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SPEAK UP!

TIPS ON PUBLIC SPEAKING FOR 4-H CLUB MEMBERS

Texas Agriculture Extension Service · The Texas A&M University System
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you will give it. This will involve going through all the steps you will follow in your actual presentation. Play it out in front of a mirror.

Pretend you are sitting on the stage. You are introduced and you walk to the speaker's stand or microphone. You pause, look around, smile at the audience, pause once more, look at your audience and begin.

PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!

The Delivery

You are about to go on! You are seated on the stage, platform, or at a table. The toastmaster or chairman has just finished introducing you.

Rise and walk gracefully to the speaker's stand.

Take a deep breath and exhale slowly.

Smile.

Look at your audience.

Don't rush.

Acknowledge your introduction.

Start talking.

STANDING

Stand at ease. Your weight should be evenly distributed on both feet or shift your weight from one foot to the other from time to time for comfort. Don't sway back and forth. Remember that ease, erectness and freedom of movement are essential.

HANDS

The best place for the hands is at the two sides of your body. Holding the hands straight to the sides can give a stiff appearance. A bent arm held at the waist (book carrying position) is often more effective and creates a more casual appearance. Don't clench your hands together. You can place your hands on the speaker's stand occasionally, but do not grip the stand or lean on it. Don't fold your hands across your chest. Don't stroke your ear or throat. Don't hold the microphone. It is not offensive to place a hand in your pocket occasionally—but don't keep it there. You also can clasp your hands behind your back occasionally.

GESTURES

Avoid meaningless gestures. They should be used only when they are spontaneous and when they will help clarify or emphasize a point.

A gesture is appropriate if it is one you would make during an ordinary conversation with a group of friends.

GAINING CONFIDENCE

Pick out two or three people in the audience and talk to them as you would in normal conversation.

Speak slowly and distinctly. Go up and down the scale—don't be a monotone.

Pronounce your words correctly.

Pause often.

Be enthusiastic.

Smile.

Be sincere.

Never talk "down" to your audience.

Kinds Of Speeches

The seven kinds of speeches used most often by 4-H Club members are discussed in this section. The radio speech is omitted because generally it is read and, therefore, is related only vaguely to the other types.

THE PLATFORM SPEECH

(includes method demonstrations)

This kind of speech has been the basis of discussion up to this point. The foregoing sections give pointers on this type.

THE PRESIDING FUNCTION

Going to the Platform

If possible, go on the platform ahead of time, so you will feel at home there. Get the feel of 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 Rostrum Desk

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 pronounciation 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 work 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, 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 Club members—I present to you, Mr. Smith," then turn to your speaker and address him, "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, turn and walk to your chair. Do not walk backwards.

Be a Good Listener

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.

The Program Is Over

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

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. And 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, 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 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 qualifcations those things which 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 interest in the speech subject, even create suspense.

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.

Tell a story or recite a poem (humorous or serious). It should relate directly to your speech.

Use a quotation.

Ask a question.

Quote a headline.

Throw out a challenge.

State your problem clearly.

State a dramatic fact related to your subject. Don't *ever* apologize for:

Your appearance,

Your limited knowledge of the subject,

The amount of time you had to prepare your speech,

Taking up the audience's time.

Simply do not apologize for *anything.*

The Conclusion

The conclusion is probably the most important part of your speech. This is the "final touch," "rounding out," "summing up," "culmination," "climax," "high point." *Plan it well.*

Some suggestions for planning your ending follow:

Summarize important points one by one.

Use a quotation or poem which summarizes the importance of what you have had to say.

Ask a question. 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.

Compliment your audience.

DON'T

Close too abruptly.

Tell your audience you are going to close.

Use such statements as "in conclusion" etc.

Introduce a new material.

LEARNING THE SPEECH

After your speech has been planned, written and rewritten, next comes the task of learning it. This may not be as difficult as one would imagine. If you have gone through all the processes thus far, you should have a good idea of the content.

