

# 4-H Demonstrations

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**H**ave you ever shown someone how to take a picture, groom a horse, peel a carrot or weed a garden? If so, you've given a demonstration, because a demonstration is simply showing and telling how to do something. It's words in action.

Demonstrations aren't difficult; you just tell how to do something by using action words such as cut, fold, stir, mix or saw. For example, say, "Fold the paper into halves," as you actually fold the paper. Explain why you are doing the step. Review the steps and answer questions about the steps.

As a project leader, you can encourage members to give demonstrations at project meetings to introduce a new skill or as review. As members become more experienced they might want to give demonstrations to a wider audience.

## Why give demonstrations?

A demonstration helps others learn how to do something useful, perhaps in an easier or more practical way. Demonstrating is one of the best methods of teaching others, because it involves visual and verbal presentations at the same time.

Demonstrations help 4-H members:

- Develop self-confidence
- Express their ideas clearly
- Spontaneously respond to questions
- Acquire subject matter knowledge.



## Kinds of demonstrations

In 4-H there are several kinds of demonstrations.

### *Individual demonstrations*

An individual 4-H'er shows and tells how to do something as described here.

### *Team demonstrations*

Two or more 4-H members work together on a topic that requires more than one person to successfully demonstrate the procedure.

### *Working demonstrations*

Members giving working demonstrations do not prepare a talk on the topic. Instead they select a skill in which they have considerable experience — one that they can demonstrate for 15 to 30 minutes. They sit at an assigned table and work, more or less continuously. When an audience member makes an inquiry, the demonstrator describes what they are doing and continues the conversation as long as the person has an interest. When the onlooker leaves,

the demonstrator continues working until another person makes an inquiry. This type of demonstration is good for fairs, displays, in shopping centers or at special events.

## Demonstrations in 4-H

In 4-H, project leaders give demonstrations to teach members a skill. Members and teen leaders are often encouraged to give demonstrations as a review of skills at project or club meetings.

It is fun for 4-H'ers to show others the skills they have learned in 4-H. Encourage project members to share their skills at club meetings, for parents, at achievement days or even at the State Fair. Check your 4-H newsletter, fair book, achievement day announcement and the *4-H Clover* for more opportunities including the Missouri State Fair.

### *Parts of a demonstration*

A demonstration has four parts:

**Introduction** — what the member is demonstrating

**Body** — the steps of the skill and how to do them.

**Summary** — review of the steps.

**Questions and answers** — the members answer questions the audience may have.

### *Select a topic*

Members should consider the following as they select a demonstration topic.

- Is it part of my project work?
- Can I demonstrate the topic in about five minutes?

- Does the topic have enough action?
- Is the topic appropriate for my age and experience?
- Is the topic worthwhile, useful and practical?
- Am I demonstrating approved practices, proven by research?

#### **Collect needed materials and equipment**

Make a list of the equipment and materials needed to give the demonstration. Remember, the audience needs to see what is being done. Using transparent equipment and keeping the work area visible to the audience are two ways to help. Arranging equipment on a tray to carry it to the demonstration area also helps.

#### **Develop the demonstration outline**

1. Develop steps by actually going through the demonstration and writing down each step.
2. Define the key points to emphasize and write them down.
3. Build in the explanations. For each step, tell what is being done, how it is being done and why.
4. Show the results. If you cannot complete a whole job in the short time, prepare a sample ahead of time. For example, have some cookies baked or a finished bootjack. Invite the audience to look over or sample the finished product.
5. Tell where you got the information.

## Summary

- Review the main points.
- Clear the work area except for the finished product.
- Display the product attractively.
- Offer it to the audience for close inspection.

## Questions

Ask, "Are there any questions?" When a question is asked, repeat it. You may say, "John asked ..." Or just repeat the question. Then, answer if possible. If you don't know the answer, say so or tell the audience you will try to get the information for them or refer them to sources of information.

When the questions are answered, add a courteous ending. Say something like; "This ends my demonstration. I hope you will find this information useful." Use your own words to say how you feel.

## Introduction and title

Plan the introduction and the title last. The introduction gives the reason for this practice or method. Include the subject in the introduction and give reasons for presenting the demonstration. This is a chance to sell the topic to the audience. Making the introduction interesting and catchy helps the audience listen attentively to the rest of the demonstration.

The title should identify the subject and add a "hook" to create interest and curiosity about the subject.

## Suggestions and tips

**Posters can be a help.** Use a poster to emphasize the main points. The poster should be planned after the demonstration is outlined and practiced. Make sure the letters are big enough and clear enough that they can be read from the back of the room.

**Practice is important.** It can help work out the easiest way to arrange the materials. Do things in order, explain every action, know the subject, have all the equipment needed and give reliable information.

**Appearance.** Encourage members to wear clothes that are suitable for what they are demonstrating. Being neat and clean is appropriate too! Members who stand tall will be able to make their voice be heard easier.

**Voice.** A clear, pleasant voice makes it easier for the audience to hear and understand. Speaking slowly and clearly is often hard for 4-H'ers to do. Practice can improve this. Members should try to talk to the audience, not at the table as they work. A way to help members to remember this is to tell them to "keep your chin up so that your voice will carry."

**Being at ease.** Help members relax and be at ease. Encourage them to smile at the audience before beginning this is one way to set the tone.

For more information see these MU Extension 4-H guides:

LG 783, *Learning by Doing*;

LG 782, *Ages and Stages of Youth Development*;

LG 784, *4-H Project Leader*.

