



URI 4-H PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS PROGRAM RULEBOOK



What is the Public Presentations Program?

The URI 4-H Public Presentation Program (PPP) is an opportunity for 4-H members to hone critical communication skills. Public presentations are vital in any career, and they only get easier with practice. Participating in this program is a great way to develop public speaking skills in a friendly, low-pressure environment. In this program, youth give presentations on topics of their choice to peers and receive feedback from a panel of judges. 4-H also offers non-competitive public speaking opportunities, like speaking at club meetings and fairs, and presenting at the Big E!

Many youth participate in the PPP on a yearly basis, and indeed this program is meant to help youth develop their public speaking skills over time! Youth are not expected to enter the PPP with refined skills and receive top marks. And that is OK! It is the first step in a learning journey.

There are three levels to our competitive PPP:

1. **District Contest.** There are several district contests offered. Presenters will attend **one** of the district contests.
2. **State Contest.** Top scorers at the district level will be invited to compete at the state contest. Judges expect a higher caliber of presentation at this contest. Presenters may not score as highly at the state contest as they did at the district contest.
3. **Regional Contest.** The Northeast 4-H Speak Up Fest is a virtual contest for youth from Maine to West Virginia. 4-H Staff may invite select presenters who are aged 13+ to participate at the regional contest.



How to Enter

1. CHOOSE A CATEGORY

Participants will enter their presentation under one of the following categories:

- **Creative Communication:** A performance. Examples include stand-up comedy, storytelling, drama, poetry readings, singing, etc. Participants are expected to give an introduction and answer questions at the end.
- **Demonstration:** How to make, do, or prepare something. Examples include how to show a dog, how to catch fish, how to play the guitar, etc. Participants must describe a step-by-step process and show a final product/result.
- **Formal Speech:** A thesis-driven talk without any visual aids or props (except for notecards). The purpose of this presentation is to inform, persuade, or entertain.
- **Illustrated Talk:** A presentation that uses visual aids (e.g. pictures, posters, samples, models, etc.). Examples include using a poster board to help describe good nutrition, breeds of horses, a personal hobby, etc.

It is strongly recommended to look at the scorecards for each category in advance, so presenters know what criteria judges are using to score them.

2. CHOOSE AN AGE DIVISION

Age divisions are subject to different rules/requirements and scoring criteria. Please be sure to enter under the correct age division:

- **Cloverbud Division:** Members with a 4-H age of 5-7. Cloverbud members will not be scored; only positive comments will be made by the judges. Cloverbuds are NOT eligible for the state contest. Presentation length is <5 minutes.
- **Junior Division:** Members with a 4-H age of 8-13. Presentation length is 3-10 minutes.
- **Senior Division:** Members with a 4-H age of 14-18. Presentation length is 5-10 minutes.

Teams: Teams are allowed! Team members receive one collective score but each member will receive a ribbon. **If a team includes Cloverbuds, then Cloverbud division rules apply. If a team includes Juniors and Seniors, then Senior division rules apply.*



General Rules

The following rules apply to all presentations:

1. **Self-Reliance.** Adults may not assist with any of the presentation process. This means that presenters must set up and break down their own equipment, hold their own posters, advance their own slides, etc. Make sure to plan accordingly.
2. **Equipment.** You are responsible for bringing everything you need for your presentation and for adapting to the presentation space. You will have a small table available for your use.
3. **Topic.** Youth must present a different talk each year.
4. **Suggested Dress.** Dress appropriately for your presentation. This could mean business casual attire for a formal speech, skiing attire for a talk on downhill skiing, etc.
5. **Distractions.** While 4-H Staff will attempt to minimize distractions, be aware that unforeseen distractions do occur. Be prepared to roll with it!
6. **Notecards.** Notecards are allowed. Judges may deduct points for notecard use if it interferes with other aspects of the presentation.
7. **Sources.** You are expected to cite your sources. Briefly list your sources at the end of your presentation, and/or refer to them throughout your presentation.
8. **Questions.** You will be expected to ask the judges if there are any questions at the end of your presentation. Make sure to repeat/paraphrase the question so that the whole audience can hear what was asked. There is no standard way to do this; some examples include:
 - a. "The question was..."
 - b. "Thanks for asking about..."
 - c. "In regards to..."
9. **Multiple Presentations.** Participants are allowed to make multiple presentations. The participant may be required to make each presentation in a different room depending on the contest schedule.
10. **Live Animals.** Live animals are not allowed at this contest.
11. **Judging.** Judges' decisions are final. Judging is subjective and presenters can expect differing opinions from different judges.

