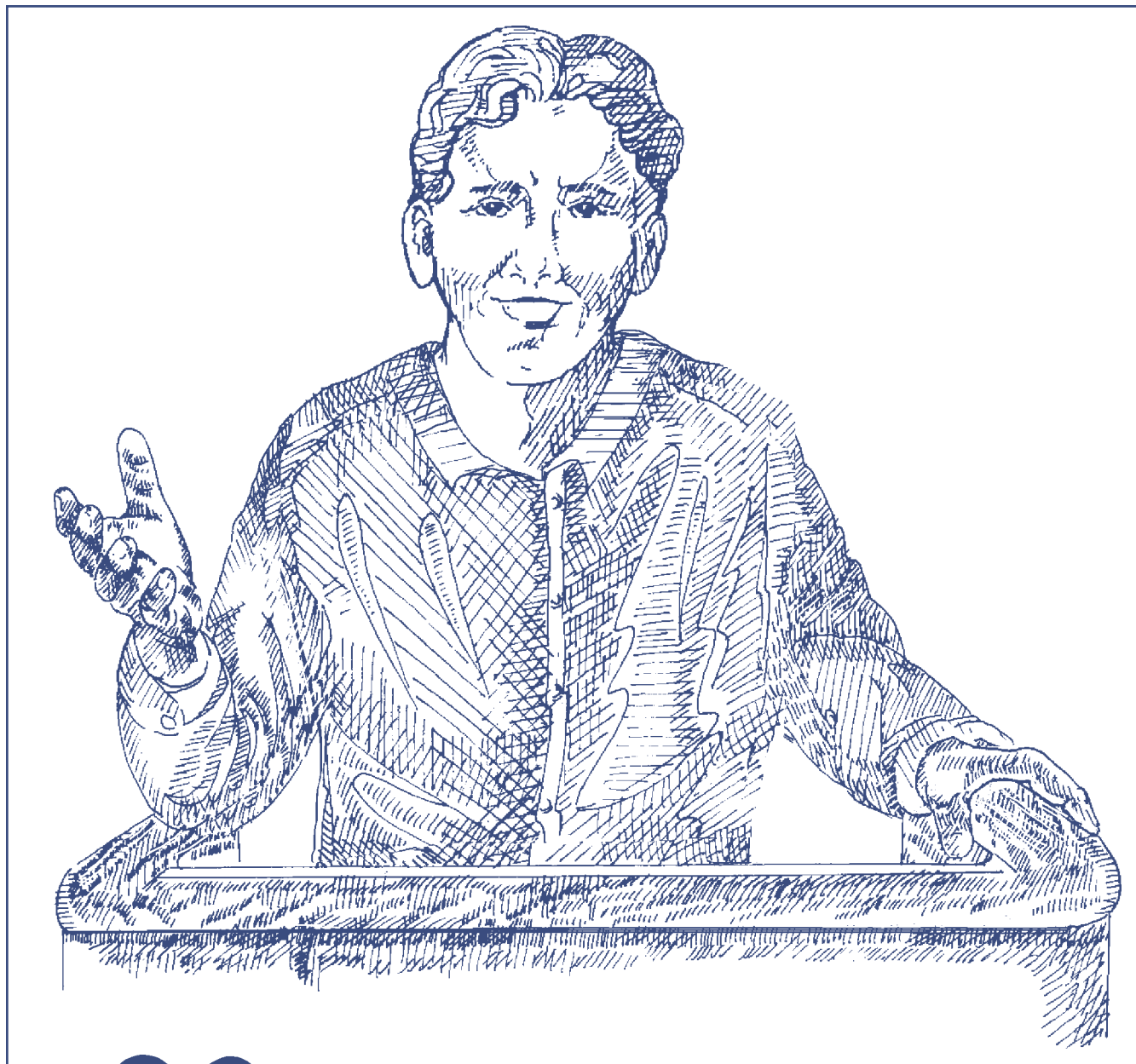


▶ Tools for Public Speaking



A Guide for 4-H Members

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4-H Public Speaking Opportunities

Basic public speaking opportunities in 4-H include:

