

Publication #1806

---

Version: 2003



B.C. 4-H

# Communication Manual

# Public Speaking



## Purpose of Public Speaking in 4-H Programs

Making people want to listen to you is an important life skill to develop. Communicating ideas and information in an organized manner with poise and self-confidence is a skill that can be developed by participating in the 4-H public speaking activities.

## Who is the “Public” in Public Speaking?

The “Public” can be a small group in a committee meeting or a large audience at a political rally. The “public” is not only an audience in the usually understood sense of the word, but any group of people being addressed by an individual speaker. This is an important point to understand in the developmental 4-H public speaking program. The audience, purpose, time, place and the speaker’s confidence and experience are all important in choosing public speaking opportunities through which to develop skills.

## Purpose of Public Speaking

Public speaking in our society has many different purposes:

- to entertain
- to inform
- to talk
- to persuade
- to sell
- to introduce
- to thank
- to praise and condemn
- to present or accept

## Preparing to Speak in Public

Begin where you feel comfortable. If you’re ready to prepare a speech here are some guidelines.

## Subject

- Select a subject first, the title comes later!
- Is it appropriate for your age, interests and your audience?
- It may be something you already know about that you’re interested in investigating further. If you are interested and enthused, it will be easier to give an interesting speech.
- If it is a very broad or general topic, can you reduce it to a more specific subject?
- Gather information by reading or listening and taking notes.

## Outline

It is very important to make an outline in point form so you can build the speech on it. It should have three main parts.

### Introduction

The speaker should begin their presentation with an appropriate salutation - "Mr. (Madam), Chairman, Honourable Judges, Fellow Speakers, Ladies and Gentlemen...".

Introduce your subject clearly and precisely so the audience is not wondering what you are speaking about. Use originality and creativity. There are many interesting ways of catching an audience's interest; i.e. tone of voice, an anecdote, a poem or questions.

### Body

The body represents about four-fifths of your speech. Describe the what, where, when and why of your subject. Give audience concise and informative facts. Use reliable sources of information, and cite the source if practical and appropriate. Develop this information in logical order so the audience is not confused. Develop one main idea and select three or four important points to build that idea.

### Summary

Stress the main points of interest, without the detail. Include what you especially want the audience to remember. Relate the summary to the introduction so you show you have achieved the objectives you set out in the beginning.

INTRODUCTION



## Preparation and Practice

Prepare your speech from your knowledge and information about the topic, building it on the outline. You may wish to write it out in full, then reduce it again to main points written on index cards, which you will use during presentation.

## Presentation

1. Speak from your knowledge of the subject. It doesn't matter if you use the same words each time you practice or deliver the speech, as long as you stay with your organized outline! Don't be afraid to rearrange it if you find it necessary after you've practised a few times.
2. Talk with, not "at," your audience. A speaker who memorizes his speech may tend to forget that he is trying to communicate an idea to his audience. Perhaps the best rule to keep in mind is for the speaker to "tell" his audience what he wants them to know.
3. Use a variety of delivery techniques. Hand gestures and body movements, such as taking a couple steps, should be natural. Look at



each member of the audience. If the audience is large this may be impossible but be sure and look in the general direction of all persons in the audience. Don't ignore those few sitting off to the left side.

4. Let your voice work for you. Varying the pitch of your voice and the speed of delivery will help your audience understand. Although shouting may be necessary for part of your speech, a whisper may also be effective and a long pause may draw a great deal of attention to what you are about to say. Be sure you pronounce each word correctly and that you project each word so everyone can hear. If you let your voice fall off at the end of a sentence some members of your audience may not hear what you have to say.
5. Practice your speech in front of a mirror, and for your family or friends, so you get "feedback"— can they hear you, are you speaking clearly? Taperecord it to play it back for yourself to evaluate your voice.
6. Dress appropriately and use the environment to help, not hurt, your presentation. Public presentations may or may not require a suit or a dress depending on where you are delivering your presentation. Try to eliminate elements in your environment that may distract the audience. Wait for an aeroplane to fly over or a clap of thunder to stop.
7. Above all—be yourself. There is no absolutely right or wrong way to deliver a speech. What other people say or do may help them communicate an idea but might not work for you. Remember YOU are trying to communicate your idea to someone else. Use the techniques that work best for you. Do it your way.

## Evaluation

Examining the public speaking card is a good technique to use as you develop a speech to see if it includes the criteria on which you will be evaluated.

## Competitions

For specific information on district, regional and provincial public speaking competitions, consult the section on "competitions" in your *Program Leaders Communication Guide*.

## Resources

- Kit #6, *A Guide to Public Speaking*.
- Slide Series #152, *How to Give a Good Speech*.
- 4-H #148 (E), *Public Speaking Score Card*.
- 4-H #148 (P), *Public Speaking Impromptu Score Card*.
- 4-H #1805, *Communication Leaders Guide*.

