

Discussion Meet Manual

How to Run a Discussion Meet Contest



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California 4-H
How to Run a Discussion Meet
For a Multi-State Event

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How To Run a 4-H Discussion Meet Contest

Goals

The goals of California 4-H Discussion Meet are to:

- Provide educational experiences and activities for senior members to demonstrate, through their research and/or evaluative data how to help deliver high quality 4-H programs through discussions on current events
- Inspire senior members to stay involved while building basic discussion skills
- Introduce opportunities for senior members to pool knowledge, to reach consensus and solve current 4-H member issues
- Promote self-esteem through individual expression and leadership

Objectives

As a result of participation in California 4-H Discussion Meet, senior members will:

- Build self-confidence by stimulating logical thinking
- Expand inquiry, investigative, and analytical skills
- Develop a concise and direct manner of speaking which can be heard in a large gathering
- Improve the ability to listen while being an active participant in a discussion
- Practice giving and receiving criticism in a helpful manner
- Increase the understanding of the value of compromise
- Extend skills for understanding and addressing effective problem solving through group discussions

As a result of participation in the California 4-H Discussion Meet Committee, youth and adults will:

- Participate collaboratively in a Youth – Adult partnership
- Increase skills in leadership, written and oral communication, organization, team building, delegation, creative expression, and evaluation
- Develop lifelong friendships throughout the Western Region and remain in the 4-H family as current and future volunteer leaders
- Gain personal satisfaction from the accomplishment of difficult tasks while thinking outside of their sphere of influence and comfort

Background Information

The 4-H Discussion Meet is a project competition based on the American Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee's Discussion Meet.

The Discussion Meet is designed to simulate a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each committee member.

The competitors will discuss pre-selected topics.

The four fundamental bases of general discussion are:

- Cooperation
- Constructive Criticism
- Problem Solving
- Communication

A successful participant is a productive thinker rather than an emotional persuader. Sometimes it's reasonable to change positions whenever new information and ideas are presented.

This is not a panel symposium wherein each participant, in turn, makes a presentation, with the moderator ending the session with a summary. Rather, it is an exercise in cooperative problem solving, with the questions, answers and statement coming from any person at any time. The moderator plays an inactive role during the discussion.

4-H Discussion Meet Competitor Qualifications

- Competitors shall be senior 4-H members (age 14 – 19 as of Jan. 1 of the current year) in good standing with their county 4-H Program.
- Past and present 4-H Discussion meet committee members are eligible to participate.
- Competitors will be enrolled in the 4-H Discussion Meet project and/or Public Speaking Project, Leadership Project, or Communications Project geared towards 4-H Discussion Meet.
- Competitors will join together at State 4-H Field Day to begin the competition. From the competitors present at State Field Day in May at UC Davis, the top four finalists will participate in the finale to determine the state winner.
- The top four competitors are eligible for scholarships. State winner will receive a \$1,000. Second place will receive \$750. Third place will receive \$500. Fourth place will receive \$250.
- Individuals who have been named California 4-H Discussion Meet winner or have participated in the final four are ineligible to compete a second time.

Accessibility of Contest

All ANR Programs, including the 4-H YDP are federally mandated under the Americans with Disabilities Act (1991) to ensure that all programs are accessible to persons with disabilities. The event registration form requests that individuals list any additional assistance needed in order to participate in the event. The form is to be submitted to the Event Coordinator and appropriate UCCE 4-H YDP staff contact for the event. 4-H staff and event coordinators will review all assistance requests and communicate with 4-H families of all reasonable assistance ANR is able to provide. Information regarding assistance provided will be communicated to any Evaluators in advance, to explain how the contest format has been adapted to assist the contestant to participate in the event.



Individuals who need to request an ADA accommodation in order to participate in 4-H Presentation Day can complete a [4-H ADA Accommodation Request Form](#). This will be submitted to the Event Coordinator and a copy submitted to the UCCE 4-H YDP staff contact for the event. The UCCE 4-H YDP staff should fill out the [ADA Accommodation Request for Material/Equipment Form](#) and submit to the [Office of Affirmative Action](#) when requesting materials, equipment and services or financial support from ANR. All requests should be retained for review purposes.

