

4-H members will develop an understanding and appreciation for various communication processes while developing skills including the following:

- Conceptualization/idea development skills
- Language mechanics skills
- Logic skills
- Research and presentation skills
- Public speaking skills
- Writing and news writing skills

This project area is designed for a train-the-trainer approach. For 4-H'ers to receive maximum benefit while exploring communications as a project area, volunteers and agents/program associates will need to provide public speaking and other communication-related opportunities before contests are held. In-service training may be scheduled upon request for volunteers and agents/program associates to develop skills necessary to work effectively with the 4-H'ers interested in this project area.

4-H Thrive

Positive Youth Development

Developing Competence

Adults create environments where youth can develop competence in their chosen project area.

Building Confidence

Youth build confidence as they learn to think for themselves, build mastery, and are recognized for their efforts.

Nurturing Caring

Adults nurture a caring environment where mutual trust between youth and adults is established. Caring relationships with adults are key to resilient youth.

Finding Connection

Youth build solid connections which are critical to their well-being.

Forming Character

Create a community where youth play an active role in developing their character.

Determining Contribution

Youth actively contribute to their clubs and communities.

Mississippi State University is an equal opportunity institution.

Activity Suggestions

Workshop Ideas:

- Public Speaking Workshop
- Research and Presenting Information Workshop
- Writing Skills Workshop
- News Writing Workshop

Tour/Field Trip Ideas:

- Public Meetings (county and municipal government meetings, town hall meetings, rural water association annual meetings, etc.)
- Public Debates (political candidate debates, etc.)
- Official Ceremonies (special holiday observances, grand opening ceremonies, dedication ceremonies, etc.)
- Television Studio Tour
- Radio Station Tour
- Newspaper Printing/Newsroom Tour

Competitive Activities

Junior Age Level (ages 10-13)

Judging: Not Applicable
Visual Presentation: Not Applicable
Project Achievement Day Public Speaking Contests
Mississippi State Fair Public Speaking Contest

Senior Age Level (ages 14-18)

State 4-H Congress Communications Track
Mississippi State Fair Public Speaking Contest

Opportunities are also available for participation in the American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest. Visit www.legion.org and select "Get Involved" → "Youth Programs".

<https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/oratorical-contest>

General Rules for Contests:

1. The judges score each contestant in ten areas on a ten-point scale as they observe each speech. The judges' scores are totaled to arrive at a final score. Total scores, with the highest score placing first, the next highest placing second, and so on, determine places. Ribbons are awarded by the judges based on natural breaks and clusters in the score of all the contestants.
2. In the event of a tie, the tie will be broken by naming the contestant with the highest score on the *Delivery* section as the winner. If the tie persists, the contestant scoring highest on the *Composition* section will be named the winner. If a tie persists, the two contestants will deliver their speeches again.
3. Speeches must be an original piece of work. While short, recited (15 seconds or less) quotations may be appropriate. A lengthy recitation of another's public address or literary production is not acceptable.
4. Speeches **CANNOT** resemble an illustrated talk or song. The use of visuals, such as posters, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, and props/costumes are prohibited. Any costume or accessory worn to enhance the speech will be considered a visual and thereby disqualify the participant.
5. Junior and Senior contestants whose speeches are not within the specified time limit will be assessed a 5-point penalty on the combined judges' total score.
6. Judges' decisions are final. Because of the limited times available for each contest, there are no written or verbal critiques of contestant presentations. The time available does not permit the judges to prepare detailed comments or indicate the quality of each contestant's level of performance beyond the numerical scores. However, if time permits, judges may make comments on the contest(s) as a whole at the conclusion of the contest.
7. Agents are required to approve speech topics and discourage potentially controversial ones.
8. Contestants are randomly assigned contestant numbers and should only refer to these numbers during the contest. References by name, county, or other information that discloses personal information should be avoided to keep the contest as unbiased as possible.
9. All contestants must remain in the room until all speeches have been delivered unless extenuating circumstances exist and have been discussed prior to the contest with the person in charge of the contest. Failure to remain in the audience may result in disqualification.
10. Parents, agents, and other visitors are welcome to remain in the room during the contest but no one except the judges can ask questions or make comments during the competition.
11. All cellular phones, portable CD players, and other electronic devices must be turned to the "silent" or "off" position during the contest. Failure to obey this rule may result in disqualification.
12. Regardless of age, a maximum of three (3) contestants may participate from one county in the contests at Project Achievement Days and 4-H Congress. This rule does **NOT** apply to the Mississippi State Fair competition.
13. Participants are not eligible to participate in any other contest(s) that conflicts with either the Communications Track and/or any given public speaking contest unless prior permission has been granted from the person in charge of the contest.
14. Junior I: ages 10-11. Junior II: ages 12-13



Junior Rules

Junior I: ages 10-11 and Junior II: ages 12-13

The Junior I and Junior II public speaking contests will be conducted in the morning along with other judging activities at the District 4-H Project Achievement Days. Contestants who participate in the public speaking contest may not enter another judging contest.

The contest consists of:

- Preparing and presenting a **3-5 minute** speech on a subject approved by the Extension 4-H Agent/Program Associate.
- A brief question and answer period in which judges will ask each contestant at least two questions concerning a point of clarification, his/her knowledge of the subject area, or the information source.

Miscellaneous Rules for Junior Contestants:

- The first, second, and third place winners from both the Junior I and Junior II contests will be recognized at the Awards Program.
- The first-place winners of the Junior I and Junior II contests in each district will not be eligible to compete in the same age group the following year. The first-place winner in the Junior I contest will be eligible to compete in the Junior II contest the following year should he/she meet the age requirement for Junior II competition.
- During the Mississippi State Fair competition, however, Junior contestants will be combined into one age group, and winners may compete again the following year in the same age group.

Senior Rules

Senior I: age 14-15 and Senior II: age 16-18

The Senior I and Senior II public speaking contests will be conducted concurrently as *part* of the full-day Communications Track at State 4-H Congress. Participants in the Communications Track **CANNOT** participate in another contest or activity on the same day during 4-H Congress between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Failure of public speaking contestants to participate in the full-day track (afternoon activities) will result in disqualification from the public speaking contest.

The contest consists of:

- Preparing and presenting a **5-7 minute** speech on a subject approved by the Extension Agent/Program Associate.
- A brief question and answer period in which judges will ask each contestant at least two questions concerning a point of clarification, his/her knowledge of the subject area, or the information source.

Miscellaneous Rules for Senior Contestants:

- The first, second, and third place winners from both the Senior I and Senior II contests will be recognized at the Awards Program.
- The first-place winners of the Senior I and Senior II contests in each district will not be eligible to compete in the same age group the following year. The first-place winner in the Senior I contest will be eligible to compete in the Senior II contest the following year should he/she meet the age requirement for Senior II competition.
- During the Mississippi State Fair competition, Senior contestants will be combined into one age group, and winners may compete again the following year in the same age group.