

Texas Agricultural Extension Service



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Preparing to Give Your Speech



A speech should be prepared enough in advance to allow for adequate practice. It is best not to memorize it word for word, but rather to visualize and learn the sequence of the speech.

Transfer the detailed outline to an abbreviated form on notecards. You will need only a key word or memory lead to bring the thought to mind. Often when you write a speech out word for word, you tend to read or memorize. Speeches should be spontaneous and fresh.

After you transfer your speech to notecards, you are ready to practice. Carry your cards with you and rehearse orally or silently as often as possible.

Before speaking, reduce the number of notecards, type or write in waterproof ink and number them.

Memorize the introduction and the conclusion. You should never look at your notes for those important parts of your speech.

Have a "dress" rehearsal. Put on the clothes you plan to wear, and try your speech using your notecards. Unless you are told that the occasion is informal, nice clothes are appropriate. For males this means a coat and a tie, either suit pants or dress pants and a solid-colored shirt. It also means dark socks and shoes. Females should wear a nice dress with a proper hem length, hose and heels. Some females even carry an extra pair of hose. Both males and females should dress attractively and simply. Avoid clothing or accessories that detract from what you are saying. Solid colors or small patterns are better than large prints or plaids.

New clothes are not recommended. Until you wear and work in clothes, you have no idea how they fit and move. Polish your comfortable shoes (if they are in good shape) and wear them. If you must wear new shoes, break them in before the speech.

As you conduct your dress rehearsal, tape record your speech and listen to it to hear what you are ac-

tually saying. Make the necessary corrections and listen again. If time permits, videotape your speech and view the playback. This is helpful in recognizing mannerisms, gestures or facial expressions that distract or enhance the speech.

Arrival

Arrive early enough to check the facilities. Check the room temperature. The cooler the room is, the more responsive the audience will be. Test the microphone. You should be able to stand eight to ten inches away from it and speak in a conversational tone. Check the route you will take from your seat to the lectern or speaker's stand. Be aware of steps or obstacles.

Eat ahead of time. Even if a meal is provided, most speakers do not perform as well on a full stomach. This will not be your "last supper!" Perhaps you can arrange to have your meal served after you speak. If not, eat and drink lightly during the meal.

Microphone Tips

A microphone can be your best aid or your worst enemy. A mike does not guarantee quality.

Do not use a mike unless it is necessary. When you boost your voice, naturally you also increase your energy level. Vocal "pumping" to project to the back row or to the most distant corner is what makes a speaker feel stronger and more in charge.

If you choose to use a mike, adjust it to your height. The audience will wait; they are here to hear you. Once you have adjusted it, do not touch it again. Back away if it hums or you get feedback.

A mike test is conducted by speaking, not thumping, tapping or blowing. This test should be conducted before you begin the program.

Delivering Your Speech



After the toastmaster or chairperson introduces you:

- Rise and walk to the lectern.
- Take a deep breath and exhale slowly.
- Smile.
- Establish eye contact with at least three friendly faces.
- Adjust the microphone.
- Wait until the audience is quiet. Do not rush, give them time to look you over.
- Briefly acknowledge your introduction, if necessary.
- Begin speaking . . . you are in control.

Speak Out

Speak clearly and distinctly. Make sure you are being heard. Do not rush. Your audience has not heard this speech, so be especially careful not to speak too fast, not to drop your voice at the end of sentences, run your words together or speak too softly.

Establish Eye Contact

Establish eye contact with your audience. Each person in the audience should feel as if you are talking personally to him. With a small audience, use a semi-circular pattern of eye contact. With larger groups, a figure-eight pattern will include all members of your audience. You should spend at least 75 percent of your speech making eye contact. Strong effective eye contact means holding your look until the audience member responds to you.

Audiences take on the emotion of the speaker, so use appropriate expressions. Smile from time to time, but not when you are talking about a serious subject.

Check Posture

Stand up straight with your feet slightly apart. Distribute your weight on both feet, being careful not to lock your knees. Avoid swaying back and forth or rocking up and down. Feel free to move about as long as the movements are not distracting from what you are saying.



Watch Hands

Use your hands for meaningful gestures. When you are not using them, let them drop loosely to your sides or place them on each side of the lectern, "gesture ready." Relax and keep your shoulders loose. Let your arm pits breathe . . . and do not forget the "right and left guard."

Choose Words Carefully

Be certain that the words you use in your speech have the same meaning to your audience that they have to you.

Make a Graceful Exit

After the conclusion, it is inappropriate to say the token "thank you" we often hear. This "amen" ending style, which is popular with many speakers, is not necessary. However, it is appropriate to warmly compliment the audience for being good listeners or to thank them for allowing you the opportunity to share with them. If your listeners are inspired by your final words, they will remember the speech as a positive experience.

Adapt for Kind of Speech

The kinds of speeches used most often by 4-H members are discussed in this section. The *platform speech*, which includes method demonstrations, has been the type discussed up to this point. The following sections give pointers on for it.