- giving a demonstration or illustrated talk
- Health & Safety Public Speaking Contest
- Health & Safety Skit Contest
- assuming the role of an officer
- giving a committee report at a meeting
- leading and teaching recreation
- leading pledges

Going Beyond in Public Speaking

More advanced 4-H public speaking opportunities include:

- being a camp counselor
- CarTeens
- being a style revue commentator
- announcing a show at a county fair
- taking on 4-H ambassador or promotion roles
- becoming a peer mediator
- speaking to civic groups about 4-H
- emceeing a program
- participating in radio/TV interviews
- teaching a 4-H workshop or clinic

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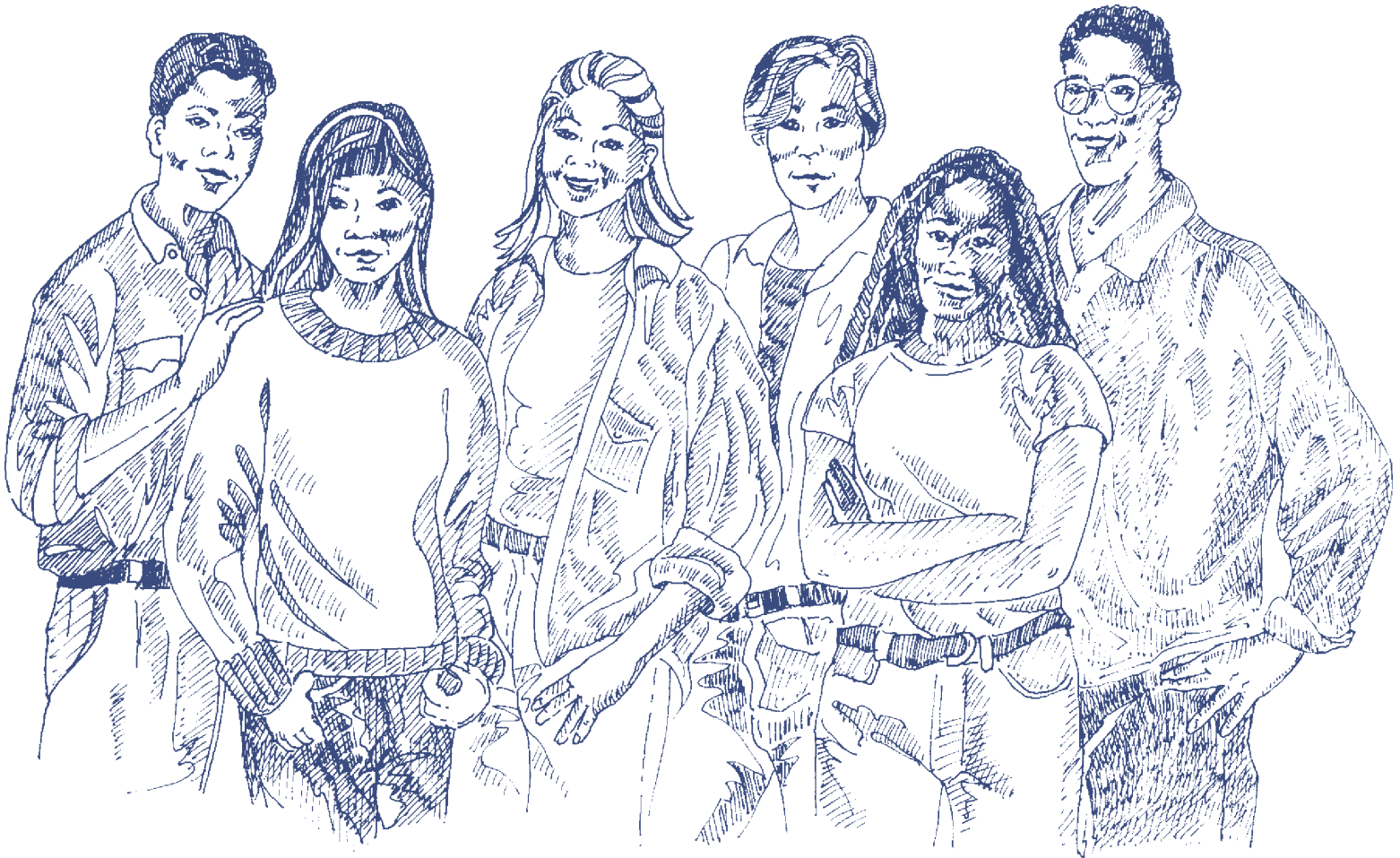
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Getting Started... and Going Further

