



A GUIDE TO SANDERS COUNTY 4-H COMMUNICATION DAYS



If it doesn't challenge you, it won't change you.

The goal of communication days is to develop Sanders County 4-H members' public speaking skills. The communication presentation process is bound to be challenging for both members and parents. At the same time the process can be fun, and the relief and self-confidence a member experiences at the end of the process is rewarding.

LOGISTICS

Communication Days 1 and 2: Sanders County 4-H offers either of two days to deliver your presentation. Typically these occur on the first full weekend of March, with Day 1 (Saturday) taking place in Thompson Falls and Day 2 (Sunday) taking place in Hot Springs.

Makeups: If you are unable to make either of these Communication Days, you may schedule a makeup. Make-up presentations may take place at the club level or the Extension Office. It is important to let your leader and/or the Extension Office know that you will be scheduling a makeup session. In order to be considered for finals, you must complete your makeup prior to Day 1. All makeup sessions must be completed within two weeks of Communication Finals.

Finals: Complete, well delivered presentations will be recommended for finals at the judges' discretion. All who are recommended will be invited to participate in finals. Typically finals take place in Plains on the Sunday following communications weekend. Members who qualify receive medallions sponsored by the Sanders



County Ledger. Members who compete receive certificates. The top four junior communicators (who are camp age) receive a full scholarship to Multi-County 4-H Camp. Top 13 and older communicators go on to compete at Montana 4-H Congress in July.

Cloverbuds: Cloverbuds are encouraged to participate, though it is not an expectation that they do so. Cloverbuds are non-competitive, so their presentations are not "scored." Instead encouraging comments (both positive and constructive) are written on the evaluation form.



How to Sign Up: You will be notified about signing up for communication days via the 4-H Dispatch Newsletter, email, and at your club meeting. You will be able to sign up online, at your club meeting, or if necessary by calling the Extension Office. It is important that you sign up by the deadline listed in the Dispatch, so the Extension Office may begin to create the communication schedule. Signing up includes which day you will participate, your presentation topic, and any special requests you might have.

To sign up online: <https://sanderscountyextension.wufoo.com/entries/communication-days/>

Equipment/Room: Each communication room is equipped with a table and an easel. Common equipment requests include a laptop, projector, extension cord, or an extra easel. Typical room requests include the gym, a kitchen (for use of stove, sink, microwave, etc) or outside. Shooting Sports demonstrations may need to occur off-site due to weapons restrictions in schools. We may not be able to accommodate other requests, but please ask the Extension Office if you need something special in order to present your presentation. These requests should be made at the time you sign up for your presentation, or as soon as you know about your need.



The Judges: Members of the community serve as judges, evaluating the Sanders County 4-H Communicators. Each judge participates in an orientation delivered by the Extension Agent prior to the sessions. This helps each judge to understand their role, gives the judges guidelines on how to evaluate your presentation and helps to maintain consistency amongst the platforms.

Who will watch you present your presentation? You will present your presentation to a panel of two to three judges. Generally anyone is welcome to watch the session, though on the first two communication days you may limit the audience to your family

or just the judges if you prefer. If there are more people in the room than you are comfortable with, you may ask some of the audience to leave. At Communication Finals the room is open to all who wish to watch the session.

Team Presentations: You may partner with another 4-H member to present a team presentation. In a team presentation both members should participate equally in the presentation. Equal participation refers to speaking and action. It is not acceptable for one member to do all the speaking, while the other does all the action. Sometimes you may need another person present in order to complete your presentation, but they may be acting more as a prop than a team member. Examples include a person whose hair you braid, or someone who you dance with in order to demonstrate steps. If the dance partner shares equally in the instruction, then it would be a team presentation.

Teams consisting of a junior and a senior member must compete on the senior platform. These teams are eligible for Sanders County 4-H Communication Finals and may win an award at the county level. However, teams with a junior member are not eligible to compete at Montana 4-H Congress, as only 13+ members may attend the event.



Before you decide to present a team presentation consider the following: Are you and your partner able to meet and practice your presentation together? Is there enough information for two people to present in this presentation? If the answers are yes, then you are ready to proceed with your team presentation. If the answers are no, then consider individual presentations, or a different topic.

Parental Involvement: It is natural that parents will be involved in helping a member to prepare and practice his/her presentation. This support is key to helping create a positive experience. Parents, please keep in mind that when your child is presenting his/her presentation at the county event, your role is to help set up if needed, then be an audience member. As much as possible let him/her set up his/her own presentation, change posters or PowerPoint slides, etc. Judges sometimes struggle with determining how much the member has done to prepare his/her presentation when parents are involved in the presentation.

DEMONSTRATION OR ILLUSTRATED TALK?

Is it a demonstration or an illustrated talk?

We tend to refer to the presentations as “demonstration,” but it is common for illustrated talks to be presented as well. Whether you are giving a demonstration or illustrated talk is not of great concern, but it may be helpful for you to know the difference. Each presentation is evaluated in the same manner, with the same form.

A **demonstration** makes use of visual aids while **showing the audience how to do something**. Visual aids are posters or power point slides that include lists or notes with points of information

that refer to what you are demonstrating, in addition to any props needed. Examples of demonstrations include: How to Make Cookies; How to Shoot a Free Throw; How to Saddle a Horse; or How to Cut Firewood. Notecards are NOT to be used in a demonstration.