For additional information please refer to Chapter 3 of the 4-H Policy manual at <http://4h.ucanr.edu/Resources/Policies/Chapter3>

It is the policy of the University of California (UC) and the UC Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources not to engage in discrimination against or harassment of any person in any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, pregnancy (which includes pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 [USERRA]), as well as state military and naval service. This policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable state and federal laws and University policies. University policy also prohibits retaliation against any employee or person in any of its programs or activities for bringing a complaint of discrimination or harassment pursuant to this policy. This policy also prohibits retaliation against a person who assists someone with a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or participates in any manner in an investigation or resolution of a complaint of discrimination or harassment. Retaliation includes threats, intimidation, reprisals, and/or adverse actions related to employment or to any of its programs or activities. In addition, it is the policy of the University and ANR to undertake affirmative action, consistent with its obligations as a Federal contractor, for minorities and women, for persons with disabilities, and for covered veterans. The University commits itself to apply every good faith effort to achieve prompt and full utilization of minorities and women in all segments of its workforce where deficiencies exist. These efforts conform to all current legal and regulatory requirements, and are consistent with University standards of quality and excellence. In conformance with Federal regulations, written affirmative action plans shall be prepared and maintained by each campus of the University, including the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Such plans shall be reviewed and approved by the Office of the President and the Office of the General Counsel before they are officially promulgated. Inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to Linda Marie Manton, Affirmative Action Contact, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2801 Second Street, Davis, CA 95618, (530) 750-1318.

4-H Discussion Meet Questions 2016

There will be another set of questions for the contest at WRLF 2018.

They will be available at WRLF 2017.

1. 4-H has been successful in recruiting new members for years. How can 4-H make the best better by using successful methods from outside organizations to boost interest in 4-H and, therefore, increase membership in the modern age?
2. How can you help 4-Hers identify and analyze actions related to a water resource and its use?
3. How can 4-Hers develop the knowledge and skills necessary to address challenges relevant to the study of the environment?
4. How can 4-Hers learn by doing within the community to provide youth with field research experience, technical expertise, and an opportunity to reflect on their own development?
5. When nations make decisions about healthy living, what are some of the dilemmas and consequences that might impact people around the world? How can 4-Hers decrease some of those negative results and/or increase the positive results?

Helpful hints for members in the 4-H discussion meet project

- Study as much material as possible relating to the overall topic. Sources: Internet, library; newspapers; magazines, 4-H Policies; county, state and National 4-H publications; and conversations with experts or knowledgeable people.
- Remember this is a discussion, not a debate.
- This is not a panel symposium wherein each participant, in turn, makes a presentation, with the moderator ending the session with a summary. Rather, it is an exercise in cooperative problem solving, with the question, answers and statements coming from any person at any time. The moderator plays an inactive role during the discussion.
- The discussion should not be “conversation” or aimless talk, nor should you take the role of a persuasive speaker. Try to cooperatively shed light on the problem and tentatively retain a flexible position.
- Be aware of the audience, but generally address the panel, though you need to speak loudly enough to be heard by the whole audience.
- Make use of statistics, quotes and share sample solutions so judges know you did your homework.
- Use good listening skills – nodding, leaning in, and looking at speakers.
- Be prepared to ask questions, state facts and opinions, and urge others to be specific.
- On your notepad write the names of the other participants so you can call them by name without having to look at their name tags. Referencing the other competitors by name adds a personal touch.
- Make notes of key points as the discussion proceeds for use in your summary statement.
- Participate whenever your contribution will further the discussion. Do not monopolize the discussion.
- You will get one minute of quiet time to organize your closing statement, make sure you use it to put your notes in order. Include statements from other participants. Jot them down on your notepad.
- Stand and make your closing statement to the audience. Use accepted speech techniques and stay within the time limit.

