



## **PUBLIC SPEAKING – GENERAL RULES AND GUIDELINES**

### **Contest Divisions: Age as of January 1<sup>st</sup>**

- Beginner I: Ages 8-9
- Beginner II: Ages 10-11
- Junior: Ages 12-13
- Senior: Ages 14-19

### **Salutations**

There may or may not be an emcee who announces each speaker. However, each speaker is expected to greet his or her listeners in some form. These could be but are not limited to: “Good Afternoon”, “Hello”, “Ladies and Gentlemen”, “Fellow 4-H Members, Parents and Guests”. They are also expected to introduce themselves and give the name of their speech.

The salutation does not need to be the very first words spoken. If a speech starts with a question, challenge, or stage-setting scenario, the salutation may more effectively occur after the first few sentences.

### **Type of Speeches / Topics**

4-H members may speak on any topic of interest to them. However, members should choose a topic that is appropriate for their age level and will be interesting to their audience.

In 4-H, members select their own topic and type of speech. No one type of speech is better than another, but the speech must meet the objective of its particular type. Although some judges may have a personal preference for a particular speech type, we ask that they evaluate the speech given by standards and requirements for its “type” (informative, persuasive, motivational or entertaining).

- Informative: Gives the audience information and facts on a subject
- Persuasive: Is used to affect the listener’s behavior by changing a way of thinking or persuading the audience that the speaker’s opinion is best
- Motivational: Encourages people to join an activity, initiate a program or take some other kind of action
- Entertaining: Entertains the audience, but can also be used to communicate a message

### **Research**

Senior members are expected to do some research for their speeches, and their speeches should include factual information in addition to personal opinion or personal experience. Junior members are expected to do some research, but not as much research as is expected from seniors. For beginner members, research is optional.

### **Note cards / Memorization**

It is recommended that 4-H members use white index cards for their speech notes. Members should use their notes as a guide if needed and should not read their speeches. The speech

should be delivered in a manner that sounds natural and not recited. Memorization/familiarity is not faulted.

### **Content is Essential**

The 4-H program maintains that content is as important as delivery. 4-H members have the right to criticize any situation or segment of society. However, they are expected to (a) document and support criticism, (b) state the criticism in a professional manner and (c) suggest a solution or a better alternative.

### **Speaking Aids - Podium/Microphone**

It is up to the speaker to determine whether or not he or she uses a podium or microphone (if available). Speakers should not lose points for using or not using these aids unless their choice inhibits their speech. For example, if the speaker does not use the microphone and cannot be heard because the room is too large, or the speaker uses the podium incorrectly so that it becomes a distraction, the speaker's choice of aids should be evaluated.

### **Posture**

Members should stand up straight and find a comfortable stance that allows them to remain relatively in one spot for the duration of their speech. It is acceptable for members to make movements in either direction; however, avoid pacing or swaying from side to side, which might be distracting from your speech.

### **Dress**

Members should be dressed appropriately and be well groomed.

### **Props**

Use of visual aids and props are not allowed. 4-H members should not dress in costume; this is considered a visual aid. Points will be deducted from the speaker if costumes are worn.

### **Use of Speeches**

4-Hers may use their speech in the Public Speaking Contest one time. In other words, they may not present the same speech year after year. 4-H public speakers may not use an old speech written by a sibling, other 4-H member or someone else. Each speech should be original work by the 4-Her delivering the speech.

### **Time Requirements**

	<u>Minimum / Maximum Length</u>
Beginners 8-9	1 ½ - 3 minutes
Beginners 10-11	2-4 minutes
Juniors 12-13	4-6 minutes
Seniors 14-19	5-7 minutes

1 point for every 15 seconds over or under the required length will be deducted from the final score.

Please Note: Audience should NOT be asked if there are any questions at the conclusion of the speech.