

**4-H Public Presentations**

**Presenter Guide**



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**4-H Public Presentations**

**A Guide for Youth, Parents, Evaluators, and Educators**

To some, the thought of preparing a speech and delivering it to an audience is often considered a fate worse than death. However, 4-H Youth Members throughout NYS, as well as the country, have an advantage in public speaking because they are given the opportunity to develop their speaking and communication skills through a 4-H program called Public Presentations.

4-H Public Presentations is a nationally recognized element of the Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program. This public speaking event is one of 4-H's most beneficial and rewarding experiences. It is the program most often credited by 4-H alumni as having given them an edge over their peers in both college and professional careers.

Through a progressive series of communication activities, youth develop poise; gain self-confidence before a group; learn to express ideas clearly; learn how to respond spontaneously to questions; and gain subject matter knowledge.

This guide will help readers to better understand how the 4-H Public Presentation Program works and provide you with all the tools you need to help you plan and prepare for a successful presentation. In this guide, you will find:

* **4-H Public Presentations Progression Chart,** which illustrates the different levels of evaluation that a youth participant may advance to
* **Public Presentation Types and Age-Group Expectations,** which provides guidelines for each presentation type/category, as well as what evaluators are looking for
* **The Danish System,** which explains the Danish System of evaluation
* **Time Limits** for each age group and type of presentation
* **Format for Public Presentations,** which outlines the three parts of a presentation—the Introduction, Body and Conclusion/Summary—as well as sample introductions and examples of catchy introductory ‟hooks”

**Go to the** [**Dutchess County 4-H Website**](https://dutchesscounty4h.weebly.com/public-presentations.html) **to find the rubrics and details of special programs such as Food Festivals**

**Be sure to read the 4-H Newsletters that give details of sign-ups as they are created**

**Know you can contact** [**4-H Program Manager Emma**](mailto:elj57@cornell.edu?subject=Public%20Presentations) **with questions**

**The Skill of Giving a Public Presentation Is an Invaluable Life Skill**

***4-H alumni tell us it is the single most valuable thing they learned in the program***

***College admissions officers agree that youth who speak well are more likely to receive offers***

***Employers say it is one of the most useful and essential skills to their workforce***

Successful completion of a Public Presentation is a requirement to complete your 4-H year in good standing and take part as a 4-H'er in the Dutchess County Fair.

Please reach out to a 4-H staff member if youth need special accommodations. Our goal is to build confidence and competence by making this a great learning experience—we are here to help. There will be several options to complete your Public Presentations:

* Fall Food Festival— usually held in November: see special instructions on website
* Spring Food Festival—usually held in April: see special instructions on website
* In-person Public Presentations scheduled at CCEDC and/or Dutchess Community College
* By presenting at special community events—speak to 4-H staff
* Horse Communications on horse-specific topics but open to any 4-H'er—contact 4-H staff

**CHECK YOUR EMAILS**

**GO TO THE 4-H WEBSITE FOR DETAILS**

**BE SURE TO SIGN UP ON TIME**

* 4-H Public Presentations is a progressive program
* Each time a presenter is evaluated, it is an opportunity to fine-tune their presentation and take it to the next level
* It is through the evaluation process that 4-H members experience mastery, gain valuable skills in listening to the recommendations of others, and continue to develop confidence in themselves
* The higher a participant advances, the more competitive the program becomes

Diagram

Description automatically generated

**4-H Public Presentation Progression Chart**

**4-H District (also called Regional) Public Presentations**

Youth (ages 9 and up) who demonstrate a readiness for a more challenging presentation may be given an opportunity to advance beyond county level. They must give the same presentation but should prepare by ‟polishing” it to improve the content and delivery based on county-level feedback

NOTE: Advancing to District Presentations is a progressive process and therefore is evaluated on a higher standard than at the County Level

**Higher Level Presentation Opportunities**

4-H'ers who have demonstrated exceptional Public Presentation skills may be selected to advance and present in a variety of ways (which vary from year to year), for example:

· At a New York State-wide 4-H Public Presentations event

· At a multistate or national event

· To organizations such as community groups to share what 4-H is about, help gain

support for the 4-H program, and achieve personal recognition

NOTE: It is a great accomplishment to be selected for any of the above and the highest standards are expected!

