

SECTION 5

Preparing a presentation

GETTING READY

- Keep steps and visual aids simple. Think about using coordinating colors for supplies, props, posters, tablecloths, and clothing.
- Practice aloud for 20 minutes a day several times. This will help fine-tune volume, pacing, and intonation.
- Avoid dependence on notes. If using notes, number them and use only key prompts with as few words as possible. Practice will decrease a need for notes.
- Make an audio recording and listen for ways to improve your clarity. Listening to a recording can help you learn your material.
- Examine presentation clothes for tears, frays, loose buttons, and spots. Remember to press clothes (and tablecloths) if needed.
- Rehearse the speech in front of friends, parents or small groups. Let them suggest areas that need work. Practice builds confidence.
- Weave personal experience into a presentation.
- Do a full dress rehearsal. Video if possible, to review.
- Show enthusiasm for the subject. Relax.. Begin and end with a smile.
- Think positive thoughts! Visualize and practice in your mind. See the presentation going well.
- Set up early if possible to check that all equipment is working properly.
- Position yourself correctly. The best place to stand during a presentation is facing the audience with electronic equipment to the side. Use a remote for a digital presentation. If no remote is available and a computer is out of reach, ask someone to advance slides for you. Work out a signal to advance slides. Saying “Go to the next slide” over and over is distracting.

Hints for Digital Presentations

Have a backup plan – Make a backup plan in case something goes wrong. You never know when equipment will fail or the room is not appropriate for a computer presentation. Have a plan in case you cannot use digital slides. If your presentation is on external storage for use on a different computer, be sure to open files and test the presentation. It may need to be saved to the computer hard drive to run smoothly. Some computers read external storage slowly. Back presentations up to a web-based drive and a physical drive. Make sure the version of the presentation program works correctly on another computer.

Use “B” or “W” keys – During a presentation if you need to pause, make the screen black or white by hitting either the “b” or “w” key respectively. Hit the key again to go back to the presentation. Practice this technique to make sure it works with your device and software.



Know key slide numbers – Write down the numbers of key slides. For instance, if the presentation is getting too long and you want to skip to the summary, type in that slide number and hit the “Enter” key to advance to that slide.

Use the arrow as a pointer – If not using the arrow, move it to the side. An arrow/cursor in the middle of a video presentation is especially distracting.

End with blank slides – Add an extra blank slide at the end of a presentation. It is less distracting to end with a blank slide. While newer versions of programs have a blank screen at the end of a presentation, this is still a good idea.

Logistics

Contact the event coordinator to ask what equipment will be supplied. You are responsible for supplying and setting up any additional equipment for the presentation. Room hosts may assist upon request. Too much unnecessary set up assistance may lead to questions about how much of the presentation you prepared. Having help to carry equipment for speedy transitions is one thing; having someone set up trays and supplies is another. Plan for equipment and supplies to be set up in 5-10 minutes.

Generally, if there is a malfunction, find a way to keep going. However, if equipment used in the presentation malfunctions and you cannot continue, request an opportunity to restart once you repair the equipment. Parents or room hosts may assist with equipment malfunctions. Evaluators should give the speaker the opportunity to relax and regroup their thoughts prior to restarting the presentation.

QUESTIONS

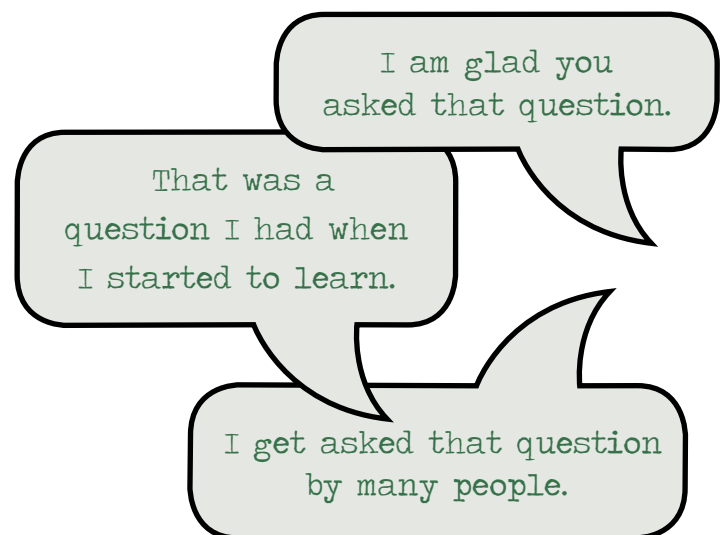
Handling Questions

Depending on the presentation type, consider a five-step approach in responding to questions. These steps may vary depending on the situation.

- Listen to the entire question before you answer.
- Repeat the question out loud so the audience can hear it, or restate the question in your answer.
- Credit the person for asking the question.
- Respond to the question honestly and the best you can. If you do NOT know an answer, tell them you do not know. You may ask for a way to contact the person with the answer once you research it. You may see if anyone else in the audience is able to provide an answer.
- If it's applicable and appropriate, bridge to the next question by asking them a question. "Does that answer your question?" or, "Is that the kind of information you were looking for?" This is critical. Once they respond "Yes," you have permission to go on to the next person. This also gives them the opportunity to say "No," and allows them to clarify their question.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR ADULT LEADERS

- Help the speaker choose a topic that interests them. Presentations are supposed to help the speaker learn more about a topic through teaching to others. Teaching creates a higher level of understanding.
- Presentations require practice, and practice pays in confidence.
- Memorization may work for some speakers, but *learning* the presentation is better because the speaker appears fresh during each presentation.
- Prepare the speaker for how to handle problems including distractions, falling posters, and forgotten items.
- Prepare the speaker to use evaluations to improve their performance. Help members to understand that feedback is necessary for improvement and not to give up if they were evaluated differently than expected.
- Help the speaker understand the importance of the skills they are learning and help them enjoy their public speaking experience.





Use trays to organize supplies, cover brand names, use a cloth to cover dirty supplies, have finished product covered on back table until revealing.



Use an easel so work can be shown to audience. Do not talk with back to audience. Show the step and turn back around to talk.



Use a covered box as a visual aid and flip sides.



If possible, tilt work surface toward audience.



Use clear cookware when possible, and keep work surface clean and clear.



Posters should be a size that the 4-H youth can manage. Think about color coordinating supplies, posters, etc



Costumes can be used to enhance a presentation.



Draw interest with a clear and creative title poster.