

# HAVE I GOT A STORY!



**Storytelling** is one of our oldest traditions. It is a way to pass on history and to help us understand our world. Just as importantly, storytelling fulfills our need to entertain and to be entertained.

## Disqualification of Entry

- Youth are cautioned that language, gestures, and subject matter should be appropriate for the age level and the audience. Disqualification may occur if the facilitator and the event review committee consider the material inappropriate.
- Senior Level members not completing and submitting a community service report.

## What You Will Do in Have I Got a Story!

- Demonstrate your ability to speak before an audience.
- Share your thoughts and feelings.
- Entertain others.
- Build your confidence.
- Provide a community service that is enjoyable and meaningful.

## What You Will Learn

- How to choose a story that fits your audience.
- How to make decisions in presenting your story.
- How to deliver your story before a live audience.
- How to interpret an existing story or create a new story.

## Deductions of Entry

- Deductions will be made for exceeding the time limit.

## LEVELS OF COMPETITION

For details on eligibility, see the General Event Policy.

### Junior Level I:

9 to 11 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year (compete only at local and regional level).

### Intermediate:

12 to 13 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year (compete only at local and regional level).

### Senior Level I:

14 to 15 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year.

### Senior Level II:

16 to 18 years old on December 31 of the current calendar year.

Refer to the [Alabama 4-H Competitive Events webpage](#) to review the General Contest Policy and the Age & Eligibility Chart.

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## The Rules for Have I Got a Story!

1. Stories may be told individually or told in tandem by two people. Teams and individuals will be judged in the same event.
2. In Junior/Intermediate events, stories should be 2 to 4 minutes for individuals and 4 to 6 minutes for two people.
3. In Senior events, stories should be 8 to 10 minutes for individuals and 10 to 12 minutes for two people.
4. For Seniors, an additional 2 minutes should be used to briefly tell about your service component. The judges will have questions that are not included in your time limits.
5. Seniors must complete a Community Service Report.
6. Microphones will not be used, so storytellers can move around.
7. Your story must be told without notes.
8. You may use simple props that do not distract from your telling of the story.
9. Your story should be something you learned to tell this year.
10. Try to tell a story that has not been used in 4-H before.
11. Costumes are acceptable, but are not required.
12. Your story may come directly from a book or another source, it may be adapted, or it may be your own original story.
13. For Senior events, there must be a community service component such as telling your story to youth or at a community event.

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Alabama 4-H  
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

## TELLING YOUR STORY

1. Practice introducing your story. Figure out a good way to introduce yourself.
2. Pause before you begin. Look at your audience and make sure you have their attention. Think of the first line of your story, take a deep breath, release it, and begin your story.
3. Speak clearly and pronounce words correctly.
4. It is important to be able to see everyone and for everyone to be able to see you. When you look at your audience, you involve them in your story. If you look mostly at the floor or ceiling, the audience might think that you are afraid of them or not interested in them. Remember you want to share your story with the audience.
5. It is important to know your story well enough to be able to tell it smoothly, without stumbling over words or forgetting important parts of the story. If you do forget your story, don't panic. Pause, picture where you are in the story, and pick it up again.
6. Tell your story at a comfortable pace, not too fast or not too slow. Remember, a common fault of storytellers is telling the story too fast. Use appropriate pauses to provide a feeling of suspense and anticipation.
7. Everyone feels nervous. Feel your feet on the ground. It helps to take a deep breath. They are on your side and are looking forward to hearing what you have to say. Think of the audience as your best friend.
8. If you use gestures, they should feel comfortable to you and make your telling of the story better.
9. Project your voice so the person in the last row can hear you.
10. Use your voice to help express your story. For example, use it to show surprise, sadness, happiness, or disappointment.
11. Try to hold the audience's attention throughout the story. A good storyteller can make the audience see what is happening.
12. Be dynamic! Put yourself into the telling!

## Community Service

Telling a great story, showcasing projects at a community library, speaking at the local nursing home, or organizing a community cooking or a building blocks workshop are great opportunities to serve others. Serving others helps build your academic skills, learn civic responsibility, and develop leadership. It may also give you a good opportunity to meet new people, publicize 4-H, and practice your communication skills. Alabama 4-H is now requiring all Senior Level 4-H members to add a community service component to all 4-H Competitive Events. Each Senior Level 4-H member will have to complete the 4-H Community Service Report as a part of their project. 4-H members will be disqualified if the community service report is not included.

It is important that you decide what service you can provide, not have a parent or 4-H leader make this decision for you. Groups of young people are encouraged to work together to discover how they can serve their community.