



Speak Up!

Kentucky 4-H Talk Meet



Speak Up!

*“Enter the 4-H Talk Meet? Me? Oh, no,” you are saying.
“Find someone else for that job.”*

*“I don’t mind giving a little talk if I have something to say,”
you argue, “but getting up and making a speech in a
meeting—that’s something else.”*

Your leader, your mother, your teacher, or maybe even the inner “you” persists: “The rewards are wonderful! You have hidden talent that you need to develop. Your club will be proud of you. You’ll learn how to prepare speeches. You’ll be a better leader. You will become more poised.” And on and on and on. Logical, undebatable, good reasons for entering the program. But you are still not convinced. Something about it seems so stiff, so formal, so different from talking about things you talk about every day.

The truth is—you are right! Of course, your leader is right, too, but only partly so. Your leader’s reasons are the happy results of the speaking program. If you are lucky, some of them may happen to you. But the best reason for entering the program (or for giving any speech) is to express something you want to say to a group of people. It must be something important enough to justify the time and energy you will put into preparing the speech. It must be important enough to justify the time and energy your audience will devote to listening to you. When you find a subject in which you are really interested—when you feel you must discuss a particular problem, for example—then you are ready to enter the speech program.

The Rules Are Simple. Are you a 4-H member at least nine years of age and not more than 19? Then you are eligible to enter the 4-H Public Speaking Program, or “Talk Meet.”

Each speech should be three to five minutes long for juniors and five to seven minutes for seniors. No visual aids, such as charts, posters, or pictures, can be used.

Choose a Purpose

First, you must decide on the purpose of your speech. Exactly what are you trying to accomplish with this speech? What do you want your audience to think or do after hearing it?

Find a subject that you know something about. You may not know much about your subject at this point, but if you are interested in it, you will enjoy finding out more. Remember that each topic is only a suggestion. You may vary it to suit your interests.

Most topics are much too broad for a short speech. You must narrow down the topic so that you can cover it in this short time period. For example, instead of talking about “The History of Farmer Cooperatives,” talk about “The Farm Supply Cooperative in My Community.” Instead of “The Value of 4-H Work,” talk about “What 4-H Has Done for Me.”

Choosing a small subject and saying a great deal about it is better than choosing a large subject and being unable to cover it well.

Decide on the one main thought you want to get across with your speech. Write this idea down.

Collect Information

Learn more about your subject than you can possibly use in your speech. Become an authority on your subject. The information you use in your speech should be like an iceberg—only a small part will show, but it will be supported by much more. Here are some good ways to gather information.

Think. You have had experience with this subject. What do you already know about it? What examples do you know that will illustrate your speech? Is there a poem, a song, a joke that you can use to make a point clear? Why did you choose this topic in the first place? Why is it important?

Read. Begin with the newspaper. Then consult farm and home magazines. What do your textbooks contribute?

After you have a general idea about your subject, get specific information. Go to your school or community library. Ask the librarian to help you. Check the Reader's Guide. Write for information on your subject—your area Extension agent and your county agencies have a list of U.S. Department of Agriculture publications.

As you read, make notes. Jot down pertinent quotations, facts, and figures. Write down who said what and when. Do not ignore the other side of the subject—be sure to read very carefully those ideas which oppose your point of view.

Ask. Talk with your 4-H leader. Talk with your parents, your teachers, your community leaders. Find out what they think. Listen to them even if they disagree with you. Interview authorities—people who have special training or experience in your subject. Meet the manager of the local co-op. Interview your area Extension agent. Consult employees from the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Farmers Home Administration. You'll think of others—home economists in gas companies and electric power distributors, the vocational agriculture teacher, or the vocational home economics teacher. Successful farmers and successful homemakers can give valuable help. Your neighbors down the street may know something about your subject.

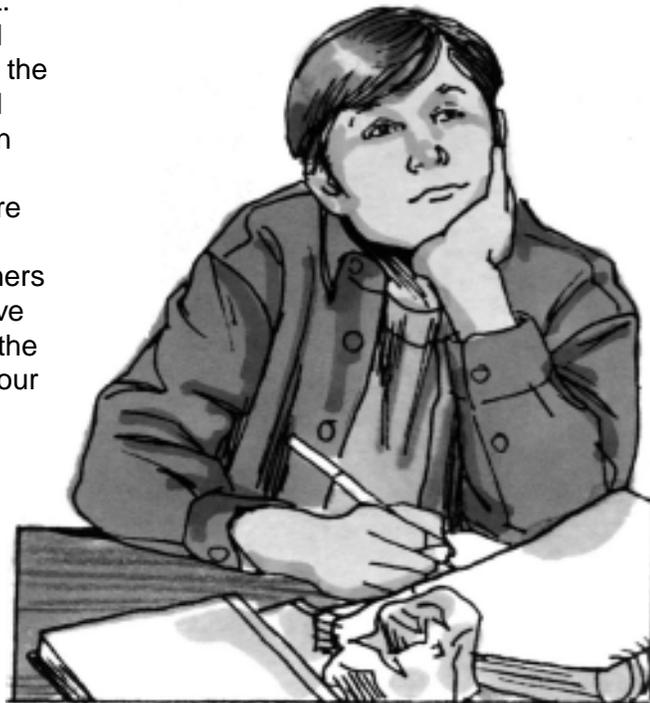
Make appointments to discuss your subject with these people at their convenience. Have a few questions ready to ask. Take notes on what they say. Listen respectfully. Ask permission to quote them in your speech. Thank them cordially for the time and

help they have given you. Later, when you quote them in your speech, be sure that you do not misinterpret what they believe.