Have your speech typed—double or triple spaced. Place it in front of you along with a supply of 3 x 5 clean note cards. You are now ready to begin.

List on the note cards major ideas upon which you wish to elaborate. You may need only a word or a short sentence at the most—just enough to bring the thought into focus.

After your speech has been transferred to note cards, you are ready to practice.

Carry your note cards with you and every chance you get—practice.

At first you may feel more at ease practicing in privacy—in your own room, out in the woods, up in the attic, in the bathtub or some secluded spot. Later you will want someone to listen as you practice. Your family is a good audience.

If you have access to a tape recorder, record your speech and play it back. Listen for spots where improvement can be made.

Your speech need not be learned all at once. Learn it in parts. Don't memorize it. Remember, you want it to sound like conversation—not like a recitation.

After you have practiced the speech in parts, put it all together and rehearse it just the way

GATHERING MATERIALS

First, draw from your own knowledge of the subject and your own experiences related to it. Put your ideas on paper.

The next place to look is in your personal library. Assemble all the written material you have on the subject.

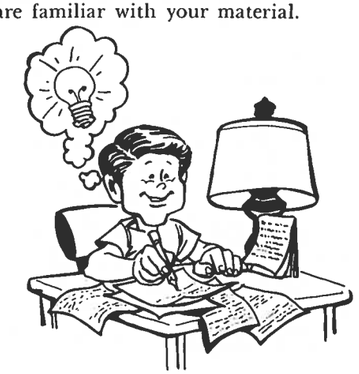
The third step is to visit your public library. Tell the librarian what you are looking for and ask for suggestions. Check through the card file index. Look for the alphabetical listings related to your topic.

Next, talk with people who are authorities on the subject. Get their opinions.

MAKING NOTES

Don't rely on your memory. From the very start, begin writing down your ideas. A small notebook will do, but many people find that using 3 x 5 white note cards works better. The advantage of note cards is that if each contains only one idea or fact, the cards can be shifted and placed in the proper order when the speech is being organized.

After your notes are made, put them in some logical order. Read them over several times until you are familiar with your material.



WRITING THE SPEECH

A speech has three major parts—the *introduction,* the *body* and the *conclusion.*

The Body

Start with the body of the speech. 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.

Decide upon three or four main points to be covered. List these main headings and group your notes under the proper heading.

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. One of the best examples of this approach is found in the teachings of Jesus. His early followers knew little of the mysteries of Heaven, but they could understand things that were familiar to them—such as mustard seed, leaven and the like. He would begin with—"The kingdom of Heaven is liken to—." He would then move to the unknown.

Use stories and illustrations to make your ideas personal. Be convincing. Show your audience that what you have to say is important to them.

The 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."

Forget the ancient procedure of beginning 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.

Capture your audience in your opening statement. If you do not, the remainder of your time may be spent catching up with it.

Put your audience on the edge of their seats. This is where you want them. Some of the proved methods follow:

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 . . ."

Do not build the speaker up too much.

Do not mix introductions with announcements, committee reports, etc.

Avoid embarrassing 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 to say 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 to him, but rather his accomplishments.

You, the speaker, should:

- Lessen the embarrassment as much as possible.
- Be brief, but complete.
- Be sure of what you are saying.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be concise.
- Be heard by all the audience.
- Be accurate and complete in your information.
- Make the speech inspirational in character.
- AVOID comparisons with others.
- Be genial, sincere, pleasant, and anxious to do the awarding.
- Stress the symbolic nature of the award or gift.

● Avoid mentioning anything about cost or difficulty in deciding what to get.

● Give the speech before calling on the recipient to receive the gift.

Be brief	*Be genial*
Be accurate	*Be sincere*

THE ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

The keynote of an acceptance speech is *appreciation.*

Be sure to:

● Thank the giver—call him by name.