The Presiding Function

Going to the Platform

If possible, walk to the platform ahead of time, so you will feel at home there. Get a feel for the size of the room, and locate your own chair.

You are the host or hostess, and must recognize your audience as soon as you approach the platform. Locate your chair in your thought before you go on — walk to it, looking at your audience.

Usually you are seated to the left of the speaker. If others are to be seated beyond you, stand beside your chair until the others reach their places.

Sitting on the Platform

- Keep forward foot flat on the floor, feet touching.

- Never cross your legs.

- Be gracious to others on the platform with you.

- *Listen* while others are speaking. Never go over your notes or rattle papers while your guest is speaking.

- Forget yourself — your clothing — keep hands away from face and hair.

- Breathe deeply — it will help you to relax.

Going to the Lectern

Walk naturally. Have your notes ready, well marked in large enough print, so you can read them at a glance. Take your time.

Wait for the audience to become quiet. Have a friendly feeling toward your audience — not superior or inferior.

Look at your audience before you speak each time. Recognize persons farthest away. Being conscious of them will enable you to reach them with a free voice. Talk as though you were speaking to just *one* person.

Introducing Your Speaker

Chat with your speakers beforehand. Be sure you have the correct pronunciation and statement of their names, titles, organizations represented and subjects.

It is always correct to give briefly the qualifications, experience and achievements of the speaker, but do not build him up with a "wordy" introduction. An extemporaneous introduction is better — more natural and friendly. Make each statement simple, but give sufficient information about your speaker to interest your audience.

Speakers can do better when they have a sincere, friendly introduction. Help your audience to realize that the speaker is an authority on his subject. You can help them want to listen intently.

Avoid trite phrases, such as "needs no introduction" or "I give you." If you are presenting someone well known to your audience, emphasize the pleasure it is to hear him again, and make him feel welcome.

Give the speaker's name at the end of your introduction. A speaker usually rises when his name is spoken. Keep facing your audience as you give the name.

Example: "4-H members - I present to you, Mr. Smith," then turn to your speaker and address him,

Example Conclusions

Here are some examples to give you ideas. A story and a call for action:

.....
The story is told of a French Marshall who, when his years of serving his country ended, went into retirement on an estate. Wishing to make the estate more beautiful, he called his gardener and asked that a certain kind of tree be planted on the grounds.

The gardener assured him, "The tree will not attain its full beauty for one hundred years."

"In that case," replied the Marshall, "there is not a moment to lose. Plant it this very afternoon." Let us then begin this project immediately as we haven't a moment to lose.

.....
In Hartford, Connecticut, in the year 1789, the skies at noon turned from blue to gray, and by midafternoon the city was so dark that, in this

religious age, men fell on their knees and begged a final blessing before the end came. The Connecticut House of Representatives was in session and many members, likewise fearful, clamored for immediate adjournment. The Speaker of the House, Colonel Davenport, arose and silenced the uproar with these memorable words:

"The Day of Judgment is either at hand or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles be brought."

.....
We can never solve the known and unknown problems facing our environment overnight, but we can make a beginning for ourselves and for our children's children.

A quote:

As John Dewey once said, "*What each parent wants for his children, must the entire community want for all children?*"

pany of men. He marched them to the right and the right again, and suddenly he found they were marching straight for the edge of a cliff. All the commands deserted him - he could not think of the command to turn about and back toward safety. As he stood there in panicked silence, one of the men in the company called out, "Say something, Lieutenant, even if it's only goodbye." Before I say "goodbye" to you today, I have a few words to say in between. I am here to talk to you on the subject of _____.

Body

First, write the body of your speech. This is the longest part of your presentation, and gives the important facts you are covering. Select from two to five main points, depending on the length of the talk, and support each with at least two illustrations.

Take each point in turn. Select a lead sentence and expand on it. The basic thought should be concentrated in the first sentence. Each following sentence should relate directly to the basic thought of the total paragraph.

In building your ideas, begin with something familiar to your audience. Move from the known to the unknown.

Remember to stick to the subject. The speech should be easy to follow and every bit of information should pertain to the purpose of the speech. Give concrete examples for the audience to remember.

Make your language simple and colorful. Help your audience visualize your presentation. Instead of saying "the tornado was 100 yards wide," you could say "its path was as wide as a football field."

Conclusion

Next, write the conclusion. Since the conclusion is such a vital part of the presentation, spend adequate time on this area. Careful planning is needed; conclusions do not just happen. Your audience must be able to tell by your conclusion that you are "wrapping it up." Remember in your conclusion:

- Do not introduce new material.
- Avoid false endings.
- End with the idea you most want remembered.
- Summarize without repeating the speech.

- Stop talking before you begin walking away.
- Some suggestions for planning your conclusion:
1. Summarize important points one by one.
 2. Use a quotation, a story or a poem that summarizes the importance of what you have said.
 3. Ask questions. For example, "What can you and I do about this problem or situation?" Answer the question by stating clearly what can be gained by taking action, and what can be lost if action is not taken.
 4. Call for action on the part of the audience. Challenge them to do something.

