



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



2026 4-H Communications Project Guidelines



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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Co-Chairs: Regina Bakley

Event Committee: Regina Bakley, Audrey Pruitt, and Grace Fogelman-Zook
and Aaliyah Lennon

Education Committee: Regina Bakley, Julia Tinker, Audrey Pruitt,
Grace Fogelman-Zook and Aaliyah Lennon

NEW in 2026

The 4-H Spark Tank Pitch

New this year! The 4-H Spark Tank Pitch. Many youth and individuals have seen the well-known TV Show “Shark Tank” and just like the entrepreneurs on that show, 4-H youth often have big ideas, goals of being an entrepreneur and are looking for a place to shine! The Communications Committee has put together a new LOT to be entered under the Communications Project area at the State Fair; 4-H Spark Tank.

In 4-H, Spark can mean many things but is often mentioned when looking at the THRIVE model. It can simply be explained as follows: “Everybody has a skill, talent, an interest, or a special quality that they are passionate about. We call these things SPARKS. They provide joy, purpose, and direction. Sparks are self-discovered and self-identified. They come from deep within and provide energy, joy, purpose, and direction in one’s life.”

Ready to let your Spark shine? This is your chance to present your purpose, passion, and joy to our panel of “Sparks” the fictional billionaires you’ll be pitching your 4-H Spark Tank business plan to. Although there is no real money in this event, the 4-H Spark Tank gives you the opportunity to gain life skills that can be used when selling your pitch in the real world.

How to do 4-H Public Presentations

What is a Presentation?

By definition a presentation is an activity in which someone shows, describes, or explains something to a group of people. A presentation is a way for you to share and teach information you have learned that will be useful to others. Any time you learn something and show and tell it to another person, you are giving a presentation.

Speaking face-to-face is one of the oldest forms of communication, and still the most effective. The listener hears your words, but more than that, they watch your face and your hands. They catch your enthusiasm, or your concern. It is a warm, personal way of communicating.

No matter what 4-H project you are enrolled in, you can give a presentation. Every 4-H member should give at least one presentation per year. Giving presentations is an important part of a member's 4-H experience.

Why Should You Give a Public Presentation?

For the rest of your life you will be communicating. No matter if it is at home, school or work you will need to know how to persuade others to gain their support, how to explain things or ask for something. The speaking skills you gain through 4-H Public Presentations will have longer-lasting benefits than any other project you enroll in.

By giving 4-H Public Presentations you will gain many skills that will help you later in life. You will gain a positive stage presence whether you are speaking to an individual or an audience. Having the ability to organize your thoughts and information and present it will allow you to become a valuable leader to others.

The speaking skills you gain in 4-H will help you to better communicate with your friends and family. Those same skills will benefit you in job interviews and in your future career. When professionals are surveyed as to what skills are needed to succeed, public speaking ranks at the top of their list. Unfortunately, public speaking ranks as a top fear for many people. Giving public presentations in 4-H can be learned by most people and with practice it will become easier with each presentation. Plus, you will gain confidence which will make you feel more at ease in presenting.

Public presentations add variety, spark, interest and enthusiasm to the 4-H program. It is a fun way to learn new knowledge and share it with others. When 4-H members do the work to prepare a presentation for others, they will be more likely to remember the information and other members often listen and learn more from other youth.

Getting Started

Start with something simple ... among friends at a 4-H Club meeting. You'll have their interest and support, and the butterflies won't be fluttering in your stomach as much.

Not all public presentations can be done in the living room or kitchen. Your club may want to meet in a school, community center, bank basement, or get out into the barn, garage, or garden. A demonstration on how to plant a tree is not recommended for the living room.

When members have sufficient experience, encourage them to give presentations at public gatherings such as service club meetings and county public presentation days.

Marketable Life Skills

- How to speak before an audience with poise, capability and self-confidence.
- How to find and research a subject and supplies with initiative and motivation.
- How to plan and organize information and thoughts in a logical manner.
- How to prepare original visuals and use them to support what you say.
- How to express yourself clearly, convincingly and creatively.
- How to teach and show others what you have learned.
- How to select an appropriate delivery method and use appropriate delivery techniques.
- How to listen to the opinions of others and accept feedback.
- How to manage your time
- How to manage stress

All 4-H members should give at least one demonstration, illustrated talk, or public speech each year. You will learn more when you do a presentation than the members who watch. It need not always be a solo performance. Some members may prefer to team up with a friend, rather than go it alone. Working with a team member is a different experience than working alone. It is okay if a beginner or younger 4-H member wants to be assisted by an older brother or sister or a junior leader.

So What Do You Talk About?

Your first step is to select a subject or topic. Usually you'll do best if you choose a subject from your own experiences. Determine the purpose of your presentation. Is it to inform, or do you want to create action? If you know who your audience will be, consider them.

Learn More About Your Subject

Find out all you can about your subject. There is no substitute for being well informed. Take notes as you read and study. A "computer idea file" becomes the catchall storage location for topics and subject information. This file can be used at a later time to look up information.

Remember:

- All your statements must be accurate.
- You need to know more information than you tell.

Sources of subject information vary according to the presentation:

- 4-H project literature
- Extension Fact Sheets & Bulletins
- school textbooks
- library sources
- current magazines, newspapers & books
- commercial material
- local resource people
- tours and trips

Learn about the do's and don't's of preparing for and delivery a public speech from some of our very own 4-H members. Melody, Lydian, and Harmony Gilkerson, of the Northview Lads and Lassies 4-H Club, helped us put together a public speaking best practices video. You can access this video at: [youtube.com/watch?v=GOck8-RFHdU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOck8-RFHdU).

