

## **The Anatomy of a Speech**

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With the quick approach of a favorite Los Angeles 4-H Event, Field Day (also known as “Presentation Day”), on Saturday, March 16, some of us are scrambling to not only figure out what to write a speech about, but HOW to write a good speech.

Public speaking is a skill that we learn and are able to polish in the 4-H Program. Most everything we do in 4-H involves an element of public speaking. When we hold an office for our club, we give reports during Community Club Meetings. When we participate in a project, we often report to our club about our current and upcoming activities. 4-H Judging Day provides an opportunity for presenting “oral reasons” to judges. Showing an animal at a fair often involves answering livestock questions. Representing 4-H in the community is another time when we use our public speaking abilities. Occasions for expanding our public speaking skills are boundless in the 4-H Program!

In every situation in life, whether it be at school, at work, or in interpersonal relationships, being a clear public speaker is an important skill to have. For Field Day, we work towards giving an exciting speech that both the presenter and the audience will be interested in, enjoy, and hopefully, take something useful away with them. All speeches have key elements that must be present. Here are some of the basics...

### **Choosing a Topic**

Choosing a topic for your speech is an essential part of the process. You should choose something that will be interesting to your audience, but mainly to YOU, as you will be the one giving the speech over and over again. Your enthusiasm for your chosen topic will come through in your speech and will excite those listening to it. You will be more apt to enjoy researching and writing a speech if it is about a topic that you are connected with.

Make a list of potential speech topics, and run them by your Mom and Dad or Community Club Leader. The topic should not only be fun, but appropriate for your age and for the speech competition you are entering. Your parents and club leader will be able to help guide you with this. It should be a singular topic rather than multiple (i.e. how to make a particular kind of bread, not how to make breads in general). Sometimes simple is best. It may seem silly or boring to do a speech on something you do every

day, or about something that comes easy to you (i.e. working with your rabbit), but others may find it fascinating!

## **Introduction**

A speech should have a clear “**Introduction.**” An introduction should have what is often referred to as a “hook.” A “hook” is considered an opening statement or question for the audience that immediately pulls them in, makes them want to know more about your topic, and invites them to learn about the topic you are presenting. For Field Day, the introduction to a speech should be about three to four sentences long.

You can start your introduction with a question for the audience such as, “Have you ever wanted to know how to make a cake from scratch?” Your opening statement could be dramatic (within reason) such as, “Juliet, O Juliet, wherefore art thou Nigerian Goats?” Your opening could be the line from a poem, a quote from someone famous, or a small passage from a work of literary genius.

You can also start by saying one key word, or a series of three words, and then providing a brief pause (For example: “Bees. Pollination. Farming” (pause)). You can start out with a small funny statement (within reason) such as, “Today I will be talking to you about dog training. This is my dog Sam, and he is a good example of why dogs need training.” You can also start with a shocking statistic (depending on your topic) (i.e. “Did you know that 1 out of every 5 dogs is abandoned in the County of Los Angeles? Shocking, but true.”)

After you make your initial statement, you will want to say your name, your age, and the club you are with.

The next statement should start with, “Today I will be talking to you about...” This statement will be a short bulleted list of the items you will be covering in your speech (if you have poster boards as a visual aid, these bullets should be listed on your poster). This statement should also include a brief reason why you chose to give a speech on this topic (i.e. “I have always wanted to know more about Chinchillas,” or “In my sewing project I wanted to know where ‘patterns’ came from...”).

After you finish with the aforementioned elements of an introduction, you will then move into the body of your speech.

## **Body**

The “**Body**” of a speech refers to the main part of your speech, where the information you wish to impart is encapsulated. Immediately following your Introduction Statement, you will begin. The body of your speech should be fairly concise (usually several paragraphs, or a page, depending on the length of the speech and what type of speech you are giving—check requirements), but at the same time, informational and somewhat exciting.

An example of the body of a speech would be if you were speaking about how to create your own fish tank, you would include what elements you would have to have to create it, why these elements are necessary, and what the result would be (healthy and happy fish in a natural environment that you, friends, and family can enjoy).

The body should be the “meat” of your speech. If you have visual aids, you may choose to show them now or demonstrate an element of what your speech is about. The body should include details or “how to” instructions (if you are doing a demonstration or telling your audience how to go about doing something). It should also include examples and details. It should be specific, and most of all, it should be fun! No one wants to listen to a speaker drone on and on about a topic even the speaker doesn’t care about! People remember speeches that are informational and are at the same time entertaining.