Outline

A speech outline should look similar to this:

- I. Introduction
 - A. Response to welcome
 - B. Opening (use one)
 1. Personal anecdote
 2. Startling statement or fact
 3. Appropriate quotation
 4. Appropriate poem
 5. Appropriate story
 - C. Preview or purpose of what you plan to tell them
- II. Body
 - A. Main point no. 1 (past . . . present . . . future)
 1. Support material (story, incidents, exhibits, demonstrations, experiences, expert testimony or quotation)
 2. Support material
 - B. Main point no. 2 (problems . . . damage . . . solution)
 1. Support material (use at least two support statements or proofs for each point)
 2. Support material
 - C. Main point no. 3 (cause . . . effect . . . action)
 1. Support material
 2. Support material
- III. Conclusion
 - A. Summary of points one by one
 - B. Quotation, story or poem that summarizes the importance of what you had to say
 - C. Call for action

"Mr. Smith." Look at him as a friend you are eager to hear.

Another example: "I am happy to introduce Mr. Smith who will speak on the subject _____. I know you will enjoy hearing Mr. Smith."

After your speaker has risen, remain at the lectern, shake his hand, turn and walk to your chair. Do not walk backwards.

Responding to the Speech

Listen attentively to your speaker. At the conclusion of the talk, thank your speaker graciously. You may refer to some interesting point but make it short and impersonal. A speaker likes to know when he has made a good impression with the audience.

Ending the Program

Shake hands with your speaker. Show appreciation. Accompany guests from the platform. Help them with coats and briefcases and go to the door with them if they are leaving. Treat them as you would a guest in your own home.

General Tips

- Speak well yourself.
- Speak with sincerity and enthusiasm.
- Avoid negative remarks or excuses.
- Learn to listen — even when you are standing before an audience and do not know what to say next. If you listen, ideas will come.
- Think of one thing — the person you are to introduce and his subject. Never mind what the audience thinks. Never mind how you look. Attend to all that carefully, before you go on the platform.
- The audience is not interested in you, but in the "ideas" that will reach them through you as their presiding officer.
- If you seem to go blank — pause and listen. A new idea will come. Pause and listen again — give out the next thought that comes pouring in. It's very simple if you keep your mind on your subject and off yourself. Since you cannot think of two things at once, keeping your mind on your subject automatically makes you less self-conscious.
- Be yourself — do not try to imitate anyone. Give your ideas. No one can give an idea exactly the way you will. Your tones, expressions and thoughts will be different — they will be you.
- Enjoy expressing the ideas that come to you.
- Enjoy your opportunity to participate in the program.

The Introductory Speech

Who is this person? An audience usually wants to know the speaker's name. Some of the audience may know him, many will not. Introduce the speaker as someone the audience would like to know.

Where does he come from? Both where he came from originally and where he comes from at present should be mentioned.

Is he qualified on this subject? Choose from the speaker's experience, abilities and qualifications those things that relate to this subject. This ethical proof is necessary for right reception of the speech.

Why should I listen? Show a need for information on this subject. Create an interest, even suspense, in the speech subject.

When you introduce a speaker you should:

- Usually cover all four questions listed above.
- Be brief . . . brief . . . brief!
- Speak loudly and clearly.
- Plan, prepare and practice your speech.
- Check the introduction you plan to make with the speaker.
- Ask the speaker if he minds a joke about himself.
- Adjust the nature of the introduction to the tone of the speech.
- Sound enthusiastic about having him as a speaker.
- Announce the title and/or subject of the speech. Remain standing until the speaker has taken his place.
- When you introduce a speaker, you should avoid using trite remarks such as:
 - "We are fortunate tonight to have . . ."
 - "We are greatly honored by . . ."
 - "Our speaker tonight needs no introduction . . ."
 - "At this time we would like Mrs. Hill to say a few words . . ."
 - "Now, at this time, we would like to introduce our speaker. Let's make welcome. . ."
- Do not build the speaker up too much.
- Do not mix introductions with announcements, committee reports, etc.

- Avoid embarrassing the speaker by:
 - Apologizing for the fact that he is a substitute.
 - Apologizing for the fact that he is not well-known.
 - Telling embarrassing stories about him.
- Never be guilty of stealing his speech material.
- Do not look at the speaker when introducing him. Aim your remarks at the audience.
- Do not rehash the speech after the speaker has finished.
- Pronounce the speaker's name correctly.

The Presentation Speech

The audience wants to know:

- Why you are taking their time and this occasion to make the presentation.
- Why this honor is being given.
- Who the donors are.
- The name of the person receiving an award at the end of your speech.
- Why he got the award instead of someone else.
- Specific accomplishments of this person.
- The influence this person's work will have on others.

The receiver *does not* want:

- To be asked for a few words.
 - You to say any more after you have handed him the award and shaken his hand.
 - You to tell a story about him.
 - You to make untrue statements about his work.
 - You to stand near him after you have given him the award and shaken his hand.
 - His name mentioned until the end of your speech.
 - The attention in the speech directed too much toward him, rather than his accomplishments.
- The speaker should:
- Lessen the embarrassment as much as possible.

shift ideas or to delete ideas as you organize your speech.

