. Here are ten keys that will help you prepare your first 4-H presentation.



Key #1 – Select a Topic

How do you get ideas for your presentation? Here are some ways to get you started thinking of a possible topic.

- ✓ Review your project materials (members' guides)
- ✓ Make a list of things you like to do at home or school
- ✓ Make a list of things you've learned on a tour or trip
- ✓ Make a list of important events or projects going on in your community, school, or club
- ✓ Make a list of things you do well and would like to tell or teach others
- ✓ Find ideas from a TV show, a video or computer program
- ✓ Look up subjects that interest. Use the computer catalog or card catalog at your media center/library.
- ✓ Talk to your parent, 4-H leaders, teachers or other experts about possible topics.



Key #2 – Research Your Selected Topic

Use your available resources to make notes about your topic. Write down each main idea you find on a separate note card. Then when you get ready to organize your thoughts you can arrange your note cards in a sequence to present the information about your topic.

You might want to include interviews with experts about your topic. These people have many fine experiences and materials they can share with you. Your parents, relatives, and neighbors may just be that expert!



Key #3 – Communication Method

Now that you have researched your information and have the main ideas written down, how will you share it with your audience? There are different types of educational presentations. Whether you wish to show, explain, or tell will determine whether you do a demonstration, illustrated talk, or a speech. All of these presentations require similar preparations. When selecting the type of presentation, keep the differences in mind. The following will help you see how they differ.

Demonstration

- ✓ Most of the time you are doing something with the actual item or items.
- ✓ You are showing or making something. As you show how, you tell what you are doing
- ✓ There is a finished project

Illustrated Talk

- ✓ Most of the time you are talking about something.
- ✓ You are telling or explaining how with the use of visual aids or pictures.
- ✓ There is no finished project.

Speech

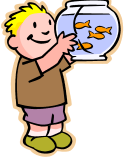
- ✓ You will not use visual aids.
- ✓ Use facts and figures to support your thoughts and opinions.
- ✓ You get your idea across using descriptive words.

No matter what type of educational presentation you choose, communication is a process that happens when one person or group shares information with another person or group. There are two roles in all communication. The first role is that the sender thinks of an idea and sends the message. As a 4-H'er doing a presentation, you are the sender. This can be done verbally, nonverbally (visually) or in writing. The second role is that of the receiver. Your audience is your receiver and must be able to receive your message and understand its meaning. The following diagram shows how communication works.

Sender (4-H Presenter)

Receiver (Audience)

Idea → Message → Meaning



Key #4 – Three Parts of a Presentation

Now that you have thought about the communication model of sender, message, and receiver and decided which method of delivery (demonstration, illustrated talk, or speech) you'll use to get your message across, let's look at the three parts that are needed to present a polished presentation.

Introduction

The introduction is to get the audience's attention, share briefly what your topic is about, and tell the audience why you chose this topic.



Some Ways To Do This...

- ✓ Do a short skit with a partner or someone from the audience.
- ✓ Ask a question that the audience needs to think about.
- ✓ Wear a costume or mask.
- ✓ Talk with a puppet or do a role play.
- ✓ Play a short cassette tape.

Body

The body is the main part of the presentation where you tell the information or show and explain the process and where you sell the audience on your ideas.



Some Ways To Do This...

- ✓ Pick two or three main ideas which are important to your topic and plan your presentation around them.
- ✓ Use examples or steps in the process to complete your main ideas.
- ✓ Use posters that are not cluttered and are easy to read.
- ✓ Tell where you got your information.

Conclusion

The conclusion is the end of your presentation and the time to “bring your point home”.



Some Ways To Do This...

- ✓ Review the two or three main ideas of your presentation.
- ✓ Do not introduce any new information.
- ✓ Encourage the audience to try your idea or agree with your opinion.
- ✓ Have a sample or handout for the audience to take home.
- ✓ Ask for questions. Repeat the question or work the question into your answer. If you don't know the answer, say so.
- ✓ After the questions, end with a smile and thank the audience for listening.



Key #5 – Prepare an Outline

Your note cards will now serve as your guide as you prepare a more detailed outline of what you plan to say using the three main parts of your presentation as listed in Key #4.

After you have outlined your researched information with the three main parts and decided on the types of presentation you will give, assemble your resources. These resources may be charts, visual aids, equipment, books, etc. Make a checklist of everything you will need.



Key #6 – Charts and Posters

Make simple charts or posters of the main ideas you wish to tell or show your audience. You do not need to purchase professional letters, but EVERYONE can use a yardstick for straight lines and a dictionary for correct spelling. Perhaps you have a computer at home, school, or at the public library, to help you make your posters. You'll learn more about making posters if you do them yourself.

When making posters or charts, a good idea to remember is ABC: Attractive, Brief, Clear. Size, spacing, and style help to make easy-to-read posters. Limit your posters to two or three colors. Having one main color is a good idea. Black, green, red, and blue are good colors and show up well on a white background. Yellow does not show up very well unless it is on a dark colored poster board.

