



4-H Happenings

4-H Public Speaking (Grades 6-12 | 3-7 minutes)

Theme: America 250: My 4-H Promise for the Next 250 Years

In 2026, the United States is celebrating 250 years since the Declaration of Independence. This anniversary is a chance to look back – and to decide what we want the next chapter of America to be.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT (PERSUASIVE SPEECH)

Create a persuasive speech that connects America 250 to one thing you believe should be strengthened, protected, or improved in your community, state, or nation. Explain why it matters and what people (including youth) can do about it.

CHOOSE YOUR FACTS

- Community issues (health, hunger, education, safety, housing, jobs, mental health)
- Agriculture & natural resources (water, conservation, forestry, wildlife, energy, food production)
- Civics & citizenship (community involvement, respectful dialogue, voting in the future)
- Technology & the future (AI, privacy, online safety, access to STEM)
- History & identity (local stories, historic places, veterans' legacy, civil rights, immigration stories)
- Youth opportunities (career readiness, apprenticeships, clubs, mentorships)
- A specific "problem + solution" you want others to support

OPTIONAL DELIVERY STYLE

- A "letter to America" in 2026
- A "challenge speech" (your personal pledge + invite others)
- A story with a turning point ("then vs. now vs. next")
- A proposal to your school/town/state
- A comparison speech ("what we should keep" vs. "what we must improve")

SPEECHES DUE _____

REQUIRED ELEMENTS (INCLUDE ALL)

- **America 250 connection:** What is it, and why does it matter?
- **Personal connection:** Why do *you* care? (brief story/experience/observation)
- **Evidence:** Use credible support (facts, history, examples). Cite sources if used ("According to...").
- **Clear claim:** What should happen?
- **Call to action:** At least 2 specific, realistic actions your audience can take.
- **4-H tie in:** Connect to Head, Heart, Hands, Health or the 4-H pledge or your experiences/project area.

HELPFUL QUESTIONS (PICK A FEW)

- What do you want America to be known for in 2076:
- What is one issue we can't ignore if we want the next 250 years to be better?
- How can local action connect to a national milestone?
- What have you learned in 4-H (or elsewhere) that prepares you to lead?

NOTES POLICY (Recommended)

- Using notecards during your speech is highly recommended.
- You may memorize your speech, but memorization is not required.
- Need notecards? We can provide them – please contact the 4-H office before your next meeting.

Contact Us

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Planning Worksheet

Use this page to organize a 3-7 minute speech. Plan your speech using keywords you can fit on notecards. Facts are encouraged – but even 1-2 good facts can make your speech more convincing.

1) My speech in One Sentence

My topic/issue: _____

My claim (what should happen): _____

2) Hook + Closing

Hook (question, story, surprising statement, etc.):

Closing line + call to action (What you want the audience to do):

3) Support (Facts/ Examples)

Add up to 3 facts, quotes, dates, or examples. If you use a fact, write where you found it (website, book, interview, etc.)

#	FACT / QUOTE / EXAMPLE	SOURCE (WHERE YOU FOUND IT)
1		
2		
3		

4) My Plan (2 Actions)

Action 1 (realistic): _____

Action 2 (realistic): _____

5) Timing Outline (3-7 minutes)

Use this to keep your speech moving and balanced.

0:00-0:45 – Hook + introduce topic + America 250 connection

0:45-2:30 – Background + why it matters + facts/examples

2:30-5:30 – Your solution/plan + explain how it helps

5:30-7:00 – Call to action + strong closing

