Due to teacher requests for speech topic suggestions, a list of speech titles from the past years can be found below. This list is intended to be a springboard for brainstorming and discussion. Speech titles identical to those listed, while not against the rules, could possibly cause controversy.

My School Life
Little Brothers: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly
Being a Miami Hurricane Fan in FSU Territory
The Difference Between Elementary & Middle School
My Snake Experience
How Much I Hate This Assignment
It’s a Scary, Funny World
How My Brother & Dog Are Alike
How To Get A Bigger, Badder, Older Sister
The Books
The Door Under the Pool
Fairy Tales 101
My Step-Dad & the Pittsburgh Steelers
Cutting My Hair
Why Mom & Dad Should Be On “Fear Factor”
Driving Me Crazy
My Annoying Brother
Fables, Old & New
My Crazy Cats
Oh Me, Oh My, How Fast Time Flies
Tests, Tests, Tests!
How’s America Doing George Washington?
My Missing Dog
They Need It More Than You Do
O-U-T!
My Grandma – The Muscle Lady
The Good & the Bad of a Bug’s Life
One Day on Planet Neptune
Switching Places with My Dog
Tradition
Why, Oh Why?
Sting-Ray
Dreamlands
Carb Queen
I Just Want a Medal
Here We Go Again
My Ski Trip
A America Under Attack
My Cousin’s Car
Karate
Night Read
My Hero, Martin Luther King, Jr.

My Life Changing Experience
Major Payne Compared to Major Pain
The Uniqueness of My Classmates
Adventure for Me
It Is Important to Honor Women
My Dog and Her Obsession With Chewing
My Little Sister
Bump, Set, Spike
The Fall
Critters, Gators, and Geese
My Worst Hunting Trip
Clucky for Miss USA
Plug Your Ears
The Alphabet Game
Life’s Truth
The Places He Visited
Clowns Will Eat Me
I Believe I Can Fly
Homework
How Corny is the Brady Bunch
Pimple
What Friendship Really Is
At the Beach
Exclusive Info on an Elusive Author
Alaska Trip
My Hip Hop Grandma
I’m Stuck In Munchkin Land
A World Without Boys
The Vital Importance of Choosing a Proper Golf Coach
Orlando-The Vacation Spot For Children Lincoln’s
Appearance
Full House
Never Do It Again
Chores
How Australians Live
Numismatism: Easier Done Than Said
My First Time Skiing
An Embarrassing Time
Everyone Should Own a Pet
Shop Till You Drop
Mom’s Day Out

Cleaning My Cage
My Annoying Baby Sister
The Day A Lion Got Me In Trouble
Help! I’m Trapped In My Kitty Kat’s Body
My Trip to the Big Apple
My Special Talent
Going to 6th Grade
What Makes A Legal Pad Legal
Jackie Robinson
My Life As A Greek American
Don’t Be A Fool/Stay In School
Cellar Airheads
Models of America
My Most Embarrassing Moment
The Six Foot Hamburger
Shorty
Parents
Best Friends Forever
Turkey
Why I’m Glad I’m Not an Oscar Mayer Weiner
My Weird Family
Missing: My Teeth
My First Pet
Oh No, Rusty’s at it Again!
Onion Soup
Good-bye Grandpa
The Christmas Crisis
When Parents Play Games
Taking A Walk On the Ocean Floor
What It is Like To Have a Mom That’s a Teacher
Kids vs. Grown Ups
“B” is for Brothers, “S” is for Sisters
Africa
What...What Did You Say?
Why Do Parents Always Make Excuses?
My Invention
www.sisterforsale.com
Kenya
My Mom and the Wheel of Fortune
It’s Not Easy Being Me
FRIENDLY CRITIQUE SHEET
Please check (✓) all that apply

1. The Speech Included:
   ________ Catchy introduction
   ________ Clear message
   ________ Appropriate examples to reinforce message
   ________ Ideas that fit together with clear transitions
   ________ Something of interest to me
   ________ Memorable conclusion that repeated the important part of the message

