
Educational Presentation Essentials

Overview. A 4-H educational presentation is a demonstration of a 4-H member's knowledge and skills in a certain project area. This presentation is done in a way that is most comfortable to the 4-H member. It can be accomplished using props (method demonstration), posters or media presentations (illustrated talk), or by simply speaking, convincing and educating with words alone (public speaking).

Educational presentations are part of the state-wide event known as Roundup. Roundup events should be conducted at the county level, as well as the district and state levels. Each district determines when to hold its district Roundup. State 4-H Roundup is always the second full week in June. The state 4-H Roundup includes all events such as quiz bowls, judging contests, educational presentations, food show, fashion show, and public speaking contests. Based on the schedule for your district, the list of competitions at the district Roundup will vary. It is important to know the schedule of competitions for your district so you can plan for adequate preparation and practice time for your 4-H members.

Educational presentation basics. Educational presentations are conducted consistently across the state for each category and 4-H age division. Below is a summary of the rules and guidelines that pertain specifically to the educational presentation. These rules are released annually in the Texas 4-H Roundup Rules and Guidelines.

- *Topic subject.* Educational presentations should address emerging or current issues in each of the contest areas. Some contests provide a list of suggested topics for educational presentations, along with a resource list. Senior contestants are encouraged to research these emerging and/or current areas to develop their presentations.
- *Accuracy of information/resources.* With the Internet being used heavily as a source of information for educational presentations, 4-H members must know the difference between research-based and non-research-based information. Contestants are required to use information that is factual and can be supported through adequate documentation. Reliable Web sites are those by federal, state and local governments, independent research organizations, and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Internet information that is questionable includes personal sites, chat rooms, message boards, etc. 4-H members should prepare a list of references (biography, works cited) for their presentation.
- *Subject matter.* The skills and knowledge exhibited in any 4-H contest should be the result of experiences in a project in which the member has participated. A presentation should relate to the contest entered, should contain current information, and should not be more suited for another contest. It should be appropriate for the member's age and experience. Appropriate credit should be given for references used. If there is a question about which category a presentation belongs in, consult the district 4-H specialist, state 4-H office and/or state contest superintendent.
- *Time limits.* Each educational presentation is limited to 12 minutes. An additional 9 minutes to set up equipment before the presentation and clean up the stage afterward. A penalty of two points per minute or partial minute of overtime will be deducted from the final score. Adults are permitted to assist 4-H members with the on-stage arrangements and clean-up.
- *Visuals.* The use of charts, photographs, computer graphics/programs and other visual materials is permitted. Visuals should contribute to the presentation. Each presentation is an example of the participant's ability to communicate an idea.
- *Judges' questions.* Judges and/or superintendents may ask contestants' questions at the end of their presentations. This will be done on the judge's time. Only official judges and superintendents may ask questions of the contestants.
- *Score cards.* 4-H Educational Presentation Score Sheet, 4-H 3-5.041 (revised Aug. 2005) will be used by contest judges in scoring educational presentations regardless of presentation style (method demonstration, illustrated talk, or speech). Separate score cards are used in public speaking and Share-the-Fun. All score sheets are available on the Texas 4-H and Youth Development publication Web site.
- *Judges gifts/handouts.* Gifts (of any kind) may not be presented to the judges in any contest. Contestants may give handouts to judges and the entire audience.

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- *Video, audio, and display equipment.* Participants are responsible for all video and audio equipment (and components) used in a contest. Video and audio equipment includes: computers, video projectors, extension cords, viewing screens, compact disc players, easels, etc.

Educational presentation categories. An educational presentation can be done on any topic in the disciplines of family and consumer sciences, agriculture, or natural resources. To see a complete list and detailed rules related to each category, refer to the current Texas 4-H Roundup Rules and Guidelines.

Family and Consumer Science educational presentations can be presented in Clothing and Textiles, Focus on Health, Safety and Injury Prevention, and Open Family and Consumer Sciences. Refer to the 4-H Roundup Rules and Guidelines for descriptions of each category.

Developing an educational presentation. Developing educational presentations should be fun for 4-H members! First, help them select a topic within a 4-H project in which they are actively participating and one that is an important issue in our world today. The topic should be one in which the 4-H member is interested. Encourage 4-H members to pick topics that will be challenging so they can grow. As they increase their knowledge and involvement in the 4-H project, they can also expand the presentation focus.

Once a 4-H member has selected a topic, he or she should start researching! Research should include ONLY scientific, research-based facts. Outstanding resources for acquiring such resources include local, state and federal government Web sites/publications, firms that conduct unbiased research, and other organizations' and associations' Web sites/publications that provide research-based information (e.g., American Heart Association, American Cancer Society).

The 4-H member should then decide whether to make the presentation alone or with other 4-H members, and whether it will be a speech, a method demonstration, or an illustrated talk. Factors that help them decide the method to use include the resources available (e.g., a computer with a presentation program) and whether or not the topic can be demonstrated or is more informational/persuasive and should be delivered as a speech.

Help the 4-H member prepare an outline using the resources collected. Younger 4-H members may have to write out their entire speeches, while older 4-H members who have been involved in public speaking may just need to prepare a detailed outline. For all participants, practice is the key to success.

Coordinating a Roundup contest. It is important that counties have county 4-H Roundups to help members prepare for the competition at the district and state 4-H Roundups. Roundup events can be held in the evening or on a weekend, depending on the number of entries. The county Roundup event is typically used as a qualifying process for 4-H members to advance to the district level. It is important to know how many entries in each contest can advance to the district contest in order to plan for the qualifying competition at the county level.

Whether you are having a county Roundup to qualify entries for the district level or using it as an opportunity to give feedback and practice time for your 4-H members, there are some factors to remember in planning it.

- Secure a facility and announce the location, date and time of the event at least 3 months in advance so 4-H members and leaders can have adequate time to prepare.
- Ask your 4-H volunteers and committees to organize the event. Allow volunteers to recruit and train judges and other event workers. Have a volunteer committee arrange for awards and/or recognition for contestants and for refreshments, greeters and other logistics.
- Have judges provide helpful feedback to participants so they can improve their educational presentations before the district competition.
- Use your county 4-H youth leaders by having them host an assembly to recognize those participating.

Benefits of doing an educational presentation. An educational presentation is a great way to increase a 4-H member's public speaking skills. It allows a young person to share his or her knowledge with a group of other 4-H members and/or adults. Making an educational presentation teaches a 4-H member organizational skills and the ability to successfully relay a message, and also builds self-confidence.

The great thing about an educational presentation is that it can be fun! Educational presentations can be done individually or with one to four team members. Supporting adults, such as volunteer leaders and County Extension Agents, should help 4-H members identify credible, unbiased research to use in their presentations. When helping with the development of an educational presentation, adults can encourage creativity and enthusiasm.

Resources.

Printed/Web resources: all available at *texas4-h.tamu.edu*

- Public Speaking – 4-H Style
- 4-H Public Presentation Guide: Method Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks
- Texas 4-H Roundup Rules and Guidelines (released annually)
- Get to the Point with 4-H Presentations (on-line training module)

Specialists:

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- Safety and Injury Prevention educational presentation: Myrna Hill, mr-hill@tamu.edu, 979-845-3885
- Open-Family & Consumer Sciences Educational Presentation: Dianne Gertson, CEA-FCS, dlgertson@ag.tamu.edu, 281-342-3034