Fourth, *research* the topic if needed. Use your local Extension office, library or even interview authorities in the field. Get as much information as possible. When you begin to prepare the second draft, be selective and cut the content to fit your allotted time. Most people talk 120 to 137 words per minute, so time yourself. Let this mass of information rest a few days. Like bread that rises with time, more ideas and organization for your speech will come to mind.

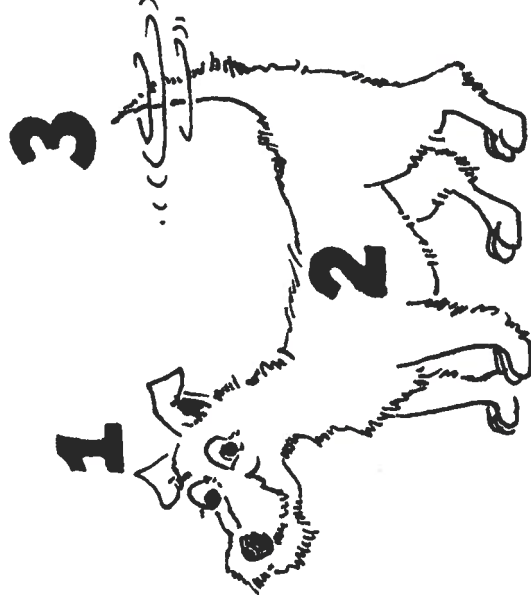
Organize Your Material

After your material has had time to rest, you are ready to read over the information and organize it into a basic outline. List the major headings and group your notecards to suit the points you wish to make.

Remember a speech is made up of three basic parts: the introduction, the body and the conclusion. Your thoughts must fall into one of these categories. Visualize the well-proportioned dog and create your speech based around this plan.

Fit the Parts Together

1. $\frac{1}{4}$ Introduction (10 to 15 percent)
2. $\frac{5}{8}$ Body (75 percent)
3. $\frac{1}{8}$ Conclusion (10 percent)



Introduction

The next step is to prepare your introduction. Someone has aptly stated, "Your first ten words are more important than your next ten minutes."

The introduction is short, but it should accomplish a great deal. If it is well-planned, you get the attention of your audience, make them want to listen and inform them that your subject concerns them.

Forget the ancient procedure of beginning the speech with statements such as: "Mr. Chairman, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is a distinct pleasure to come before you this evening." Simply acknowledge your introduction with a polite "thank you" and immediately begin your speech.

Here are some example introductions to give you ideas.

1. A personal narrative is by far the best opening for a speech. If the speaker has a story that is pertinent, it will establish a common ground between himself, his subject and his audience. For example, year round major events are televised that are of general interest and have wide audiences. They might be World Series games, football games or the Rose Parade from Pasadena. Therefore, a speaker could begin with a statement such as the following: "Last week I watched, as I am sure many of you did, the World Series on television. As I looked at the great crowds assembled in the stadium and then thought of the millions of individuals like myself who were watching on TV, I thought how wonderful it would be if as much attention could be brought to the subject I am to present to you today."

2. A startling statement of fact can capture the audience's attention. For example:

"Crime costs the United States of America billions of dollars a year. This could be reduced by fully one-half if we would streamline our judicial system, and demand that the law applies to the rich and to the poor alike."

3. A quote is effective. For example:

In 1887, Lord Acton wrote to Bishop Mandell Creighton: "*Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely.*" Shall we now examine this statement as it applies to our current situation?

4. An appropriate story can capture the audience at the outset. Here's an example:

A young Army lieutenant we heard about recently was having his first experience in drilling a com-

Preparing Your Speech



Select a Topic

Often you will be assigned a topic or theme for your talk. If you are given the opportunity to choose your own, speak on a subject you are interested in or on one which you have firsthand knowledge.

When a person writes about a subject that he is familiar with, he generally will make his best speech. Leave the literary masterpieces to the writers of books and prepare an effective talk that is brief, direct and positive using short words and sentences.

To see if your selected topic is suitable, ask yourself these five questions:

1. Does it fit me?
2. Does the topic fit my capabilities, knowledge, experience and intelligence?
3. Does the topic fit my audience?
 - a. Will the audience be interested in it?
 - b. Will the audience feel "this concerns me?"
4. Does the topic fit the occasion?
5. Can the topic be covered properly within the time allotted?

Plan Your Purpose

Every speech should have a purpose determined by the needs and interests of the audience and your own interests and capabilities. A speech may aim to:

- entertain
- inform
- stimulate (provoke inspirational or emotional reactions)
- convince or persuade
- actuate (secure action from the listeners)
- combination of the above purposes

Your first step in preparation is to *decide* the purpose of your speech.

Second, *write* out the purpose of your speech in clear and precise terms. If your purpose is to entertain, the approach will be different than if the purpose is to inform or persuade.

