



# You can give a method demonstration



Louisiana 4-H is an  
educational program  
of the LSU AgCenter



How to...

# Learn by Doing – A Guide to Demonstrations

A method demonstration shows someone how to do something. When you give a method demonstration, you show someone how to do something and explain the process step by step. This is different from an illustrated talk, the purpose of which is only to give information. In a method demonstration, you want to teach your audience a method and inspire them to use it.

Learning to give a method demonstration will help you gain self-confidence. You will:

- feel more at ease in front of a group
- learn to gather information about a subject
- organize your ideas
- think about main points of a subject
- present information in a logical order both visually and verbally
- learn to express yourself more easily, clearly and convincingly
- experience the joy of sharing what you've learned
- actually help other people learn
- take part in group activities
- when you are 13 or older, you can win fantastic trips

## Choosing a topic

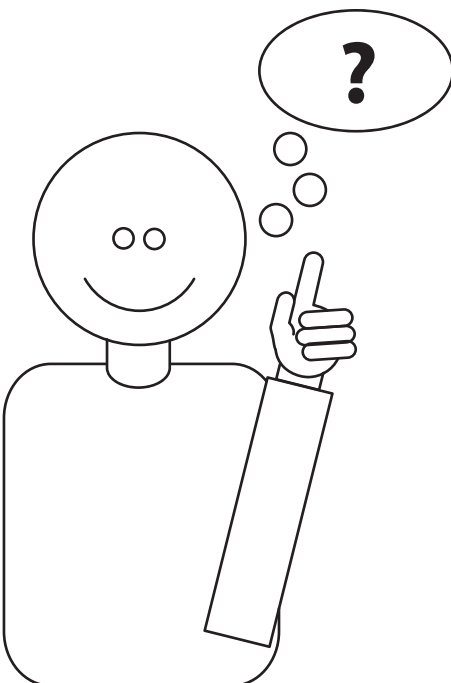
First, think about your interests and your audience. Ask yourself:

- What interests me? My audience?
- What will my audience find useful?
- What do I already know?
- What would I like to learn more about?
- What do I believe in?
- What do I do well? What challenges me?

Get a paper and pencil and write down your ideas. You can get ideas from:

- projects you have done
- tours, science fairs, school projects
- things going on in your neighborhood
- LSU AgCenter booklets
- books, magazines, TV
- talking with 4-H agents and other adults (farmers, store owners, librarians, doctors, nurses, dentists, teachers, firefighters, postal workers, law enforcement officers, etc.).

When choosing your idea, ask yourself: Is the idea unusual? Is it simple? Is it limited to one idea, not more? Does it appeal to your audience?



Once you've decided on your topic, it's time to plan the demonstration. Planning in detail - on paper - is the most important thing you can do to make your presentation a fine one. Think about – and write down:

- information you'll use
- steps you'll show – in what order
- what you'll say along with each step
- supplies and equipment
- how you'll use the materials
- visual aids you'll need

You yourself are probably the most important visual aid. Visual aids can help you make a point and add interest to your talk. Some visual aids you can use:

- Real objects. These objects usually teach the best.
- Flipcharts. These can be stapled at top, allowing charts to be turned over as needed.
- Posters. Keep them simple, neat and easy to see. They can be held on an easel or made to stand on a table.
- PowerPoint or other computer-based visual aids.

Now you're ready to plan your demonstration. The best way to do this is to make an outline. An outline will help you keep your thoughts in order, list supplies you'll need and list what you'll say and do.

A demonstration has three main parts: the introduction, which gets the audience's attention; the procedure, when you'll show and tell how; and the summary, when you'll restate the key points. Your outline should have the same three parts – the introduction, the procedure and the summary.

## **My Outline**

What I'll say, What I'll do, What I'll need  
Introduction, Procedure, Summary

## **Introduction**

Greet your audience. Introduce yourself. Tell why you chose your topic, why you think your topic is important and why your topic is practical. A good introduction should be original and brief. If you use your own words, you will hold the attention of your audience.

You can get the attention of your audience by using:

- a personal incident
- a lively poster
- a riddle
- a song or tape
- a question

- a dramatic or shocking statement
- a gesture, poem or skit
- a completed product

Now, what about the procedure, the second part of the demonstration? The procedure is the “show and tell” part of the demonstration. You’ll have to decide what you’ll say and what you’ll do while using your visual aids and materials.