### **Conclusion**

A good speech should have a clear **Conclusion**. The conclusion should be approximately a paragraph long (like the introduction). It should be concise and clear. The conclusion should be so clear that it starts with a statement such as, “In conclusion...” In your Conclusion Statement, you will review the bullets from the introduction of your speech that you have covered (if you are using a poster board as a visual aid, these bullets should be listed under the title “Conclusion”).

A good conclusion should include a “call to action.” A “call to action” means you are asking your audience to do something with the information you have provided them during your speech. This could be anything from completing his/her own birdhouse to volunteering time at a local animal shelter. The “call to action” should sound something like, “After hearing my speech today, I hope that you will...”

Any research that you have done for your speech should be included in the conclusion. Just like writing research papers for school, always cite your sources!

### **Question-and-Answer-Period**

Immediately following your conclusion, you next will conduct a question-and-answer session which is completed in a very particular format. In an effort to conduct clear communication between yourself and the audience, you must always start and finish this way:

“Are there any questions?”

When an audience member says, “Yes, how did you or why did you...”

You will **always** repeat the question back to the audience member by saying, “The question was asked (then repeat the question they asked back to them).” This is a help to

you as well. Sometimes the question may be long, and you may not remember all of the parts to it; that's okay, just ask, "Can you please repeat the question?"

After each question asked say "Are there any other questions?" When it appears there are no further questions, you should say, "If there are no further questions, this concludes my speech. Thank you for coming!"

### **Visual Aids**

Many people are "visual learners." This is to say, they actively learn when they are able to look at a physical example of what they are learning about. Poster boards are a great way to get your point across, impress your audience, and are fun to make and use during your speech. Here are some tips to remember when using poster boards:

- Make sure the poster boards are large enough to be seen at the back of the room (22" x 28"). They can be found at hobby stores, Staples, Office Depot, on-line or anywhere else you choose.
- White poster boards are best, as they show the writing and photos or other items you have displayed much better. Oversized poster boards are hard to use during a speech, and you may not find an easel to hold them up.
- Bring your own easel, and beforehand, practice putting it up, taking it down, and changing posters during your speech.
- Write neatly. If you are not able to write in large print neatly, use stencils with a ruler underneath your words.
- If you use pictures, make sure they are large.
- Posters should have a starting point and a finishing point. There should be a "Title Page" with the title of your speech, your name and your club name on the first poster. The next poster should be bullet-points about what you will be talking about. The body of the speech will follow. Don't be too wordy in this section. Try to stick to multiple, one sentence statements on the same board. You don't want to add so much information that the board isn't pleasant to look at. Your final board should have a "Conclusion" title with the bullets from the introduction. You may point to items on your poster boards as you are in the process of giving your speech.

### **Power Point Presentations**

If you are using a Power Point Presentation during your speech instead of poster boards, make sure to follow the same rules as above (Title Page, Introduction, Body, Conclusion"). Make sure to bring everything with you that you will need (cord,

projector, speakers if needed). Also, check with the person(s) in charge of the event to find out if you can use a Power Point presentation, and if there are electrical outlets.

### **Foods and Animals**

If you are using food for part of your speech or are making a food item, make sure to store your food at the proper temperature if it requires heat or cooling (i.e. bring refrigerated items in a cooler, with ice or insulated bag). If you are cooking during a speech, make sure you have practiced cooking it before giving the speech (check that all equipment is working properly). Check with the room moderator on where the outlet is, and if it works. Be careful when cooking or with food preparation (especially in front of your audience). Bring a sample already made of what you are talking about or have made for the judges (including plates, cups, napkins and plastic silverware if necessary). Following your conclusion and question-and-answer period, you will say, “Now I have some....that I would like you to try. Thank you for coming!” Clean-up after your speech so that the next presenter will have a speaking area that is ready to go.

If you are bringing a live animal as a visual aid for your speech, make sure that he/she is clean and well-groomed, and also bring the items you will need to clean-up after it with you. Remember, animals, much like people, have good days and bad days, and should your animal not do what you want it to do, or acts differently than you had hoped—the judges understand this. You cannot control an animal who is in a different setting from what it is used to and may not do well in a group of people, or even indoors. Clean-up after your animal before leaving the room.

