

SPEAK UP, ALABAMA



Alabama 4-H
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Do you want to stand up for what you believe? Do you want to be able to inspire or educate people on important issues? Well, the two Speak Up, Alabama events are the 4-H events for you!

Speak Up, Alabama helps build your leadership, citizenship, and communications skills. 4-H public speaking events have had a powerful effect on many of Alabama's civic and business leaders—lawyers, corporate presidents, religious leaders, political leaders, and Extension staff.

What You Will Do in Speak Up, Alabama

- Build your skills as an impressive public speaker.
- Express yourself clearly and persuasively.
- Become more aware of challenges and opportunities facing young people, families, and communities.

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

Persuasive Public Speaking is all about trying to change your audience's attitudes and ways of thinking. If you want youth to start exercising more, then you persuade them. If you want your community to build a skate park, then you'll need to persuade people.

Informative Public Speaking is about the facts. If you think that Rosa Parks was an interesting person, then tell your audience about her. If you think that technology is changing Alabama, inform your audience about those changes.

What You Will Learn

- Choose a topic that fits your audience.
- Research a timely and interesting subject.
- Write an effective speech.
- Deliver your speech before a live audience.

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.

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The Rules for Speak Up, Alabama

1. Individual entry only. Teams are not appropriate.
2. Your speech must be new and original. You cannot copy it directly from an existing speech, news article, or anything that someone else has written or that you have written before the current 4-H year.
3. Visual aids, costumes, and props are not allowed.
4. The speech should be age appropriate.
5. Junior/Intermediate speeches must be between 3 and 5 minutes.
6. Senior speeches must be between 5 and 8 minutes.
7. Participants will present the facilitator of the event three copies of their speech with name and county listed.
8. You may use notes, but you may not read your speech.
9. Your topic must explore the challenges and opportunities of youth, family, and society.
10. When you win Persuasive Speaking at Senior Level I, you can't compete in Level I Persuasive Speaking again. You can compete in Informative Speaking at that level.
11. When you win at Senior Level II in Persuasive Speaking, you can't compete in Persuasive Speaking again. You can compete in Informative Speaking.
12. When you win Informative Speaking at Senior Level I, you can't compete in Level I Informative Speaking again. You can compete in Persuasive Speaking at that level.
13. When you win Informative Speaking at Senior Level II, you can't compete in Informative Speaking again. You can compete in Persuasive Speaking.

Disqualification of Entry

- Using props, visual aids, or costumes.
- Not completing and submitting a community service report (Senior Level I and II only)

Deduction of Entry

- Exceeding the time limit.
- Not providing three copies of the speech.

Identification of Entry

Name, county, and level of participation should be displayed with each entry. An introduction at the beginning of your time would be appropriate.

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Selecting a Topic

Don't wait until the last minute to decide on a topic. Start early so that you can get ideas from books, the Internet, newspapers, and magazines. Talk about ideas with other people.

Make a list of topics you are considering. Give them the following test:

- Does the topic explore a challenge or opportunity faced by youth, families, and society?
- Am I really interested in it?
- Will I be able to find information on it?
- Can the topic be well covered in the time allowed?
- Select the topic you feel will work best and begin to organize your thoughts. Limit the scope of your talk so that it can be covered in the time available.

Organization

Your presentation should include the following:

A. Introduction

The introduction has two objectives:

- to gain your audience's attention
- to inform the audience of the purpose of your speech and let them know why they should be concerned about the subject.

To gain attention and interest, you might begin with the following:

- Challenging your audience with a question.
- Giving a startling statement, but not something offensive.
- Recounting a personal experience or telling a story.
- Using an appropriate poem or quote.

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Relate your opening to the audience and to what you are going to say.

Good speakers don't begin with "Good morning. My name is. . ." because that's not interesting. Your introduction sets the stage for the speech, so you may want to write this section last. Your introduction should take up about one-tenth of the total time of your speech.

B. Body

The body is where you support your main points, so it needs to be well organized. Limit yourself to three to five main points.

The material supporting main points may be classified into four general types: testimony, statistics, examples, and analogies.

- **Testimony:** The expression of an opinion on a topic by any person. (John Smith says that walking an hour a day has made him healthier, happier, and smarter.)
- **Statistics:** Factual numbers provided by a university, government agency, or other reliable source. (According to the 2004 National Kids Count Data Book, Alabama ranks 47th out of the 50 states in overall child well-being.)
- **Examples:** Include personal experiences, interviews with knowledgeable people, and library resources. (During my interview with Mayor Jones, the mayor stated that bike paths have significantly reduced traffic jams in our town.)
- **Analogy:** A type of reasoning that suggests that if two things are alike in ways that you know about, they are probably alike in a way that you don't recognize. (Catfish and chicken are tasty and are good sources of protein, therefore they can both produce agricultural income.)

C. Conclusion

The conclusion is the part that the audience will remember most. It should be no longer than your introduction (about ten percent of the total speech). It summarizes your main points and gives your audience one more chance to hear what you have to say. Your conclusion may motivate your audience to action or just provide a smooth ending. Remember that you want your speech to come to an obvious conclusion, instead of leaving the audience wondering if you have finished.

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Outline

A written outline helps you organize your thoughts. Here is a simple outline that you can change to fit your needs.

I. Introduction

- A. Opening phrases to get audience's attention.
- B. State subject or purpose and why the audience should be concerned.