2. You did these BEST: You could IMPROVE on:
   ________ Eye Contact
   ________ Facial Expression
   ________ Gestures
   ________ Postures/Body Movement
   ________ Voice Volume
   ________ Articulation
   ________ Voice Expression
   ________ Rate of Speaking
   ________ Ease of Speaking
   ________ Eye Contact
   ________ Facial Expression
   ________ Gestures
   ________ Postures/Body Movement
   ________ Voice Volume
   ________ Articulation
   ________ Voice Expression
   ________ Rate of Speaking
   ________ Ease of Speaking

I liked your speech because ______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
Taking Charge of Your Appearance -- An Important Tool For Public Speakers

* First impressions and the overall appearance of a speaker are important. An audience often forms an impression of a speaker before any words are spoken. A number of things contribute to the appearance of a speaker including grooming, style and fit of clothing, posture, facial expression, and appearance of confidence.

* Clothing should not capture the attention of the audience to the point that they are focusing on clothes or jewelry instead of what is being said.

* The “total look” in public speaking also includes personable qualities. A pleasant facial expression, good posture, a positive attitude, and eye contact with the audience are appearance boosters.

* The following list of appearance boosters may be helpful to the public speaker:
  - Body is clean.
  - Clothes are clean.
  - Appearance is neat.
  - Nails are clean and suitably manicured.
  - Make-up is appropriate.
  - Posture is good.
  - Poise is evident.
  - Movements are easy and smooth as the speaker walks, sits, stands.
  - Expression is pleasant.
  - Positive presentation of self is made; speaker shows confidence.

* For the 4-H/Tropicana Public Speaking County Contest, speakers should dress neatly and take pride in their appearance as they are their school’s representative.

Adapted From: Tools For Public Speaking: A Guide For Leaders
4-H 971AG
The Ohio State, University 1998
Unlock Your Leadership Potential

Information Sheet

Improving your public speaking means developing your own style.

It does not mean learning to speak like a newscaster or speak like someone else. It means strengthening your ability to say what you want to say. There is no such thing as a perfect speaker or speech. Everyone can improve.

The most important thing to remember in improving your public speaking is to become your own best teacher.

Learn to analyze a presentation and you will be able to learn and improve with every speech you give. You can learn from every person you hear. If you hear someone speak and you did not even learn one thing then you have wasted an opportunity. Everyone has something to teach and something to learn.

Know your audience.

Know what they want to know. Know where they come from. Find out what interest them. If possible, know them by name and use their names in speech whenever possible. One study indicated that the sweetest sound in any language is the sound of your own name. Know your audience as well as you can.

Space and room arrangement are important to speaking.

For example, if people are in a circle, they tend to hear better. If you are speaking in a classroom it is better to stand so that your voice can project better, your presence adds to your message, and so that you can use body language.

There is no substitute for preparation and practice.

The best speakers practice each sentence in their head many, many times before they speak it. They try it over and over until the timing is just right and it begins to feel natural. Often it looks like they are sitting there thinking but really they are practicing speaking in their head.

Develop the main theme or message you want to communicate.

Often when we try to use too many themes it becomes confusing and the audience doesn’t remember any of them. It doesn’t matter if you are making a point in a class or doing a full scale speech. Develop your main theme and keep hammering away to get that message across.

Use an introduction, body and conclusion in your presentation.

All three of these should tie directly to whatever is your main theme. The goal of any speech is to help your audience understand something and having an introduction, body and conclusion helps your audience understand your theme and tie it back into everything you say.

The introduction has two purposes.

The first is to secure attention and the second is to orient the audience toward your theme. Most audiences will pay attention to any speaker at least for the first 20 seconds. In that time, you should get their attention and orient them to your talk.
PODIUM PRESENCE
Information Sheet

The conclusion also has two purposes.

The first is to summarize the speech, and the second is to motivate the audience. The summary should restate the theme in a clear manner. The motivation should focus on what you want the audience to do. For example, if you are recruiting people to come to a conference, your conclusion should end on a note that makes them want to come.

Use stories rather than statistics.

Statistics appeal to the head but stories touch the heart. Most people can’t relate to statistics. They can understand them but are not inspired by them. Everyone, however, can relate to stories.