A good public speaker is made, not born. Being able to speak well in front of the public is a skill available to everyone. Good public speakers carry positive attitudes such as these:

- ▼ You can if you think you can!
- ▼ Winners never quit; quitters never win!
- ▼ When the going gets tough, the tough get going!

Learning good public speaking skills will benefit you throughout your life. Good public speakers have learned the right skills and put them into practice.

This publication teaches you about nine basic tools for public speaking. Learn how to use these tools, practice them, involve yourself in 4-H public speaking opportunities, then “jump beyond” to outside public speaking opportunities. These opportunities are identified on page two of this publication.

▶ Tool #1: Determine Your Present Skill Level

To help determine your present skills in public speaking, answer the following questions:

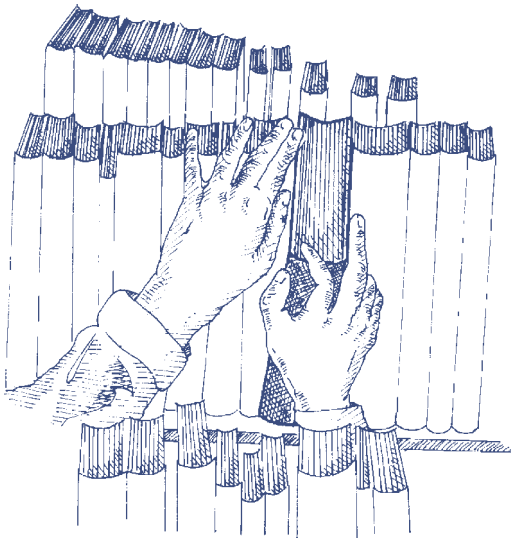
- Why have I been scared to speak in public?
- It is more difficult to speak in some situations than others. For example, you may find it easy to tell friends about your vacation, but difficult to question a teacher about a bad grade. In which situations do you speak more freely, and in which are you more reserved?
- Past experiences often determine how comfortable you are speaking to a group. On which past experiences would you draw to present a demonstration, participate in a club meeting, or become a camp counselor?
- What public speaking goals will you set for yourself this year in 4-H? How about next year, or in 5 years, or as an adult?

► Tool #2: Know Your Subject

If you are going to give a talk, you must choose a topic. You also need to consider whether the purpose of your talk will be to inform, persuade, instruct, entertain, or inspire your audience. Here are questions to ask yourself as you choose a topic:

- Am I interested in this topic?
- Is it interesting or useful to others?
- Does it have one main idea?
- Can I find enough information about this topic?
- Can I cover the topic in the time allotted for my presentation?
- For a demonstration: Can this topic be demonstrated clearly? Does it involve action?

After you have selected your topic, learn as much as possible about your subject. Gather information from several different sources, such as your library, your local Extension office, your 4-H project book, or by talking to an authority on the subject. For example, if you decide to speak on home fire safety, you could ask your local fire department for a statistic on the number of fires in your community last year. This information would encourage your audience to follow the fire prevention tips in your talk.



► Tool #3: Know Your Audience

In public speaking, knowing your audience is almost as important as knowing your subject. In order to “know” your audience, consider asking the following questions (and any others you can think of) about them:

- Who are they? This information is called “demographics,” and would include age, sex, ethnicity, and other relevant statistics.
- Where will you present (outdoors, in a gymnasium, at a banquet hall)?
- Why does the audience need this presentation? How will it interest them? What are they expecting?
- What change in knowledge or behavior do you intend to accomplish with the audience?
- What will the audience be feeling? Are they likely to be energetic, relaxed, tired, hostile, or irritable at the time of your talk?