When Selecting Your Subject, Ask Yourself is it:

- Something you like to do?
- Something you have learned to do or about 4-H?
- One single idea or theme?
- Something others would like to know about?
- Timely and seasonal?
- Something interesting, worthwhile and has economic or practical importance to you and or your audience?
- Something you can do in a limited time?
- A topic of interest which you already have some knowledge and would like to know more about.?
- A subject suitable to your age, experience, and surroundings?

Develop a Plan

Planning helps you to:

- Organize your ideas
- Manage your time
- Be prepared
- Eliminate being rushed and stressed.

Ask yourself how much time will I need to:

- Research more information?
- Write my presentation and make my visuals?
- Collect the equipment for my presentation?
- Practice and be prepared to present at my very best?

Types of Presentations

Once you've chosen your subject, it will be easier for you to decide what kind of presentation you'll want to plan. Review the differences in the four public presentations and select the best one for your purpose and subject.

There are many types of public presentations, in South Dakota 4-H, we use four types:

1. Demonstrations
2. Illustrated Talks
3. Public Speaking
4. 4-H Spark Tank

They are all different, and you should try each to see which one you're most comfortable with.

1. DEMONSTRATIONS

- A demonstration is doing and showing how. As you show how, you tell what you are doing.
- In a demonstration, you make or do something step by step. There is always a finished product, or a task is completed. Show the finished product in the summary.
- Actual products, materials, garments, machines, plants, animals, etc. are used. Personal, family, or club experiences may be used.
- In a successful demonstration the audience leaves knowing how to do what you demonstrated and often times will want to do it themselves.
- It is true and accurate.
- You learn by doing. The audience learns by watching and listening.
- A demonstration may be an individual or team effort.

2. ILLUSTRATED TALKS

- An illustrated talk is telling how by using visuals. You may use computer generated charts, flip charts, posters, pictures, models, cut outs, slides, flannel board, chalkboards, and real objects. There is not a finished product.
- Personal, family, or club experiences may be used.
- The key to an illustrated talk is you learn by telling. The audience learns by watching and listening.
- It is true and accurate.
- An illustrated talk may be an individual or team effort.
- Remember that an illustrated talk is the same as a demonstration except that:
 - You are not actually making something.
 - You have no real finished product.
 - Your visuals show what you are explaining.

3. PUBLIC SPEAKING

- Public speaking is talking.
- Public speaking is telling about your experiences or what you have learned.
- In public speaking, it is what you say and how you say it that informs the audience and communicates your ideas to them. Public speaking is good when you want to tell facts, ideas, or give information.
- Public speaking is more formal than other public presentations. Examples of a public speaking presentation: government official speech, a sermon, a lecture.
- Public speaking may not use visual materials.
- Personal, family, or club experiences may be used.
- The most effective speech is the one that presents most clearly and impressively what the speaker has in mind. It is true and accurate.
- You learn by doing. The audience learns by listening. Public speaking is an individual effort.
- Remember that Public speaking is basically the same as a demonstration, an illustrated talk, except that:
 - It is just telling.

- It requires careful planning and effective delivery with facial expressions and gestures, voice variation in your pitch, volume, speed and inflections as well as proper English.

4. 4-H Spark Tank

- A way to engage the Sparks (Judges) as your fictional investors to get them to buy into your business, plan and marketing strategies.
- You will walk the Sparks through your business plan, marketing strategies, and the manufacturing process of your items.
- You will need to bring 3-5 samples of the product you plan to market to “Sparks” for display. If you are providing a service, a copy of your flyer outlining your services is required.
- You will need to turn in a copy of your Spark Tank Business plan to the “Sparks” at the start of your pitch. Found in Appendix A.
- In a successful 4-H Spark Tank, you will leave the “Sparks” wanting to purchase your item and buy into your company.
- Find a way to showcase innovation, core values, and professionalism using visuals – digital or other, a business plan, and your best sales pitch.
- The presentation can be done by teams of 2 or individually.

Team Presentations Demonstrations, Illustrated Talks and 4-H Spark Tank

Team is 2 people

Sometimes two can give these presentations better than one, especially if four hands are needed or when it is difficult to work and talk at the same time. Team presentations require careful planning and more practice. Teamwork teaches cooperation.

In a team presentation, divide it so both of you will have about the same amount to do. Make the divisions where it would be natural to shift from one process or idea to another. When you are showing how, you will be the one telling about it. While your teammate is showing how, you will serve as his/her silent helper.

So, which method do you use? What are you trying to tell? What’s your main purpose? Whether you wish to show, explain, tell or do a combination of these will determine whether you use a demonstration, illustrated talk, public speaking or 4-H Spark Tank.

Presentation Parts

Demonstrations, Illustrated Talks, and Public Speaking require similar preparations. 4-H Spark Tank requires additional preparation. Instructions can be found in this document on page 10 and 21-32. They are composed of three parts: the introduction, the body and the summary. The Introduction should be 10- 15% of your speaking time, the body 75% and the conclusion 10%. In other words, the Introduction you tell them what you will tell them; the Body you tell them; and in the conclusion you tell them what you have told them.

Outline of a Presentation

1. Introduction
 - Catch
 - Personal Introduction
 - Brief outline of main points
2. Body
 - Point A
 - Point B
 - Point C
3. Summary/Conclusion
 - Summarize Main Points
 - Give Sources of Information
 - Ask for Questions (Do not ask for questions in Public Speaking.)

The Title

Every presentation needs a good title. The title is your first chance to catch the attention of the audience. Be dramatic. Good titles are short, descriptive and intriguing. They suggest the subject without telling the whole story. For example, if you are going to do a demonstration on eye makeup, you might choose the title The Eyes Have It as opposed to Applying Eye Makeup. Don't be concerned about coming up with the title first. It may be the last part of the presentation you decide. It will come!