Vary your tone.

A person who speaks in one tone is monotone. That’s what monotone means. Become a little louder at times and a little softer at others. Vary the tone. Don’t be boring.

Vary your speed.

Mono-speed is as bad as monotone. It does not matter whether you talk more quickly or more slowly. What is critical is that you vary your speed and practice your timing. Speed up some words and slow down on some. Practice will improve your timing.

There is no one right way to speak, but there are some wrong ways.

Don’t read from a script unless absolutely necessary. Also don’t repeat things. If you want to reinforce a point, say it again but in a different and creative way.

Identify and eliminate weak language from your speaking.

Weak language is any word or phrase that does not add anything to what you are saying. Any word that does not make your message stronger makes it weaker. When you analyze a sentence, cut it down to as little as you need, without cutting out the message.

The cure for stage fright is to get emotional or to laugh.

Allow yourself to feel very happy or very angry and your stage-fright will go away. Allow yourself to laugh and it will also go away. Stage fright is like fog. A good breath of emotion or laughter will blow it away.

Make eye contact with the audience.

Allow yourself to smile. Don’t be afraid to use emotion when it is real and sincere. Real emotion and feeling allows your audience to relate to you. If you let your guard down and speak from the heart, the audience will let its guard down and listen from the heart.

Build strong language into your presentation.

Strong language is language that expresses force, feeling, or fact. Examples of strong language are words that paint pictures that the listener understands. Scared is regular language, while petrified is strong language. Red is regular language, but cherry red is strong language. Strong language is more descriptive and helps your listener understand what you are expressing.
The most common example of weak language is the word “um.”

From now on, if anyone uses the word “um” for the rest of this workshop, I want everyone else to raise their hands to remind the speaker that they said “um.” Other examples of weak language are “basically,” “well,” “That is to say,” “I mean,” or “In other words.”

We use weak language as a crutch.

We say words like basically, not because they mean anything but because they help us stall until we can think of something to say. But it is better to be silent than to use weak language. Be comfortable with silence.

Like anything else, public speaking is only worth doing if it is worth doing well.

No matter what else you learn, you must become your own best teacher. Learn to analyze every speech you hear. Look for the items from the 19 points already shared and see which speakers are using them and what their effect is. Become your own best teacher and you will always improve.
Public Speaking
All You Need to Know for a Great Speech

Written by: Alexander L Diaz, Youth Development 4-H Agent, Miami-Dade County

What is Public Speaking?
Public speaking is the process of speaking to a group of people in a structured, deliberate manner intended to inform, influence or entertain.

It might be scary if you don't know
I know that public speaking might be a little scary, so I’ll help you overcome this fear by teaching you everything you will need to know.

Why is Public Speaking Important?
Why do you think public speaking is important? 1) it’s a tool needed for effective leadership; 2) teaches us to speak our mind in an organized understandable manner. Plus, did you know that jobs that involve public speaking pay much more! Just think of all the famous leaders, and you will realize that they all have one thing in common, great public speaking skills.
First Step: Select a Topic

The first step in preparing a speech is to select a topic that interest you. Create a list of topics that you would like to talk about, look into current event topics by searching the internet.

Second Step: Do Research

Once you have decided on a topic, you must do research on that topic. The internet is a great place to start, and don't forget the library as well. Another cool way to learn about a topic is by conducting interviews of those who know about your topic. Don’t forget to take notes, and to write down facts that you can use for your speech.

Third Step: Think

Gather all the information you have researched, and then think and analyze all the information. Develop a way to present your findings. This is the time to figure out if you want to give an informative speech on a topic, or persuasive speech (meaning you will try to change your audiences’ opinion by providing them your viewpoint backed up by facts.) Also, think about the audience you intend to give your speech to, you do not want to give a highly complicated speech to a kindergarten class.

Fourth Step: Write It Out!