Life Skills Gained Through Participation in the Discussion Meet

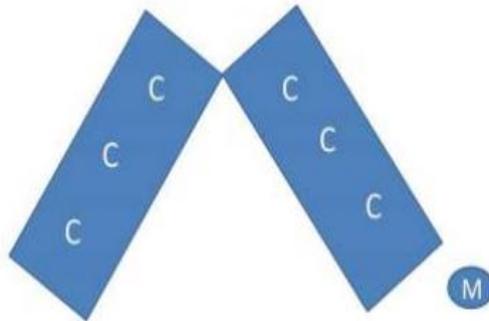
- Stimulate logical thinking.
- Develop a concise and direct manner of speaking.
- Improve the ability to listen.
- Overcome stage freight.
- Practice giving and receiving criticism in a helpful manner.
- Teach the value of compromise.
- Develop leaders for effective problem solving through group discussion.
- Develop the self-responsibility to carry out the research for accurate information.
- Improve problem solving skills.
- Practice contributing to the group effort.

Competition

- All competitors will compete in the first two rounds of the competition known as “Round Robins.” Round Robins will have four to six competitors. The first round will be a practice round with no scores.
- The participants will discuss pre-selected topics with four, fundamental bases for the general discussion: cooperation, constructive criticism, problem solving and communication.
- The competitive event will consist of four rounds: one practice round, one Round Robin, Elite Eight and Final Four.
- All competitors will compete in the first two rounds. The top eight competitors based on judges’ scores will move on to the Elite Eight round.
- The top two competitors in each of the third round rooms will move on to the Final Four round in order to determine the winner.
- Each round will begin with a 30-second opening statement and end with a one-minute closing statement by each participant.
- Participants will have 20-25 minutes of open discussion dependent upon the number of contestants, followed by one minute of quiet time.
- The physical arrangement of the Discussion Meet rooms should provide for two tables at the front of the room facing each other and the audience. Half the participants should be seated at each table with the moderator at the side.
- Name cards identifying competitors should be easily visible. Cards should show only the competitor’s name.

Room Layout For Discussion Meet

Room Layout



```
xJxxxxxxxxT  xxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxx  xxxxxxxJxxx
xxxxxxxxJxx  xxxxxxxxxxx
```

M = Moderator C = Competitor J = Judge T = Timer X = Audience

FLOW OF COMPETITION

Generally speaking, the discussion should follow these steps:

1. State problem or need.
2. Explore, define, and understand problem or need.
3. Identify causes of problem or need.
4. Elaborate all possible alternative solutions.
5. Evaluate and compare alternatives.
6. Test and project what appears to be the best solution.
7. Arrive at ways to implement the solution.

Competition Format

1. All competitive event facilitators and competitors will meet in the pre-assigned competition room fifteen minutes prior to the start of the competition to receive last minute comments by the room chair and receive the topic of the question to be discussed at the practice round. The competition facilitators are 4-H Discussion Meet Committee-designated room chairmen and moderators.
2. Competitors may not take prepared notes of any form with them to the competition table. After all competitors have been introduced, and they take their places at the table, notes may be written on the paper provided. At the point a note is brought to the table and is noticed by the competition facilitator, there will be a disqualification called at the end of the round by the 4-H Discussion Meet Committee Chair and/or the Co-Chair.
3. The room chair person will call the meeting to order, announce the topic to be discussed, and introduce the timekeeper and moderator. Any competitor not present at this time will be disqualified.
4. The moderator will introduce the competitors and re-announce the topic to be discussed. The moderator will give each of the competitors, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a 30-second opening statement directed to the audience.
5. The timekeeper will flash a red time card indicating when 30 seconds has elapsed. Judges may subtract points at their discretion for competitors who abuse the time limit.
6. The moderator will then indicate the opportunity for open discussion, which will continue for a total of 20 minutes in the Round Robins and Elite Eight competitions and 25 minutes in the Final Four Competition. The discussion should be directed to the fellow competitors during open discussion.
7. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when five minutes of open discussion time remains in the Round Robins, Elite Eight and in the Final Four.
8. If the discussion is lagging, the moderator may close the discussion at this time.
9. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when 20 min in the Round Robin and Elite Eight competitions and 25 min in the Final Four competition have elapsed with a red time card.
10. The moderator will call for open discussion to stop and for one minute of quiet time allowing the competitors to consider a closing statement.

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11. The moderator will give each of the competitors, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a one-minute closing statement directed at the audience.
12. The moderator will recognize the judges and request them to leave the room with the room chairman to finalize the tabulation of their score sheets. Judges are not to confer with each other until the room chairman has collected their tabulated score sheets.
13. The next round topic to be discussed will be announced (with the exception of the Final Four question). The Final Four topic will be announced at the official Final Four Announcement.
14. The moderator will thank the panel and ask the audience to recognize their efforts. The moderator may then request the competitors to each discuss their 4-H background and involvement.

