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4-H Youth Development: I have to do what?—Pieces to a 4-H Presentation Puzzle

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I HAVE TO DO WHAT?



4-H Youth Development



Pieces to a 4-H Presentation Puzzle

You are sitting at a 4-H club meeting. Someone tells you that all 4-H'ers need to sign up to give a presentation at a future club meeting. Your hands get sweaty, your heart falls into your stomach, and you think, "I have to do what?"

Then you watch some of the older members give presentations at the meeting, who seem to be completely relaxed! It seems like they just get up and start talking. Some people can do this, but most of us have to plan and practice to look like we are not nervous!

Put your jitters to rest; use this fact sheet to help you prepare for your first presentation. Understanding the steps to getting ready will help take the panic out of giving your first presentation. Like a puzzle, a presentation has different pieces that fit together. Sometimes the little puzzle piece doesn't look like it makes sense until it is a part of the entire puzzle. Let's look at the pieces to the presentation puzzle.

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Puzzle Piece #1

What is a presentation?

What is a presentation? Basically, it is sharing information about yourself or another subject with someone else. You have been doing “presentations” for years, without even realizing it! Think about “Show and Tell” from your early school years. Think about answering roll call at a club meeting. Think about showing a friend a collection you have started, or explaining how you made something, or telling how your team won the game.

Each of these is basically a presentation! You have already given your first presentation; soon you'll give your first 4-H presentation.

Puzzle Piece #2

Choose a topic.

This is like choosing a puzzle! You probably look for a puzzle that looks fun to you, one that is not too hard or easy, and one that can be done in the time you have. The same things can be true for choosing a presentation topic!

Where do you get ideas for your presentation? How do you get ideas? During club meetings, watch others give their presentations. This may give you clues for both topics and presenting. Look through your 4-H project information.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

▪ Look through your 4-H project materials for ideas.

▪ “Brainstorm” on paper! Make a list of things you:

Do for 4-H projects _____

Collect _____

Do after school _____

Read or learn more about _____

Do for fun _____

▪ Ask a parent, leader, or older 4-H member for ideas.

Take a look at your list. Write the topic you'd like to “present” to your 4-H group.

Puzzle Piece #3

How do I do it?

Some presentations are called demonstrations; others are called illustrated talks. In a demonstration, you show others how to do something by doing it yourself. As you show how, you explain what you are doing in each step. An example of a demonstration is making a milkshake or kicking a soccer ball.

When giving an illustrated talk, most of the time, you are talking and showing at the same time. While you are talking, you are also showing it to the audience. You can tell how or explain with the use of posters or models. An example would be sharing a collection and explaining how you got started, your first item, your favorite item in the collection, etc.

Which is the best way to get your information to your audience?

A demonstration or an illustrated talk? Circle one!

Using these terms may seem like we're getting ahead of ourselves! Deciding on the type of presentation is like finding the corner puzzle pieces. The corner pieces are the ones you look for first, and after they are in place, you start building on them! So, let's move on to the next piece.

Puzzle Piece #4

Investigate your topic or idea!

This step is like dumping all the puzzle pieces on the floor and turning them all right side up. You look at the shape, the color, and compare the piece to the picture on the box! Look at the pieces of your presentation. To investigate your topic, make notes on things you'd like to tell others. How did you get interested in this? How

long have you been doing it? You can make your notes on notecards or regular paper. If you need more information, read your 4-H project materials, encyclopedias, magazines, or books in your school or community library. You also could talk with your parents, leaders, grandparents, or other adults who might know about your topic.

Puzzle Piece #5

Organize!

This step is like sorting the puzzle pieces by border edges or different colors. Now is the time to take all the information on your paper or notecards and organize it! If you have put your steps or ideas on notecards, arrange them in an order that makes sense to you. If you are showing how to do something, you will want to list the steps in making the item. If you are sharing a collection, ideas, or information, arrange the items in a way so others easily can understand. If you have written your ideas on regular paper, you can cut up the paper and place them in the order you want to use them in for your presentation. Tape them on another sheet of paper or notecards.

