

Welcome to 4-H Communications

Young people in 4-H learn the basics of communication through presentations, demonstrations, stage performances, roll calls, purposeful recreation, discussions, and much more. What young people learn depends on the support and opportunities they receive and their own interests and motivation. One responsibility of 4-H volunteers is to provide opportunities for youth to communicate in the club, afterschool programs, and camps. They also can encourage youth to take advantage of the county, area, and state communication opportunities available to them.

How do you incorporate communication into a 4-H project?

Whether youth are involved in shooting sports, gardening, photography, or engineering, they need to learn good communication skills. Check out all the ideas in this flier!

1 Start with a Welcoming Environment

Set the stage for a welcoming environment, before the meeting or activity begins. Have 4-H'ers greet others at the door and introduce guests and new or potential 4-H'ers to the group.

Once the meeting or activity begins, encourage all present to practice respectful listening, which will help youth feel both safe and welcome. Respect involves courtesy to listen (not talk) when someone else is speaking, tolerating no put-downs or cliques.

2 Roll Call

Often used at 4-H club meetings, roll calls are more than a way to take attendance. Roll calls can be a technique to allow youth of different ages and interests to get to know each other and feel part of the group. As youth share with the group, they build confidence.

Try these. My favorite project or hobby is? because? If I could travel to anywhere in the world, I would go to? because? My favorite book is? because? If I had to give up all the electrical appliances in my house, I would miss a/an/the? the most because? I spend most of my time out of school doing?

3 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 848B.



4 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 • HEIFER project • Digital effects in photography • Breeds of an animal • Firearm safety • Iowa's endangered species

Record keeping offers self-reflection and evaluation of the project year.

4-H fair exhibits offers ways to communicate 4-H experiences and project knowledge with the general public.

Club meetings hone communication skills while serving as club officers, welcoming other members or guests, serving on committees, introducing speakers, preparing correspondence, leading recreation activities, or discussing club business.



Award applications enhance members' written and verbal skills as they prepare applications and participate in personal interviews at the county, area, or state level. State award recipients are selected in a two-stage process—area and state levels. Check with your county extension office for any local 4-H award application and selection procedures.

4-H Technology Team offers 4-H'ers a means to pursue communication technology interests.

Check your county extension office or Web site for details of these opportunities.

Discussion Starters

Buzz Group Break into small groups (five to eight people) and give them 5 to 10 minutes to list ideas (project, service, social) they want to do the next year (in any order). Everyone needs to contribute ideas. Any idea is good, no matter how wild or crazy. List as many as possible so they can be narrowed down later. Print on paper and post the lists from all groups. Share all ideas with the rest of the group.

Bingo Give each youth a blank bingo card. Tell youth to write an idea of something they would like to do or learn in the coming year on the squares. When finished, start with one youth and who reads one item on his/her sheet. If another youth has the same idea, he/she can cross it off on his/her own sheet. Continue around the room. When finished collect the cards and summarize the ideas.



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.fourhcouncil.edu

Activity Guide

Communications Toolkit – communication activity guide
Available from Michigan State University
or National 4-H Council
www.fourhcouncil.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>

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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 they solve problems and communicate 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 score card 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 event. 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.

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 Discus 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.

Debriefing 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?

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.



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.