Please note that while contests are often held in public schools and libraries, the venues can and do change from contest to contest. This means that lighting, noise level, distance from the judges, stage size, podium availability, etc. is variable. Part of effective public speaking is learning how to adapt to your environment! It is a good idea to show up to the contest early to see where and how you will be presenting. Be prepared to adapt to the room and ask 4-H Staff in advance if you have questions.



SLIDESHOWS

Slideshows are permitted, but they will only be allowed to play on the 4-H Staff computer. You may not hook up your own computer. For that reason, it is critical you submit your slideshow to 4-H Staff in advance of the contest and in the correct file format. Anyone arriving at the contest without having submitted their slideshow in accordance with the rules will be disqualified.

Slideshows can make for great presentations, but they do come with their difficulties. Please read the following rules carefully to make sure you are prepared:

- Submit your slideshow to 4-H Staff at least three days before the contest.
- Slideshows will be played from the 4-H Staff computer as .pptx files. This means that if you submit a Google Slides slideshow, it will be converted to a .pptx file. The conversion process is not perfect, so the best practice is to convert the Google Slides slideshow yourself, so that you can tweak the .pptx as needed. Otherwise, you may be surprised to find out the formatting, videos, etc. in the .pptx version are not how you wanted them.
- Be prepared for technical difficulties! Be prepared for faulty WiFi/Internet, broken projectors, etc. 4-H Staff will try to problem-solve within reason, but if you do not have a backup plan (e.g. printouts of your slideshow), you may not be able to present.
- Once you reach the front of the room, you will have 3 minutes to set up your slideshow and begin presenting. If you are not ready within the 3-minute mark, you may forfeit your presentation.

FOOD

If your demonstration includes food, you must wear a head covering and apron. Bring a clean copy of the recipe for the judges. Clear glass bowls are recommended, so that the audience can see what you are doing. **Make sure to note any allergens before offering food to the judges and/or audience!**

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE

Use of AI to create presentations is allowed, with limitations. The following rules regarding AI use in accordance with current University and regional/national collegiate standards for AI.

- The specific AI tool you are using (e.g. ChatGPT) must be cited as a source.
- Using AI to narrow a thesis, brainstorm ideas, and the like are acceptable. Using ChatGPT to write the entirety of a speech is unacceptable.

Judges may take points off if the participant appears to have relied too heavily on AI and to have not put in enough of their own work.



Scoring

A panel of judges will use scorecards to evaluate presentations. The scorecards are meant to guide the judges, but they are not a comprehensive list of everything the judges take into consideration. Judges are URI 4-H volunteers, alumni and members of the community who have been trained by 4-H Staff. Participants in the PPP understand that not every judge will have the same opinion about a presentation. Judging is a subjective process based on what each judge considers to be the most important factors of a good presentation. We want youth to hear different perspectives because it teaches youth to engage diverse audiences. Make use of multiple perspectives to help you grow!

The presenter will receive one overall score, which is the average of the judges' individual scores. Age division will be factored into each presenter's score.

Presentations are timed (see "age divisions" section). The clock will begin as soon as you start speaking and will end before the Q&A session. 1 point is deducted from the overall score for each minute over the maximum time. For example, if the maximum time limit is 10 minutes, a time of 10:01 - 10:59 will receive a 1-point deduction. 2 points are deducted for each minute under the minimum time.

Awards

The overall score at all contests will be rounded to the nearest whole number (with 0.5-0.9 rounding up and 0.4-0.0 rounding down). All district contest participants will receive a ribbon.

Scoring at the district level is determined as follows:

- Green ribbon = Cloverbud participation
- White ribbon = 3-6
- Red ribbon = 7-11
- Blue ribbon = 12-16

Presenters who score a 12 or above at a district contest will be invited to compete at the state contest!

At the state contest, only ribbons for first through third place will be given out to each age category and each age group. This means that ribbons will be given to the top three junior creative communication, the top three senior creative communication, and so on. Scoring at the state level is determined as follows:

- Blue ribbon = first place
- Red ribbon = second place
- White ribbon = third place



All tiebreakers will be made by 4-H Staff and judges.

Additional prizes may be added at the discretion of the 4-H Staff.