The Introduction

Your second chance to catch the attention of the audience and to set the tone of your presentation is in your introduction. Be creative, original and interesting, and use only 1-2 minutes. There are many ways to capture the audience's attention, here are a few suggestions:

- Ask a question. (This is the easiest but probably the least creative choice.)
- Share a fascinating fact or startling statistic.
- Quote someone.
- Share a personal story.
- Show a completed product.
- Show an unusual object.
- Wear a mask or a costume.
- Sing, dance, or do a skit. (Be sure it doesn't last too long and don't be silly.)
- Enter in an unusual way such as popping up from behind the table.
- Demonstrate an action without speaking.

Be sure your introduction leads into the body of the presentation in such a way that the audience will want to listen. Tell the audience what you plan to do, why you chose the subject, why it is important and what you hope your audience will learn from your presentation. It is always good to incorporate your title into the introduction.

Before or after your attention getter you will need to introduce yourself. Include your name, age, your club and how many years you've been in 4-H. If someone introduces you, it isn't necessary to repeat your name and facts about yourself. In a team presentation each presenter can introduce themselves.

Body

The body is the main part of your presentation. This is where you explain your topic and present all of your information. How you organize the body is very important because the audience needs to be able to follow what you are saying and/or doing.

Demonstration and Illustrated Talk

- Make notes in your own words using key words or phrases. Do not write down everything you will say.
- Outline what you will do and say in the presentation. Arrange information in a logical order.
- Select equipment, materials or visuals.
- Prepare posters or charts. Make them easy to read, understand and attractive.
- Think through what you will say – explain what, how and why of each step.

Public Speaking

- Make notes in your own words using key words or phrases. Do not write down everything you will say.
- Outline the 3-4 main points in a logical order.
- Decide how you can use hand gestures, facial expressions and voice variations to strengthen your talk.

Summary or Conclusion

This is your last chance to summarize the main points.

Emphasize what you want your audience to know or do. Be brief and to the point. Do not introduce new material in the summary. Try to tie the summary back to your introduction or title. Attractively display the finished product or completed task. Then, share your sources for your presentation.

In a demonstration or illustrated talk, ask for questions. Some may not have understood everything you said or would like to know more about your subject. If you cannot answer a question, admit it! Do not bluff! Offer to find the information or give a resource that would have the answer.

Indicate to the audience that you are through with a challenge, or a statement about your subject.

Additional Preparation for 4-H Spark Tank Presentation

Business/company name and a slogan and name for your product

- Introduction
 - Catch
 - Personal Introduction
 - Project connection to 4-H
 - Brief Outline of product or service
- Body
 - Product introduction
 - Ask of the “Sparks” to invest in your pitch
 - Investment pitch
 - Market research
 - Expense Plan
 - Sales Plan
 - Beginners and Juniors may have assistance in preparing their 4-H Spark Tank Business Plan Worksheet
- Summary
 - Reflection
 - Share future goals of your company and business plan; summarize previous information
 - Answer any questions the Sparks may have
 - Ask the Sparks to buy into your company

The Title and Slogan

Every sales pitch needs a good business title or item slogan; this is your first chance to catch the attention of the “Sparks” and get them hooked on investing in your company. Be professional, fun, and eye catching. Give a hint to what your business is about, without giving away the whole plan.

The Introduction

This is your second chance to grab the attention of your potential fictional investors; you can do so by being creative, original, and interesting while only using up to about 1- 2 minutes of your allotted time. Be sure the introduction leads into a good place to start talking about your business plan and your pitch to Sparks.

Youth will have the following time frames:

- Beginners will have minimum of 10 minutes
- Juniors will have a minimum of 15 minutes
- Seniors will have a minimum of 20 Minutes
- All will have a max time of 25 minutes

Youth may use a digital presentation or any other visuals to sell their product.

Spark Tank Criteria

Individual or Team, Minimum Length – Beginners 10 Minutes; Juniors 15 Minutes and Seniors 20 Minutes. Maximum Length: 25 minutes for all age categories.

Presented before an audience, 4-H Spark Tank is a sales pitch and a business plan for an innovative product. Individuals or teams create 3 to 5 actual products or share their business flyer, share market research and detailed business plans. Visual aids used in the Spark Tank presentation may include but is not limited to: charts, posters, illustrations, or digital presentations.

Showmanship – Mechanics of Presenting

Appearance

- Remember how you look is the audiences' first impression of your presentation. Your clothes should be neat, clean, well pressed and attractive. Appropriate dress will depend upon the subject. Avoid things that attract attention (do not chew gum). Avoid fads.
- There should be no writing on your clothes unless it applies to your presentation.
- Be sure your hands and fingernails are clean and well kept.
- Keep jewelry to a minimum.
- Use light makeup.
- Keep hair off your face. For food presentations tie hair back or cover with a scarf, hairnet or cap.
- Start with a smile and a pleasant expression; they go a long way in getting the attention of your audience.

Eye Contact

- Look your audience in the eye. Look at your audience 75-80 percent of the time.
- Eye contact is important because it invites the audience into your presentation.

Body Language/Posture/Movement

- Stand tall, on both feet.
- Keep your hands at your sides when you are not making something or gesturing.
- Avoid turning your back to the audience or shifting and swaying.
- Do not lean on the table or podium this gives the impression you are tired or don't care about your presentation.

Voice

- Talk in a conversational voice to the audience.
- Project your voice so the whole room can hear you.
- Slow down, inexperienced and nervous speakers tend to talk too fast. An experienced speaker will vary the rate at which they speak. Be sure to emphasize certain words that are important. Learn to enunciate your words clearly.
- Use your own words in describing your steps. If you memorize your information or use someone else's words, it will sound less convincing.

