



Colorado State University

Extension 

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THE COLORADO 4-H PUBLIC PRESENTATION PROGRAM

Learning to speak in public is one of the best life skills that we can help our youth develop. Alumni of the 4-H program often point to public speaking as one of the most useful things they learned in 4-H, leading to success in their future careers. In the public presentation program, youth learn to organize their ideas, to share emotions and creativity, and to communicate clearly. Additionally, they develop subject matter expertise and gain self-confidence.

The 4-H Public Presentation program is designed to provide a safe, age-appropriate environment for 4-H members to develop communication skills. By participating in a variety of presentation types, members will be able to find comfortable starting points, as well as new challenges. By progressing through the public presentation program, youth will become well-rounded presenters.

While the Colorado 4-H Policies do not require members to *compete* in public presentations, each member is, at a minimum, required to *do* a 4-H public presentation. However, all members, especially those who wish to receive feedback and improve their skills, are encouraged to participate in a competitive event. Members can compete at the county, state and, in some cases, the national level, earning recognition for their achievements!

The Colorado 4-H Public Presentation program currently offers three competitive divisions: Demonstration & Illustrated Talk, Prepared (Formal) Speech, Impromptu Speech. Interpretive Reading is being introduced at the county level. Members are encouraged to review the expectations and requirements for each of the divisions and choose the area(s) in which they would like to participate. Each of the competitive divisions will have three classes: Juniors (4-H age 8-10), Intermediates (4-H age 11-13), and Seniors (4-H age 14-18.) There will be no events for Cloverbuds (4-H age 5-7) at the state contest, but counties are encouraged to provide these opportunities at the local level.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION CATEGORIES*

DEMONSTRATION & ILLUSTRATED TALK

The presenter **shows** and **explains** how to do or make something in a demonstration (make a fruit salad, care for a pet, how to juggle, do basic dance steps, build a kite, etc.) or uses **visual aids** to **tell** about a topic in an illustrated talk. Appropriate equipment, models or illustrations, posters, PowerPoint slides, and visuals are used as needed to explain information being conveyed or to show the steps in the process being demonstrated. It is sometimes necessary to show a larger scale replica of something that is too small for the audience to see. A finished product is often shown. Team demonstrations and illustrated talks are allowed (two members on a team) and should reflect a topic requiring teamwork as well as effective balancing of verbal communications and hands-on action. For example, teammates should have an equal amount of speaking time.

PREPARED (FORMAL) SPEECH

The presenter aims to **persuade, motivate** or **inform** the audience without the use of visuals. In this category, the presenter chooses and researches a topic of choice related to today's youth. Depending on the topic chosen, the presenter chooses a format (persuasive, motivational or informative) that best suits what is to be conveyed to the audience. For example, if the topic is cyber bullying, the presenter can choose to inform the audience about this topic, persuade the audience of their convictions, or motivate the audience to take a more active role in making current changes in this area. A speech is written in the presenter's own words, however, poetry, quotations, humor, or imagery may be incorporated to command attention or emphasize a point.

IMPROMPTU SPEECH

The presenter aims to **persuade, motivate** or **inform** the audience, without the use of visuals, in an unrehearsed setting. In this category, the presenter is given three topics to choose from and ten minutes to develop a speech on the topic they chose. Because the speech is not prepared in advance, members learn to organize their ideas and respond to a topic in a more spontaneous way. Members are encouraged to incorporate stories, quotes, and real life examples in their speeches.

INTERPRETIVE READING

The presenter, with the use of vocal inflection and body language as communication tools, delivers a **rendition of a piece of pre-written material**. The pre-written material should be a selection from a book, poem, story, etc. and should be 4-H appropriate. This creative communication area bridges the gap between message delivery and the performing arts. Costumes and small props can be used, but they need to be simple and minimal, not detracting from the strength of the presenter. This area is not intended for presentation of original material written by the presenter.

**Public Presentation categories adapted from Cornell Cooperative Extension (2008) "4-H Public Presentations: State Level Guidelines and Evaluator's Guide".*

FORMAT FOR PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

All types of presentations share the same three-part format: an **introduction, body**, and **conclusion** or **summary**. The content and presentation techniques used in each part differ somewhat for each type of presentation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESENTER (BY ROOM HOST)

At the state level, presenters in all categories will be introduced by the room host by name, county, and title.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESENTATION (BY PRESENTER)

The presenter will begin his/her presentation by introducing the topic in a manner that creatively catches the attention of the audience while stimulating their curiosity and motivating them to think about the subject to be presented. Use of the title can be a part of this introduction.

For **Interpretive Reading**, the presenter should identify the source of the creative piece and its author and may allude to, explain, or challenge the audience to discover the message it conveys prior to beginning. In addition, the presenter's reason for choosing this particular piece should be included because it lends to a better understanding of the piece being presented. These introductions should not attempt to interpret the piece for the audience, be too lengthy, or overshadow the content of the recitation or dramatic interpretation.

BODY

This is the main part of the presentation. In a **Demonstration**, a technique or steps of a process are shown. In an **Illustrated Talk, Prepared Speech or Impromptu Speech**, the main points are identified and explained. In an **Interpretive Reading** presentation, the creative piece is performed.

CONCLUSION OR SUMMARY

The presenter emphasizes or re-emphasizes the message of the presentation. In a **Demonstration**, the most important steps are summarized.

In an **Illustrated Talk, Prepared Speech, or Impromptu Speech**, the presenter concisely recaps the message of the presentation or draws conclusions.

In an **Interpretive Reading** presentation, the nature of the conclusion depends on the type of creative piece and how it was introduced. It may be emphasized through a simple comment, a brief analysis, or an expressive body movement (i.e., lowering one's head, stepping to one side, creating a noticeable pause, etc.).

Please note that this part of the presentation is called a summary in a **Demonstration** and **Illustrated Talk**. It is called a conclusion in **Prepared Speech** and **Impromptu Speech**. This is due to the fact that one type of presentation actually calls for a summary of the material presented and the other types require the presenter to bring the talk to a conclusion.

QUESTIONS

Contestants will be asked questions by judges at the conclusion of their presentation in the **Demonstration & Illustrated Talk** contest. Question time will not be counted in the allotted time. Contestants should repeat the question and then answer it.

There will not be questions asked at the end of a **Prepared Speech, Impromptu Speech, or Interpretive Reading** by either the judges or audience.

STATE COMPETITION RULES

AGE DIVISIONS

All ages are as of December 31 of the previous year:

- Juniors: 8-10 years old

- Intermediates: 11-13 years old
- Seniors: 14 and over

CONTEST REQUIREMENTS FOR THESE CONTESTS CAN BE FOUND OUT:

Demonstrations/Illustrated Talk:

http://www.colorado4h.org/project_resources/StateFairContestRequirements.pdf

Speech Arts (Impromptu/Prepared):

http://www.colorado4h.org/events_opportunities/stateconference/PublicSpeakingImpromptu.pdf

http://www.colorado4h.org/events_opportunities/stateconference/PublicSpeakingPrepared.pdf

REFERENCES

University of Maryland Extension. *Maryland 4-H Public Speaking Guide*.

Rutgers (2010). *4-H Member Guide: How to Make a 4-H Public Presentation*.

Cornell Cooperative Extension (2008). *4-H Public Presentations: State Level Guidelines and Evaluator's Guide*.