



4KA-04PO  
Kentucky 4-H Communications Program

# 4-H Speeches



## Preparing you for your future!

Do you like to speak in front of a group? Have you ever had to make a speech in your classroom? Would you like to learn the skills and gain the confidence to be an outstanding public speaker? Then you should participate in the Kentucky 4-H Communications Program! 4-H members can learn how to prepare and present a speech on any topic they feel passionate about.

## What is a speech?

A **speech** or talk is 3 to 5 minutes long for junior 4-H members (9-13 years old) and 5 to 7 minutes for senior 4-H members (14-18 years old). No visual aids may be used.

## Preparation

The following steps will help you prepare to give a speech or demonstration.

- **Choose a topic.** Find a subject that you know something about or that is of interest to you. Make sure your topic is not too broad.
- **Select a Title.** Think of a title that relates to the subject and is catchy, original and short. It should suggest the subject without telling the whole story.
- **Collect information.** Think about what you already know about your topic. What examples do you know that will illustrate your speech or demonstration? Is there a poem, a song, or a joke that you can use to make a point clear? Why is the topic important?
- **Organize materials.** Separate your materials and ideas into three parts: introduction, body and conclusion. Use the **4-H Speech Guide** at the end of this publication.
  - **Introduction.** Get the attention of your audience, make them want to listen, inform them of your subject and show them how the subject concerns you. Tell a story or joke, or read a quote. Tell the audience what you are going to talk about and why that topic is important to them.
  - **Body.** Select two or three main points and explain each point. Use accurate and up-to-date information. Arrange key points in logical order.

# *When using gestures, try to be natural and relaxed.*

- **Conclusion.** Briefly restate your main ideas. Leave your audience with an attention-grabbing statement, question or wrap-up thought.
- **Make note cards.** Do not write your entire speech on cards. Have only the main points and key words written down. Note cards should help you organize your speech but should not be a distraction.
- **Practice!** Give your speech in front of a mirror and in front of friends and family.



## **Delivery**

- **Eye Contact.** Look directly into the eyes of your audience during your speech. Look at people in various parts of the audience.
- **Posture.** Stand in a comfortable position with your feet several inches apart and your back straight.
- **Voice.** Speak loudly and clearly enough for all to hear. Try to sound conversational. Do not yell or talk too softly.
- **Gesture.** When using gestures, try to be natural and relaxed.
- **Emphasis.** Pause just before and after an important point. You may also change your tone of voice or step closer to the audience.
- **Quotations.** Give full credit to your source and pause before and after so the audience knows where the quote begins and ends.

- **Notes.** Do not write your entire speech on cards. Do not read from your note cards! Refer to your cards for the main points you want to make.
- **Attire.** Dress appropriately for your audience and topic. Costumes are *not* allowed for speeches.

## **Practice, Practice, Practice!**

As you practice your speech or demonstration, ask your leader, teacher or family to evaluate it using the checklist below.

- Dress clean, neat and appropriate
- Posture erect but not stiff
- Gestures poised and natural
- Voice easily heard
- Voice expressive
- Introduction interesting, brief and gives purpose
- Body of speech well organized in logical order
- Eye contact with the audience
- Correct grammar and vocabulary
- Notes do not distract
- Talk flows smoothly from one point to the next
- Subject matter accurate and up to date
- Suitable for age

Contact your County Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development for more information on the 4-H Communications Program!

Adapted by Jennifer Tackett from Speak Up! Kentucky 4-H Talk Meet (4KA-01PB) by Jann Burks and Would You Like to Do a 4-H Demonstration? (4KA-02PA) by Anna B. Lucas and Susannah Denomme.

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, M. Scott Smith, Director, Land Grant Programs, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Lexington, and Kentucky State University, Frankfort. Copyright © 2013 for materials developed by University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension. This publication may be reproduced in portions or its entirety for educational or nonprofit purposes only. Permitted users shall give credit to the author(s) and include this copyright notice. Publications are also available on the World Wide Web at [www.ca.uky.edu](http://www.ca.uky.edu).