**4-H County Public Presentations**

Cloverbuds and first-time presenters can opt to join a CCEDC-led training workshop rather than present to an audience

Other 4-H’ers sign up to give their presentation at a county-wide event in front of trained volunteer evaluators who constructively critique each presentation using the Danish System (see below). Evaluators are encouraging, using positive feedback and making suggestions for improvement

**4-H Club Training and Practice**

4-H Members begin their public speaking training at the

club level by selecting a topic of interest, preparing a presentation, and then delivering it to their peers during a 4-H Club Meeting

Ask your leader for help and guidance

**4-H Public Presentation Types and Age-Group Expectations**

**A Guide for Parents, Club Leaders, and Evaluators**

NOTE:*Youth needing accommodations can fit into any category regardless of age–please ask*

*4-H staff for guidance*

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| **Time and Purpose** | **Presentation Type** | **Expectations** |
| **Cloverbuds ages 5–6** |  |  |
| **Presentation Length:**  1 to 5 minutes  Cloverbud presentations provide an opportunity for young children to begin to feel comfortable speaking in front of an audience. Competition is not appropriate for children of this age; therefore, Cloverbuds cannot advance to District or State level presentations. | **Recitation:** For example, a recitation of the 4-H Pledge, Pledge of Allegiance, a poem, etc.  **Show and Tell:** A simple show and tell demonstration to build confidence  **Cloverbud Workshop:** A session run by 4-H staff to teach the basics of public speaking in a fun way through storytelling | To ready Cloverbuds for participation in the Public Presentation Program. A special Cloverbud Comment Sheet is used (no ratings or scores are given) and a dialogue between the child and Evaluator takes place, providing motivation and praise. Emphasis is on self-expression and helping the member feel comfortable speaking to a small group, e.g., of peers. |
| **Cloverbuds ages 7, and/or first-time presenters** |  |  |
| **Presentation Length:**  3 to 8 minutes  Cloverbud presentations provide an opportunity for young children to begin to feel comfortable speaking in front of an audience. Competition is not recommended for children this age; therefore, Cloverbuds cannot advance to District or State level presentations. | **Demonstration:** The presenter shows how to do, make, or prepare something one step at a time. Models or illustrations may be used as needed to explain information, show the steps in the process being demonstrated, or show a larger scale replica of something that is too small for the audience to see.  Some examples include:   * how to juggle or do a magic trick * how to make a pb + j sandwich * how to care for a pet * supplies you need to go fishing | Cloverbuds who have already had a positive Show and Tell experience and/or feel confident about trying a demonstration may do so. The three parts of a presentation (Introduction, Body, and Conclusion) are learned at this level, but the focus is still on helping the member to feel comfortable. Cloverbuds are not expected to do a polished job. A special Cloverbud Comment Sheet is used; no ratings or scores are given. The Evaluator encourages and coaches in a positive manner. |
| **4-H Members ages 8–11** |  |  |
| **Presentation Length:**  5 to 12 minutes. Note that for youth 9+ advancing to District, time limits are strictly enforced  4-H Members who demonstrate a readiness for a more challenging opportunity may be selected to give their presentation at the next level—District (also known as Regional)  4-H Public Presentations | **Demonstration:** Show and explain how to do or make something. Models or illustrations are used, e.g.: the steps in a process or a finished product. Team demos are allowed if the presentation requires it for the presentation to be effective.  **Illustrated Talk:** Presenter uses visual aids to talk about a topic using graphics, posters, slides, overheads, models, etc., to communicate their message. Team illustrated talks are NOT permitted. | Youth are expected to show how and explain why. They should know enough background information to answer reasonable questions from the Evaluators and/or the audience. At this level, Evaluators constructively critique each presentation and grade it using the Danish System. REMEMBER to cite at least two different, reliable sources to validate the information you provide. |