Competition Orientations

Discussion Meet Orientation

- a) Held prior to the 1st Round Robin Practice Round
- b) All competitors are required to attend
- c) Roll call of competitors
- d) Release of Discussion Meet topic time schedule

First Round topic will be announced during the Competitor Orientation and again in competition room by Room Chair 10 minutes prior to start of First Round, which is a practice round.

Each subsequent round topic is announced at the close of prior round with the exception of the Final Four question. The Final Four question will be announced at the official Final Four announcement.

- e) Distribute room locations to competitors

Judges' Orientation

- a) Held prior to the 1st Round Robin Practice Round
- b) Review judge's duties in Roles and Responsibilities of Competition Facilitators along with any announcements.
- c) Review timing sequences
- d) Allow time for questions
- e) Roll call of judges
- f) Distribute competition room locations

Timekeeper's Orientation

- a) Held prior to the first Round Robin Practice Round
- b) Roll call of timekeepers
- c) Distribute time schedule
- d) Distribute time cards
- e) Distribute competition room locations and Round Robin Bracket sheets

Roles and Responsibilities of Discussion Meet Competition Facilitators

1. Competition Chairman's Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the 4-H Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Conduct Discussion Meet Orientation Session at the meeting for Competitors and Judges
 - 1. Make introductions
 - 2. Give brief explanation of Discussion Meet competition procedures.
 - 3. Distribute room locations.
 - 4. Allow time for questions.
 - 5. Draw and announce topics to determine sequence to be used for the competition.
 - 6. Announce first Round Robin topic during Orientation.
- c) Settle any and all disputes during the competition.

2. Room Chairman's Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the 4-H Discussion meet Manual.
- b) Review Tally Sheet. (Appendix A & B)
- c) Ensure all judges are present and check their identities. Report any changes to the moderator.
- d) Meet in the assigned room with competitors, judges, moderator and timekeeper to answer any questions they may have.
- e) Call the competition to order at the appointed time. Introduce the timekeeper and moderator. Announce topic to be discussed.
- f) Introduce and thank judges at the end of the session.
- g) Escort judges to the judges' tabulating room at the end of the competition and allow them to finish tabulating and ranking the competitors. Assist judges in final ranking of competitors.
- h) Ensure each competitor has been ranked in all sections of the rating sheet.
- i) Supervise tiebreakers. (See Scoring)

3. Moderator's Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the 4-H Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Become acquainted with competitors.
- c) Open the competition with the following to ensure that all understand the format:
 - 1. Welcome the audience.
 - 2. Introduce competitors and ask them to come to the table.
 - 3. Announce the topic to be discussed.
 - 4) Ask for competitors to make a 30 second opening statement in voluntary order.
 - 5) After the last opening statement, say "You have heard the opening statement; you may proceed with the discussion."
 - 6. End discussion at timekeeper's signal.

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7. Call for one-minute time used to prepare closing statements.
8. Call for one minute closing statements, in voluntary order.
9. Thank competitors.
10. Dismiss room chairman and judges for tabulations.
11. Announce topic for next round (with the except of the Final Four Question)
12. Give competitors the opportunity to introduce themselves and describe their 4-H involvement.
13. Announce time of next competition.

Note: The moderator should not comment on the topic or encourage discussion. This is the responsibility of the competitors. However, if the discussion seems to really be lagging, the moderator should use their best judgment to end the discussion early.