Once you have gathered your thoughts you are ready to write out your speech. You will need three parts: 1) your introduction (opening section that grabs your reader); 2) your body (You develop your message within the body using your viewpoint based on facts); 3) conclusion (this section summarizes your speech).
Fifth Step: Practice Makes Perfect

It is important to practice your speech, this will make you feel relaxed when you give the speech in front of your audience. When practicing your speech don’t try to memorize your speech. You will sound very boring, and not natural. You should give your speech like you are talking to a friend. If you feel that you will forget key points in your speech, it is ok for you to have note cards. The more you practice your speech the better you will get at it.

Six Step: Just Do It

Now you are ready to give your speech in front of your audience, its your time to shine. Don’t speak too low, or too loud. Act cool, don't rock back and forth, or fidget. Look at your audience, you need to have your audience engaged. Show enthusiasm, don’t look bored. If you forget something, don't say “ummmm or ahhh” simply pause and collect your thoughts.

Ways People Judge Speakers:

- Content of Speech
  - Choice of Material

- Organization of Material

- Use of Language

- Projection to Audience
  - Did speaker establish bond with audience

- Pronunciation & Articulation
4-H/Tropicana Public Speaking Contest

The Miami-Dade County 4-H/ Tropicana Public Speaking Program is an annual educational and competitive event for 4th and 5th graders in after school programs or in schools throughout the county. Funded by Tropicana Products and organized by the Miami-Dade County 4-H Program, its aim is to introduce students to the importance of public speaking, and to teach them the basics of good speaking at a younger age than might otherwise be possible.

The program is structured for students to create, write, and present short speeches. Tropicana provides the educational materials for teachers and educators to present a series of prepared lessons on public speaking. Each classroom or each activity leader in an after school program selects one outstanding student to compete in their school grade level competition. The winners from the 4th & 5th grade level competition are sent to the county competition to represent their school or after school program. Ribbons, medallions and plaques for finalists, as well as certificates of participation for all students are provided by Tropicana.

The University of Florida/Miami-Dade 4-H extension office is here to help and guide educators through the competition.

All materials, curriculum, plaques, ribbons, certificates and trophies are completely free.

If you are an educator or a teacher and would like to participate, please feel free to contact the extension office.

Contact:
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***If Interested in 4-H educational curriculum, Volunteering, or 4-H clubs, please contact: 305-592-8044, http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu/4h
Created By: Alexander Diaz
SKILL SHEET:
Overcoming Stage Nerves

The largest barrier to learning to speak effectively in front of a group is the fear that something terrible will happen. Some people who dread public speaking are afraid because they've had poor first experiences and were unprepared to handle the situation. But for most people it’s the lack of practice or opportunities to speak that keeps them from feeling like capable public speakers.

It is important to recognize the difference between a real phobia and just a bad case of stage nerves (also called “stage fright“). The symptoms of stage nerves could be quite severe, but should lessen as you become a more experienced presenter. You don’t have to lose your fear before you can do a good job. You can learn the mechanics of overcoming fear, and through repetition you’ll gain confidence.

If you get nervous before crowds, remember that a little nervous energy is absolutely necessary to give you that excited spark that the audience can share. Even very experienced speakers and actors feel “butterflies” before going on stage because they all want to give their best performances. Only speakers who don’t care don’t feel anything.

Tips for Reducing Stage Nerves

To reduce your stage nerves and work toward becoming a confident speaker, follow these tips:

• Be prepared. A well-planned and well-rehearsed talk will sound clear and organized and seem natural to deliver.
• Only speak about things you know well or that interest you, so you feel confident you have something to offer the audience.
• Complete the “Let’s Talk About Nerves” activity found on page 48 to help you identify your anxiety symptoms. Then learn to prepare for and eventually overcome them.
• If you get nervous speaking in front of strangers, try to chat with a few members of the audience before you have to give your speech. This helps establish contact and make you feel as though you’re on friendly ground.
• Eat light before a presentation.
• Avoid carbonated beverages, which may cause stomach upset or uncomfortable gas. Dairy products may coat the mouth and throat, and also may cause stomach upset for some people.
• Practice giving your presentation several ways so you’re comfortable making last-minute adjustments.
• Learn a quick stress-reducing routine for relaxing your neck, shoulder and facial muscles just before giving your talk.
• Visualize yourself succeeding and enjoy the applause!