



## Judging 4-H Presentations Using PowerPoint

When thinking of PowerPoint, think of it in terms of posters that are enlarged and projected on the wall. Although computer presentation programs provide limitless numbers of options, the way they are used can make the difference between an effective presentation and a distracting, hard to understand presentation.

An important consideration for any presentation is that the 4-H member is the most important part of the presentation. The computer presentation is used to enhance whatever the 4-H member is saying.

### Tips for an Effective Presentation

#### Presence

*Position of presenter relative to the screen.* The 4-H member should stand to the side of the screen (ideally on the left of the screen as you are looking at them). They should be facing the audience.

The presenter has the same image on the computer that is projected onto the screen. Therefore, the presenter should not be turning to read or look at the images projected on the screen. Constantly doing this could impact scores for *Voice Projection* and *Eye Contact* under the *Presence* category. A presenter looking only at their computer screen is similar to always looking at note cards and would affect *Voice Projection* and *Eye Contact* scores as well.

#### Presentation

There are several elements that are part of a computer presentation that can affect the effectiveness of the presentation. Poor use of any of these elements could affect the *Use of visual aids, charts, posters* score. Things to look for are listed below.

#### Text

- *Use the 6 X 6 rule.* This rule states that there should be no more than six lines on a slide and there should not be more than six words in each line.
- *Use easy to read fonts.* While there are lots of different fonts to use, basic fonts are easier to read.
- *Limit font types and sizes.* The sizes of the fonts in a presentation should be consistent throughout. That means all the titles on each slide should be the same font size and the body of the slide text should be the same size.
- *Avoid all caps.* Text in all capital letters is harder to read than text that has both upper and lower case letters.
- *Double check spelling.* The presenter needs to double check spelling beyond just using spell check.

#### Color

- *Keep it simple.* Use a basic set of colors for the presentation.
- *Remember to provide contrast.* There should be contrast in the colors in the presentation, especially between the text and the background.



## *Backgrounds (Template)*

- *Select backgrounds to enhance presentation.* The background or template should evoke the mood or feeling of the presentation and be appropriate for the topic.
- *Avoid clutter.* Many templates have some sort of border or image incorporated in the design. This can look cluttered if text or graphics cover or overlap part of the background.
- *Be consistent.* Ideally, the same background should be used throughout the presentation. At most, a different background can be used for each part of the presentation. However, there should not be a different background on each slide.
- *Be sure text contrasts with background.*

## *Graphics*

- *Use graphics to make the message clearer.* A graphic should support the presentation and make the message clearer. If the graphic does not support the message, it should not be included.

## *Transitions and Animations*

Transitions are how each slide comes onto the screen. Animations are how the text and graphics come onto and leave the screen. There are lots of ways that slides can come onto the screen. Also, words and graphics can fly in from almost anywhere. Some tips for transitions and animations include the following.

- *Be consistent.* Use the same type of transitions throughout the presentation. In general, the best slide transition is one that the audience does not even know happened.
- *Make them natural.* An animation that feels natural will keep the audience listening rather than trying to figure out where the next set of words will come from. Natural animations: "Drop from above" and "Appear from left."
- *Use for emphasis.* When emphasizing a point, it is appropriate to add a fancy animation.

## *Sound*

Sounds tend to distract from the presenter. Since the audience should be listening to the presenter, it is better just to avoid using sounds.

## Summary

Remember, the PowerPoint type program should be supporting the information being presented by the 4-H member. If at the end of the presentation, the audience was distracted by too many words on the screen or text and objects flying in from everywhere, the presentation was not effectively supporting the speaker. But, by remembering these basic tips, PowerPoint type programs can enhance a 4-H presentation.

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***For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit [www.nj4h.rutgers.edu](http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu).***

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