

VISUAL PRESENTATIONS MADE EASY

Being able to speak well in public is a skill that can help you throughout your lifetime. You can probably think of famous people that were known for their speaking ability such as Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King. They were able to accomplish great things because they had an important message and had the skills needed to deliver that message.

You can become a good speaker, too! With the help of your leaders, teachers, and parents, you can learn to give a visual presentation.

What is a Visual Presentation?

Visual presentations teach, entertain, inform or persuade. There are several different types including a demonstration, illustrated talk or team presentation.

A demonstration is a way to teach others how to do or make something. In a demonstration, the presenter shows and explains each step of a process. A finished example of what has been demonstrated should be displayed at the end of a demonstration.

An illustrated talk is a useful way to explain a topic if animals or equipment necessary for the presentation are too large or hard to handle (in Massachusetts, the use of live animals is no longer allowed in a visual presentation). The presenter depends on models, posters, or charts to explain the topic in an illustrated talk. A finished example is not required.

A team presentation is given by two presenters. Each presenter should participate equally in preparing and

presenting the information. A team presentation is actually more difficult to prepare and present.

How do I get started?

First, you have to decide what you want to talk about. That may seem pretty simple but it may actually be the hardest part!

Choose a topic that shows your interests and passions – this could be something that you do in your 4-H club, community or school. Think about the following:

- Unusual experiences that you have had such as organizing a conference for teens, a community service experience or your job
- Hobbies that you love
- Subjects that are important to you – recycling, cleaning up your neighborhood or caring for your animal

What should I do after I pick my topic?

Now you must begin to think about what you want to say and gather your information. Try to think about what your audience may want to know and find interesting. As you begin to plan, remember that visual presentations for juniors (ages 8-13) must be at least 3 minutes in length and for seniors (ages 14-18) must be at least 7 minutes long. No visual presentation can exceed 10 minutes in length.

Where can I find information on my topic?

Your leaders, teachers and other club members may know information about your

topic that could help you get started. Your school and public library are also excellent sources. Of course, a wealth of information is available on the Internet.

How should I arrange my information?

A visual presentation is made up of three parts: the introduction, the body of the presentation, and the conclusion.

The Introduction: This is the part of the presentation where you have to grab your audience's attention. A good introduction will:

- Get the audience interested in your topic and make them want to hear what you have to say
- Tell the audience what they will learn if they listen to you

There are several ways to introduce your topic. You could start with a story or a joke but make sure it relates to your topic! Other ways to do this include giving some history about your topic or telling the audience something that has happened in your life that made you interested in your topic. You could also choose to use an interesting quote that you gathered in researching your topic. These are just suggestions to help you think creatively about how to introduce your visual presentation.

The Body of the Presentation: This is the part of your presentation where you tell people what you want to tell them! It should:

- Explain how to do something if you are doing a demonstration or explain how something works if you are doing an illustrated talk
- Include how-to steps the audience can follow

- Be clear and logical
- Not include too much information; be appropriate for the time you have

It is usually best to outline your speech and not write out an entire speech in narrative format. Reading a speech is not allowed and memorization is not a good idea. If you forget one phrase, it is often difficult to continue on.

Note cards are allowed. Use an outline format or key words and phrases that remind you of what you need to say. Again, do not read off your note cards but use them to refer to if needed as you go along. You can also use posters like note cards.

The Conclusion: This is the final part of your presentation. It is very important because it is your last chance to leave your audience with the feeling they have learned something. During your conclusion:

- Repeat the most important points that you want your audience to remember
- Do not introduce any new material

What type of equipment should I use?

The type of equipment you use depends on the type of presentation you are going to give. Some things to keep in mind:

- Use equipment suitable for the job and the age of the presenter
- Clear glass bowls are best for food demonstrations for visibility
- Have towels available for spills
- Cover the table, if you are using it
- And, remember to test your equipment before you begin your presentation

How should I set up my work area?

It is important that you arrange your area so that your audience can see what you are doing at all times. A neat, clean workspace will help you find your materials more easily. Setting up your materials in order will help you remember what comes next in your presentation. Take the time you need before you begin your presentation to set up your work area the way you need it.

When should I use a poster?

Posters are used to help the audience to understand your topic. They are used to illustrate your presentation and to help your audience understand important information or steps in a process.

It is important that your posters be well done and not detract from your presentation. Limit the amount of information and visuals you put on any one poster; less is better. Make sure all lettering is large, neat and dark enough to be read from the back of the room.

What should I wear?

Remember that people often form a first impression based on appearance. Wear neat, casual clothing; school clothes are usually fine. Think about your topic and dress appropriately. Remember that you want people to focus on your presentation so try to eliminate possible distractions by keeping hair off your face (you may want to tie back long hair) and avoid wearing a lot of jewelry.

What if I get nervous?

Being nervous is not all bad; it can actually help you make a good presentation. Good speakers use their nervous energy to make

their presentations more exciting. So, take a few deep breaths and begin your presentation. The nervousness is usually at its worst before you actually start. Once you begin your presentation it usually gets better! Make sure that you are well prepared and you'll have nothing to worry about!

Final hints:

Before your presentation:

1. Practice, practice, practice! This is the most important part
2. Make sure you know your material
3. Make a list of all the equipment you need and check all equipment to make sure it works

During your presentation:

1. Speak in a loud, clear voice
2. Look at your audience as you speak; eye contact is important
3. Use natural hand movements and make sure your movements are not distracting
4. If you use note cards, they are for reference only: You may not read your presentation

Curricula and resources about public speaking and communication skills are available in your local 4-H office. Contact your 4-H Educator if you would like more information.