



Kansas 4-H Demonstrations

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 demonstration.

What is a demonstration?

A demonstration shows and tells how to do something. Have you ever shown someone how to make fresh salsa, sew on a button, make a bird house, or show an animal? If so, you've given a demonstration.

The demonstration and illustrated talk are both effective teaching methods. However, you need to understand the difference between the two to best present your idea. One type of talk is of no greater value than the other.

Decide which method will be the most effective to show what you would like to teach. Members occasionally confuse an illustrated talk with a demonstration. An illustrated talk tells how, but a demonstration shows how. Often when the demonstration is over, there is a finished product to show the audience.

If the topic you're thinking about doesn't lend itself to showing (demonstration), perhaps you could tell how (illustrated talk). The following summary may be useful.

Demonstrations:

- show how,
- often produce a finished product, e.g., fresh salsa,
- teach, and
- are for any age 4-H member.

Demonstrations at a glance

Show (not tell) how.

Are for any 4-H member.

Make or do something, often with an end product.

Visuals are encouraged, when they complement.

Questions are asked of the presenter.

Are generally from 5 to 15 minutes long.

Demonstrations may be up to 10 minutes long for 7- to 13-year-olds and up to 15 minutes long for 14- to 18-year-olds.

Team demonstrations

Demonstrations may be done individually or in a team, usually by two members in the same age division.

A team demonstration might be desirable when:

- more than two hands are needed to demonstrate the idea;
- friends or first-time presenters can work together; or
- talking and demonstrating are difficult to do at the same time.

Team demonstrations require teamwork and cooperation. They also require practice to do well. Some topics are a natural for a team demonstration, but other topics are difficult for a team to demonstrate well. If that's the case, it may be better to present the demonstration as an individual.

When giving a team demonstration, it's important to use a balanced approach. One person should not talk and demonstrate for long periods while the other person stands and listens. There should be a smooth ebb and flow of talking and demonstrating between team members. The presentation should seem natural, like a conversation between two friends. If questions are answered at the end, presenters should alternate in answering them. The other presenter may add more information at the conclusion of the answer.

Purpose of a demonstration

An effective, successful demonstration should:

- show an audience the importance of a practice or procedure;
- convince an audience of its value;
- create in the audience the desire to put the same practice or procedure to use.

Plan the demonstration

The most successful presentations reflect your own ideas and are expressed in your own words. Consider the following steps when planning and presenting a demonstration:

1. Select a subject or topic.
2. Gather information.
3. Choose a title.
4. Develop an outline.
5. Choose visuals, if appropriate.
6. Practice delivery.

I. Select a topic

The topic should fit your interest, experience, knowledge, and skill. 4-H projects are excellent sources of topics for presentations. You will be most successful if you select a subject from your own project experience. When selecting a subject, ask yourself:

- Is the subject learned as part of my 4-H experiences?
- Is it of interest to others?
- Does it have enough steps to demonstrate?
- Can an audience see it easily?
- Can it be given in the time allowed?
- Is it within my ability (not too simple, but not too difficult)?



If “yes” is the answer to each of these questions, you are ready for the next step.

2. Gather information

Be selective when choosing resources. Make every effort to ensure the information is accurate, up to date, and complete. Some sources for information are:

- 4-H project manuals
- K-State Research and Extension publications
- Textbooks
- Websites and libraries
- Newspapers and magazines
- Local experts in their fields
- Manufacturers

3. Choose a title

Spend time thinking about a title. This is your first opportunity to capture the audience’s attention. Once this is accomplished, you will find public speaking easier. Think of the books you have read or movies you’ve watched because the titles were interesting.

Effective titles are short, descriptive, and engaging. A title should suggest the presentation subject without telling the whole story.

4. Develop an outline

After determining the topic, gathering all necessary information, and selecting a title, you are ready to put it down in writing — in outline form.

Organization is essential for developing a good presentation with a clear, concise message. The outline serves as a guide to:

- present material in a logical sequence;
- determine the balance between talking and doing;
- relate the visuals, equipment, and supplies with the information given;
- emphasize the essential; delete the unimportant.

One simple method for writing an outline is shown in the 4-H Demonstration and Illustrated Talk Outline Planning Form (4H981). This form helps you outline each step in the process or procedure. There are many other types of outlines. The important thing is to find an outline form that has meaning to you and you will use. The outline method of planning demonstrations teaches organization.

Parts of a demonstration

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

1. The **introduction** to a demonstration is your second opportunity (after the title) to capture the audience's attention. A good introduction is relatively short and has ingenuity and variety. To get attention, do one of the following:
 - Ask a question.
 - State a problem.
 - Show a unique object or picture.
 - Tell a startling fact or statistic.
 - Make a challenging statement.
 - Show a finished product.
 - Use a quote or headline.
 - Tell a short story.
2. The **body** is the main part of the demonstration and should be about 80 percent of your talk. First, tell what it is you will be demonstrating. Perhaps it is building a birdhouse or making fresh salsa. Then, following your outline, demonstrate the process.
3. The **summary** or conclusion is concise and pertinent. A summary should not restate each step, but should highlight a few important ideas for the audience to remember. You can do this by motivation — appealing to the values and interest of the audience. The motivation might include such things as saving money, time, or energy.

Prepare to answer questions

Allow time for questions after a demonstration. Think about questions you could be asked, and prepare answers ahead of time. Avoid overusing the phrase “The question has been asked . . .” (However, you may need to restate a question if some audience members are unable to hear it.) Questions are asked for two reasons:

- To clarify some point or points that were not covered or the judge failed to hear.

Other resources to help you

4-H Communication Fact Sheets:

- 4H1105, Kansas 4-H Project Talk Scoresheet
- 4H1104, Kansas 4-H Demonstration and Illustrated Talk Scoresheet
- 4H1103, Kansas 4-H Public Speaking Scoresheet
- 4H978, Kansas 4-H Presentation Overview
- 4H979, Kansas 4-H Project Talks
- 4H981, Kansas 4-H Demonstration or Illustrated Talk Outline Form
- 4H982, Kansas 4-H Illustrated Talks
- 4H983, Kansas 4-H Public Speaking
- 4H984, Effective Presentation Tips
- 4H985, Preparing and Using Visual Aids
- 4H986, Presentation Brainstorming Activity

- To check your knowledge.

When answering questions:

- Give only correct answers.
- Don't bluff. If you don't know the answer, admit it.
- If you are unable to answer a question, refer the questioner to a possible source.
- Use variety in replying to questions.

5. Choose visuals

Visual aids — either a poster or electronic medium — can help the audience better understand and remember what you are telling them. Visuals should be used only if they make the presentation more effective and should not distract from it. They can also help you remember what to do and say next and are preferred to note cards.

6. Practice delivery

Practice is important if you want to become a skilled presenter. Only through practice can improvement be made and presentations polished. Try making a video of your presentation. It will help you see ways to improve your posture, eye contact, delivery speed, voice, enunciation, mannerisms and gestures, general appearance, demeanor (smile and other facial expressions), and organization.

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Photo courtesy of Isabelle Jones, Ellis County

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