

# Communications Guide



## Demonstrations

### Show Them

Giving a demonstration is putting words into action. A good demonstration is perhaps the best way to teach someone how to do something.

Will your demonstration be an individual demonstration or a team demonstration? This is one of the first decisions you need to make. Do you need two people to demonstrate your topic?

Try to relate the topic for your demonstration to your 4-H projects or to an interest. Choose the topic first, and make the title fit the topic, rather than getting a clever title and trying to fit the demonstration to the title.

It's better to present a few short sentences that your audience will remember than to give a lot of details to an audience that has stopped paying attention. Try to limit your demonstration to 10 minutes or less.

Limit the demonstration to one main idea or theme, just as you would for a speech. Choose an interesting topic. You must be convinced of the importance of the topic.

As with preparing for a speech, you next want to research your topic and prepare an outline. List the important steps and processes that are to be discussed and demonstrated. Arrange the steps in a logical order as they naturally would be done. Outline the explanation necessary to go with each step or process. Plan posters or illustrations that will add to the clearness and effectiveness of the demonstration. Use posters only if they help to explain or stress a point.

### The Preparation

As with speeches, a demonstration is made up of three parts: the introduction, the body, and the summary. The introduction is the "why" of the demonstration, the body is the "how," and the summary is the "what."

Include only enough explanation to fill the action time required for each phase of the demonstration. You should always use your own words to describe action. Memorized material never sounds convincing. Practice using complete sentences that

will avoid the bad habit of "personalizing" the explanations. Avoid saying, "You add the salt and beat well." Instead say, "Next add the salt and beat well."

If you are giving a team demonstration, divide the working and explaining so each team member has about the same amount to do. Correct methods are important throughout the presentation.

### Summary

In the summary, the points of the demonstration that you want your audience to remember should be repeated. You should also emphasize the ways this topic can be valuable to your audience.

If someone asks you a question that you don't know the answer to, don't try to bluff your way through it. Simply tell the person that you don't know the answer.

### Setting the Stage

Keep equipment and supplies away from the front of the working space so the audience can see each step as the demonstration proceeds. Arrange your equipment or supplies not needed at once on a second table behind the demonstration table. Group equipment as much as possible, using trays. Grouped equipment is easier to move, appears neater, and is easier to locate quickly. List the equipment to be used and make card lists for each tray. A quick look will show you if anything is forgotten.

When practical, use transparent equipment to permit the audience to see the material and the process (such as glass mixing bowls). Wooden mixing spoons make less noise than metal. Remove the lids from your containers before beginning the demonstration. Cover commercial or brand names on equipment or supplies.

Keep a hand towel or paper towels handy to use as necessary. A paper bag, taped to the back edge of the table, is useful to dispose of waste material.

### Dressing for the Job

Choose clothing suitable and appropriate for the job. A skirt or nice pants for girls or casual pants for boys are appropriate. Try not to wear something dressier than you would feel comfortable wearing while doing the demonstration. Your clothes should

be neat, clean, well pressed, and attractive. Fingernails should be clean. Food demonstrators with long hair should find a way to keep your hair away from your face. Keep makeup to a minimum. Avoid attention-getting clothes or accessories, such as jewelry, hair ornaments, flashy shoes, or fancy belts. Try to look and talk like someone you would want to sit and listen to.

First impressions are important. If you dress, act, and speak confidentially, you can forget about yourself and concentrate on the demonstration. If you get involved with teaching about your topic, you will forget to be nervous. This is why it is important to demonstrate a topic that you really enjoy and want to share with others.

Look like you are enjoying yourself. Smiling a lot helps to “fake” it, until before you know it you are enjoying yourself. If you smile, the audience will think you like them and they will smile back at you.

## Visualizing It

Well-prepared and well-used visuals help the audience understand more completely, learn faster, and remember longer. A visual may be used to introduce the demonstration and demonstrators, to present the main points, and/or to give the summary. A rule to follow on using charts or posters is to use them if they seem to make the demonstration more effective.

## Showmanship Techniques

If you are not using a demonstration table with an overhead mirror, try to slant the table toward the audience by raising the back legs of the table slightly, or by making a slant board. This will make it possible for everyone to see the procedure. If you are doing a demonstration about clothes or fashions,

you might want to use a rack for displaying the garments. A nice tray, with attractive serving dishes, adds considerably to the appearance of the finished food product.

If you are using several posters or charts of identical size and color, a small identification number on the back of each will guarantee the visuals being shown in the intended order. A title poster will help the audience coming in after the demonstration has started to know what the demonstration is about.

Try to do something distinctive. That is, something that no one else is doing and that will help people (and the judges) remember you. Candles with the final food display, a handout of your recipe or instructions, or a “razzmatazz” introduction are all distinctive, but only if you are the only one doing it.

State Fair Score Card	Very Good	Needs Improvement	
		Some	Much
Appearance			
Confidence			
Voice Quality and Grammar			
Audience Appeal			
Organization			
Knowledge of Topic			
Demo Technique			
Visuals/Handouts if any			
Summary			
Team Work (if used)			

Time requirement: 8-10 minutes

