



4-H Presentations

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Perfecting Presentations

Here are some ideas about perfecting presentations from a person who has given over a dozen 4-H presentations and viewed hundreds of them. I hope you find the suggestions helpful.

Keep it simple! Sometimes the simplest ideas presented well are better than complex ideas presented poorly. I once saw a wonderful demonstration on wrapping packages—a very simple idea, done very well.

I can't hear you! Look around the room and audience before you give your presentation. Notice if there is anyone in the audience wearing a hearing aide (particularly a judge), if so, speak up a little bit. That paid off for me once as a judge wrote on the comment sheet that I placed highest because I was the only one he could hear.

Go the distance! Make sure your visual aids are easy to read. Try to sit at a distance from your visual aid and see if you can read it easily. When you are creating a visual aid it may seem fine because you are working so close, but be sure to check it from a distance.

Practice, practice, practice! I remember my sisters and me practicing our demonstrations 2-3 times a night for a month before demonstration day. We were so prepared that we didn't need to be nervous. We also found out what might go wrong while we were presenting and how to correct difficulties in front of an audience. Also, don't forget to practice in your mind. Visualize yourself doing well.

Make it clear! Just as it is important for people to see your visual aids, it is important for them to see your work. Use clear containers. For cooking demonstrations, custard cups and glass bowls are necessary. Remember also to move items that are between you and the audience. For instance, if you are stirring a mixture, be sure you haven't set the ingredients in front of the bowl. Using trays can help you organize your supplies and makes them easy to move all at once. Put items you no longer need on a tray and move it to the side or to a back table. It is easy to use trays on the front table—one for items you are using and the other for used or dirty items. A cloth can cover dirty items. Think about how your table looks from the audience's view. Also, cover brand names when giving a presentation. You don't want to appear that you are endorsing a certain product.

Mirrors! Mirrors are helpful in several ways. First of all, watch yourself in the mirror as you practice. You will see mistakes you are making and can correct them. Also, you may use a video tape for the same purpose. I don't know any high school sports team that doesn't make use of video to improve their game. You could use this same idea for presentations. Also, use a mirror to show the audience what you are doing. If you are tooling on a piece of leather, use a large mirror to show the audience what that looks like. It is very hard for an audience to see work that is being done on a flat surface. Some projects could be done on a table podium turned with the slanted surface to the audience. Work on a vertical surface rather than a flat one when possible.

Theme! If you can, use a theme or catchy title throughout your presentation, it will have more impact. For instance, a speech on drinking and driving could use "Humpty Dumpty had been at the bar, then Humpty Dumpty got in his car, now all the doctors and policemen, can't put my sister together again. The solution for drinking and driving is not as simple as a nursery rhyme..." You could use the same sort of verse as a conclusion. Think how much more impact that introduction would have rather than: "Hi, my name is Jane Wolery and today I'm going to talk to you about drinking and driving."

Visual Aids! Put borders on your visual aids. You can spiff up a simple poster by using ribbon to put borders around the edges or use a paper cutter and construction paper. Also, use colors that are easy to see. Notice if yellow on white has more impact or if black on yellow is better. Also, make use of computers to do the lettering for you. You can increase font size and change styles. It is much easier than the 'old' way of using stencils and markers. You can also use stencils on construction paper to cut out and glue onto your poster, which also looks better than markers most of the time. Another tip

with color is to 'match' your posters or presentation. Two of my students presented a speech at the national level. They wore black dress suits with red tuxedo shirts. Their posters were black with red borders and red arrows. They made speech holders with laminated construction paper that also had black and red combined with arrow graphics. They made a visual impact before they even opened their mouths. My mother always made us tablecloths to match our posters and if we were doing a food demonstration we had matching aprons.

Courtesy and cleanliness! Ask the judges if they are ready for you to begin before you start. Wipe the tables before and after you use them. One year a boy from my club was showing a rabbit and nature called right there on the table. The next presenter was doing a foods demonstration. Both scores had comments on their sheets thanking them for cleaning the table. He had cleaned it when he was done and she cleaned it before she put her tablecloth down (another good reason for tablecloths)!

Computer Presentations! Most of the professional work force seems to be using computer software technology for presentations, conventions and classes. If 4-Hers have the opportunity to use such technology, then they can build additional skills. Different types of presentations have different requirements for visual aids. If *Power Point* and *Presentations* software are appropriate and effective, our 4-Hers should be using them. When was the last time you saw a professional presentation with a poster? Using technology to the best possible advantage will be a life-skill of the current generation of 4-H members. 4-Hers will need to learn, however, that a glitzy computer program alone will not make them a good presenter. They still need to develop the skill of speaking before an audience - voice projection, inflection, eye contact, poise,

logical progression, etc. Each type of visual aid has its place and computer technology can be considered a valid option for 4-H presentations.