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| **Time and Purpose** | **Presentation Type** | **Expectations** |
| **4-H Members ages 12–19** |  |  |
| **Presentation Length**:  10 to 15 minutes. Note that for youth advancing to District, time limits are strictly enforced  4-H Members who demonstrate a readiness for a more challenging opportunity may be selected to give their presentation at the next level—District (regional)  4-H Public Presentations | **Demonstration**: See above  **Illustrated Talk**: See above  **Creative Communications**: Bridges the gap between message delivery and the performing arts. Art forms such as recitation, dramatic interpretation, puppetry, skits, clowning, singing, music, and storytelling are used as the vehicle for conveying a message.  **Dramatic Interpretation**: The presenter or team delivers a reenactment of a piece of scripted material. Content of the presentation can be taken from plays, movies, sketches, and monologues—dramatic or comedic. This form of presentation, by definition, should include props and costumes. Props need to be simple and minimal, not detracting from the strength of the presenter(s).  **Original Pieces:** Pieces written by the presenter(s) are accepted in this category. Team demonstrations are permitted. (4-H educators should monitor appropriateness of the presentation.)  **Recitation:** The presenter, with the use of vocal inflection and body language, delivers their rendition of a piece of prewritten material. Props may not be used, but appropriate dress to subtly represent the character or mood of the written piece is acceptable. Dress should not overwhelm the presentation. Memorization is expected, but notes are permitted. This area is not intended for presentation of original pieces written by the presenter. Teams are not permitted. | At this level, format, showmanship, and presentation technique are emphasized equally. Presentations are expected to be informative, well organized, and presented in an interesting manner. Members who have already successfully completed a Demonstration or Illustrated Talk are now encouraged to try a Creative Communication (Recitation or Dramatic interpretation) presentation.  Trained Evaluators constructively critique each presentation, using the Danish System as the primary method of evaluation. Upon conclusion of the presentation, the Evaluators consult with each individual presenter to provide positive feedback as well as suggestions for improvement.  REMEMBER to cite at least three different reliable sources to validate the information you provide. |
| **4-H Members ages 15–19** | **Other Presentation Options** |  |
| **Presentation Length**:  10 to 15 minutes.  Note that for youth advancing to District, time limits are strictly enforced  4-H Members who demonstrate a readiness for a more challenging opportunity may be selected to give their presentation at the next level—District (regional)  4-H Public Presentations | **Formal Speech**: Call 4-H Office for Speech Guidelines. Must have completed at least two prior Demonstrations or Illustrated Talks at District Level  **Teen Interviews**: Mock College or Job Interview—call 4-H Office for guidelines  To enter the above categories, presenters must seek permission from the 4-H Office so appropriate Evaluators can be identified and relevant paperwork prepared | At this age and experience level, teens should be able to deliver a polished and professional presentation. The Formal Speech is an appropriate challenge because the speaker has nothing but their own voice and body to retain audience attention and communicate the message. Interviews will simulate a real-life scenario. Evaluations and feedback given as above. |

**Important Guidelines to Note**

**Presentation Times**

See above for time limits relevant to age. While Evaluators are flexible with younger children, those presenting for the first time and those needing accommodations, they will penalize youth aged 8 and older who should know the expectations. Presentations must be neither too short nor too long, and time taken should be effectively used. In extreme cases, Evaluators may stop a youth who goes on too long or decline to evaluate a youth whose presentation is much too short.

**Presentation Format**

Most types of 4-H Public Presentations (except for Teen Interviews, Speech, Cloverbud Pledge/Motto Recitation and Show and Tell) share the same three-part format: an introduction, body (the main content usually with subheadings), and conclusion or summary. The content and presentation techniques used in each part vary somewhat depending on the type of presentation. See the rubric for guidelines and consider issues such as flow and cohesion.

**Introductions**

In the past, 4-H Members have been taught to begin their presentation with the standard “Hello, my name is …. and I am …. years old. I am a member of the …… 4-H Club. Today I am going to talk about …..”

*Now, we live in a fast-paced world! To be successful in the twenty-first century, you have got to grab people’s attention in 30 seconds or less.*

The most effective way of capturing attention is with what is known as a “hook”! The goal—to catch, arouse, or draw the audience’s interest within the first 15 seconds. The presenter name and other details can be slotted in elsewhere.

Cloverbud presenters may use the standard introduction of ‟Hello my name is …. ” After

they become more experienced; they may begin incorporating more interesting introductions.

* Sample 2nd/3rd year Cloverbud intro: ‟Hello! My name is …., I am …. years old, … and my favorite sandwich is P B and J, so today I am going to teach you how to make one! ”

For Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks, the presenter will begin by introducing their topic in a manner that creatively catches the attention of the audience while either stimulating their curiosity or providing information about the subject.

* Sample Demonstration intro (A football is thrown from the side of the room by a prearranged helper and caught by the presenter who is dressed in football uniform): “If you have ever watched a football game, you know how important it is for the players to be able to throw and catch the ball skillfully and today, I, Joe Smith, will show you how.”
* Sample Illustrated Talk intro (on tractor safety): “Did you know that approximately 130 people are killed in tractor-related accidents in the US every year and many more seriously injured? (pause) That is why I am going to talk about this important topic today.

For Creative Communication categories, the presenter should identify the source of the creative piece and its author and may allude to, explain, or challenge the audience to discover the message it conveys prior to beginning. The setting as well as the presenter's reason for choosing this specific piece may also be included at this point if so desired. Once again, the presenter’s first name should be incorporated into the creative introduction.

Other ideas for “hooking” the audience:

A Short, Snappy Sentence:

“Help! I’ve just lost my steering! Not my car, but on how to groom that beautiful steer out in the barn.”

Quote:

“To bee or not to bee, that is the question.” According to Shakespeare (a presentation on bees)

Question:

“Did you know that manure could be very useful? Manure makes excellent compost for your garden. Hi, my name is \_\_\_, and I am going to tell you how to set up a home composting system to recycle the manure from your farm animals.”