Think Some More. Everything that is written or said is not true. What was best in 1925 may not be best now. What a famous man said in 1941 may not be his opinion now. You may not think exactly as you did when you began preparing this speech! Be critical. Learn to separate the important from the trivial. Decide what is good and what is even better. Then try to select the very best material from the research you have done.

Organize Your Talk

Organize your material and ideas into three parts—introduction, body, and conclusion. From now on, everything you do should be planned to make it easy for your audience to understand and enjoy your speech.



Introduction. 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, inform them of your subject, and show them how the subject concerns them.

If you are a good storyteller, get attention by telling a story that pertains to the speech. Use a joke that illustrates your speech topic, or give an interesting quotation about your subject. Then tell the audience what you are going to talk about and why it is important to them.

Body. The body is the longest and most important part of your speech. It contains the heart of your information. Plan it carefully. Select one or two main points. Illustrate each point. Give facts to back up your arguments. Tell a short story to show what you mean. Include your experience and ideas.

Stick to your subject—be sure that each bit of information you use pertains to the purpose of your speech. Make it easy for the audience to follow your talk.

Plan this part of your speech first; then you can develop an introduction and a conclusion that are appropriate.

Conclusion. The final part of your speech gives you an opportunity to state your main ideas again, briefly. This is a good time to tell your audience exactly what you want them to do or believe about your subject. Do this by summarizing your main points, restating the purpose of the speech, telling a story to summarize your speech, using a quotation that aptly expresses the point, or telling the audience exactly what they should do.

This is your last chance to impress the audience. Plan your conclusion so that you can finish forcefully.

Practice Your Speech

Make an outline, plan your opening sentence, check information for accuracy, then practice.

Practice before a Mirror. See yourself as an audience would see you. See how you use your hands or facial expressions to make a point.

Practice, if possible, on a stage in an auditorium. Get the feel of standing on a stage. Pretend that the room is full and speak to the people seated in the last row. Each time you practice, vary your wording a little. Do not memorize your speech. Concentrate on your main ideas—not on specific words; then if you forget a phrase, you can choose another way to express the same thought. You won't get "stuck."

Practice with a tape recorder if one is available. Listen to your speech and make corrections.

Practice by giving other speeches. Whenever you give a successful speech in a school assembly, in a church activity, or at a club, you are rehearsing for this speech. Speak whenever you have an opportunity, and you will be better prepared to deliver this particular speech.

Deliver Your Speech

Ready! Your appearance makes an impression on your listeners. Be well-groomed and neatly dressed. Choose a simple hairstyle and leave off dangling bracelets and most other jewelry; try for naturalness in makeup. Your dress and makeup should not detract from your speech.

Set! Try to look relaxed and pleasant as you wait your turn to speak. Of course, you won't feel relaxed, but try to give that impression. Look at and listen to the master of ceremonies and the other speakers. Respond to what they say—laugh at their jokes and applaud their speeches. Don't use this as a time to study your notes. Don't smile at or have a private conversation with your friends and family in the audience. You are already making an impression on the audience; look as courteous and intelligent as you really are!

Listener Evaluation

As you practice your speech, ask your leader, teacher, or a member of your family to evaluate it. Listed below are some of the things you might look and listen for. If you have prepared successfully, there will be many "Yes" answers. However, the "No" answers will be the most important because they indicate what you should improve.

	YES	NO
CONTENT		
Was the purpose of this speech worthwhile?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you select the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was the purpose clearly stated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the introduction get attention?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the introduction introduce the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were the main points easy to follow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were the main points arranged in the best order?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were there no more than two main points?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was each main point supported with information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was credit given to sources of information, if needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there enough information concerning the subject?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was the conclusion short, interesting, final?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were the sentences short, easy to understand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was the speech interesting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DELIVERY		
Was the speaker friendly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the speaker—		
Talk directly to the audience?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look at the audience?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have a posture that was erect but not stiff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refrain from using stilted, artificial gestures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seem relaxed, at ease?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refrain from leaning on the speaker's stand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speak loudly enough?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Correctly pronounce all words?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflect the mood of the speech in facial expressions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use notes without detracting from the speech?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GENERAL		
Did the speaker—		
Stay within the 5-minute time limit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Convey to the audience a sense of wanting to communicate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make the audience believe that this subject was important?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use humor in the speech?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seem to choose words at the time they were spoken? (Avoid a memorized or reading style of delivery?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seem natural, conversational, sincere? (Avoid too-big words, long sentences, dramatic voice, planned gestures?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the speech reflect the thoughts and personality of the speaker?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Go! When you are called to speak, nod and smile your acknowledgment to the master of ceremonies. Walk quickly to the speaker's stand. Pause for a moment and look at the audience. Begin your speech. Don't give the title—just begin; your introduction will tell the audience your subject. Don't say, "Ladies and gentlemen, judges, and friends." This is not necessary in a short speech.