► Tool #4: Be Creative

Creativity in public speaking helps to capture and maintain the attention of the audience. Through creativity, you can personalize a talk and “make it yours.”

Creativity begins by selecting a catchy title for your talk. The title arouses the interest of the audience. A title should both inform and arouse interest. Following is an example of an acceptable title, and a better title:

Acceptable: “How to Groom a Steer”

Better: “Steer-ing in the Right Direction”

Other ways to add creativity to your talk include adding posters or visuals (if permitted), and variety in your speaking style and delivery.

► Tool #5: Organize Your Information

Your presentation should have a central theme, which includes several main points stated in a logical sequence. Any talk has three basic parts:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Body
- 3) Summary and closing

▼ The Introduction

▼ An introduction should capture the audience’s attention within the first 15 seconds. You can attract attention by asking a question, sharing a surprising statistic or fact, relating a personal experience, telling a joke or funny story, or showing an unusual object.

▼ Your introduction also should inform the audience of your topic and what you hope they might learn from your presentation. Avoid sharing your name, age, and club in your introduction if you have already been introduced.

▼ The Body

▼ The body is the “meat” or “heart” of your talk. There are many ways to organize the body of your talk, including the following:

▼ Clearly Numbered Points

▼ Example: “There are seven points to follow in the safe use of extension cords. Number one...”

▼ Cause and Effect Reasoning

▼ Example: “The number-one killer of youth age 16 to 20 is vehicular accidents. What causes this tragic loss of life?”

▼ Chronological Relay of Information

▼ Example: “First, cream the margarine and sugar. Then ...”

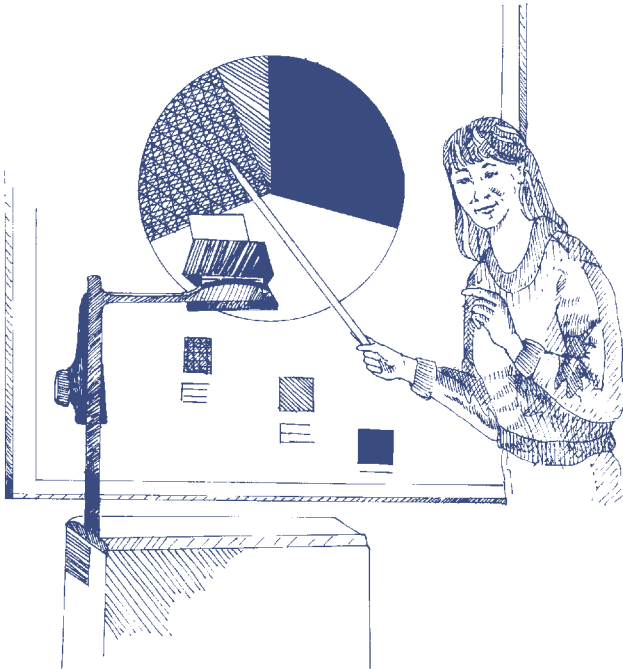
▼ However you choose to organize the information in the body of your talk, you will need to move smoothly from one point to the next. Transitions are the words or phrases that accomplish this smooth movement from point to point. The words “first,” “second,” “next,” and finally” bridge the points in your talk.

▼ Also, organizing your thoughts so that related thought are grouped together helps a talk flow smoothly.

Summary and Closing

The final section of your talk should include a summary and closing. The summary reminds your audience of your main points. Reemphasize what you want them to remember or what action you want them to take.

Your closing is slightly different, as it should relate to your introduction. For example, if you opened with a question, restate it and give the answer. If you opened with a quote, relate your closing comments back to that quote. An anecdote or story in the summary could drive home the point of your talk. The closing leaves an impression on your audience, and is the message they are most likely to remember.



► Tool #6: Deliver Your Talk

Effective delivery blends verbal and nonverbal communication. Consider the following ways of making your delivery more effective:

- Hand gestures—use occasionally and with good style, such as to emphasize a point.
- Facial expressions—look alert! Use your smile, eyebrows, and the expression on your face to show confidence, feelings, and determination.