Ideas for Presentation Topics

Most of the following ideas are for "how-to" presentations or demonstrations. You can get ideas everywhere-internet, libraries, instructional videos, HGTV, etc. There are just so many ideas and possibilities that every 4-Her should be able to find a topic. The titles are just suggestions. Try to make your titles interesting.

- You Show 'Em - How to prepare vegetables for show
- A Model Situation - How to model for style shows
- Shake 'Em Up Orange Bars - Bar cookies made in a jar.
- From Udder to Butter - Make butter either with a churn or can
- Kick the Can Ice Cream - Make ice cream in cans.
- Who Cut the Cheese? - Demonstrate how to make cheese/cottage cheese
- Say Cheese Please - Presentation on different types, varieties and history of cheeses
- The Incredible, Edible Egg - Show egg cookery techniques or how eggs are graded or the growth process of eggs (a nice complement to the poultry project)
- Electricity - How does it get to your house
- Right and Wrong - Good team demonstration to have one person perform the correct procedure and one person perform the incorrect procedure
- Wood You Please - Wood working techniques or tools explained
- Safety First - Safety presentations can be done in all areas.
- Dancing - Another good team presentation
- Animal Bread - Many variations available
- Bumpy Banana Dinosaur Bread - Recipe from Homemaker's School
- Polly Wants a Cracker - Homemade crackers
- Animal Vegetable Snacks
- Fritter Critters - Batter finger steaks
- A Different Breed of Animal - Balloon animals
- CPR - A good team demonstration
- Tip the Table in Your Favor - Table settings
- Napkin Folding - For banquets
- Fly-Fishing Techniques
- Grand Old Flag - How to care, display, etc. the American flag
- Breads - Unleavened breads of the world (tortillas, lefse, etc.)
- How to Show an Animal - Rabbit, sheep, etc.
- The Seed Story - How seeds grow?
- Splish, Splash - How to give a baby a bath
- Let Me Spin You a Tale - How to spin wool
- I'll Tan Your Hide - Show how to tan hides or about different animal hides
- Quilting - Demonstrate easy techniques
- Patterns - How to use a sewing pattern or read one
- Harmonica - How to play the harmonica
- I Believe in Music - Demonstration of basic musical techniques and terms or reading notes
- Are You Chicken? - How to cut up a chicken
- For Birds - How to make bird food or a bird feeder
- Garnishes - Lots of creative items could be done

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- Science Experiments You Can Eat - This is a book that has lots of ideas
 - Tie One On - How to tie scarves or ties
 - That's Just Nuts - Tell about varieties and growing of nuts
 - Understanding Radon
 - Pizza Party - Vegetable, fruit, brownie or marshmallow treat pizzas
 - Harvest - Tell about different barley or wheat varieties
 - Picture Perfect - Demonstrate how to use a camera or develop film
 - The Undemonstration - Demonstrate how to give a demonstration
 - Pucker Power - Make batteries from lemons and discuss a closed circuit
 - Here's the Dirt - Soil testing
 - A Bum Wrap - How to wrap gifts on a bag lady's budget: cut out a man's collar and tie with scraps, use dried weeds, make a brown sack into a house or reindeer, black spots on white freezer wrap for "udderly" cute packages
 - Marvelous Marbling - Fabric dyeing technique
 - Bonding Time - Show welding techniques
 - Sittin' Tall in the Saddle - How to saddle a horse properly
 - When Life Gives You Lemons - Could do a cute demonstration on lemonade.
 - See Spot? See Spot Run - Demonstration on stain removal
 - Don't Burst My Bubble - Could do wonderful things with a presentation on blowing bubbles
 - Just Watching My Soaps - Demonstrate how to make soap
 - Don't Cross Me? - Teach basic cross stitch methods.
 - This Little Light of Mine - Candle making methods
 - Something is Fishy Here - Show how to fillet a fish or gut one
 - You'll Dye for It - Different dyeing techniques
 - It's Sew Simple - How to thread a sewing machine
 - The Web - How to use the Internet
 - No Words at All - Teach simple sign language skills
 - Just Checking - How to open a checking account or balance a check register or write a check
 - Color Analysis
 - Calligraphy
 - Rope Making
 - Discuss diseases of animals
 - One to Get Ready, Two for the Show - How to prepare animals for showmanship
 - Oh the Tangled Webs We Weave - Show pin weaving techniques
 - Mooove Over - Lactose intolerance or how to milk a cow/goat
 - Computer Crazy - Show how to use a computer program
 - A is for Apple - Tell about different varieties and uses of apples
 - B is for Banana - A follow up to the 'A is for Apple' presentation
 - Just Clowning Around - Show how to paint a face to be a clown and give history of clowns in rodeo and circus life
 - I Can Can - Show proper techniques for food preservation
 - You Ought to Be in Pictures - Show how to set up amateur portraits using backgrounds and lights. Also show how to position a model and work with one
 - I'll Second That! - Parliamentary procedure would make a great topic for a team presentation
 - Brand Names - Tell about the history of branding cattle
 - We're on a Roll Now - Show how to make several different shapes of bread rolls