Suggestions on Delivery

Each person develops an individual method of delivery. However, the following suggestions will help you to be more effective.

Eye Contact. Look directly into the eyes of members of your audience. Don't look over their heads as you might do when playing a role in a play. Look at people in various parts of the audience.

Posture. Stand in a comfortable position with your feet fairly close together. Don't lean on the speaker's stand. Don't sway; don't be too rigid, either. Most of the time your hands should be relaxed at your sides. Don't stick them in your pockets.

Yes, your knees will be shaking, but don't worry—you are the only one who knows.

Voice. Speak loudly enough for all to hear. This is a good bit louder than you usually speak in conversation. Remember that you need to speak a little more slowly if there is a large audience. Speak in a natural tone of voice—try to sound conversational.

Gestures. Don't plan a particular gesture for a particular time in your speech. It will look artificial and stilted. Instead, feel free to use gestures to emphasize main points. As a rule, don't count on your fingers. This gesture is overworked and not very effective.

Public Address System. If a public address system is provided, use it. Stand about 18 inches from the microphone and speak in a conversational voice—not loudly. Stay the same distance from the mike throughout your speech.

Emphasis. Some ideas and words (main ideas, names, dates) in your speech are more important than others. To emphasize them, pause just before and after giving



them, change the loudness of your voice, or step closer to the audience.

Giving Quotations. The careful speaker always gives full credit to the source of quotations used in a speech. Never say exactly what someone else has said or written without identifying it. In giving a quotation, however, it is not necessary to say, “John Jones, in his book *People*, and I quote: . . .” Just say, “John Jones, in his book *People*, said . . .” Pause briefly before and after the quotation, and the audience will know where the quote begins and ends. You don’t need to say “end of quote.”

The Audience. The people in the audience are your friends and want you to do a good job. Show them that you are friendly by smiling at them. Pay attention to them. If someone is straining to hear, speak louder. Speak directly to your audience. Your speech is a flop if it cannot be heard and understood.

Notes. Use note cards if they will help you give a better speech. Use a few small cards. Don’t write the entire speech on them, just main ideas and key words. Hold the cards in your hands, or put them on the speaker’s stand. Use notes when you need them, but don’t attempt to hide them from the audience.

Conclusion. After you have given your conclusion, stop. Don’t talk about stopping—stop. However, stop naturally, not abruptly. Pause at the end of your speech. Look at the audience. Give them a chance to soak up your last words. Don’t say “Thank you.” Smile if you wish, then turn and walk quickly to your seat.

Remember the time-honored rules of 4-H club speaking: Stand up, speak up, shut up, and sit down!

What Next?

Each division will name a champion, and the winner will enjoy the honor and awards that accompany that position. But in a real sense there are many winners. Whenever club members are better speakers because they studied and entered the program, whenever a member of the audience is inspired or motivated to action because of a 4-H’er’s speech, whenever a younger 4-H member aspires to become a better speaker, there is a winner.

One of the greatest rewards for entering the program is learning the power of speech as a method of communication. Speech is a tool—a way of getting a job done. It is not a goal in itself but a means to an end. The effective use of speech depends on its purpose. When 4-H members use their speaking ability to right a wrong condition, to better an existing situation, to inspire others to greater heights, to inform an audience of a pertinent problem, they are becoming more desirable citizens. Being a better speaker is an admirable goal for every 4-H member.

One Final Thought

Before you move on to other projects, stop for a moment to remember the many people who have helped you. Did you thank the judges (whether you won or lost)? Have you written thank-you notes to the people who gave you information? Did you express your thanks to your 4-H leader? Of course, you congratulated the winner of the program, but did you compliment other speakers on the things you liked about their speeches? Remember to thank the sponsors for their generosity in financing the program. Your 4-H leaders deserve your appreciation, too. And you know better than anyone else how much your family has helped you. Use the power of speech to show your enthusiastic gratitude to all these people!



4-H Public Speaking Record



List each prepared talk you have given. Under "Type Audience" indicate whether this was a talk before a 4-H group, civic club, school, radio, television, etc. Under "Purpose" indicate whether the speech was to entertain, inform, convince, or persuade.

Date	Place	Subject	Type Audience	Purpose	Number Present

On a separate sheet, write a story in your own words about your public speaking activity. Tell why you selected public speaking, what assistance you had, and what you learned from this activity.

Name _____ Age ____ Address _____

Name of 4-H Club _____ School _____

Name of 4-H Leader _____ County _____

Your Leader's Suggestions for Improvement
