

4-H Opportunities in Extemporaneous Speaking

What is it?

Have you ever given an extemporaneous speech? You may not realize this, but you speak extemporaneously every day! Explaining to your parents why you arrived home after your curfew, answering a teacher's question in front of the class and explaining to a younger 4-H member how to complete a specific task are all examples of speaking extemporaneously.

Webster's dictionary defines extemporaneous as, "not planned beforehand." When you do an extemporaneous speech it will differ from a Visual Presentation or a Public Speech in that you will not plan the speech before the day that you deliver it. It is important to be able to speak without planning ahead of time since we need to do this all the time! The ability to organize your thoughts quickly and speak clearly will be a huge asset to you in school, in 4-H and later in life as you attend meetings, give presentations and are interviewed for jobs.

How do I do it?

Although you will not have much time to prepare your extemporaneous speech the format of it will still follow the same one you've used for Visual Presentations and Public Speeches. A good speech has an introduction, body and conclusion and an extemporaneous speech is no exception. Make sure to include these three as parts of your speech.

There are several different ways to organize your thoughts to present them clearly when speaking extemporaneously. You may wish to use one of the following methods:

- State your point of view and give the reason that you feel this way, giving examples of real life experiences to support your point of view.
- Think of the past, present and future: There was a time when.....;but now we find that; in the future I expect.....
- Discuss three important things that come to mind about the topic.
- Consider the pros and cons of the issue and discuss those or talk about the two sides of the issue.
- Ask yourself who, what, when, where, why and how and focus on the response to those questions in your speech.
- Discuss how the topic affects you personally or how it affects the world in general.

These are only suggestions – you may have another way that you want to approach your topic. And, don't forget to finish with a strong conclusion!

Don't forget the basics of good public speaking! Speak loudly, clearly and slowly. One of the most common mistakes made in public speaking is the presenter rushing through the speech. Try to avoid the "umms" and "ahhs"! Avoid using too many gestures, they

are distracting: speak the speech! Think about what you are wearing; be neat and professional looking.

It is important to look like you're having fun – smile! Look and feel confident! Take a deep breath! Make eye contact with the audience. Remember, they are your friends! Stand up tall and don't slump, fidget or grasp the podium. You need to convince your audience that you care and convey passion about your topic.

During the question and answer period, don't pretend to know something if you don't. You are not expected to know everything about your topic. You do not need to apologize for not being able to answer a question.

To help you prepare, here are some example of potential topics:

- If you could be an expert in any one thing instantly, what would that be?
- Should the high school day start later?
- What's the biggest problem that your generation faces?

4-H Extemporaneous Speaking Procedures:

1. You will draw 3 topics at random and immediately choose one of them. The other 2 will go back into the pool and be available for selection by another participant.
2. You will go to a preparation room or corridor and have **5 minutes** to prepare your speech. The following will be available for your use: pens and 3" x 5" index cards. You may not bring other materials with you. You may not have contact with anyone at this time. You may not leave the assigned preparation area during this time. Use of a cell phone will be grounds for disqualification.
3. After 5 minutes you will give your speech. The speech should be 3-6 minutes in length. You may use up to 5 index cards; nothing else can be used by the speaker.

Judging Criteria:

Criteria for judging is divided into 3 areas:

Participant: appropriate appearance/dress, movements and motions are not distracting

Content: introduction, body and conclusion are required, information presented is well-organized, and adequate support is presented for position taken

Delivery: volume and projection are adequate, presentation is within the time guidelines, and delivery is effective in terms of delivering the information or message