California 4-H Presentations: 2026 Impromptu Speech Categories

Impromptu speaking involves speeches that the speaker has developed themselves at Presentation Events within a *three-minute preparation* time. One at a time, the speakers will randomly draw a piece of paper with a prompt on it. Prompts will be developed from the pre-announced categories outlined here, impromptu speech will be selected at random from any category and youth are unable to choose a specific category. From the time that the speaker is given the prompt, they will have three minutes to prepare a speech. Please refer to the Impromptu Speech category description on page 21 of the [UC 4-H Presentation Manual](#).

Senior Categories (14-19 years old)

Civic Engagement: Democratic Process

Democracy consists of a political system for choosing elected representatives through free and fair elections; the active participation of the people; protection of human rights; and a rule of law, in which the laws apply equally to all people. The democratic process involves voting for leaders to represent citizens and their ideas; and sometimes participating as an elected representative.

Consider how young people can play a role in strengthening democracy, even before they are old enough to vote. Reflect on the importance of understanding different perspectives and maintaining respectful civil discourse when discussing candidates or community issues. Think about how participation in elections and civic engagement can bring about positive change in your community. The point of this topic is to be reflective of civic engagement and democracy rather than personal political views or affiliations. Remember, 4-H presentations must be non-partisan.

Potential prompts: How can respectful discussions about candidates or ballot issues strengthen democracy and help people make more informed choices? What does voting mean to you, and how do elections create opportunities for positive community change? How does the 4-H program encourage youth to practice democracy through participation, leadership, and decision-making?

Healthy Living: Mindfulness - Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage our own emotions, as well as to empathize with and respond appropriately to the emotions of others. Mindfulness, being aware and present in the moment, supports emotional intelligence by helping individuals pause, reflect, and make thoughtful choices rather than reacting impulsively. Developing emotional intelligence strengthens relationships, builds self-confidence, and enhances leadership and teamwork skills.

Consider how practicing mindfulness can help you better understand your emotions and respond with empathy and kindness. Reflect on how emotional awareness can improve communication and collaboration in groups. Think about how 4-H activities can provide opportunities to practice mindfulness and build emotional intelligence through teamwork, leadership, and community service.

Potential prompts: How can mindfulness help you recognize and manage your emotions? Why is empathy an important part of emotional intelligence? How can emotional intelligence make you a better team member or leader? How can 4-H activities help youth develop mindfulness and emotional awareness?

Leadership: Inspiring Others

An effective leader fosters collaboration by building trusting relationships toward a common vision and purpose. Leaders strengthen others through affirmations and constructive feedback, helping their teams develop a sense of belonging, competence, and confidence. Leadership in 4-H provides opportunities to practice communication, teamwork, and problem-solving while inspiring others to achieve shared goals.

Consider how leaders can influence positive change within their clubs, communities, or beyond. Reflect on the importance of trust, empathy, and encouragement in motivating others. Think about how leadership in 4-H helps youth grow personally while supporting their peers' success.

Potential prompts: How can a leader build trust and cooperation among team members? Why is it important for leaders to help others become confident and capable? How does 4-H provide opportunities to practice and strengthen leadership skills? What does being an inspiring leader mean to you?

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM): Earth and Space Science

Earth and space science explores the study of the Earth, the solar system, and the broader universe, including the stars, planets, and their formation and history. This field helps us understand how Earth's systems interact and how human innovation has expanded our knowledge of space. Through scientific observation, technology, and engineering, we continue to learn more about the universe and our planet's place within it.

Consider how exploration and scientific discovery deepen our understanding of Earth and its relationship with the solar system. Reflect on the role of technology and engineering in studying space and protecting Earth's systems. Think about how youth can contribute to solving challenges related to the environment, space exploration, and sustainability.

Potential prompts: What is the relationship between the Earth, sun, and moon, and how does it affect life on our planet? How have engineering and technology helped humans explore the solar system? How can 4-H promote understanding of how human activities impact Earth's systems and climate? Why is it important for youth to study Earth and space science?

Intermediate Categories (11-13 years old)

Cultural Awareness

Your 4-H Club is more than just a group that meets regularly; it's a place where you can learn new things, make friends, and make a difference. It's a space where everyone can belong and grow together while exploring projects that match their interests, developing leadership skills, and giving back to the community through service. Every 4-H Club is unique, shaped by the people in it and the activities they choose to take on.

Reflect on how being part of your 4-H Club has helped you grow, whether by learning new skills, discovering an interest, or building confidence. Think about the projects or service activities your club has done; how do they make your community a better place? Consider how leadership roles and teamwork in your club help members take responsibility, support each other, and make positive change.

Potential prompts: Describe a 4-H project or service activity that made an impact in your community. How has being part of your 4-H Club helped you learn or grow? What opportunities has 4-H given you to take on leadership or teamwork roles?

Goal Management

Your neighborhood is more than just the place where you live; it's a small community filled with people, homes, and shared spaces that connect you to others. It's where you might see familiar faces, help a neighbor, or take part in activities that make your neighborhood safer and more welcoming. When neighbors care for and look out for one another, it builds a stronger, friendlier place for everyone.

Reflect on what you like most about your neighborhood and how you contribute to keeping it a great place to live. Consider how you connect with your neighbors. Do you help each other, share ideas, or look out for those in need? Think about what responsibilities you have as a good neighbor and what actions you can take to make your neighborhood even better.

Potential prompts: Describe something that makes your neighborhood special and how you help take care of it. How do you and your neighbors look out for each other? What can 4-H members do to improve or strengthen neighborhoods?

 (for more on goal management refer to the [4-H Officer's Manual](), page 11, or the County Ambassador Manual, page 17-18).