- Voice—vary the pitch and volume of your voice and the speed at which you speak. Speak with a sincere tone. Clearly pronounce your words and use good grammar. As you speak, use pauses for emphasis.
- Eye contact—invite everyone into your presentation by making eye contact.
- Delivery—show energy and enthusiasm.
- Posture and poise—approach and leave the platform with confidence.
- Stand straight—don't slouch! Keep your feet flat on the floor, and don't shift side to side. Keep hands comfortably at your sides or clasped naturally in front of your lower body.

Practice helps you appear natural in the use of verbal and nonverbal techniques in your public speaking.

► Tool #7: Take Charge of Your Appearance

Appearance is important because an audience often forms their first impression of a speaker before he or she even has a chance to speak!

Your grooming, the style and fit of your clothing, your posture, the expression on your face, and the confidence you exude all contribute to your appearance. Remember, be neat and clean!

Be dressed for what your audience or the subject requires. For example, dress clothes would be appropriate for a talk in which you promote 4-H to a business group, while an apron would be appropriate for a foods demonstration.

However, your clothing should not capture the attention of your audience to the point that they are focusing on your clothes or jewelry instead of what you have to say.

The “total look” in public speaking also includes personable qualities. A pleasant facial expression, good posture, a positive attitude, and eye contact with your audience are appearance boosters.



► Tool #8: Use Props, Equipment, and Visuals

Posters, charts, and props help the audience better understand and absorb your message. Here are some important tips when using props, equipment, and visuals:

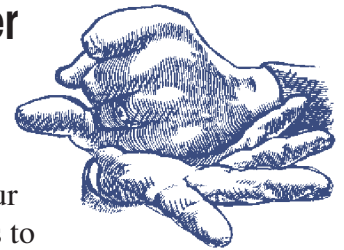
- Make sure equipment works and is ready to use.
Example: For electric appliances, have an extension cord in case one is not provided.
- Select only the necessary equipment and props. Avoid clutter.
- Organize your work area. If you won't be needing certain items until you are further into your talk, put them on trays and set them out of sight or behind you until you need them.
- If you are using a microphone, talk into it so the audience clearly hears your voice. If possible, practice with a microphone ahead of time.
- Presenters usually distribute handouts, if used, at the end of a talk, unless the information is essential for your audience to have during the talk.

- Keep visuals, such as posters or charts, simple. Letters and diagrams must be large enough for those in the back row to be able to read. Color contrast between the letters and the background makes visuals easier to read. Black letters on a white or yellow background is always a good choice.

Note: If you are entering a speech contest, check the contest rules for restrictions on the use of visuals or props.

► Tool #9: Put It All Together

With the first eight basic tools in hand, you are now ready to assemble and deliver your talk. The suggested steps to follow are:

