

4-H Presentation Contest Information and Tips

Check out complete contest information, rules, time requirements, score sheets, contact information for contest chairman, and other helpful information here:

<http://www.uwyo.edu/4-h/youth/contests/presentation/index.html>

**Youth must sign up to participate in the state contest when they register for Showcase Showdown.*

There are 3 types of presentations at the state contest. All three presentation contest types are open to all ages of 4-H youth. Youth may enter one prepared and one impromptu contest every year. Check with your county educator for your county entry process and deadline.

1. Prepared – Youth prepare a presentation (talk, demonstration, PowerPoint, visual aids, props, etc.) to comply with the time limit requirements for their age group. They bring their work to the state contest and present it in front of the judges.
 - a. This can be on any topic that interests the youth. It does not have to relate to their 4-H project, it could be something completely unrelated. For example, one member picks a different state every year and presents on its history. Make sure that the topic isn't so broad that the presentation is unfocused.
 - b. There are time limits for the state contest. It is perfectly acceptable to have kids "fix" their presentation between the county and state contest.
 - c. Bring your prepared presentation on a jump drive. Also bring your laptop as a back-up plan. You don't want to get there and not have it work with the provided laptop and be out of luck.
 - d. Make sure your visual aids can be seen by the entire audience.
 - e. Bring everything you might need for your presentation or demonstration.
 - f. Dress appropriately for your topic or business casual.
 - g. If using food – please follow proper food safety procedures.
 - h. If you have props that include anything messy or animals please make sure to bring cleaner to wipe down the tables after you are finished.
 - i. The person presenting needs to be the one setting up their equipment, props, etc. and cleaning up after themselves. Parents can help carry everything in and out but they shouldn't be the ones setting up or cleaning up the area.
 - j. If you are doing a food presentation you may give the judges a sample of your food. Don't worry if they choose not to eat it, it's just important that you give it to them.
2. Impromptu – Youth do not prepare anything before coming to the state contest. They come to the contest location during the set time and when it is their turn they will draw 3 possible speaking topics. They choose one of the three and then have three minutes to organize their thoughts, write notes, and prepare their talk. They will then go present their talk to the judges. You may enter both the prepared and impromptu contests.
 - a. There are no visual aids or props used.
 - b. Topics will include things that youth won't need to prepare for and will be age appropriate. They may be a question you have to answer or a statement that you

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need to talk about or tell your opinion on. Topics for older youth can cover current topics applicable to teens or current events or views. Examples of topics are below:

- i. Tell us about your favorite 4-H project.
 - ii. If you were a teacher, how would your class be different?
 - iii. You are a mad scientist. Tell us about your latest invention.
 - iv. The popularity of junk food is due to the media.
- c. This contest will be held on Thursday morning of Showcase Showdown. You must be pre-registered.
 - d. The order will be first come first serve. When the member is 2nd in line to present they will be escorted to the writing room to draw their topic and write their presentation. If you miss your turn you will go to the bottom of the list. Presenters not checked in when the contest begins will be forfeited.
 - e. You will be provided with your note card to organize your thought on.
 - f. When you enter the presentation room either the room host or yourself will tell the judge what your topic is.

Quick Tips

- Practice your presentation. A lot. If you are entering impromptu practice general speaking in front of people. If you are using scientific terms or complex words make sure you are pronouncing them correctly.
- The state contest will be held in a classroom. There will be two tables, easels, and a computer/projector for the presenter to use during the prepared contest. There will be no equipment or tables during the impromptu contest. If you require special equipment plan on bringing it. There will be seating for parents and guests in the back of the room with the judges sitting in the front. There will be two judges for each age group.
- Make sure to check in at the contest table when you arrive at the contest. If they don't know that you are there they may think you didn't come and skip you.
- Note cards may be used for prepared presentations, but make sure not to be relying on those notes or reading from them. One notecard will be provided for each impromptu presentation.
- If there is a room host who introduces your name or presentation topic you don't need to repeat that information to the judges when you start your presentation. Practice both ways and be ready to adjust.
- Make sure the judges are done writing notes from the previous presenter, are ready, and are focused on you before you start speaking.
- Make sure you have a catchy introduction and a solid conclusion to your presentation.
- Once you start talking the room host will begin timing your speech. They will stop timing when your speech ends. Time answering questions is not included in your presentation time.

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- Make eye contact with the judges. Make sure you are speaking clearly so they can understand you. Don't look at the floor, put your notes in front of your face, or turn away when speaking because the judges won't be able to hear you.
- When you are finished presenting always ask the judges if they have questions. Most judges will have a question or two for you about your topic. Make sure you study your topic so you can answer the questions. If you don't know the answer admit it; all you need to say is that you didn't learn that in your research. Never make up an answer.
- Thank the judges when you are finished with your questions.
- Show your confidence. You are an expert on the topic you are speaking about so don't be afraid to show it.
- Awards will be presented the night after the contest at the banquet so try to arrange to stick around.
- If you have questions, please ask! You can always contact the contest chairman or the state 4-H office.