● Thank the donor (group)—use the correct and full name.

● Face the giver as you thank him. Speak loudly and slowly and clearly enough so all in the room can hear you.

● Point out how the *donor* made it possible for you to accomplish what you did to receive this award.

● Express gratitude to those who put you in the position to achieve what this award represents.

● Turn the spotlight on others by minimizing your own worthiness as an individual. Be unassuming and give the impression that you view others favorably in comparison with yourself.

● Attribute whatever you have done to the cooperation of others.

Make a good impression by:

● Comparing what you have done with what you might have accomplished and what is yet to be done.

● Describing specifically and clearly the work others did to help you.

● Describing 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.)

● Indicating the significance of the award.

● Indicating the responsibility it puts on you now.

● Indicating the determination you have to live up to its significance.

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

● Referring 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*

Avoid:

● Talking too long.

● Saying too much in general terms.

● Trying to say something sincerely if you are afraid you can't.

● Leaving the impression that this gift is something "I have always wanted."

● Telling the audience what others ought to do now.

● Giving too much background and history of the project.

● Reporting too many of the obstacles so the job you did seems to have been a burden.

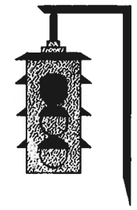
"Leadership must first express itself in speech. One must know how to ask for things, how to explain things and how to speak persuasively enough to win the active support of others. Resourcefulness and adaptability in speech may be regarded as essential to success in every occupation"

—Hoffman

As a 4-H Club member you may find it necessary or desirable to make a speech. Whether you give a committee report, introduce a speaker, preside at an important function or speak to a large audience, you will need to know what to say and how to say it. This publication has been prepared in an effort to help you meet that need.

State 4-H Staff

Before You Speak!



You Need to Know—

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.

Find out the *time* of the meeting. Also, you need to know the approximate time you will begin to talk (some "luncheon" clubs may meet at night).

WHERE is the talk to be given?

Will your talk be given in a public hall, church, school house, 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?

A visit to the place where the talk is to be given might be the most valuable step in your early preparations.

WHO will be in the audience?

● How many people will be there? You must know this if you plan to distribute leaflets or other materials.

● What will be the sex of the audience—males, females or mixed?

● Will the audience consist of more than one nationality?

● 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.

WHAT do you need to know about the program?

● How long will the total program last?

● How much time will be allotted for your use?

● What is to be the subject of your talk?

● Will there be other speakers? What topics will they cover?

● Will there be entertainment?

Selecting and Preparing the Speech

CHOOSING A TOPIC

Often you will be assigned a topic. If you must choose your own, it is important that you consider at least three things—the occasion, the audience and your own wishes and capabilities.

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?

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- Favorably evaluating the work *you* did.

- Indicating that you are now abdicating your responsibilities and others must carry on.

- Personal chit-chat with the giver or with members who worked with you.

Be sure to end with a brief, sincere statement of appreciation.

THE COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee reports need not be the dullest and least interesting part of any meeting. If a few simple rules are followed, committee reports can be interesting and informative. Some of these 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 3 or 4 minutes.

- Make the report interesting.

THE EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEECH

Extemporaneous speeches fall into two categories, namely: 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.

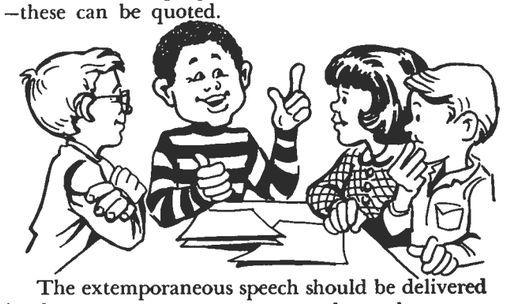
Before the meeting:

- 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 main idea or point.

- Develop your idea with facts, reasons, illustrations, examples and stories.

- Use short sentences.

- Be enthusiastic.

- Stop.