



The 4-H Public Speaking project focuses on supporting youth in developing and strengthening their abilities and confidence to speak in front of people. Giving presentations helps develop many life skills including the ability to speak in front of a group, organize ideas, and create and present in 4-H.



Exploring 4-H Public Speaking

Spark Activity: Triple Feature Story Telling

Tell a Photo Story

Storytelling is critical to engaging your audience and helping them retain the information you're sharing. To practice developing narratives, find an interesting photo online and record yourself presenting a story about it. Discuss what you think the backstory is, who the people are, their dreams, their motivations, and anything else that will tell a compelling story about them.

Make a Commercial

Presentations are all about selling an idea, so you should practice the art of sales and persuasion to be the best you can be. Choose an item in your home and create a one-minute commercial about it. Record yourself saying what makes it special, how it can enhance lives, and why everyone needs that item in their corner.

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4-H Project Levels and Goals

Beginner

- Learn the parts of a speech – introduction, body, and conclusion
- Explore the mechanics of presenting - body positioning, standing, voice, eye contact, gestures
- Learn about using effective visual aids such as posters, digital slides, and props
- Plan and deliver a practice speech in front of other members
- Participate in county, area, and state 4-H presentation contests and events

Intermediate

- Learn effective ways to respond to questions
- Practice varying your voice – volume, pitch, and dynamic – to see how it changes the message you are conveying
- Select a topic and develop a presentation, including visual aid, and deliver at a 4-H club meeting
- Watch experienced speakers, rate their performance, and compare them
- Participate in county, area, and state 4-H presentation contests and events

Advanced

- Participate in county, area, and state 4-H presentation contests and events
- Participate in Speaking for Illinois 4-H Training
- Participate in Legislative Connection and share your 4-H story
- Film and evaluate yourself presenting
- Develop and deliver a prepared speech at a community event
- Conduct a workshop for younger youth on how to do public speaking

Put Your Project Into Action

Show Your Skills

- Participate in your local and state 4-H public speaking contests

Service and Leadership

- Present to local organizations or stakeholders how 4-H affects your community; your “4-H Story”
- After completing a community service project, share with your community leaders what was completed and how it benefitted your community
- Participate in “4-H Legislative Connection” in Springfield
- Serve as Jr. Leader for your 4-H club
- Participate in local 4-H Public Speaking Contest
- Conduct a workshop on public speaking for your club or county 4-H program.
- Serve as a 4-H County Ambassador where you can promote the 4-H program
- Participate in “Speaking for Illinois 4-H” training

Technology Connection

- YouTube Videos
- Ted Talks
- Podcasts
- Ummo (app measures how often you use filler words during a speech, such as “like” and “um”).
- PowerPoint
- Prezi
- Canva

Connecting with a Mentor

- Local Toastmasters groups
- High school speech teacher
- High school forensics/speech team
- Speakers League
- Radio or news broadcaster
- Public relations staff at a local business

Events

- County 4-H Public Speaking Contest
- State 4-H Public Speaking Contest
- Illinois 4-H Legislative Connection
- High School Speech/Forensics Team
- Community Theater Performances
- High School Drama Club



Careers for People Interested in Public Speaking

Motivational Speaker
Speech Writer
Religious Leader
Professor
News Anchor
Public Relations Representative
Politician

Attorney
Actor/Actress
Auctioneer
Teacher/ Principal
Sales Executive
Social Worker/
Psychologist

Start a Conversation

Why is public speaking important?

Can you name some individuals that use public speaking for their careers?

Can you think of a person you feel is a good public speaker?

What traits do you feel make a good public speaker?

Want to learn more?

go.illinois.edu/4Hpublicspeaking

Explore more at Illinois 4-H!

4-H.extension.illinois.edu



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Credits: “Finding Your Voice: Public Speaking Made Easy” – Ohio State University Extension 4-H Publication | “4-H Public Speaking Project” – California 4-H Project Sheet Series – University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources | University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension | Write-out-loud.com | Ethos3 – Empowering Presenters – www.ethos3.com | Johnna Jennings, University of Illinois Extension 4-H Youth Development Educator | 4-H Spark Sheets are a collaborative effort of 4-H staff, volunteers, alumni, and teens from across Illinois. A big thanks to the many contributors and reviewers!