Tips for Setting Up

- Check your outline for necessary supplies and equipment. Use only the equipment that is necessary and practical for your presentation.
- Arrange the equipment and supplies in the most convenient manner. The center of the table should be left free for the "doing" part. Trays provide a natural way to group materials and keep the table neat. Put all supplies and equipment needed on a tray to your right, once it is used place it on the empty tray to your left. Towels may be used to cover trays.
- List equipment and supplies on a small card and place with that tray. Double check list to be sure you have all equipment and supplies.
- Place extra equipment on a second table away from the demonstration table.
- Develop skill in the use of the equipment. Have the equipment in good condition. See if electrical equipment works before you begin.
- In the interest of safe practices, bring ingredients or supplies in their original containers or product packaging, whenever possible. There may be a few examples when this is not practical, such as flour. Label contents stored in glass or clear plastic container to use for the supplies. In general, do not promote or endorse product or brand name that is used in the presentation. However, product or brand name comparisons can be used for educational purposes when referencing consumer issues.
- To help people to see; you may use: a slanted surface, table with raised back legs or a slanted mirror overhead, or use clear bowls and containers.
- A paper sack taped to the table is good for waste disposal.
- Keep a towel or sponge handy to use for spills, wiping hands or cleaning the table when you have finished.
- Use standard measurements, cups, spoons, etc. Measure accurately. If you do not have time to do all of the steps in your presentation, you may save time by measuring some ingredients in advance. Give clear and correct explanations of the steps you did not show the audience.

- Use complete sentences with correct grammar and the proper choice of words to make the meaning clear. Often a nervous or unprepared speaker uses terms like “um,” “ah,” or “you know.” Replace those with a pause of silence take a breath and begin again.
- Practice using a microphone. If a microphone is available use it for the ease of the audience to hear you.

Gestures

- Gestures should reinforce what you are saying and should be a natural expression of your thoughts.
- When you begin a new section of your speech, step forward or to the side. Don't pace, but change positions.
- Use the whole body to emphasize your points – a raised finger to call attention, a shrug to show indifference, a fist to emphasize strong feeling.
- The face is very important for gesturing. Use your smile, your eyes, and your eyebrows to convey the thought.
- Be natural, be at ease, be happy, and be sure to smile.

Visuals

Check Your Visual Before You Use It.

1. **Visibility** – Is it easy to see and read from where participants sit?
2. **Simple** – Is the message easy to understand?
3. **Interest** – Does it attract and hold attention or is it cluttered with too many words or pictures?
4. **Useful** – Are the letters, words, pictures, etc. suitable for the subject and audience?
5. **Structure** – Are the ideas grouped in sequential order?
6. **Information** – Is it factual and is the data current?

Posters and Charts

- Well-prepared and skillfully used posters and charts help the audience understand more completely, learn faster, and remember longer.
- When using posters and charts remember to:
 - keep them simple
 - make them readable
 - place them where they are easily seen
 - select visuals carefully to fit the presentation.
- Use charts and posters only if they “add to” the presentation “and make it” more effective.
- Use charts to:
 - serve as a guide to the member
 - add interest to the title, topic and ideas presented
 - focus and hold the audience's attention
 - emphasize key points
 - clarify a complicated process or procedure
 - show comparisons
 - summarize main thoughts.
 - introduce a subject
 - Present the main points
 - give instructions
- Number the backs of posters for easy identification and placing them in order. For ease of changing posters, put posters in reverse order on the easel. Move posters from the back to the front. For example, arrange posters: Title poster, Poster 6, Poster 5 and so on. When you are finished with your title poster move Poster one from the back of the posters to place on top of the Title Poster.

Computer Generated Visuals

There are several key elements that can be a part of any computer generated visual. You will have many options for text, color, background, graphics, transitions, animations or sounds. How you use these elements will make the difference between an effective presentation and one that's distracting and hard to understand. As much fun as it is to try all of these elements using too many in one presentation can be distracting.

- Skill in using charts must be developed. When pointing out something use the hand closest to the poster or chart. Show visual only when you are talking about that idea.
- When using flannel graphs, flash cards, slides, pictures, drawings, chalkboards, models, etc., be sure they are neat, clean, in good condition, and can be clearly seen.
- You do not have to be an artist to have neat, readable charts and posters. Charts should be eye catching but not elaborate, and limited to one idea.
- Some guidelines to use when making charts and posters:
 - Charts and posters should be large enough to be seen at 30 feet.
 - Use letters in size from 1 inch to 3 inches high.
 - Use a combination of capital and lower case letters.
 - Use simple solid block-type letters.
 - Use bold or heavy lined letters in preference to the thin, light or short, squatty letters.
 - To emphasize a word, vary style of letter. Use color to emphasize words.
 - Allow a margin on top and sides and slightly more on the bottom.
 - Do not mix letters of various colors within words. They are difficult to read.

Text

Any writing you put on computer slides in your presentation is called text. Using a computer gives you many options to how much text you have, the color of the text, the fonts and sizes of text. Below are tips to remember about the text in your presentation.