Make sure your letters are large enough for your audience to read. A guideline is if your audience is up to 25 feet from you, then your poster letters should be at least one and one-half inches high for easy reading. If the audience is 40 feet away, then try at least two inch tall letters. Be sure to leave plenty of space between letters. Sometimes posters and charts can be improved with a large, simple picture or illustration.



Key #7 – Choose a Title

You've done your research, turned your note cards into an outline, selected the type of presentation, assembled your equipment and prepared your visual aids. Now, what are you going to title your presentation? Choose a title that will catch the audience's attention. Most titles are short and suggest the subject without telling the whole story. Look in magazines, story titles, or old sayings for ideas.



Key #8 – Practice

Now that you hold the master key that will produce a polished presentation. It's called practice, practice, and practice. Practice until you feel comfortable giving your presentation. Use your detailed note cards or outline as you practice. Do not try to memorize word for word but think of the main ideas or main steps as you go through your presentation. You can use your posters to help you remember the important steps and details. If you must rely on your notes, try to have them in a shortened form. Do not try to hide the cards. Practice in front of a mirror. Use a video camera or tape recorder and then play it back and watch or listen. Be aware of things to change that will make your presentation better. Family members are always good to give you helpful hints for improvement!

As you are practicing your presentation, here are some tips that may help you have an even more polished presentation.

- ✓ One center of interest – Have the audience look at only one center of interest at a time. If it is a team presentation, the member not talking should quietly stand by or assist. Have only the poster showing that is related to what you are talking about.
- ✓ Avoid long pauses – Explain each step as you work, but try to avoid long pauses. Do not try to talk while using noisy equipment. Know some “Filler” information you might use if a step takes a little longer than you had planned. The “Filler” information should be related to your subject.
- ✓ Look at your audience – This may be difficult at first but good eye contact helps to get your message across. Look at different people throughout the presentation. It might help to pick out someone in the back of the room or audience to focus on.
- ✓ Be neat – Consider using trays to organize equipment that is needed for each step. Clean up your messes as you go. Wear appropriate clothing – if you are working with food, aprons

would be appropriate – exercise, warm-up clothes, etc. Wearing the 4-H emblem and the 4-H colors of green and white is a good way to let the audience know you are proud to be a 4-H member. Good posture (standing on two feet) and good grooming will say positive things about you. Of course, you would not chew gum while doing a 4-H presentation.

- ✓ Involve your audience – Get the audience involved by passing out sample, recipes, information sheets, asking questions.
- ✓ Use large motions – The audience may be quite a distance from you, so use large motions. If you have clear jars or bowls, this helps the audience to see what is inside.
- ✓ Voice – It is best to speak a little more slowly and louder than a normal conversation voice. This will help people to be able to hear you and understand you better.
- ✓ Above all, Be yourself – Remember that YOU are trying to send your ideas to someone else. Use the techniques that work best for you!!
- ✓ And now...You've given your presentation... Congratulations are in order. Even if your knees were knocking, your palms sweating, or your heart bumping, no one knew that but you. You had practiced and your polished presentation was given. Congratulations!



Key #9 – Evaluation

Now you are ready to evaluate your completed presentation using the 4 R's of Communication.

- ✓ Respect – For those that are listening to you
- ✓ Research – Using your research skills in finding out more about your selected topic.
- ✓ Responsibility – To tell others what you have learned.
- ✓ Resources – What you used to communicate your ideas.

Answer yes, no, or needs improvement to the following questions:

1. Did I show RESPECT to my audience by making sure they could hear me and see my presentation?
2. Did I RESEARCH my topic thoroughly?
3. Did I show RESPONSIBILITY to the audience:
 - ✓ By choosing a topic that I enjoyed doing or sharing with them?
 - ✓ By making an outline I could use to give my presentation?
 - ✓ By getting their attention in my introduction?
 - ✓ By having the body of my presentation centered around main ideas?
 - ✓ By summarizing my presentation in my conclusion?
 - ✓ By asking if anyone had any questions?
4. Did I have RESOURCES (equipment, easy to read posters, visual aids) to help communicate my main ideas?
5. Did my summary highlight the main points?
6. Did I ask if anyone had questions?
7. Did I practice and also think about the 4 R's of Communication?

How did you do in your evaluation? Do you have any areas that you said needed improvement or were all your answers yes?

In conclusion, go ahead and plan a second presentation. Perhaps you'd like to do a team or a cooperative presentation with two or more members of your club. An entire club can give a presentation although this involves lots of time and patience in scheduling practices.



Key #10 – The Door to Success

You have now unlocked the door to giving effective 4-H Educational Presentations. By using these 10 keys, you are on your way to becoming a successful communicator. Congratulations!

If you used all the keys, you're on your way!

Ideas taken from:

- ✓ 4-H Communication Activities, West Indiana
- ✓ Show and Tell, Iowa Publication
- ✓ Sound off with a 4-H Presentation, Iowa Publications
- ✓ The Basics of Beginning 4-H Presentations, Nebraska
- ✓ Member Handouts by Doris Goering
- ✓ 4-R's for 4-H Communication Program by Janet Anderson
- ✓ The Communicator

This resource written by Doris Goering, Story County 4-H Volunteer and Communications Project Leader – January 1996.