## **Procedure - What will you do? Say? Need?**

- Have you discussed the main points?
- Have you checked to see that all information helps to make the main points clear?
- Have you explained each step?
- Are you using your own words?
- Do you use precise words that bring vivid pictures to mind? Or do you use imprecise words such as “things,” “stuff.”

So far we’ve covered the introduction and the procedure. Now, why do we need the last part—the summary? If you want the main points to stay with the audience, you have to restate what you have told them. The research you did on your subject is going to pay off during this time. The audience and judges can ask questions. If you don’t know the answers, admit it. Don’t fake it. If you can, tell the questioner where to find the answer to his or her question.

## **Summary**

- Show the finished product, if there is one.
- Highlight the main points.
- Ask for questions
- Two reasons questions are asked:
  - to clarify a point
  - to see how well you know your subject matter.
- Don’t answer with only a “yes” or “no.”
- Out of courtesy, repeat the question.
- Try to guess what questions will be asked so you can practice ahead of time.
- Tell where you found your information.



Here is an example of an award-winning demonstration. It is called "Hooked on Fishing."

## **HOOKED ON FISHING DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm hooked on fishing. Today I will tell you a little about fishing in Louisiana, show you how to tie a knot to hold a hook and show you some different baits to use for fishing. That way, you can get hooked on fishing, too.

### **BODY:**

In Louisiana, we are blessed with a large number of lakes, ponds, bayous, rivers, creeks, marshes, bays and estuaries. With all of these habitats, we have many different fisheries populations. Some common freshwater fish are bass, bream (also called bluegill), catfish and perch (also called sac-a-lait.) Saltwater fish that are popular are redfish, speckled trout and flounder. You need to know what type of fish you want to catch, because that will determine the size of the hook, line strength and bait you will use.

### **TURN POSTER & GET TRAY**

Equipment and supplies you will need for fishing are:

- Rod and reel (or a cane pole)
- Monofilament line – 6- and 12-pound line; these numbers refer to the strength of the line. The higher the number, the stronger the line.
- Hooks - You can use a #10, #8, #6 or #4. The smaller the number, the larger the hook.
- Live bait - You can use crickets, worms, minnows or bait shrimp.

Or

- Artificial Lures - Some popular types are spinners, jigs, spoons, crankbaits and plastic worms.

### **TURN POSTER**

Probably the most important thing to know about fishing is the correct way to tie the knot to hold the hook on the line. A strong knot is needed so that the hook doesn't keep breaking off. There are several different strong knots, but the one I will show you today is the PALOMAR KNOT. For demonstration purposes, I will show you how to tie the knot using a large cotton rope and an eye bolt.

1. Start with plenty of line.
2. Double the line and pass the end through the hook's eye.
3. Tie an overhand knot (like you were tying your shoestrings), but do not pull it tight yet.

4. Pass the hook through the loop.
5. Pull the loose end of line to tighten the knot. Trim the one end. Leave at least 1/8 inch of your line at the knot.

This should be a strong enough knot so that your fish don't get away.

## TURN POSTER

In summary, remember:

- Know what fish you want to catch. This will determine the hook size, line strength and bait you will use.
- Collect your equipment and supplies: rod & reel, monofilament line, hooks and bait.
- Tie strong knots so that the "big one" doesn't get away.
- and
- Have fun fishing. It's a popular sport here in Louisiana.

## TURN POSTER

Now that you know a little more about fishing, I hope you become HOOKED ON FISHING.

My references for my demonstration were the pamphlet "Fishing Fun" by the Future Fisherman Foundation, and the "Identification Guide to the Common Sport Fish of Louisiana" and "Let's Go Fishing," both written by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

I have enjoyed presenting my demonstration to you. Are there any questions?

## POSTERS

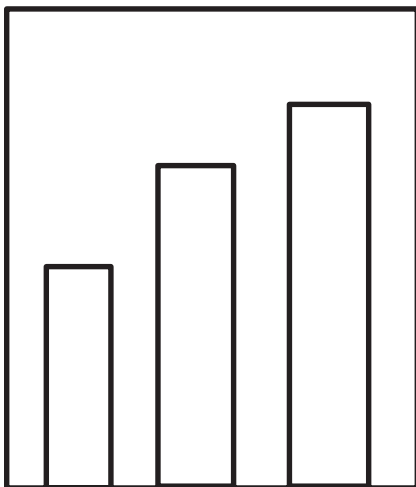
1. Cover Poster
2. Equipment and Supplies
3. Palomar Knot
4. Summary