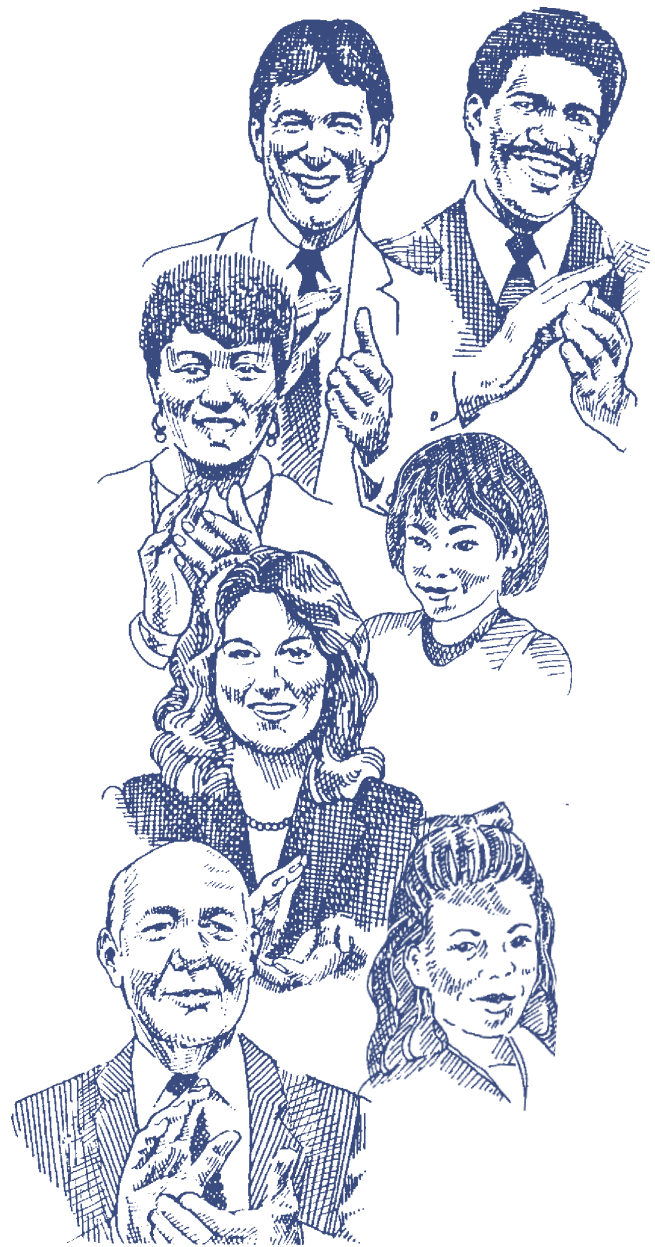


- a) Organize your notes into an outline. Under each main heading of the outline, list as many details as you need to cover the point.
- b) From the outline, write out the entire talk. You may need to write several drafts before you have it just the way you want it. Reading a speech word for word or memorizing a speech is not recommended. To be an effective speaker, you need to simplify your final draft into a series of keywords or symbols.
- c) Identify keywords or symbols for each section of your speech. Keywords are “nuggets” of information; these nuggets are easier to remember than full sentences or phrases, a tool to help you remember a larger set of information. Write your keywords on notecards, then use the notecards as you rehearse your talk.

d) Practice, practice, practice! Ask family members, friends, or your 4-H volunteer to listen to your talk. Their suggestions could be helpful. In addition, tape recording or videotaping your talk allows you to evaluate yourself. Practice one last time just before your scheduled talk.

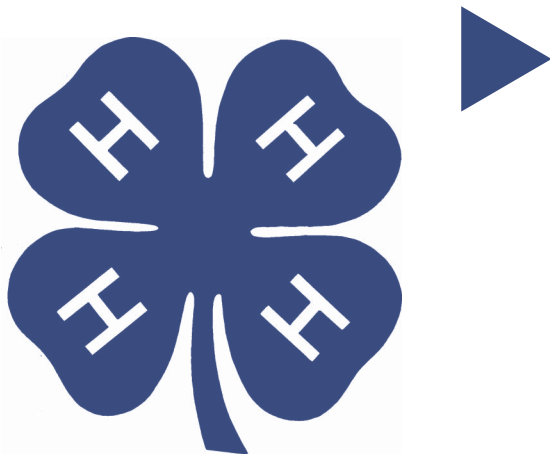
e) Do it! After putting all the tools together and practicing sufficiently, present your talk confidently to an audience. Be prepared for questions following your presentation. When a member of the audience asks a question, respond by restating the question then answering it to the best of your ability. Always thank your audience for listening.

f) Evaluate your presentation. After a talk is over, good speakers evaluate their presentation. Evaluate yourself on the nine tools in this handout. Also, you might ask a 4-H advisor, a parent, or older 4-H member with public speaking experience to evaluate your talk and help you improve your skills.



Forge on!

Keep going in public speaking. The more you speak—in front of your 4-H club, to the local Kiwanis club, at the County 4-H Demonstration Contest, or the County 4-H Health and Safety Speaking Contest—the better you will become. Last but not least, have fun and feel good about “making your best better” in public speaking.



I pledge
My Head to clearer thinking,
My Heart to greater loyalty,
My Hands to larger service and
My Health to better living, for
My Club, My Community,
My Country and My World.