An **illustrated talk** is a talk that makes use of visual aids, such as posters or power point slides that include lists or notations with points of information referring to your subject. These lists/ notations are helpful to you as reminders of what you want to tell the audience and they are great visuals for your audience to follow along with you. When doing an illustrated talk you do not physically show or demonstrate to the audience how to do something. Examples of illustrated talks include: How to Develop a Feed Plan for Livestock; Parts of a Bow (Archery); The History of Chocolate. Notecards are NOT to be used in an illustrated talk.



YOUR DEMONSTRATION OR ILLUSTRATED TALK

Planning Your Demonstration: As you plan your demonstration, you need to:

1. Select a single, simple idea on which to build your demonstration
2. Plan the body of your demonstration
3. Plan the conclusion, include handling questions
4. **Then plan** your introduction and select a title

This approach may sound like it is in reverse order, but it works!

Choosing a Communication Topic: Is there a topic that you are passionate about? Is there a subject that you love learning about and enjoy sharing with others? If so, consider choosing that topic for your presentation. By choosing a topic that you enjoy, you are likely to be more comfortable presenting.

Consider selecting a topic from one of your project areas or a favorite hobby or sport. For more ideas, contact the Extension Office for “A Few Ideas for Communication Presentations.”



Time Limit: 7-10 minutes, according to Montana 4-H Congress Guidelines. Beginning members may be briefer, 5-7 minutes.

Title: The judges will notice whether your title is plain or catchy. A plain title would be “How to Make a Chocolate Milkshake.” A catchier title would be “Heaven in a Blender”. Use your imagination to find a title that will make your audience curious.



Introduction: This is your opportunity to capture the judge’s attention and engage them in your presentation. Presentation introductions might involve playacting, a question being posed or an anecdote (a very short story.)

Body: This is where you show the audience what you are going to show them, or tell them what you are going to tell them. When demonstrating, there are periods of time when you show the audience how to do something. During that time be careful not to lapse into silence while you work. If you are demonstrating how to braid hair, you may share information about the history of braiding, different types of braids, and other ways braiding is useful, etc. while you are braiding.

Summary: After you show the judges what you are going to show them, or tell them what you are going to tell them, your presentation is almost complete. Do not forget the important part of providing a brief review or conclusion of your presentation.

Questions: After you summarize your presentation, ask the audience if there are any questions.

“This concludes my presentation. Are there any questions?”

The judges and possibly the audience will ask questions. Repeat the question before answering.

“The question has been asked, ‘How did I become interested in dinosaurs?’” or “The question is ‘Where did I find my information?’”

It is important to repeat the question(s) for two reasons. The first is so the person who asked the question knows that you understood what he/she is asking. The second is so the entire audience hears the question. This helps them understand your answer more easily.



Visual Aids: Visual aids help the audience to follow your presentation. Visual aids come in the form of posters, PowerPoints, Prezis, or other appropriate props. Each demonstration should have at the very least a title poster or page. Other appropriate visual aids may include *materials*, *procedure*, and *summary* posters or pages. Notecards are not to be used in demonstrations and illustrated talks. Visual aids often serve as cues for your presentation.

What to wear: Your clothing should be appropriate for the topic of your presentation. If your presentation is about how to shoot a free-throw, you should wear athletic clothing. When demonstrating how to change a tire, wear clean work clothes. For any type of cooking demonstration wear closed toes shoes, neat clothing, and an apron.



Brand Names: Because 4-H does not endorse any commercial products, brand names should be covered if reasonable. For example you would be expected to cover the polish brand in a demonstration on polishing shoes, but would not be expected to cover the brand name on a basketball in a demonstration on shooting free-throws.

Cooking Demonstrations: There are a few additional items to consider if you are presenting a demonstration involving food.

- Wear an apron.
- Wash your hands prior to the demonstration. If there is not a sink in the room, be sure to let the judges know you have washed your hands.
- Use a tablecloth or table covering. You don't know if the previous demonstration involved an animal on the table or if something was spilled.

AFTER YOUR COMMUNICATION PRESENTATION

NOTES FOR YOUR PRESENTATION

What happens after your communication presentation? After all of the presentations on a platform are completed, the judges write their final comments and select an overall rating (Finals, Excellent, Good or Needs Improvement) for your presentation. The evaluation forms are then delivered to the Extension Office. If your presentation does not qualify for finals, your evaluation forms will be given to your organizational leader, who will then give them to you. Everyone who qualifies for finals will be notified by email the Monday after presentations. The Extension Office will also mail evaluation forms to finalists. This will allow finalists to review the judges' comments and incorporate any changes he/she may want to make into the presentation.

Judges' Comments: Judges make both positive and constructive comments for your benefit. These comments are to help you know what you are doing well and what you can do to improve your presentation skills. Sometimes it can be hard to read comments that may sound critical. Please do not take offense at any of the comments, as they are intended to help you grow as a public speaker.

Evaluation Score: As mentioned above, the judges will select an overall rating for your presentation. The "ribbon" (sticker) that you receive is based on the overall rating. All presentations qualifying for *Finals* will receive purple. Those who earn an *Excellent* rating will receive blue, *Good* will receive red and *Needs Improvement* will receive white. See Clover Communications Booklet for score sheets.