- **Use the 6 X 6 rule** –This rule states that you should have no more than six lines on a slide and no more than six words each line. Using this rule prevents you from putting too much information on the slide. A common mistake is typing everything you want to say. This takes attention off you because the audience reads the information themselves and stops listening to you. And, since people read at a different speed than they listen this can become very distracting.
- **Use easy-to-read fonts** – While there are lots of different fonts you could use, stick to basic fonts like Arial and Times New Roman. Basic fonts are easier to read and can be found on most computers. This is important if you plan to copy your presentation onto a CD or portable drive for use in another computer. If the second computer does not have the fonts you used in making your presentation, it will replace it with a font that is similar. This similar font might totally change the spacing of text on lines. Using basic, simple fonts can help prevent this from happening.
- **Limit font types and sizes** – Try not to use more than two types and sizes of fonts in a presentation. For instance, one font might be used for the titles and another the rest of the text in your slides. The size of the fonts in your presentation should be consistent throughout. That means all titles on each slide should be the same size and the body of the slide text should be the same size. The recommended minimum sizes for text are:
 - Slide title text - 44 points
 - Body of slide text - 28 points
 - Common fonts are Arial and Times New Roman

Slide Title	Body of slide text	Arial
Slide Title	Body of slide text	Times New Roman

- **Case size** – AVOID ALL CAPS- TEXT IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS ARE HARDER TO READ than case that has both upper and lower letters.
- **Use bold for emphasis.** Use it sparingly, for headlines or a word here and there.

How to Use Color

The color used in posters, charts and computer generated slides creates a mood or feeling for your presentation. Color attracts attention and can be used for highlighting items you want to emphasize. Using different colors helps you compare several different items. The colors allow the audience to easily see differences in the items.

Understanding how a color relates to other colors is important. For instance, a bright yellow with other bright primary colors will not stand out, but put it with a darker color and it will. You will need to remember warm colors stand out (advance) and cool colors look farther away (recede).

- **Keep the colors simple** – Use a basic set of colors - one or two vivid colors and then the tints and shades (lighter and darker versions) of the color.
- **Use Color contrast** – For example light colored text on a dark background or vice versa. Colors with little contrast will blend together and be hard for the audience to read. Also, remember that some of your audience may be color blind, so be careful how you use reds and greens. If you are using those two colors to compare items for instance in a graph a color blind person may not be able to see the difference in the two colors.

Computer Backgrounds and Templates

For your presentation there are usually many different template designs or color schemes for you to select from on your computer. Some templates have a design border while a background is a solid color. Another option is to design a border for your presentation. Here are some tips on choosing backgrounds or templates.

- **Select backgrounds to enhance presentation** – Find a background or template that will evoke the mood or feeling you want to have for your presentation. A presentation showing how to make a Thanksgiving turkey craft will look good with a background with fall colors and leaves.
- **Avoid clutter** – Many templates have a border or image incorporated in the design. Consider this when choosing a template. If you are adding many pictures or illustrations to your presentation, the template design may distract from them. It may be better to choose a solid color background.

Color Combinations for posters and slides.

A general rule of thumb when choosing color combinations for text and background is to place dark text on a light background. When in doubt, use black with a pale color.

Black on white

Navy blue on pale yellow

Black on pale green

Dark green on pale blue

If you do decide to use a dark background, make sure you use text that is much lighter in color.

White on black

Pale yellow on navy blue

Using colors this way creates contrast for readers to take in information easier. When colors are too similar, it is particularly difficult for audience members who are colorblind to see text. If you are not sure if your colors contrast each other enough, use this contrast checker: <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

What Color Means in the Background

- gray = neutral, reporting – use for presentation with no emotional sway
- blue = calm, conservative, loyal, reduces pulse and blood pressure use to present unfavorable information
- green = analytical, precise, resistance to change use to encourage interaction, or want to be opinionated, assertive
- red = vitality, urge to achieve results, impulse, raises our spirits use when want to motivate
- yellow = bright, cheerful, may be too much light
- violet = mystic union, unimportant and unrealistic, irresponsible and immature, humor, charm, delight
- brown = decreased sense of vitality, projects dullness
- black = negation of emotions; surrender, power, to discourage argument

Graphics

Graphics are the photos, illustrations, or clip art you add to your presentation. Graphics can be used to support your point or to add some humor to your presentation. When using graphics, remember the following:

- **Be consistent** – It is a good idea to stick with similar types of graphics. If you are using clipart, try not to combine a simple line drawing with a very intricate illustration.
- **Use graphics to make the message clearer** – If you are adding a graphic just because you can, skip the graphic. It needs to support what you are trying to say.
- **Be sure text contrasts with background** – If you chose a template or background color scheme, the text colors may already provide enough contrast. However, you may choose to make the title and text bold, change the size, or even choose a font that you think contrasts more with the template or background.

Sound

Sounds tend to distract from you. Since you want the audience to be listening to what you are saying, it is better just to avoid using sounds.

Transitions and Animations

There are many ways slides, text and graphics can come onto the screen. Transitions are how each slide comes onto the screen. Animations are how the text and graphics come onto and leave the screen.

Tips for transitions and animations:

- **Best slide transition** – is the one that the audience does not even know happened.
- **Be consistent** – Use the same type of transitions throughout the presentation. Also, be consistent on how the text comes onto the slide.
- **Make them simple** – It is a good idea to use basic animations such as:
 - Wipes
 - Fades
- **Make them natural** – An animation that feels natural will keep the audience listening to you rather than trying to figure out where the next set of words will come from. Natural animations are:
 - Drop from above
 - Appear from left
- **Use for emphasis** – If you really want to emphasize a point, this is when it is appropriate to add a fancy animation.

Practice and Judge

Practice for Confidence and Poise

That's all you have left to do – practice. Follow your outline. Do not memorize. Use your own words. If you use notes, have key words or phrases on a card, for quick glance to keep you on your way. If you use cards write only on one side and number them for ease of organizing them.

Keep the information in logical order. Synchronize action and explanation. Check to see if everything is blending together smoothly. By practicing you will develop your skill and will be able to stay within the time limit. Ask your family or 4-H leader to watch you. Have them ask you questions and make suggestions. Practice in front of a mirror. See how you react to watching yourself. Ask yourself, “Would I stay for this?” Practice gives you confidence.