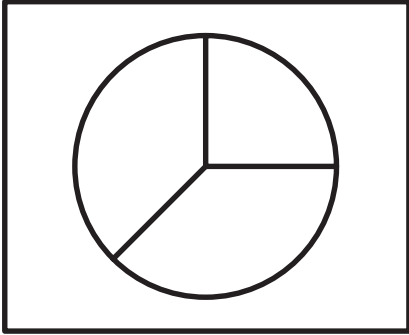
## TRAY - ONLY ONE

- monofilament line (6- and 8-pound)
- hooks (#10, #8, #6 and #4)
- bait (spinners, jigs, spoons, crankbaits and plastic worms)
- large cotton rope
- large hook
- rod and reel

Some tips on making posters for visual aids:

- Write words across the page, not up and down.
- Keep it brief and neat.
- Here is a table that will help you decide on lettering that can be read from a certain distance. (That's assuming eyesight is 20/20, lighting is good, and color contrast of letters and background is strong.)





### Legibility Table:

Distance	Letter Height	Letter Thickness
10 feet	1/2 inch	3/32 inch
20 feet	3/4 inch	1/8 inch
50 feet	2 inches	5/16 inch
100 feet	3 1/2 inches	11/16 inch

Can you read this? Have a friend hold up this page from 10 feet away. From how many feet away can you read each chart? How do your answers compare with distances below.

#### TRY THIS FROM 10 FEET

I can read this from \_\_\_\_\_ feet away.

#### FROM 20 FEET AWAY

I can read this from \_\_\_\_\_ feet away.

I can read this from \_\_\_\_\_ feet away.

I can read this from \_\_\_\_\_ feet away.

How many posters will you need for your demonstration? We suggest you use a poster for your title, a poster to bring out a point in the procedure and a poster for your summary.

When you make your posters, choose colors with a good contrast so words can be seen easily from a distance. For example, navy-blue letters on a yellow background are easier to read than orange letters on a yellow background. Some color combinations you can use are:

- Black on yellow or white
- Dark green on white
- Black on orange or yellow
- Dark blue on yellow or white
- Red on white
- White on navy blue or black
- Orange on purple
- White on purple
- Purple on white or yellow

#### To judge your posters

Ask yourself:

- Is it needed?
- Does it help explain a point?
- Does it focus attention?
- Is it large enough for the audience to see?
- Is it neat?
- Is it easy to use?
- Is it simple?
- Is it colorful?

A few tips to remember when using a program like PowerPoint:

- A PowerPoint slide is basically an outline of your demonstration.
- Keep it simple. Do not read directly from the slides.
- The slides should just emphasize the key concepts of your demonstration.
- Follow the 7x7 Rule. No slide should more than 7 lines deep and 7 words across.
- Use at least 42 point font for titles and 28 point font for your text.
- Follow the basic color scheme used for making an effective poster.
- Be careful when using graphics and animation. Too much animation can be a distraction. Be sure the graphics you use are related to the content of your presentation.
- And last, but not least, try the slide show out before you present your information to the audience. Make sure you can demonstrate and change slides at the same time. One great way to do this is to project the slides on the wall or screen and walk to the back of the room to make sure you can read all of the slides.

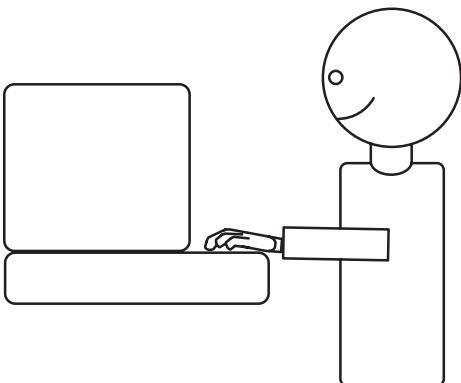
To judge the slides of your PowerPoint presentation

Ask yourself:

- Is it needed?
- Does it help explain a point?
- Does it focus attention?
- Is it large enough for the audience to see?
- Is it neat?
- Is it easy to use?
- Is it simple?
- Is it colorful?
- If you follow these easy tips, your PowerPoint presentation should be a hit.