Third, write yourself *dry* on the subject. Use your own knowledge and experiences related to the topic. Drain your brain and put every idea you have on paper. Record each separate idea or fact on a 3 x 5 inch white notecard. Cards allow you to



- Describe specifically and clearly the work others did to help you.
- Describe a humorous or interesting bit of experience involved in this achievement. (Be sure this "bit of experience" isn't so personal that the audience can't enjoy it.)
- Indicate the significance of the award.
- Indicate the responsibility it puts on you now.
- Indicate the determination you have to live up to its significance.

End with a brief, short statement of very sincere appreciation.

- Refer little to the gift as such. Make the group feel that you are pleased with what they gave you, without referring to its worth or value.
- Give thanks.
- Show credit.
- Be humble.
- Be modest.

Try not to:

- Talk too long.
- Say too much in general terms.
- Say something sincerely if you are afraid you cannot.
- Leave the impression that this gift is something "I have always wanted."
- Tell the audience what others ought to do now.
- Give too much background and history of the project.
- Report too many of the obstacles so the job you did seems to have been a burden.
- Favorably evaluate the work you did.
- Indicate that you are now abdicating your responsibilities and others must carry on.
- Engage in personal chit-chat with the giver or with members who worked with you.
- Draw out a long statement, but instead end with a brief, sincere statement of appreciation.

The Committee Report

Committee reports need not be the duller and least interesting part of any meeting. If a few simple rules are followed, committee reports can be interesting and informative. Some of those rules follow:

- Give the name of the committee.
- Announce the names of committee members.
- Give the purpose for which the committee was appointed.
- Tell what the committee accomplished.
- List the recommendations prepared by the committee.
- Hold the committee report to three or four minutes.
- Make the report interesting.

The Extemporaneous Speech

Extemporaneous speeches fall into two categories: the unpredictable and the predictable.

The *unpredictable extemporaneous speech* may arise out of a situation in which you feel compelled to say something but have had little time to think about it, or you may be called upon to state your opinion on some question without warning.

The main help in these situations comes from experience and much practice. However, some guidelines follow:

- Decide quickly on a place to begin.
- Use what someone else has said as a takeoff.
- Make some comment about the occasion.
- Use a story that fits the occasion.
- Connect the occasion with current world affairs.
- Quote what someone has said in a similar situation.
- Express yourself as for or against the proposition. Give reasons and facts to support your stand.

The *predictable extemporaneous speech* differs from the unpredictable in that the speaker can predict, with some amount of certainty, the situation he is likely to encounter.

In this type of situation you will be able to make some general preparation. Before the meeting:

- Have a number of facts clearly in mind.
- Make up your mind exactly how you stand on the issue.
- Accumulate a supply of appropriate stories.
- Talk with people and learn their sentiments - these can be quoted.

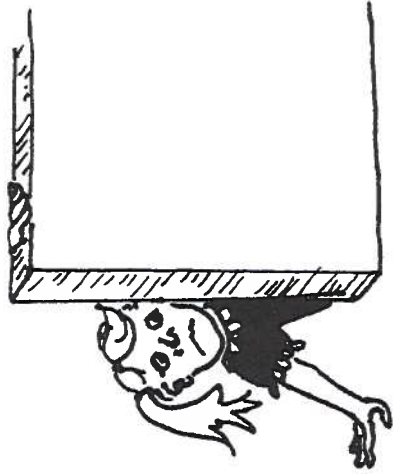
The extemporaneous speech should be delivered in the same manner as a prepared speech. Some basic principles of extemporaneous speaking follow:

- Confine yourself to one idea or point.
- Develop your idea with facts, reasons, illustrations, examples and stories.
- Use short sentences.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Stop.

Control Fear

Expect to feel a sense of nervousness or anticipation prior to a speech. These feelings can range from slightly "keyed up" to complete physical panic. What we refer to as "fear" comes from a strong desire to do our best in front of others. The only speakers or performers who do not experience some sensations are those who do not care how they do. The following chart will help you identify and relieve your specific symptoms.

Remember even if you drop all your notes, wipe out your speech with iced tea, fall on the way to the lectern, break off your heel on the platform or



Symptoms

Nervous stomach (butterflies)

Vomiting, nausea, diarrhea

Jello legs

Trembling hands and a rattling manuscript

Stumbling over words or getting "tongue twisted" or major bloopers

Shortness of breath

Shaking voice

Blushing

Red blotches on neck
Cold hands and feet

Hoarseness prior to speaking

Going blank

Excessive perspiration (arms)

Excessive perspiration (hands and forehead)

Dry mouth

A cold or a cough

Solutions

Slow, controlled breathing. Avoid eating prior to speaking.

Avoid eating ahead of time. Consult your druggist for over-the-counter preparations.

Move around. Shaking rarely shows to the audience so do not worry about it.

Use 3x5 cards. Connect them by rings and flip up each one as you use it. Or invest in a small notebook in which to place the cards.

Breathe shallow and slow down your speaking. Repeat a sentence if necessary. Do not apologize.

Swallow, breathe and exhale. Make eye contact with a friendly face and continue.

Make strong eye contact with a friendly face. Swallow and lower your pitch. Slightly increase your volume.