Joke or Funny Story (Be careful not to offend your audience and that it relates to the topic):

“Doctors are some of the most educated and trained professionals and yet everything they do is called ‘practice.’”

“Why do we park on the driveway and drive on the parkway?”

Relate a Personal Experience:

“While on vacation last summer, I was able to save a life by using CPR.”

Show an Unusual Object:

Hold it up or pass it around and ask if anyone can identify it.

**Body or Content of Presentation**

Consult the appropriate rubric. Content should flow logically, be divided into bite-size pieces, when possible, be relevant, and focus on one main theme without wandering off track. Depth is usually better than breadth. Avoid lists; focus on the how/why/when/what.

* In a Demonstration, a technique or steps of a process are shown.
* In an Illustrated Talk or speech, the main points are identified and explained.
* In a Creative Communication presentation, the creative piece is performed.

**Conclusion or Summary**

The presenter must reemphasize the main points covered. E.g.: “Today I have talked to you about X, Y and Z” or “Today I have demonstrated how to …”

* Stress the message, e.g., why this was important
* Possibly say how they may use the information or be inspired
* Suggest follow-up research and/or related topics
* CITE YOUR SOURCES
* ASK IF THE AUDIENCE HAS QUESTIONS

In a Creative Communication presentation, the conclusion depends on the type of creative piece and how it was introduced. A conclusion may be built into the piece itself or the message may be emphasized through a simple comment, a brief analysis, an expressive body movement (lowering one's head), or even through dialogue with the audience.

**Citing Sources**

At all ages and levels, presenters MUST state where their information came from in answer to the questions:

“Where did I learn what I am telling you? ”

“How do I know the information is accurate?

Sources may not include sites such as Wikipedia, Google (with no other references), blogs, and hearsay. When using graphics, sources must be written on the poster board or slide as well as cited orally. Consider bringing the hard resource, such as books, and article printouts.

Citations can be made during the presentation where they fit in naturally and/or should also be included as part of the summary.

Examples of reliable sources are:

* **Cloverbuds ages 5–7**, saying that you learned this from a parent, in school, by watching X TV show (name it), reading a book (name it) is sufficient
* **Juniors ages 8-–11,** cite a minimum of two reliable sources such as the name and author of books on the topic, TV documentaries with names of presenters, online articles from experts such as David Attenborough
* **Youth 12–19,** cite a minimum of three reliable sources that may include the above but should be more correctly referenced and, as youths mature, include sources such as academic publications

**Dress Code**

Appearance matters! A basic standard of clean hands and face, neat hair, and clothes appropriate for the occasion are expected. Dressing nicely is a way to respect your audience and help your confidence.

* **Cloverbuds**: Need to be comfortable, so work with them to choose accordingly
* **4-H’ers presenting on general topics**: The standard of dress should become gradually more formal as they mature and gain confidence and skills. Once the level of college interview is reached, for example, jeans are much less appropriate.
* **Special Dress**: To complement your presentation, specific clothes may be appropriate, e.g., an apron/chef’s hat for cooking. There may be occasions when the Evaluators and audience may miss that your clothing relates to your topic (for example, if you are doing a presentation about fitness and wear leggings/sneakers), so be sure to point this out. A costume or special clothing is not required but is welcome where relevant.

**The Danish System of Grading**

For Cloverbuds, ages 5–7, theories of Positive Youth development suggest that being graded can be detrimental to confidence and growth. Therefore, Cloverbuds receive feedback and participation awards in a noncompetitive environment.

Cornell Cooperative Extension’s 4-H Youth Development program uses the Danish Judging System as its primary method for evaluating 4-H Member (ages 8–19) Public Presentations. Using this method, each youth presentation is evaluated based on the ideal standard for the presenters’ age, experience, ability, and developmental level. Therefore, each presentation is not compared with or in competition with other presentations. Instead, they are evaluated using a rubric and encouraged to try to improve their personal performance rather than compare themselves with others. Youth receive certificates in the following categories:

**WHITE:** This rating is determined if the overall level of accomplishment needs

improvement

**RED:** This rating is determined if the overall level of accomplishment meets

expectations

**BLUE:** This rating is determined if the overall level of accomplishment is above average

**PURPLE:** This rating is determined if the overall level of accomplishment is outstanding; that is, well above average with ‟star” quality

Note that less than 10% of youth in an average year achieve purple, so it is something to strive for. As older youth are evaluated to a higher standard than younger youth, it is challenging at all ages. Youth usually need a purple or high blue to be invited to move to the District level.

**Technology**

CCEDC does not guarantee that the available technology equipment will be compatible with youth devices. It is recommended that youth bring a flash drive as a backup and speak to 4-H staff well in advance.