

4-H Communication Fact Sheet 2.0

4-H Project Talks

Kansas 4-H members have been learning to speak skillfully before an audience for more than 100 years. It is often one of the things people say they most remember about their 4-H experiences — before participating in 4-H, they could not speak comfortably in front of an audience. Through 4-H, thousands of youth have learned the skills necessary to clearly organize and present ideas and instructions through project talks, demonstrations, illustrated talks and public speaking. This fact sheet focuses on the 4-H project talk.

What is a project talk?

It is a short talk about one of your 4-H projects. The best project talk does all of these things:

- Tells about your experiences in the project.
- Gives some information relating to the project.
- Promotes the project.

Who may give a project talk?

The project talk is designed for younger 4-H members, 7 to 11 years old.

How long should talks be?

For a beginning 4-H'er — 7 or 8 years old — the talk may be 3 to 4 minutes long. For an older 4-H'er, it could be a 6- to 7-minute talk. Also consider the subject, audience (project or club meeting), length of time allowed for the talk, and your experience in giving talks (your first one will probably be short).

How do you select a topic?

Some 4-H clubs assign the project about which 4-H'ers are to speak; others leave this up to each member. Whatever system is used, you have a right to choose a topic of most interest to you. Let your project leader know of your interests. Select a topic that:

- you know something about,
- you want to know more about,
- will be of interest to nearly everyone who will hear your talk, and
- is a part of, or closely related to, your project.

Project talks at a glance

- Tell about a 4-H project.
- Purpose is to inform.
- For members ages 7 to 11.
- Visuals are optional.
- Generally from 3 to 7 minutes long.

A project talk should be about one phase of the project, such as pattern selection, feeding a bucket calf or tools needed for woodworking.

Where do you find information?

- Use your own experiences.
- Read your 4-H project material.
- Visit Web sites or the public library.
- Ask a 4-H leader or teacher.
- Talk to a business person or extension agent.

What is included in a good talk?

All talks have three parts: an opening or introduction, the body that presents the information, and a short summary that highlights the main points of the talk.

1. The introduction is the opening statement. It should catch the audience's attention by doing one of the following:

- Ask a question.
- Show an object or a picture.
- Tell a startling fact.
- Make a challenging statement.
- Tell a short story.

2. The body is the main part of the talk. It should be 80 to 90 percent of your talk. First, tell what the main idea of your talk will be. Then explain or illustrate important facts while developing the main idea.

Tell of personal experiences whenever they relate to your talk. Use pictures, poster boards, models or other visuals if they enhance the talk. Visuals are not

required in project talks, but they may add to your talk if they have a purpose.

3. Give the summary or conclusion. Repeat just a few of the major points. A quotation, poem or saying might be used at the close. Audience questions are not solicited after project talks, as they are in demonstrations and illustrated talks.

Tips for you as a speaker

- Dress appropriately for the occasion so you feel at ease.
- Stand erect — on both feet. Good posture will help convince your audience you mean business.
- Outline your talk, but do not write it out word for word. Use your outline as you give the talk, if you need it, but never read your talk. You may want to write your notes on a 3" × 5" index cards for easy use.
- Practice giving your talk. Give it to yourself alone at first — perhaps in front of a mirror. Later, have someone listen who will offer suggestions for improving it. Never memorize your talk. Memorize your outline instead.
- Speak so people can hear and understand you easily. This will come with confidence and practice.
- Speak slowly. Talk at a natural speed, but change pace occasionally for emphasis and to hold audience attention.
- Watch pronunciation of words. Don't use words you can't pronounce or understand. The words used should fit you and be said in the way you would say them.

Use of copyrighted and trademarked materials in 4-H presentations and posters:

A copyright and/or a trademark are legal methods used by artists, photographers and writers to protect original creative works such as photographs, books, music, recipes, sports logo insignias, brand names and art work. The copyright symbol does need to appear on a work for it to be protected by copyright. Copyrighted materials cannot be reproduced without permission and proper crediting of the source. 4-H members need to be aware of copyright restrictions and take steps to obtain permission to use copyrighted materials and trademarks. Full details cannot be covered in a short paragraph, but additional helpful information can be found on K-State's Intellectual property site: <http://www.k-state.edu/copyright/>.

Date shown is that of publication or last revision. Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

Publications from Kansas State University are available at: www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu

Contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Deryl E. Waldren and James P. Adams, *4-H Project Talks*, Kansas State University, October 2009.

Other resources to help you

4-H Communication Fact Sheets:

4H975 *Kansas 4-H Project Talk Scoresheet*

4H976 *Kansas 4-H Demonstration and Illustrated Talk Scoresheet*

4H977 *Kansas 4-H Public Speaking Scoresheet*

4H978 *Kansas 4-H Presentation Overview*

4H980 *4-H Demonstrations*

4H981 *4-H Demonstration or Illustrated Talk Outline Form*

4H982 *4-H Illustrated Talks*

4H983 *4-H Public Speaking*

4H984 *Effective Presentation Tips*

4H985 *Preparing and Using Visual Aids*

4H986 *Presentation Brainstorming Activity*

- Use poster boards or visuals if they enhance the presentation.
- Be pleasant. A smile on your face will put a smile in your voice.
- Be at ease.
- Be yourself.
- Be enthusiastic.

Written and revised by

Deryl E. Waldren, 4-H Youth Development Specialist

James P. Adams, 4-H Youth Development Specialist