From a distance and under lights, this usually looks like a healthy glow so forget about it and continue.

Avoid low-necked clothing. Move around; make some gestures.

Remain silent for 24 hours before speaking. Do not even whisper. Drink lots of warm drinks. If the problem is still present when you begin to speak, move in close to the mike.

Look at your notes. Consider this pause a "thoughtful silence."

Light colors show circles less. Dress shields (purchased at fabric shops) pinned under the arms can be helpful. Try an antiperspirant.

Take a cotton handkerchief to absorb moisture on your palms. Wipe your brow, with no apology, if you absolutely must.

Avoid drying agents such as antihistamines and decongestants. Even salt water tends to dry. Use a lip balm on your lips and even teeth. Keep a lemon drop, small peppermint candy or cinnamon candy under your tongue to produce saliva.

Take tissues and even a cough drop to the lectern. Do not apologize to your audience. The cold seems worse to you than to them.

Information Please!

Please help me by providing the information requested so that I may prepare for my presentation.

Name of organization or group _____

Contact person/phone number _____

City or town _____

Date of speaking engagement _____

Place of meeting _____

Phone _____

1. What time does the meeting begin? _____

What time am I to speak? _____

How long am I to speak? _____

What time will I be through? _____

8. Is a lectern available? _____

9. Is a mike available? If so, what type? _____

2. Type of meeting (banquet, workshop, seminar) _____

10. The following visual aids are available:

chalkboard _____

slide projector _____

tape recorder _____

record player _____

overhead projector _____

3. Subject for my speech/presentation -- (List any special remarks, references, names to mention, etc.) _____

11. Will the audience be seated theater style or around tables? _____ Please diagram.

4. Approximate number of people expected:

_____ men _____ women _____ youth

5. Do you have some idea of the average age?

9-12 13-14 15-18 20 25 30+

6. What amount and type of audience participation is desired? _____

12. Whom should I contact when I arrive? _____

13. Is dress formal? school clothes? casual? _____

7. About what size and shape will the meeting room be? _____

14. Please provide directions to site on the back of this sheet, or attach a map. _____

preparations. If possible, try to set up the surroundings so you will be comfortable. The more familiar you are with the setting, the less nervous you will be. Be sure to check the lectern and microphone.

The Audience

- Who will be in the audience? Why are they there?
- How many people will be there? You must know this if you plan to distribute leaflets or other materials.
- Will the audience be predominantly males, females or evenly mixed?
- What will be the age span of the audience?

- What are the major needs and interests of the audience at present? This is the key to your whole speech. A speech on goal-setting would not be appropriate for residents of a nursing home.

- What does the audience know about the subject? What is their attitude toward it?

If you know something about your audience (their ages, knowledge of your topic, how your topic will affect them, etc.), you will be better able to plan a speech that speaks directly to them.

Information Please!

The following information sheet is a professional way to size up a speaking situation. Have your host complete this as soon as possible in order for you to have adequate preparation time.



blow out the bulb on the overhead, DO NOT APOLOGIZE . . . COPE! Life is full of the unexpected. The way you handle the unexpected is what is important. You owe your audience the courtesy of not making them suffer for your discomfort. So, speak without notes or shoes or overhead. Get your main points across in a simple, clear manner and do not worry that it was not the way you planned . . . not much in life is.

Relax! Certainly not many of us have bodies that relax on command, so it is helpful to know some techniques that can aid in our relaxation. Several are listed in the following chart.

Here are several other relaxation techniques to try before or during the speech.

- Brisk exercise such as walking or jogging can reduce tension. Yawning is relaxing.
- Deep breathing. With mouth closed, inhale through your nose as deeply as possible. Hold this breath to the count of five (1-2-3-4-5) and then release it to the count of ten (1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10). Repeat several times.
- Become a rag doll and shake out your body.
- Stop and exhale or pause and swallow. Allow your hands to unclench and your arm pits to breathe. Change positions at the lectern.
- Avoid anything to drink stronger than water because it can bring on various side effects such as burping, nausea or worse. Especially avoid caffeine drinks, alcohol or pills or drugs that stimulate or relax. Any of these products can produce an adverse effect at the wrong time.
- Build confidence.
- Strive for success. Set yourself up for a successful speech with adequate preparation and a sincere desire to share your knowledge or experiences with your audience. The feeling of success will be well worth any anxieties you have experienced.