Remember, you can help the audience react favorably to your presentation if you are enthusiastic when you present it. Having enthusiasm will help convince the audience they want to make what you are making or try your idea. Also, don't let the misuse of a word or the slip of a piece of equipment upset you. Goofs happen – go right on with your presentation.

Members should practice using the judge's scorecard and then discuss the points with an adult. It is good self-analysis. Members may also practice with each other using the judge's scorecard. By practicing with each other, you see what others can do.

How Well Did You Do?

After the presentation be your own judge, ask yourself:

- Was my audience interested?
- Did I feel at ease?
- Did I enjoy giving the presentation?
- Did I know my information well enough?

The next time you give a presentation, choose a more advanced subject to test your skill and gain greater confidence in yourself.

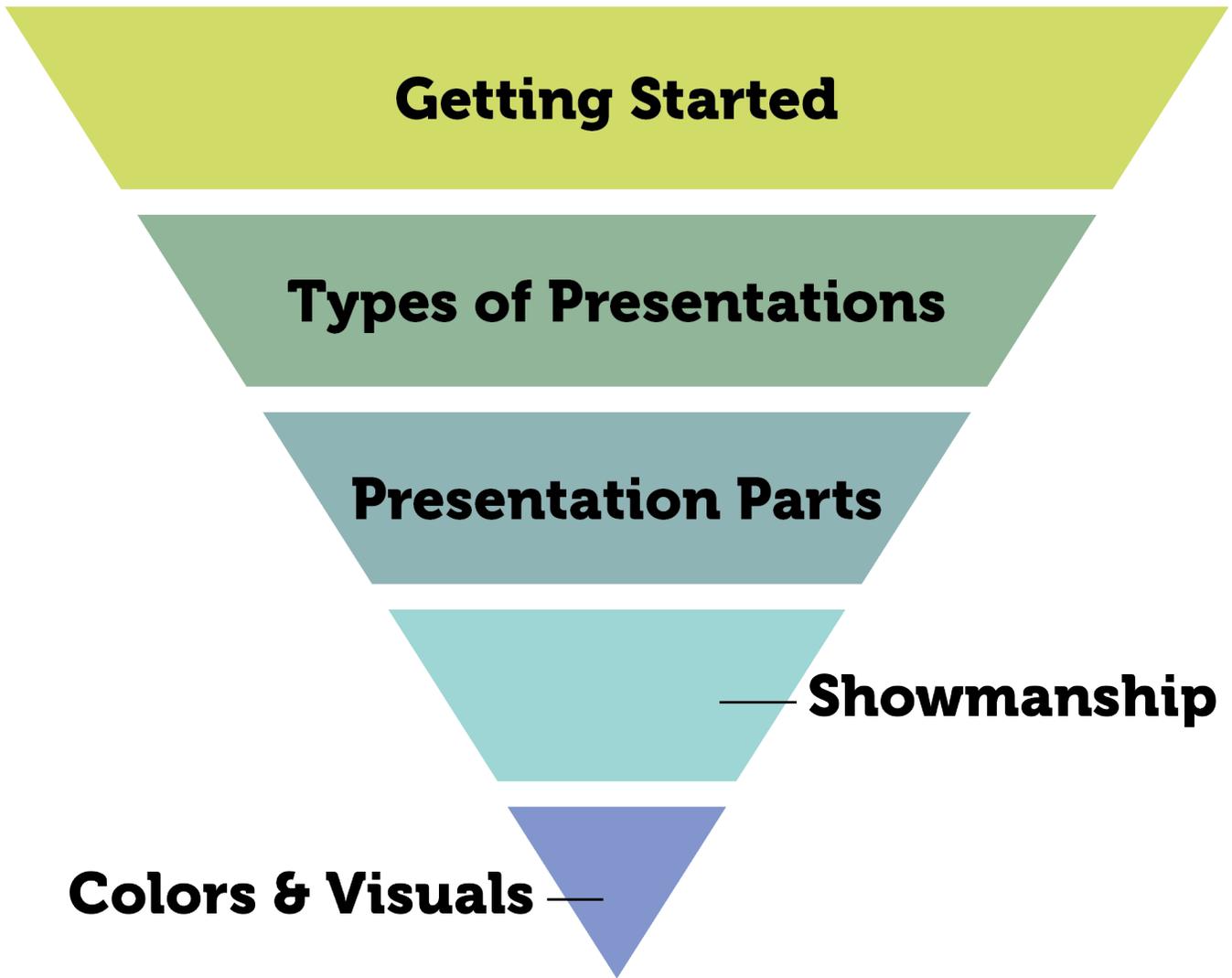
Ribbon System - Level Of Mastery

The Ribbon System is designed to help you recognize the Level of Mastery you have accomplished.

- Purple – Designates superior work – presentation is clearly superior in attracting attention and arousing interest, conveys message, design, originality and workmanship.
- Blue – Designates excellent work – presentation meets standards in all major aspects.
- Red – Designates average work – presentation lacks one or more qualities.
- White – Designates needs improvement – presentation clearly lacks several qualities.

The Foundation of Personal Development

Just as an inverted pyramid progressively gets smaller at the bottom, the preparation process for delivering a quality public presentation starts incredibly broad in nature by first identifying a topic. Each stage from there on out becomes more specific and catered to the presentation being delivered.