4. Timekeeper's Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the 4-H Discussion Meet manual.
- b) Go to the assigned competition room fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.
- c) Meet with room chairman, moderator and competitors for last-minute questions.
- d) Indicate following timing points to the moderator and competitors as follows:

Round Robins and Elite Eight

1. The end of each 30 second opening statement. (Time elapsed – red card)
2. Warning at 15 minutes of open discussion. (Five minutes remaining – yellow)
3. The end of 20 minutes of open discussion. (Time elapsed – red card)
4. The end of one-minute of quiet time. (Time elapsed – red card)
5. The end of each competitor's one-minute closing statement. (Time elapsed – red card)

Final Four

1. The end of each 30-second opening statement. (Time elapsed – red card)
2. The end of 20 minutes of open discussion. (Five minutes remaining – yellow)
3. The end of one-minute quiet time. (Time elapsed – red card)
4. The end of each competitor's one-minute closing statement. (Time elapsed – red card)

5. Judges' Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the 4-H Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Review discussion topic questions.
- c) Review Rating Sheet
- d) Attend the Discussion Meet Judges' Orientation Session.
- e) Go to assigned room ten minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.
- f) Meet with room chairman and moderator for last minute questions.

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- g) Judges should:
 - 1. List competitors on Rating Sheet from left to right for ease in identification.
 - 2. Score competitors using the Rating Sheet.
 - 3. Total the score.
 - 4. **Note:** there are 700 points available: 200 points for Cooperative attitude and 100 points each for the other categories.
 - 5. Determine and record ranking.
 - 6. Sign Rating Sheet.
- h) Judges should not:
 - 1. Sit near a fellow judge.
 - 2. Judge by applause.
 - 3. Confer with each until all scores are tabulated.
- i) Judges should remain seated until your room chairman calls for you to leave the room to do the final tabulating of your score sheet.
- j) Select winners. (See scoring)

SCORING

The room chairman will supervise the final tabulation by the judges. Judges will use the point system indicated on the score sheet to assist in selecting their winners. Each judge will be instructed to total his/her score sheet and rank the competitors. Each judge is to break ties that occur on his/her own score sheet. The room chairman will assist the judges in determining the final ranking of the competition.

1. The winner will be determined by judges' ranking, and ties will be resolved before the judges are dismissed.
 - a) Ties will be broken at the end of each of the Round Robin competitions, the Sweet Sixteen and the Final Four by an automatic procedure using Cooperative Attitude as the first tiebreaker, followed by Problem Solving and Delivery, respectfully. (See Page 20).
 - b) In the event of an unresolvable tie between all three categories, total points from judges' score sheets will be used to resolve the tie. The room chairman will assist with this process.
2. When possible, the above procedure should be conducted in a private room, with the judges, room chairman, and Discussion Meet chairman present.

Round Robins

Sample rankings for the two Round Robin competitions follow. (See Pages 19 & 20).

Elite Eight

- a) After competing in two Round Robin competitions, each competitor will be ranked according to his/her scores. From this final determination, the Elite Eight competitors will be chosen.
- b) These competitors will then be broken down into two groups of four competitors. This will be done using the following bracketing process:
- c) After the bracketing process is complete, the scores from the previous Round Robins will be discarded and the competitors will compete in the Elite Eight round using a third topic. Competitors will be judged in the same manner using the same process as the Round Robin competitions.

Room 1	Room 2
1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8

- d) The two top scorers from each room will advance to the Final Four where a fourth and final topic will be discussed.

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Tally sheet A

Tie Breaker

Appendix A

**AFBF Discussion Meet
Official Tally Sheet**
Round 1 () Round 2 ()

Competitors Final Ranking

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Brutus Buckeye	1	2	1	4	1
Herbie Husker	2	3	2	7	
Goldly Gopher	3	1	3	7	
Nittany Nellie	4	4	4	12	4

**You have a 1st and 4th place, but a tie for 2nd so move to the first tie breaker*

Competitors

Tie Breaker #1 – Cooperative Attitude

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Brutus Buckeye	1	2	1	4	1
Herbie Husker	2	3	2	7	
Goldly Gopher	3	1	3	7	
Nittany Nellie	4	4	4	12	4

**You still have a tie. Move to 2nd tie breaker*

Competitors

Tie Breaker #2 – Problem Solving

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Brutus Buckeye	1	2	1	4	1
Herbie Husker	3	1	3	7	
Gold Gopher	2	3	2	7	
Nittany Nellie	4	4	4	12	4

**You still have a tie. Move to 3rd tie breaker*

Competitors

Tie Breaker #3 – Delivery

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Brutus Buckeye	2	1	1	4	1
Herbie Husker	1	2	3	6	2
Gold Gopher	3	3	2	8	3
Nittany Nellie	4	4	4	12	4