### **Other Visual Aids**

Other visual aids may be used--such as bringing an example for the audience to touch and feel (i.e. a woolen item you knitted, a rock from your science project, etc.). Visual aids that are to be handled are usually distributed to the first audience member in the first row during the middle of the body of your speech.

### **Voice and Eye Contact**

Sometimes you will be nervous when giving a speech in front of a group, so be very conscious of slowing down. Speak slowly, clearly, and loud enough for those audience members in the back of the room to hear you.

Eye contact during a speech is very important. Look up and all around the room at audience members (and judges) while giving your speech. Scan the room from time to time, and even smile a time or two; it will make the audience feel good, and you too!

### **Appearance**

Your appearance is very important when giving a speech. What this means is, your clothes should be neat and clean (and ironed if necessary). If you need a belt to hold up

your pants, put one on! Tuck in your shirt. Dress for success. Boys, wear a tie if you have one! You should be wearing properly-fitted clothing (no over-sized clothing such as giant shirts or pants that hang down).

Good hygiene is important. Nails should be clean, hair combed (and even tied back if you feel like it). No extreme make-up or jewelry should be worn. The audience is meant to listen to you, learn from you, and not notice your new glittery eye shadow or nose piercing.

### **Some Extra Tips**

- Memorize your speech. Make brief note cards of your main points to keep with you during your speech. There is nothing worse than a speech that is being read directly off of a piece of paper. It means that you didn't prepare beforehand, or that you don't care if the audience is bored!
- It is inevitable that you will make a mistake. Keep moving! If you make a mistake of any kind, just continue with what you were meant to do next. Many times, no one will even notice! Try not to start laughing and joking around when this happens.
- Be likeable! You already are likeable, and this should come out during your speech. You have a unique personality that should shine through in both your writing and your actual presentation. Be yourself!
- Keep joking and silliness to a minimum. A carefully placed joke here or there in your speech is great; it puts your audience at ease and gives your speech a "fun" feel to it. Try not to go overboard with saying too many jokes, or partaking in all-around silliness.
- Do not address the judges privately before or after giving your speech.
- Moms, Dads, Grandmas and Grandpas: Do not coach your youth member while they are giving a speech. They will do a great job, and, if they forget anything, they will eventually remember it (or not) and it is okay!
- Don't fidget during your speech. Keep your hands at your sides and try not to touch your hair, face, or any visual aids unless it is time to do so. Audience members are easily distracted by your movements at the front of the room as you are the main event!
- When giving a "Team Speech," make sure to provide equal time to both speakers. Try not to start laughing if something goes awry. Work together to give a good presentation and you will be successful.

- Timing of a speech is very important. Many times you will be marked down during a speech if it is too short, or too long. Make note of the time requirements, and absolutely stick to them. When practicing, use a timer and make sure to adjust your speaking if you are speeding up, or going too slow.
- Practice! Practice! Practice! Get anyone you can to listen to your speech. Work on memorizing, timing and using visual aids as many times as you can before giving your speech. The only way to get it right is to practice enough times so that you are calm, cool and collected during your speech, and it will be a lot more fun that way, for you, and your audience.
- Watch some famous speeches on-line. See how the master's do it! Contact your local Toastmaster's Club and ask for any hand-outs or tips they may have for public speaking. Participate with your speech in *several* competitions (at school, Toastmaster's Competition and 4-H Field Day!)

The **Los Angeles County Field Day Competition** will take place on **Saturday, March 16, 2013**, at Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC, College Bldg 28A, 1100 N. Grand Ave., Walnut, 91786). For more information on this event, contact Noel Keller at [nkeller91711@gmail.com](mailto:nkeller91711@gmail.com) or Dawn Fuller at [dafuller@ucanr.edu](mailto:dafuller@ucanr.edu). We hope to see all of you there, and we know you will be terrific!

There will be a **Presentation Workshop** for youth to practice their speeches and receive feedback (date and location still being determined). This is a wonderful opportunity to “fine-tune” your speech and move towards doing your very best at Field Day! To sign-up or find out more information, contact Dawn at [dafuller@ucanr.edu](mailto:dafuller@ucanr.edu).

*“Be sincere; be brief; be seated.” ~ Franklin D. Roosevelt, on speechmaking (1882-1945, 32nd President of the United States)*

<http://www.toastmasters.org/>

<http://www.optimist.org/e/member/scholarships4.cfm>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JV96J1yZEpM&feature=related>