



“Making Your Point”

Extemporaneous Speaking

Introduction

Have you ever given an extemporaneous speech? You may not realize this, but you speak extemporaneously every day! Webster’s dictionary defines extemporaneous as, “not planned beforehand.” According to this definition, when you answer a teacher’s question in front of the class or explain something to a younger 4-H member, you are speaking extemporaneously. If you’ve ever made a bad choice and had to explain to your parents why you arrived home after your curfew, you probably already see the value in having these skills!

When you give an extemporaneous speech at a public speaking contest it will differ from a traditional (“prepared”) public speech in that you will not plan the speech until shortly before you deliver it. The amount of preparation time you will have varies from contest to contest. The ability to organize your thoughts quickly and speak clearly will also be a big help in school, 4-H and later in life as you attend meetings, give presentations and are interviewed for jobs.

How do I do it?

Once you are assigned (or choose) a topic to speak on, there is usually not much time to put together your speech. There are several different ways to organize your thoughts to present them clearly when speaking extemporaneously. Some examples include:

- State your point of view and give the reason that you feel this way, giving examples of real life experiences to support your point of view.
- Think of the past, present and future: There was a time when _____; but now we find that _____; in the future I expect _____
- Discuss three important things that come to mind about the topic.
- Consider the pros and cons of the issue and discuss both sides of the issue.
- Ask yourself *who, what, when, where, why* and *how*, and focus on the response to those questions in your speech.
- Discuss how the topic affects you personally or how it affects the world in general.

These are only suggestions – you may have another way that you want to approach your topic that better fits your own personal style. Although you will not have much time to prepare your extemporaneous speech the format of it will still follow the same one used in prepared speeches. For more information on how to write and deliver a high quality public speech, check out the *Getting Started* section of “Making Your Point: Building Public Speaking Skills” on the Missouri 4-H web site!