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- Siting on Pins and Needles - Tell about the different types of needles and pins and how they are used
 - Tea Time - Demonstrate how to make a good cup of tea and the different accessories for making tea. Could include safety issues with sun tea
 - Draw Me the Picture - Give an illustrated talk to 'draw a picture' of how pencils are made
 - Hot Potato - An illustrated talk or demonstration on varieties and uses of potatoes and their historical value
 - Tall Tales - Demonstration on how to tell a story. Could be for a child development or it could relate to storytelling through history and as a theatrical art
 - Can I Have A Piece - Show how to cut pieces for quilts
 - Sunset Strip - Show basic techniques for strip quilting
 - What Are You Crowing About? - Talk on the different breeds of poultry
 - I've Lost My Marbles! - Show marble games
 - The Games People Play - Do an illustrated talk or demonstration. A talk could be about the different ways that games have changed or stayed the same throughout time. A demonstration could be on how to play games like 'jacks' and 'cat's in the cradle'
 - Go Fly A Kite - Tell about the different types of kites or demonstrate how to make a kite
 - Let's Get Dirty - Do gelatin dirt cups with worms
 - Wiggle Jiggle - There are a variety of gelatin desserts that could be made for a demonstration
 - Peculiar Pizza - There is a recipe for crazy topped brownie pizza that is really cute
 - Chocolate - An illustrated talk could give the history and uses of chocolate
 - The Great White Hunter - Talk on different hunting equipment or bugling techniques
 - What Time Is It? - Show the different instruments used to measure time throughout the ages
 - Winter Survival - Show how to make a winter survival kit for vehicles and give suggestion for what to do if you are caught during the winter. Could do a coffee can and cover it so it looked like a 'Lifesaver'
 - Snowflakes - Give information on different types of snowflakes. There is even a way to imprint snowflake patterns to preserve them
 - Why Do Leaves Turn? - Could do a variety of talks on the types of trees and leaves and the reason they fall or how leaves grow during certain seasons
 - I'm All Dried Up! - Show how to dry and preserve flowers
 - Something Smells! - A talk about how perfumes are made
 - What a Deal? Show different card games
 - Now That's a Nice Carcass! - Tell how carcasses are judged
 - Where's the Beef? - Talk on how meat is cut and where the different types of meat come from on the carcass. This project could be expanded to include the best cookery methods for different types of beef
 - Easter Eggs - Different ways to decorate
 - Purchasing and Returning - Illustrated talk on how to check into consumer issues at different stores. Could be a team demonstration with one person posing as a sales clerk
 - Miss Manners - Could be a team demonstration with right and wrong on table manners
 - Origami - Show different techniques for paper folding

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- Putting on the Polishing Touch - Refinishing antiques
 - Old, But Not Too Old - Depression glass
 - Photo Finish - Demonstrate how to get better pictures.
 - A Pressing Matter or Pumping Iron - Demonstrate how to iron different clothes and fabrics
 - Hats Off! - History of different types of hats and songs that go with hats. Manners associated with hats could be explained as well as the bridal veil custom
 - Just a Kernel of Truth - Tell the history of popcorn, 'amazing' popcorn facts, make a popcorn treat.
 - Branch Out in a New Direction - Shelterbelt design and maintenance.
 - All Mixed Up - How to mix rations for market animals
 - How to Float Your Bloat - Tips for dealing with bloated animals, what causes bloat, etc.
 - Uprooted - How to repot house plants
 - Stand Up Straight - Tips on posture and importance of posture for health.
 - Zip, Zip, Zippy - How to apply a zipper or the history of the zipper, etc.
 - It's a Snap - Show different types of snaps and correct way to apply.
 - Lego My Lego - Any information about the Lego.

The library is filled with "how to" books and videos and audio cassettes. Please look at your library for other ideas. Remember, a presentation is a great way for you to learn about an area of interest and share it with others!

Favorite Resources

Web Sites:

howstuffworks.com

recipesource.com

family.com

Magazines:

Family Fun

Quick Cooking

Books:

Science Experiments You Can Eat

By: Vicki Cobb

Teamwork and Team Play

By: Jim Cain & Barry Jolliff

Montana State University Extension

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1. Demonstrations
2. Speeches

Pennsylvania State University-Ext.

814-865-6713

ecm3@psu.edu

1. Posters: Design & Production
2. Exhibits: Design & Production
3. Flip Charts for Effective Presentations

If you have great ideas, we'd love to see them. Email additional ideas to: tetonmsu@3rivers.net

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