

Guide to 4-H Demonstrations

**Me? Demonstrate how to do something in front of people?
Yes! You can do it!**

A demonstration is putting words into action. An effective demonstration is the best way of teaching someone how to do something while explaining the procedure of doing it.

Successful demonstrations don't have to be difficult or complicated. Something you have learned or something you enjoy doing will make a good demonstration. Develop one main idea or topic to share.

Choosing Your Topic

Choose an interesting topic you know something about that can be clearly demonstrated and has action. The more you know about the subject, the easier it will be. If you're a beginner, choose a simple topic like "How to Care for Houseplants" or "What to Feed a Pet" or "How to Make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich".

Choosing a Title

Select a title that will describe your demonstration and catch the interest of your audience. The title should suggest or give a hint as to what the demonstration is about. Be creative. For example, if you are going to do a demonstration on eye makeup you might title it "The Eyes Have It" as opposed to "Applying Eye Makeup".

Planning Your Demonstration

Planning is the key to success and will give you confidence. Most people remember what they see rather than what they hear, so the way you present your demonstration is very important. It should consist of three parts – the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.

Introduction - The introduction is a follow-up of the title to let the audience know what you will be talking about. It should be brief and clear. To catch the interest of the audience, use a short, snappy statement or a question that relates to your topic.

Body - This is the main part of your demonstration. Use an outline to help you organize your presentation into three to seven points or steps. You should show and explain all the steps of what you are doing in logical order. Each step should be clearly shown or explained before moving on to the next one.

In demonstrations that have long intervals between steps, the entire process will not be shown directly to the audience, but each step should be clearly explained. It is recommended to have the item or product available at various stages of development.

Conclusion – This is the last chance to put the message across. Reemphasize the important points of your presentation and show your finished product. Never introduce new material in the conclusion. Smile and be proud of your accomplishment. You did it!

Ask if there are any questions. When a question is asked, let the entire audience know what the question was by repeating it. If you don't know the answer, apologize and say you don't know the answer. It's alright to admit you do not know the answer.

When there are no more questions, thank the audience and invite them to sample and/or inspect the finished product. Pass out any handouts you may have available. Gather your equipment as quickly and quietly as possible.

(over)

More Tips

If you aren't introduced by someone before your presentation, introduce yourself and your subject.

Delivery

An effective demonstration always begins with a smile. With practice and experience, you will be able to develop a delivery that shows poise and enthusiasm. You should speak clearly and use proper grammar. Make eye contact with your audience. It's important to talk to them instead of the judge, the table top, or your visuals. You can emphasize important words and phrases by changing the volume or tone of your voice.

In addition: Stand erect

- Take your time
- Act and look like you enjoy the demonstration
- Use complete sentences and be sure to describe all actions fully
- Keep notes available but never read from them or rely on them too heavily
- Use your own words but don't memorize a speech
- Goofs do happen! Explain what happened and go right on with your demonstration

Time

If your demonstration has a time limit, make sure you abide by it. If the time interval is 5-7 minutes for your age, aim for 6 minutes for your demonstration.

Materials

Arrange equipment and supplies so they don't block the audience's view. Materials should be kept in the background, so the audience will watch you rather than the equipment. If many things are needed, arrange them on trays and place them on a table behind you. Put things to be used together on their own trays. You can complete one step, return that tray with its materials, and get the next tray.

- When possible, use transparent equipment so the audience sees the material and the process.
- Label containers for the audience to see
- Keep a hand towel or paper towels handy, if needed. A paper bag taped to the table serves as a handy disposal container.

Visual Aids

Using visual aids can enhance some demonstrations. Posters, charts, or flannelboard can be used if they will make the demonstration more effective. Well-prepared visuals help the audience learn faster, understand better, and remember longer. Sometimes only the title of your demonstration needs to be on a poster. Keep visuals simple and make sure lettering and pictures are large enough to be seen by the audience.

Appearance

Choose clothing that looks neat and is suitable for the occasion. Avoid flashy jewelry and other accessories that will draw attention away from your topic.

Practice

Practice can make perfect. Practice your demonstration in front of a mirror or before your family so they can give you suggestions that will improve your presentation. Practice sessions will help you learn to control your nervousness and enable you to feel comfortable.