



4-H Briefs

Fun ideas to help members and families explore 4-H projects

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service 4-H Youth Development

Techniques

Using Notes:

If you choose to use notes or speak from a script, you will need to use a podium so you will have a place to rest your notes. It is not good form to hold notes when you are giving a presentation. You may begin to fidget with your notes which could be distracting. Notes may not even be necessary if you have learned the information you are presenting and you have prepared adequately. A tip to help you remember the information you are presenting is to use the key words and phrases on your visual aids. This way you learn to incorporate your visual aids and your presentation.

Using a Pointer:

Some presenters like to use a pointer when referring to visuals. Other presenters prefer to just use their hands. If you are nervous or uncomfortable about presenting without something in front of you, using a pointer can give you something to hold on to so you don't appear uncomfortable. However, the pointer itself can become an object of attention if you fiddle with it as you talk. One of the major benefits of using a pointer is that it allows you to stand away from your visual aids. If you are using slides, you should definitely use a pointer so your body does not make a black image on the screen.

Using Your Arms:

As you are presenting you should *not* hold your hands together in front of you, cross your arms across your chest or waist, hold your arms behind your back, or stick your hands in your pockets. These positions are unnatural and distracting and will make the audience uncomfortable. These positions also will confine your hands and arms so that natural hand gestures are difficult. The best position is to simply let your arms hang freely at your sides. This posture will give you the maximum flexibility to move and gesture naturally and give you the most confident appearance.

Using Movement:

Movement during a presentation should be natural. Excessive, flashy, or dramatic movements detract from the presentation. The drama in a presentation should be in the information being presented, not in the speaker.

Interacting with the Audience:

Part of giving a presentation is interacting with the audience. Interaction with the audience usually comes in the form of questions and answers.

When answering questions you should keep your answers short and to the point. If you don't know the answer to a question, simply say you don't know. It is better to be honest than to try to deceive the audience by making something up. It is acceptable to speculate about the answer to a question based on other information you have, but always tell the audience you are speculating. No one expects you to know everything.

The presenter can allow the audience to ask questions during the presentation or reserve questions until after the conclusion. When the audience can ask questions depends on the information being presented and what the presenter is comfortable with. Whichever way you choose, let the audience know before you begin your presentation.

If the presentation is long, covers complicated material, or has several parts, you may want the audience to ask questions during the presentation. This approach allows anyone who might need clarification or additional information to ask questions as needed.

If the presentation is short or fairly simple in content or if breaks in the presentation would detract from the strength of the information, you may want to reserve questioning until after the conclusion.

Some presenters find that a question during the presentation disrupts their concentration and makes it difficult to continue. Others find questions asked at the end of a presentation more difficult to answer because the exact statement or information being referred to is difficult to answer. Personal preference is really the key. Try practicing your presentation both ways and see which way you are most comfortable with.

Other tips to remember when preparing for your presentation are:

Choosing Appropriate Attire:

You should dress appropriately for what you are doing. Your appearance should make the audience feel comfortable and instill confidence that you are an expert.

You should also consider where you will be presenting when choosing your attire. For example, if you are doing a presentation that requires you to be outside or in some other natural environment, you will want to dress appropriately for your environment and what you will be doing. A presentation on forestry at a camp site does not demand a "dressed up" appearance.

Practicing Your Presentation:

After organizing your presentation the most important thing in preparing for your presentation is to practice, practice, practice!

Because of the interaction between what you are saying and the visual aids you will be using to present the information, you will need to practice with your visual aids for the presentation to flow naturally. Practice what you are going to say and how and when you are going to incorporate your visuals into the presentation. You should practice your presentation at least six times before you deliver it. The more you practice, the more comfortable you will become.

Putting It All Together:

When you have completed the process of preparing for your presentation and you feel comfortable with the delivery of your presentation, it is time to deliver it!

Set up a time to give your presentation at a 4-H club meeting, a local civic club meeting, before one of your classes, or a formal competition specifically for 4-H.

After you have delivered your presentation, write a brief summary of your experiences with giving a presentation. Share your feelings on the preparation process and how the actual delivery of your presentation went. You should also discuss what you did well or what you need to improve.

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