



Kansas 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 shorter).

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

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.

- is a part of, or closely related to, your project.

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 websites 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 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

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
- 4H980, Kansas 4-H Demonstrations
- 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

words used should fit you and be said in the way you would say them.

- 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.

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