Use an Ice Breaker

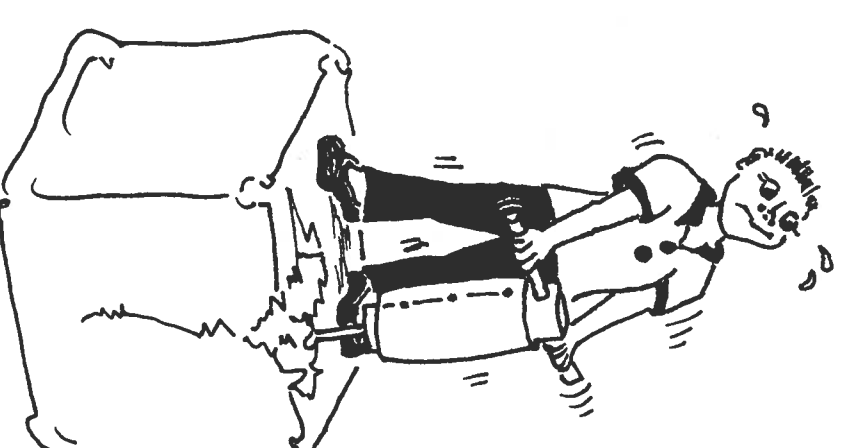
1. *Silent speakers* – each member comes to the lectern, or to the front of the room, makes eye contact with the entire group, smiles and walks back to his chair.
2. *String talk* – each member comes to the lectern, establishes eye contact, smiles and

3. *Back to Back* – divide the group into pairs by passing out numbers or colored buttons. Match up pairs and have each pair stand back to back and interview each other. Assign three specific things to find out, such as favorite food, a favorite TV show and favorite music. Participants should discover how difficult communication is without eye contact.

4. *Solve the Problem* – write a problem situation for each member or participant on a slip of paper. Place each problem in a blown-up balloon and tie the end. Each participant comes to the front of the room, selects a balloon and pops it. Then he reads the paper aloud and tells how he would solve the problem or handle the situation.

Examples:

1. At an out-of-town ballgame, you rip the back seam out of your pants.
2. Your date does not have enough money to pay the bill at an expensive restaurant.
3. While introducing the keynote speaker, you forget his name.



5. *Phone Pals* – using two disconnected telephones as props, seat two participants back-to-back and have them interview each other. Give suggestions for questions to be asked before beginning. Allow the first two to each select another participant. This works best if an adult leader begins as one of the first pair and then selects an outgoing person for part of the second team.

6. *Directions* – each participant will write and tell "how to get to my house," a clear set of directions that might be used by a new county agent. Have each write out the description on a 3 x 5 notecard. At the next meeting, read the cards aloud and see if each participant can recognize the directions to his home.

Try a Fun Speaking Activity

1. *Me Collages* – provide each participant with 1/2 sheet of poster board or a large sheet of construction paper, scissors, glue and a supply of magazines, newspapers and catalogs. Allow a set time period, such as fifteen minutes, for the participants to cre-

ate a collage based on their individual personalities and preferences.

When the collages are completed, the participants will use them as visuals and stand before the group to share "All About Me."

This could also be prepared at home and might include photos, buttons, record covers, etc. An example could be displayed when the assignment was given.

2. *Variation of Me Collage*

a. Use paper grocery bags and decorate the bag. Include inside three personal items that reflect the participant's personality.

b. Make this as a mobile and suspend from a coat hanger.

3. *A to Z Speeches* – participants draw a letter of the alphabet and must talk for one minute about anything that begins with that letter. Have a dictionary handy.

4. *Joke Night* – cut jokes and short humorous stories out of family style magazines such as "Reader's Digest." Have participants select a story or joke to read, prepare and share with the group. This is a fun way to share the difficulty in presenting humor appropriately.

5. *Hobby* – each participant prepares a two to three minute speech based upon his hobby or special interest. Visuals would be appropriate although this would not be a method demonstration.

6. *Priorities* – base an impromptu or planned speech around the ten items you would want to save in case of a fire.

7. *Hero* – base an impromptu or planned speech around the statement "I admire _____ because..."

8. *Whopper Speech* – give participants five questions to answer in a short presentation. One of their answers must be an untrue exaggeration or a whopper. Or ask participants to base a short talk around the reason they joined 4-H. If they use three reasons allow one of these to be an exaggeration or whopper. The listeners guess which statement is false.

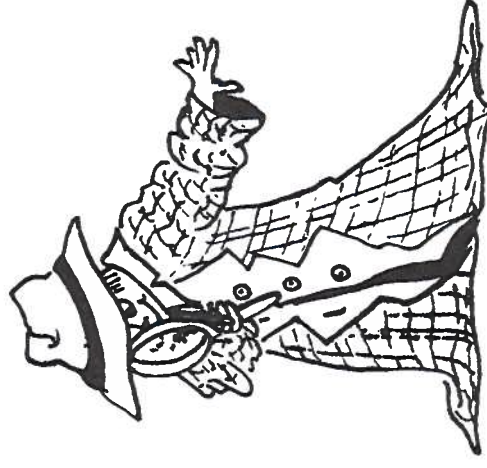
9. *Pet Peeve* – base a speech around something that really "bugs" you. Remind participants not to call names or make personal judgments of people.

10. *Someday* – base a short speech around a topic such as: "When I grow up," "If I were the principal," "When I run the fair," or "When I'm the county agent."

Public Speaking . . . the 4-H Style



- What is the total program? How is your talk related to the program. You may make some changes in your delivery if you know you will be appearing at the end of a long line of speakers, when your audience may be bored, or after a meal when they will probably be sleepy.



As a 4-H member, you will have many opportunities to make speeches. These challenging occasions will help you to develop communication skills you will use throughout your life.

