

BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

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It's Public Presentation time! I know—some of you love doing them, some of you hate doing them, and some of you do them because your parents and leaders require you to. But let's face it—if you "must" do a presentation, it's worth doing the best you can. You will learn more about your project, others will learn from you, you'll feel great about your efforts, and you may even earn a blue ribbon or a trip to the State Fair in Puyallup!

Every year I am excited to see the fresh new presentations so creatively prepared by Stevens County 4-H members. I am also encouraged to see each of you improve from year to year. The judges tell me that they always learn something from each of you! They also have told me that the presentations that are most effective ALWAYS follow the established format as shown on the score sheet. So this year I would like to challenge EVERY 4-H'er to work on this area.

The basic parts of a presentation should be given in the following order:

- ❑ INTRODUCTION
- ❑ TITLE
- ❑ OUTLINE
- ❑ BODY
- ❑ SUMMARY
- ❑ CLOSING
- ❑ BIBLIOGRAPHY
- ❑ QUESTIONS



Being creative within this format is refreshing, but not following this format is confusing, hard for the listener to understand, and does not meet your goal of learning, teaching and competing. You know what paces the judge expects you to go through when you enter a Fitting and Showing Class. Likewise there are paces you should go through when giving a public presentation. Let me go through each one and explain why each one is so important:

INTRODUCTION: This tells the audience who you are and why they should consider you to be an expert in your topic. It also helps judges determine the level of difficulty based on your age and experience.

TITLE: After introducing yourself, introduce your title and an introductory sentence that ties the title to the topic—be clever here—a little play on words gets the audience's attention.

OUTLINE: *"In my presentation I will tell you..."*

Prepare your audience to be good listeners by telling them what you will be speaking about. Break it down into logical points and put these points on a chart so the listener can see them. This is also a good time to tell WHY you chose your topic and WHY it will be of interest to the audience. If you have many reasons for WHY you may want a separate chart to list the WHYS.

BODY: This is the meat of your presentation. This should be sequential and easy to understand. If you have 4 points on your outline, you might need 4 charts—one to cover each point. You also might need an extra chart or two for showing examples. Even more effective are real things to demonstrate the process you are teaching. Having an introductory and closing sentence for each chart will help the audience follow your presentation.

SUMMARY: *"In my presentation I have told you..."*

When you have finished presenting your information pull the outline chart to the front of your stack. Now it acts as a summary—to review the important points. It also sparks questions that the audience may still have.

CLOSING: This is a nice finish to your presentation. It should tie in with the title and purpose. It is like the closing sentence in a letter or report.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *"I received my information from..."*

If you only have a few resources (magazines, project manuals, books) having them with you to display at the end of your presentation is great. Intermediate and senior members should have a bibliography chart, especially if you have lots of sources (and you should). They should be listed as you would for a school report. Ask your English teacher for help with this.

QUESTIONS: *"Are there any questions?"*

It is VITALLY important that you repeat the questions so that everyone in the audience understands your answer. This can be done in a number of ways:

"The question has been asked...."

"The judge (or gentleman or Susan) has asked...."

Older members might rephrase the question as part of their answer.

Direct your answer to the entire audience, not just the person who asked. But keep eye contact with that person to be sure they understand your answer. When all the questions appear to be answered end like this:

"If there are no further questions, this is the end of my presentation. Thank-you for listening." It's okay to come up with a more original closing if you wish.

That's it! Keep it simple—follow the format and you have a blueprint for a perfect presentation! I look forward to seeing many and more of you at area and county presentations this year. **GOOD LUCK!**

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