



Getting Ready to Give a Presentation

Practical Hints

When preparing your presentation, follow these guidelines to add polish to your presentation.

Setting Up and Handling Equipment

- For all presentations, props (food, toys, examples, etc.) should be placed on uniform trays. These don't have to be expensive, just clean and inconspicuous.
- All trays should be covered. Dish towels work great, but they should be a solid color, clean, and uniform.
- Once you've purchased trays and towels remember to put them in a safe place and DO NOT use them on a regular basis. This will mean trays and towels will stay clean and can be used over and over again.
- Always re-cover trays once you are finished using them. Trays are covered for two reasons:
 - Towels cover up any messes or opened containers
 - If the audience can't see what is on the trays they will not be distracted during the presentation

- Arrange equipment and supplies so that the audience can see clearly.
- Place trays and extra equipment on a second table behind you.
- Use trays to group your supplies and equipment. It is easier to move materials on trays and it looks neater.
- When possible, use transparent equipment such as glass bowls so the audience can see the material and the process.
- Label containers clearly and be sure your labels are visible to the audience.
- Keep a hand towel or paper towels handy if needed.
- Make a list of equipment and supplies needed on a small card and place with the tray.
- Arrange the equipment and supplies in the most convenient manner. Keep the table clear in the center so people can see what you are doing.
- Handle props carefully and quietly; have a folded towel under bowls or pans.
- Keep the work surface clean; have damp cloths, sponges, paper towels handy.

Appearance

First impressions are very important.

- Choose simple, practical clothing so that your audience will be attracted to your presentation, not distracted by your clothes. Team members might want to dress alike.
- Make sure your clothing is clean, neat, and well pressed.
- Be sure that your hands and fingernails are clean and well kept.
- Make sure your shoes are comfortable and look professional.
- Hair should be out of your face.
- Keep jewelry to a minimum; avoid long earrings, excessive rings, bracelets, and bulky necklaces (no matter how great they look with your outfit).
- Makeup should be clean cut. Bright eye shadow and lipstick can be very distracting to the audience. Even though you are giving a presentation, stage makeup is not necessary.
- Avoid mannerisms that may distract the audience such as pushing hair back, rocking back and forth, and chewing gum.
- Dress tastefully. Skirts should be of a conservative length and tops should have a high neckline.

Gestures

- Use hand gestures or movements to give emphasis to main points.
- The face is very important for gesturing. Use your smile, your eyes,

- Be natural, be at ease, be happy, and be sure to smile.
- Stand up straight and tall, as if you were a puppet on a string and the string is attached to the top of your head. Be sure to keep your shoulders back and not lean on one foot or the other.
- You can put one or both hands in front of you or out to the side, keeping elbows close to your body.
- Hands can be placed vertically, as if you could cut something with a knife. Or you can put your hands out flat, as if you were waiting for someone to put coins in your hand.
- Some people are comfortable using one finger for their first point, two fingers for their second idea, and so forth.
- Practice to find the gestures that are most comfortable for you. Just be sure you don't "fidget" with your hands, or lean them on the table.
- Plan your moves. Many people take a few steps between main ideas. This helps your audience know you are changing the topic. You will not want to move and walk continually, though.
- Get used to using your hands when you speak. This will help you avoid playing with props or tugging on clothing. If necessary, "choreograph" your speech, knowing when to acknowledge a poster or show a prop can make you more comfortable.

- Be enthusiastic. Your interest in your topic is usually shown in your facial expressions. You need to consider how smiles, frowns, looks of surprise or other facial changes will help tell your story.

Tips for Giving a Food Presentation

- Use an apron.
- Cover any commercial labels that are showing.
- White paper or masking tape placed over the label works well.
- Label all ingredients.
- It is okay to pre-measure.
- Arrange ingredients on your tray in the order you will be using them.
- Keep surfaces clean with waxed paper.
- Tape a small paper bag beside you on the table for peelings, egg shells, etc.
- Clean as you go!
- Use clear mixing bowls if available.
- Use proper measuring equipment.
- Include nutritional values, storage, as well as “how to’s”.
- If using a mixer, a towel under your bowl will deaden the sound.
- Before you display your finished product, clean up everything. Cover your trays with matching towels and then display what you have made.
- Use trays and attractive dishes to display the finished product.

Showmanship

- Try coordinating your tray covers with your presentation. For example, if your posters are mainly black, white, and yellow, try using black or yellow towels.
- Remember to bring a plastic bag to tape to the table if you will have garbage. This could be scraps of paper, egg shells, string, etc. Trash should NOT go on trays.
- Always remember to talk when you are loading or unloading items from a tray. The only time there should be silence is while your back is turned, and that should be brief. Practice!
- Practice your presentation enough so that you are as comfortable as possible.
- Remember to relax your legs when you speak.
- Locking your knees is dangerous and you should be able to move, but avoid swaying or rocking.
- Speak with clarity and volume without giving an impression of force or yelling at the audience. If you have trouble pronouncing a word or phrase, change it!
- Remember to change the inflection of your voice when speaking. Practice putting emphasis on important words and phrases, as well as ending sentences.
- Presenting is a leadership position. Work on creating an “active listening” environment, consistency, and empowering your audience.

Additional 4-H Communications resources include:

- The Versatile 4-H Presentation
- The Four P's of Planning A Presentation
- Getting Ready to Give a 4-H Presentation
- Presentation Visuals
- Using PowerPoint® in 4-H Presentations
- Evaluating a 4-H Presentation
- How to Prepare a Multimedia Presentation
- How to Prepare a 4-H Radio Public Service Announcement

Visit the Nebraska 4-H Web site for additional resources
(<http://4h.unl.edu>).

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