Effective speakers are not necessarily polished or perfect. Instead, they are energetic, direct and warm human beings who are involved with their subject matter and their audiences. Good speakers are not born, they are developed. Each presentation should be a learning experience.

Investigate

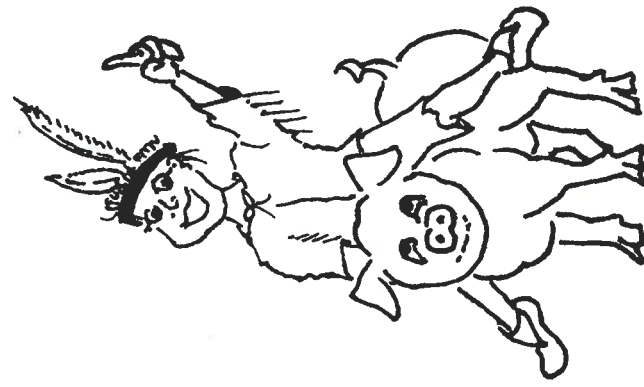
The Situation

Speakers are more comfortable and do a better job when they analyze the occasion, the physical facilities and the audience, as well as plan what is to be said in advance.

The Occasion

- When is the talk to be given? Check and double-check to be sure that you have the correct date. Place the date on your calendar. If possible, have the host send you a written confirmation.
- Find out the time of the meeting and the approximate time you will begin to talk. Find out how long the total program will last and how much time will be allotted for your use.
- What is the purpose of the meeting? Is this a regular meeting or a special meeting planned primarily to hear you?
- What procedures will be followed? What amount and type of audience participation is desired?
- Is the meeting formal or informal?

- Where is the talk to be given?
- Will your talk be given in a public hall, church, school, community center or home?
- Will the room be large or small? Will you have a speaker's stand? If so, where will it be located? Will you use a microphone? If so, what type?
- What facilities are available for control of light or ventilation?
- What audio visual equipment (if needed) must the speaker provide?
- A visit to the place where the talk is to be given might be a valuable step in your early



Topic Suggestions for Planned 4-H Speeches

- Why I joined 4-H
- My most unforgettable 4-H experience
- What I expect from 4-H
- After 200 years - America's spirit lives on
- What 4-H offers youth 9 to 11
- What 4-H offers youth 11 to 14
- What 4-H offers youth 15 to 19
- What the benefits of 4-H are to my community
- What 4-H has done for me
- How 4-H has influenced your goals
- Why (this group) should contribute money to 4-H
- The value of volunteers
- What is leadership?
- What is citizenship?
- How 4-H members can address the U.S. youth illiteracy problem
- What positive alternatives are available today for youth
- A World Leader - The American Farmer
- Value of the decisionmaking process
- Why communication is important
- Texas 4-H Center opportunities
- What is National 4-H Council?
- What is the Texas 4-H Foundation?
- Describe duties of a junior leader
- Describe duties of a teen leader
- Give a brief history of the 4-H program
- I've grown through 4-H
- An unforgettable adult (4-H) leader
- 4-H is special because . . .
- Success is spelled 4-H
- 4-H and the rural youth of today
- 4-H and the minority youth of today
- What 4-H wants from me
- How 4-H benefits my community, state or nation
- "Learn by doing" process
- Conservation of natural resources
- 4-H takes stock in ecology
- Leadership skills developed through 4-H
- How 4-H has helped me develop a positive self-concept

Credits

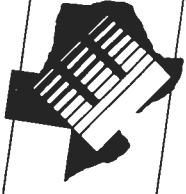
This publication was prepared by Gayle Laine, Curriculum Coordinator, Extension 4-H and Youth Development Specialist, Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

The illustrations were done by Jennifer Johnson, a former 4-H member, who is now attending Texas A&M University.

Some of the material in this publication was adapted from the following resources.

Communications Made Easy, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University.
4-H Public Speaking, Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

The Organized Public Speaker You, Union Oil Co., California, for the 4-H Public Speaking Program.
Speak Up, Texas Agricultural Extension Service.



**Texas
Agricultural
Extension
Service**

The Texas A&M University System

Dear 4-H Member:

The purpose of this publication is not only to provide you with knowledge and experience in communication, but also to help you reflect on why you are a member of 4-H. Hopefully, in your speaking you will help carry the message that 4-H is the finest youth development organization in the world.

4-H goes far beyond youth leadership and development. Through 4-H you participate in the process of learning. Whether or not the project or product is successful or wins an award, the skills you have learned will prepare you for living as an adult in the real world.

My positive experience as a 4-H'er provided me with skills that I have used throughout my life, and I continue to use them to profit through my work with the Texas 4-H Council. It is rewarding for me to know that each of you working in this speaking program will be the promise of tomorrow.

Sincerely,



Nancy Prince

Nancy Prince is a secondary educator with the Nacogdoches Independent School System in Nacogdoches, Texas. She is a private consultant in public speaking, creative drama and motivation and has helped train Texas 4-H Council groups since 1980.

Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, handicap or national origin.
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