Getting Started

- » Find a topic you are passionate about
- » Do your Research
- » Prepare your content

Types of Presentations

Determine the best type of presentation for your content:

- » Demonstration
- » Public Speaking
- » Illustrated talk

Presentation Parts

- » Tell them what you are going to tell them
- » Tell Them
- » Tell them what you told them

Showmanship

- » Appearance
- » Eye Contact
- » Body Language
- » Voice
- » Gestures
- » Confidence

Colors & Visuals

- » Visibility
- » Simple
- » Interesting
- » Useful
- » Structure
- » Information

Rules and Regulations

- Registration must be completed on Fair Entry by August 1 at 11:59 p.m. CT.
- For team presentations, only ONE team member is required to register on Fair Entry. During registration, they will be required to indicate their teammate's name and the preferred time of presentation.
- Counties are responsible for collecting two blank Public Presentations scorecards with the top portion filled out from the participants. Counties should send scorecards of ONLY those registered in FairEntry to the State 4-H Office, Attention: State 4-H Office - 4-H Communications Committee, SAG 121, Box 2207E, SDSU, Brookings, SD 57007, no later than August 3. If paperwork is not postmarked by August 3, the youth will not be allowed to participate in the event.
- The 4-H Communications Project Guidelines and scoresheets are located on the SDSU Extension website.
- Youth should not promote any particular product or brand name during their presentation. However, it is acceptable to have labels or brands displayed while giving the presentation.
- Ingredients or supplies should be from original containers or packaging. When this isn't practical (e.g., flour), participants should place the product in a labeled clear plastic container.
- Presentations may have been prepared during the 4-H year and given previously in school, during extracurricular activities or to service organizations; however, youth must alter the presentation to include and relate it to their 4-H projects and/or their 4-H experiences. In their delivery:
 - 4-H members must use the word "4-H" and state the specific 4-H project or program. If not, 4-H members will receive a point deduction.
 - 4-H members must state how their content teaches the listener or audience about a specific 4-H project(s) or program.
 - EXAMPLES: "I am enrolled in the 4-H Beef Project. Today I will tell you what I learned about proper nutrition for my market steer through my 4-H project work. I have also learned ____ in these projects." "Today my illustrated talk on Nutrition Fact or Fiction falls under the Foods and Nutrition Project and the Health Project. I have also learned ____ in these projects."
- 4-H Public Presentations are all timed events. In the case the presentation is under the minimum the member will receive a 3-point deduction from their overall score. If a presentation exceeds the maximum time limit, the 4-H member will receive a 3-point deduction in their overall score for the first minute over and a one-point deduction for each additional minute. See time requirements below.
- The 4-H Public Communications Committee will provide the following for presentation purposes: a Windows laptop, and TV screen with remote clicker. All presentations should be Windows laptop compatible. In order to alleviate technology issues and provide smooth transitions between each presenter, youth are REQUIRED to bring their digital presentation on a USB flash drive (if applicable). Internet access is not a guarantee nor is access to online cloud sharing platforms (i.e. Box, iCloud, Google Drive, etc.).
- Senior division 4-H members are required to set-up the entirety of their presentation to include supplies and digital presentation. Should they receive assistance from an adult, with the exception of extenuating circumstances

determined by the event coordinator, a three-point deduction will be reflected in their overall score.

- For team presentation guidelines, visit page 6 of the Communications Project Guidelines document.

Presentation Types & Criteria:

- **Demonstration** – Individual or Team, Minimum Length – Beginners 3 Minutes; Juniors 5 Minutes and Seniors 7 Minutes. Maximum Length: 25 minutes for all age categories.
Presented before an audience, a demonstration is an accurate step-by-step process of actions and explanations that results in a finished product. Individuals or teams use actual products, material, garments, machines, plants, animals, etc., and may also share personal, family or club experiences. Demonstrations may include charts, illustrations, posters, and other types of visual aids.
- **Illustrated Talk** – Individual or Team, Minimum Length – Beginners 3 Minutes; Juniors 5 Minutes and Seniors 7 Minutes. Maximum Length: 25 minutes for all age categories. Presented before an audience, an illustrated talk is original, true and accurate information showing how something is accomplished using a combination of speaking about and showing one or more visual aids (e.g., Power Points, charts, pictures, slides, models, miniatures or real objects, flannel board, flip charts, chalkboard, drawings, and cutouts). Personal, family or club experiences may be used. In the Illustrated Talk, there is no finished product; rather, an explanation of results that is illustrated with visuals.
- **Public Speaking** – Min Length: 3 minutes & Max Length: 6 minutes – Individual
In public speaking, a 4-H member chooses a subject or topic which relates to an aspect of 4-H (project, program, promotion, etc.). Public Speaking is telling about your experiences or what you learned about the topic to others. Public Speaking may not use visual aids. Participants may use brief notes, if desired. Judges are not permitted to ask questions in this presentation type.
- **4-H Spark Tank** - Individual or team, minimum length Beginners 10 minutes, Juniors 15 Minutes, Seniors 20 minutes. Maximum Length: 25 Minutes for all age categories. Youth will present a business plan and showcase their business or service in hopes of gaining the interest of a “Spark” to consider a fictional investment in their plan. Spark Tank presentation must include 3-5 samples youth plan to market or a flyer for their service. Spark Tanks can also include charts, visual, posters, or other visual aids.

References

- 4-H Presentation Manual, University of California, 4-H Youth Development Program, 2005.
- Speak up with Confidence -Tips on Presenting in Nine Key Areas, University of Idaho Extension, 2012.
- Public Presentation Curriculum For use with 4-H Program Clubs, Workshops or other Educational Settings, Nebraska Extension, 4-H Youth Program.
- 4-H Member Guide: How to Make a 4-H Public Presentation, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2010.
- North Carolina 4-H Presentation Handbook, North Carolina State University, A&T State University Cooperative Extension, 2007.
- A Primer on Presentations, Oregon State University, Extension Service, 4-H Youth Development, 2009.
- 4-H Public Presentation Guide, AgriLife Extension, Texas A & M System, 2010.
- How to do 4-H Public Presentations, South Dakota State University.
- Minnehaha County 4-H Entrepreneur Project Area, Adapted from Michigan State University Extension.