II. Body

- A. Main point
- B. Main point
- C. Main point
 - 1. subpoint
 - a. detail
 - b. detail
 - 2. subpoint

III. Conclusion

- A. Summary of main points
- B. Closing statement

Organization

Four common ways of organizing your speech are: logical, topical, spatial, and chronological.

- A. **Logical:** You give the problem and then present possible solutions. (Problem: Methamphetamine use in Alabama is destroying lives. Solution: Reduce access to some over-the-counter cold medicines used in making the drug.)
- B. **Topical:** Divide the speech into general areas, which become main headings. (The 4-H clover represents head, hands, heart, and health. Each leaf represents a personal characteristic that is important in 4-H).
- C. **Spatial:** Use this plan when your subject involves places or objects that fit into a physical arrangement. (When visiting the Guggenheim Museum, you are awed by the great circling stairway. Off the stairs are a series of exhibit rooms....)
- D. **Chronological:** The time order in which events took place. (The first man in space was Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin. The first American in space was Alan Shepherd.)

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Tips for Writing Your Speech

- Use your own words; if your speech sounds the way you normally talk, then your speech sounds more natural.
- Try not to use long sentences. They are harder to follow.
- Simplify main points so that the audience can understand and remember them.
- Use examples, stories, dialogue, or anything to help your audience visualize what you are telling them.
- Avoid phrases that are used all the time (“good as gold,” “big as a house,” “red as a beet”) and words that are hard to pronounce.

Before You Speak

- The audience will notice you as soon as you start to walk to the front.
- Be well-groomed and appropriately dressed.
- Be an attentive listener until it is your turn to speak.
- Rise and walk naturally to the front of the room.
- Establish eye contact with your audience and smile. Let them know that you have a friendly feeling toward them.
- Remember to breathe.
- Pause before beginning to speak. Don’t hurry, and be confident.
- Still remember to breathe.
- If right-handed, stand with your right foot about one inch ahead of your left with your feet two to four inches apart. If left-handed, reverse. This allows you to step forward easily and keeps you steady.
- Stand straight with your arms at your sides until you are ready to gesture.
- Use good posture at all times.

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Delivery

A. Vocal Expression

1. **Voice Quality:** clear, steady, rich, and full.
2. **Force of Speaking:** volume and intensity. Your voice should vary according to what you are saying to avoid monotony. It should be pleasant and loud enough to be heard.
3. **Rate of Speech:** speed at which you speak. Your rate will change with the effect you want to give. By slowing down, you can think ahead and give the audience a chance to absorb what you are saying. Pauses can be used effectively. But don't let them appear to be memory problems.
4. **Enthusiasm:** You believe in your topic and you are interested in what you have to say.

B. Enunciation and Articulation

1. Pronounce all words so that the audience hears them.
2. Look up words if you are not sure of their pronunciation.
3. Most of us have a tendency to slur words together, but overprecision is undesirable too.

C. Breathing

Relax. Breathe deeply and evenly and you can overcome a little of your nervousness and feel more comfortable.

D. Gestures

Your body actions tell your thoughts almost as effectively as words. How you feel is always communicated to the audience through your body language. To convey your ideas, use your whole body. Use facial expressions and direct eye contact.

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You should feel that a gesture, such as a pointed finger or a clenched fist, is necessary to express your idea. Work toward a natural look as you make gestures and movements to emphasize points.

E. Stage Fright

It is only natural to be fearful. You care what the audience thinks of you and everyone is looking at you. Stage fright is a physical and mental fear that causes your heart to quicken because you are breathing faster. Relax. Your audience wishes you well and wants you to do a good job!

Breathe slowly and deeply, and let your muscles relax. Even professional actors worry if they are not a little nervous before going on stage. They use this tension to their advantage so they won't sound dull and listless.

Some tips to overcome your nervousness:

- Practice! Practice! Practice!
- Pause before your start.
- Be confident!

As you gain experience, you will gain self-confidence. It will become easier to speak because you know that you can handle it.

F. Use of Notes

Using notes is allowed, but not encouraged. If you feel you need notes, try putting your outline on a card. You can then refer to it, but do not read it. Do not gesture with your cards, but don't try to hide them either. If you forget what you wanted to say next, you can refer to the main points and easily recover. Don't read from a manuscript.

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G. Using a Microphone

When speaking to a large audience, you may need a microphone.

- Before the speech, check the microphone by talking into it to see if the height and volume are correct.
- Speak directly into the mic (about four to eight inches away) but do not lean toward it or away from it.
- Use a lapel mic if possible. This allows you to move around more.
- Don't rustle papers. Sounds will be magnified.

H. Acknowledging Your Sources

When using materials written or spoken by someone else, be sure you acknowledge the source. For instance, a poem, quote, or passage from a book can be used as long as you tell who the author is. Using someone else's exact words and pretending that they are your own is called plagiarism.

You should also be able to back up what you say. If you state that there are 150,000 mockingbirds in Alabama, you should tell the source of your information. You want to be believable, a person to be trusted for accurate information. One of the most common faults is failing to acknowledge sources or to make statements of fact without proper evidence of research.

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Career Connections

Skills that are developed through this project have direct connections to many exciting and rewarding careers. Think of all the people who speak in public: business and political leaders are often called upon to make public presentations; educators talk in front of the classroom; attorneys speak before the court; entertainers, such as actors and athletes, speak before cameras or before live audiences; Extension staff speak before youth and adult audiences.

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.