



4-H Communications Contests Rules and Guidelines

The contests will take place on Saturday, June 6th from around 1:30 p.m. to approximately 3:30 p.m. at the Rutgers Academic Building at 15 Seminary Pl., New Brunswick, NJ.

NJ State 4-H Public Presentations will be held from 11:00 a.m. to approximately 12:30/1:00 p.m., followed by a short break to allow participants to eat lunch (lunch will NOT be provided). The Communications Contests will begin at 1:30 p.m. after the break.

Overall

1. Pre-registration is required by May 22.
2. Participants must:
 - Be registered in ZSuite as a 4-H member for 2025-2026.
 - Be a member in good standing with their clubs.
 - Have earned a blue ribbon at their county-level presentation event.
3. Participants may enter either one or both communications contests.
4. Participants should plan on staying through the awards presentations.
5. Rubrics will be provided to all participants upon registration.
6. The Danish System of awards will be utilized.

Mock Interview Contest Format

Participants will engage in mock job interviews with experienced judges, answering questions on a variety of topics. The mock interview contest will allow participants to practice the important communication skills that are unique to interviewing, and strengthen their skills in this area, as well as build confidence.

1. Youth will select one of three fictional jobs at the point of their registration for the event.
 - Barista at a local coffee shop
 - Counselor at a youth summer day camp
 - Assistant to the event planner for your local 4-H office
 - *NOTE: These are the 2025 event fictional job options. 2026 event options will be updated soon.*
2. Youth will prepare a short resume of their current relevant experience and submit it before the event. Youth should also bring a copy of the resume to the interview.
3. The interview should take 5-10 minutes. The interviewer can use the following questions or tailor some to the submitted resume.
 - What made you apply for this job?
 - What are your greatest strengths?



- Tell me about your previous experience: who have you worked for and for how long?
 - How did you like your last employer?
 - What are your major weaknesses?
 - Where do you hope to be 10 years from now?
 - What are the most satisfying and frustrating aspects of your current job or school experience?
 - What would you do to improve our company and how?
 - How do you work under pressure?
 - Do you have any questions about the job or our company?
4. Participants will be provided with a copy of the rubric before the event.

Extemporaneous Speech Contest Format

Extemporaneous speaking is a valuable skill for 4-H youth in New Jersey, as it fosters critical thinking, adaptability, and effective communication. This form of speech encourages participants to think on their feet, articulate their thoughts clearly, and engage with their audience dynamically and spontaneously. By incorporating extemporaneous speaking into 4-H programs, New Jersey youth are equipped with essential life skills that will serve them well in various aspects of their lives. This practice not only prepares them for future leadership roles but also empowers them to become effective communicators and critical thinkers.

1. Participants report to the waiting area at the time and place stated in the event program.
2. The order of participants will be selected at random. Each participant draws three cards, each containing one topic, from a box and selects one topic from the three on which to speak. The cards with the unused topics are returned to the box.
3. Preparation
 - a. After having selected a topic, the first participant enters a preparation room separate from the speech delivery room and is given fifteen minutes to prepare a speech.
 - b. Each speech must be the result of the participant's own effort.
 - c. Once the first participant enters the presentation room, the second participant enters the preparation room and begins their 15 minutes of speech preparation.
 - d. Each speech must be 3-5 minutes.
 - e. Notes:
 - I. No reference materials or electronic devices may be used or brought to the preparation room.
 - II. Any notes for speaking must be written during the 15-minute preparation period.
 - III. Each participant will be provided a maximum of three 3" x 5" blank notecards and a writing implement.
 - IV. Although participants are permitted to use notes when speaking, it should be noted that deductions in scoring could be made for this practice if the use of notes detracts from the effectiveness of the speech.

4. The event coordinator introduces each participant according to the order in which the participants are selected. The topic card selected by the participant is given to the judges.
5. Time commences when the speaker begins talking and concludes at the end of the speech.
 - a. The timekeeper visually notifies the speaker of the time remaining by using four separate cards.
 - b. Each of the four cards has a “time remaining in minutes” number on it (3, 1, ½, and 0), and each is shown in descending order to the participant by the timekeeper during the speech.
 - c. Participants will be penalized one point per ten seconds for speaking over five minutes or under three minutes.
6. Judges independently evaluate each speech.
7. Observers
 - a. Observers are not allowed in the waiting or preparation rooms, although they are allowed to sit in the audience of the performance.
 - b. Talking or gesturing is not permitted.
 - c. Observers are not allowed to enter or leave during a speech.
 - d. There is no applause until the speech has concluded.
8. Potential Topics
 - a. Name three things you have learned in 4-H that you probably would not have learned elsewhere.
 - b. When you have been disappointed by a ribbon a judge has given you what did you do about it?
 - c. Explain how 4-H has helped you identify your personal strengths.
 - d. What skills have you learned in 4-H to create a community that encourages youth and adults to work together?
 - e. An intermediate-aged 4-H'er informs you that he or she is going to quit 4-H. As a senior 4-H'er and a role model, what would you tell that 4-H'er to encourage him or her to continue to participate in 4-H?
 - f. I admire my 4-H leader because...
 - g. I am a 4-H member because...
 - h. How has 4-H helped your family?
 - i. What have your 4-H projects taught you?
 - j. Name one of your 4-H role models and why?
 - k. To “Make The Best Better” is the 4-H motto. How does this statement relate to your life?
 - l. The most rewarding feeling I have gained from being involved with 4-H is...
 - m. 4-H has helped me to develop career goals by...
 - n. I have gained leadership responsibility from 4-H by...
 - o. What lifetime skills have your 4-H projects taught you?
9. Participants will be provided with a copy of the rubric prior to the event.