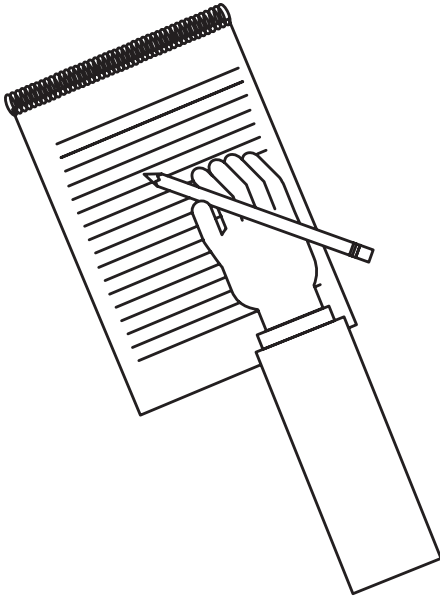
The Title:

- Finding a title can be your last step.
- If you concentrate on the IDEA for the visual presentation, and the DEVELOPMENT of the idea, the title will come later.
- Titles that communicate best usually are SHORT, DESCRIPTIVE and CREATE PICTURES IN THE MINDS OF THE AUDIENCE. A title should HINT at the subject without telling the whole story... much the way a riddle sparks interest because it makes the listener think.



How to organize demonstration equipment and supplies

- List all the equipment and supplies needed.
- Arrange the items neatly in order you will use them.
- Have a second table behind you to keep equipment and supplies before needed in the demonstration and to set articles out of way after use.



HINTS:

- Have a neat, well-lighted demonstration table or work surface of proper height.
- Arrange equipment and supplies neatly in the order you will use them.
- Test and have equipment in good working condition. (Oops! What if the bulb burns out?)
- Develop skill in using your equipment.
- Start with a clean table and keep audience guessing what comes next.
- End with a clean table and have only the finished product before audience for the summary.

Especially for foods projects:

- Place pad or folded towel under bowls when stirring or beating to prevent upset and noise.
- Have a litter bag on work side of table. Have damp cloth handy in case of spilling.
- Use a mirror to show the finished product if possible.
- Keep supplies covered or in background when not in use. Cover brand names. Loosen caps and tops before beginning.

### **Practice!**

Ask yourself:

- Am I doing things in a logical order?
- Am I remembering key points and working to find the best way to get them across?
- Am I using visual aids with skill, such as using my hand closest to the chart when pointing so that my arm does not cross in front of my body?
- Am I matching my actions with my words to avoid long, unnatural pauses?
- Am I staying within the time limit?
- Have I practiced before anyone and everyone who will listen to give me poise and confidence?
- Have I asked someone for suggestions to make my presentation better?

### **What shall I wear?**

Why not wear a conservative costume? A costume can add interest and be an important visual aid related to your subject. A well-groomed look is always attractive.

Follow these appearance guidelines:

- Avoid wearing heavy jewelry or clothing that draws attention to you instead of the subject of your talk.
- Have eye contact with the audience.
- Stand tall and straight on both feet.
- Avoid leaning on table, pushing back hair, rocking back and forth, shifting again and again from one foot to the other, twisting one foot behind the other, etc. These are distracting.
- Avoid putting hands in pockets. Let them hang relaxed and natural unless you are making an appropriate gesture.
- Avoid reading from notes because you will lose contact with the audience.
- Avoid talking when your back is to the audience because you probably will not be heard.

To sum it all up:

- Get an idea.
- Research the idea and study.
- Focus on a few basic thoughts to teach the idea.
- Leave out all unnecessary information.
- Write an outline.
- Select visual aids.
- Practice.

### **What do the judges like?**

They like you to:

- Be natural and at ease.
- Smile now and then.
- Show enthusiasm. (It's catching. If you enjoy what you are doing, the audience will, too.)
- Use your own words.
- Organize your equipment and supplies.
- Show skill in using visual aids.
- Look at various people in audience during talk.
- Speak so the person in last row can hear you.
- Keep the pitch of your voice low.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Look at the audience as much as possible, not down at table or at charts.
- Use accurate measurements.
- Be sure your facts are up to date and accurate.
- Start and finish with a clean work table.
- Be careful not to waste supplies.
- Know your talk well enough, but not have it memorized.
- Use precise, accurate words.
- Keep charts to a minimum.
- Show only the chart you are talking about.

- Stay calm if you have an accident. Explain what happened, if necessary, and go right on with your talk.

Especially for teams:

- Call your teammate by name rather than “my partner” or “my teammate.”
- Never turn your back to the audience while you are the demonstrator. Your teammate brings all the things needed, watches product cooking and helps when needed.
- Ask your teammate politely for what you need. Do not whisper to teammate if he or she fails to remember.
- Talk directly to the audience, not to the table or your teammate.



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