



Manitoba 4-H Council Inc.

4-H Communications Competition Tips

Writing Tips

4-H Communications: Writing Tips

Where do you begin when writing your 4-H speech or visual presentation?

A great way to get you started on the right track is to organize your speech by preparing an outline. This means constructing your thoughts, so your speech starts from a definite point, proceeds in a logical fashion and reaches the conclusion in good time. A neat way to think about this is from your audience's point of view. What will their reaction be to what you have to say?

There's a formula you can use called the "Borden" formula (presented by Dr. Richard C. Borden in his book, *Public Speaking as Listeners Like it*). It has four steps that represent the reaction of your listeners to what you say:

- **Ho-Hum!** This corresponds to the introduction of your speech. The audience is sitting back, expecting to be bored. It's up to you to have an opening that will make them sit up and listen. You need to kindle a fire in them.
- **Your opening must be planned to arrest attention, arouse interest or suggest the theme of the speech.** This allows you to show your own interest and enthusiasm about the topic. Some commonly recognized good openings include "shocks" (a startling question or statement) and an appropriate quotation, illustration or story.
- **Why Bring that Up?** You must build a bridge to carry the audience. Show that your topic is important, and relate it to the interests of your listeners. This and the previous step shouldn't take more than one-fourth of your presentation.
- **Following your introduction, tell the audience exactly what you're going to be talking about in one sentence.**
- **For Instance!** Get down to cases- the audience wants concrete evidence. Use illustrations, facts, and stories. Drive the points home. Start action in the mind of your listeners.
- **There are many methods of outlining a speech.** The main thing is for the speaker to have a definite method and follow it. Try dividing your speech into logical main points, and then using quotations, statistics, and examples to develop each main point.
- **So What?** This is the call for action. Tell the audience what you want them to do about your speech. Finish forcefully!



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- The conclusion is the climax- the whip cracker- the clincher that gets the desired action or reaction. It must tie in with the opening and must never leave the audience in doubt as to what is wanted. A weak, inconclusive ending kills the best speech. Try out some of these conclusions:
 - An appeal for action.
 - A summary of the points made, with recommendations, or conclusion drawn from the points.
 - A pointed story, quotation or illustration.

The last thing you are to say is the first thing to consider. Not only do you have to wow the audience with what you say, but also how you say it. Know your introduction. This will get you off to a good start and will help you establish good relations with your audience. Always remember to speak clearly and loudly, look at your audience, and be enthusiastic about your topic and show it. You can expect to be a little nervous but don't worry about it. Each time you speak you'll become more comfortable and less nervous.