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Appendix A: 4-H Spark Tank Business Plan Worksheets

The 4-H Spark Tank Project Area is designed for youth who want to explore innovation, entrepreneurship, and communication by creating and pitching their own product, invention, or business idea. Participants will develop a business plan, marketing plan, and sales/financial plan in preparation for their Spark Tank presentation, where they will pitch their idea to a panel of 4-H “Sparks” (judges). These Sparks will act as potential fictional investors, ask questions, and provide feedback to help you strengthen their ideas and presentation skills.

On the following pages are templates to help you plan your business and prepare your pitch. Use them to think big—imagine your ideal business, target customers, and marketing strategy—not just what could be sold at a fair booth. This is your opportunity to dream, design, and develop your best idea! Please bring a copy of your completed template to turn in during your Spark Tank Pitch for the Sparks to review.

When completing the sales and financial worksheets, provide estimated costs, prices, and potential profits based on what it would take to realistically produce and sell your product or service. These figures will help you explain your pricing and demonstrate your understanding of how your business could succeed in the real world.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Regina Bakley, SDSU Extension Program Manager, Regional Youth Educator, at regina.bakley@sdstate.edu

4-H Spark Tank Business Plan Worksheet

Name of Business:

Owners/Entrepreneurs including experience:

Product/Service Name:

Brief Description: (Include what it is, what it does, colors or sizes available, and how it helps or solves a problem)

Mission Statement: What is the purpose or goal of the business? What does your business stand for?

Business Motto/Slogan:

Draw or attach your Business Logo:

Business Location: Where was this product made? Where will you sell or promote your product?

What inspired you to complete this business plan?

Marketing Plan Tempalte

Your target market is customers who are most likely going to buy from you. Describe them in as much detail as possible, based on your knowledge of your product or service.

Problem/Solution: What problem does this product or service solve? How does it solve it?

Target Customer: Who will buy or use this product or service?

Other characteristics of my target market: (geography, occupation, income, life stage, age)

Unique Selling Point: What makes this product or service special?

My competition is: (name of other companies, brands, or products like yours) Provide reference information if available (i.e. website, catalog pages, etc.)

Explain why your goods are different/better than your competitors, with reference to a specific company (price, quality, design, convenience, mission, etc.).

How will you get your product noticed? (Check all that apply, explain how you will use them and consider potential costs of promotion.)

Social Media

Posters/Flyers

Booth at events

Website/Online store

Word of mouth

Other:

Exhibit or demonstrate one of the ways you will advertise your products (can include a poster, sketch, packaging design, social media post mockup, etc.)

Operations Plan

How will you create or produce your product or service?

How will you deliver your product or service to the customer?

Product Pricing Worksheet

Your first goal as a new business is to reach the break-even point, where your income from sales pays for the expenses of producing your products. To determine the break-even point, you must first determine the cost of goods per unit. Use the following table to determine the selling price of your product or service.

Fixed Expenses: This amount will not change whether you sell 1 item or 1000 items.

Equipment Description	Rent or Purchase Costs	My Total Costs
TOTAL Equipment Expenses	Box A	

Other Fixed Expenses Description	Costs	My Total Costs
Rent/Purchase of Location		
TOTAL Other Fixed Expenses	Box B	

Variable Expenses: This cost fluctuates depending on how much is purchased or how many you plan to produce.

Raw Materials (Individual parts to make your product)	Costs	My Total Costs
TOTAL Raw Material Expenses	Box C	

Other Expenses

Other Expenses	Costs	My Total Costs
Advertising/Marketing		
Shipping		
Packaging		
Office Supplies		
Labor (what is your time worth) (# of hours worked x hourly wage)		
TOTAL Other Expenses	Box D	

Total Production Costs

Item	Costs
Box A Total	
Box B Total	+
Box C Total	+
Box D Total	+
Add Boxes A, B, C and D for grand total of production costs	= Box E
Total Production cost x 2 Part 1: Production Costs Part 2: Profit	

Item	Costs
Total Production Cost	Box F
Number of Units Produced	Box G
Price to Charge Per Item	Box F divided by Box G = Box H

Sales Projection Budget

A budget is a plan for allocating resources. To create a budget, you must estimate your projected income and expenses. A budget is important because it forces you to carefully consider how you will earn enough income to cover your expenses and make a profit.

Income/Revenue: Money coming INTO the business.

Item	Costs
Total Requested Funds	Box I
Personal Investment (if any)	Box J
Total Investment into business	Box I + Box J = Box K

Projected Sales Revenue:

To determine your projected sales, you will need to know how many products you have or how many hours of service you plan to provide. For a product simply count how many you have to sell. For a service, your units will be the number of hours required to complete the service.

Item	Costs
Number of available units	Box L
Cost per unit	Box M
Projected Sales Revenue	Box L x Box M = Box N

Investment Pitch

How much money are you asking the Sparks (judges/fictional investors) to invest?

Are you putting in any of your own money/equipment/supplies already owned? If so, please explain what and how you will invest.

What will you use the investment for? (Supplies, advertising, equipment, etc.)

What will the Sparks get in return? (Example: "10% of my company" or "your logo on my packaging")

Business Goals

Where do you see your business in 1 year/month?

Where do you see your business in 5 years/months?

Where do you see your business in 10 years/months?

Reflection and Core Values

Which 4-H skills did you use while creating your product and business plans? (Leadership, communication, teamwork, problem solving, etc., be specific and describe.)

How will your product have a positive impact on your community?