Another way to organize is to make an outline. Use whichever method works best for you! (You probably won't read your notes word-for-word during your presentation, but it's helpful to

have them with you in case you need them!) Since first presentations are usually short (under 5 minutes), you may not need to use all the notes or information you have!

4-H members who have given presentations before say it is easiest for them to organize presentations (either demonstrations or illustrated talks) into three parts: introduction, body, and conclusion.

1. Introduction: Tell briefly what you are going to do and why you chose this topic.

2. Body: Give the details of doing it, showing it, or telling it!

3. Conclusion: Repeat the main points and ask if there are any questions. Mention where you found your information, in case someone else wants to learn more about your topic.

After you've answered the questions or if there are no questions, say, "This concludes my presentation." Then, everyone knows that you are done, and it's time to applaud!

Another way of thinking about organizing is the old saying: "Tell 'em what you're gonna' tell 'em (introduction). Tell 'em (body). And tell 'em what you told 'em (conclusion)."

Puzzle Piece #6

Practice!

You know how puzzles become easier the more you do them. You know what to look for and how to sort the pieces! The same is true for presentations! Here are a few hints we've collected from 4-H'ers with experience in giving presentations.

Be neat!

Consider using trays to organize your props or items needed for each step. Clean up the mess as you go! Good posture and standing on two feet—instead of rocking back and forth or from side to side—say positive things about you. Of course, no chewing gum or twirling hair or rocking from side to side is allowed! What should you do with your hands? Unless you are using them to indicate a point, simply keep them at your sides.

Make posters.

Posters help to "show" or highlight the main points. They also serve as notes for you! Back up, and see if you can read your posters from a distance. Color adds a nice variety, but be sure to use colors that show up; sometimes pink or yellow are hard to see. Also, be sure to use colored markers, rather than highlighters, for your poster!



Give a mirror presentation.

If you are very brave, you could practice your presentation in front of a mirror! This will give you a good idea of how you look to your audience. Remember, this is good practice, but it is a little tricky!

Use a “presentation voice.”

It usually works best if you speak a little more slowly and louder than you would in normal conversations. This will help your audience hear and understand you better.

Look at your audience.

This may be difficult at first! But, good eye contact helps get your message across. Some of the “experts” say they look at different people during their presentation, some pick out a friend or friendly face to smile at, and others look just over the top of the heads of their audience.

Involve your audience.

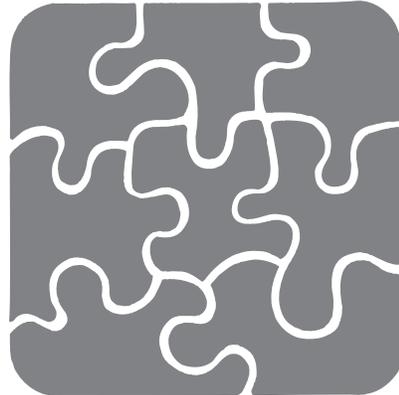
Get your audience involved by handing out recipes, samples, or asking questions.

Puzzle Piece #7

The Presentation—Just Do It!

So now you’ve picked your topic, organized it, and even practiced! Now, it’s your turn! If you are nervous, that’s normal and natural! Remember, you have something to share with the group, and many of them also have been in your shoes—giving their first presentation!

★ YOU DID IT!



Evaluation

What went well?

What will you change next time?

Most people say they were nervous the first time they gave a presentation.

Were you nervous?

If so, how could you tell?

What advice do you have for others giving their first presentation?

Puzzle Piece #8:

Review what you have just done.

Your puzzle is together! Now celebrate!

Congratulations! You made it through your first presentation! Doesn’t it feel good? There may be things you would change another time. Perhaps it wasn’t perfect. That’s okay! We hope it was a good experience and that you will move on to more “puzzles” or “harder puzzles.” Consider giving more presentations in your club, school, or other places.

Jot down ideas you have for your next presentation and hints you want to remember next time!

... and justice for all

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