

MARYLAND 4-H COMMUNICATION CONTEST

General Rules:

1. The contest consists of four categories:

- **Prepared Speech**
- **Extemporaneous Speech**
- **Radio Spot**
- **Interpretations**

In all categories, speeches are given by individuals, not teams.

2. Each of the above categories includes three age groups:

- **Junior, 8-10**
- **Intermediate, 11-13**
- **Senior, 14-18**

Ages are as of January 1 of the current year.

3. Visual aids, including posters, are not permitted. Appropriate gestures are encouraged. For **Dramatic Interpretations**, the contestant may choose to wear a costume and opt to sit for the presentation. Podium use is optional, but judges may deduct points for excessive movement or hand gestures that distract.

4. At the State Contest, a contestant may only compete in one category in a given year. If a contestant wins more than one category at the County Contest, they must choose which category to compete in at the State Contest.

5. **State Champions** may not enter the same category and age group a second time.

6. The names of county champions in each category will be sent to the State 4-H Office by April 1st.

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Category-Specific Rules

Prepared Speech

Time limits -- Juniors: 3 to 5 minutes, Intermediates and Seniors: 4 to 6 minutes. Judges may deduct points for presentations not meeting or exceeding time limits.

Contestants may speak on any topic. It may be wise to discuss topics that could be considered controversial with your 4-H leader or educator before the contest. The Speech may be written for a specific audience, such as a 4-H club, PTA, Rotary Club, etc. Note cards containing a key word outline are permitted. Only Juniors may use a complete script. **Memorization is not encouraged.** Note cards are to be given to the judges at the end of the speech.

Contestants should not introduce themselves as part of the presentation. This will be done by an MC or room Host/Hostess.

Judges may ask questions of contestants. Due to time constraints, questioning should be limited to two or three minutes per speaker.

Extemporaneous Speech

Time limits – Juniors and Intermediates: 2 to 3 minutes Seniors: 3 to 5 minutes. Judges may deduct points for presentations not meeting or exceeding time limits.

Extemporaneous speakers will draw three topics and choose one topic for their speech. Juniors and Intermediates may have up to 30 minutes and Seniors up to 15 minutes to prepare their talks. Contestants may use one side of up to four, or both sides of up to two, 5 x 8 inch note cards for their key word outline. Extemporaneous speakers will be shown time cards at correctly timed intervals indicating "1 MINUTE", "30 SECONDS", AND "STOP".

Contestants should not introduce themselves as part of their presentation. This will be done by an MC or room Host/Hostess.

Judges may ask questions of contestants. Due to time constraints, questioning should be limited to two or three minutes per speaker.

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Category-Specific Rules

Radio Spots

Time limits -- Radio Spots should be exactly 30 seconds in length and may include a musical or sound effect introduction and/or background, but may not include a spoken introduction or “tag” by anyone other than the contestant. If music or a sound effect is used, the contestant must provide and operate the sound-making device. Judges may deduct points for presentations not meeting or exceeding time limits.

The **contestant must provide a complete written script** (including notations about music/sound effects) to the timekeeper to aid in timing accuracy. Musical/sound effect introductions and endings are considered to be a part of the radio spot and must not cause the 30 second time limit to be exceeded. The spot should **relate to 4H, be original, and be created by the contestant**. Questions will not be asked by judges in the Radio Spot category.

Interpretations

Time limits – Juniors: 1 ½ to 3 minutes, Intermediates: 2 to 4 minutes, Seniors: 3 to 5 minutes.

The speaker is permitted to speak or interpret in the language of their choice. If using language other than spoken English, the participant must inform the Extension Office a minimum of 10 working days before the event to ensure appropriately qualified judges are available.

Contestants should not introduce themselves as part of their presentation. This will be done by an MC or room Host/Hostess.

Judges may ask questions of contestants. Due to time constraints, questioning should be limited to two or three minutes per speaker.

Interpretations are to be memorized oral interpretations or a selection of narratives from a given work. Permitted works include plays or books, but should not come from the script of a television show or be from an unpublished source. Interpretations may be from these three types:

Dramatic

Poetry

Humorous

Contestants are to bring two (2) copies of the script including a complete reference citation. Language other than English must be translated in these documents.