NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EXTENTION
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

2026 COMMUNICATOR AWARDS

Criteria and Scoresheets

COMMUNICATOR AWARD OBJECTIVE:

To recognize NAE4-HYDP members for significant accomplishments in presenting 4-H to the general public, civic groups, 4-H groups, or individuals through public information methods.

ELIGIBILITY:

- All active and life members are eligible to submit awards.
- Membership status is determined using the NAE4-HYDP database as of January 31, 2026.
- Applicants must have been an active member the year prior to applying as well as the current year of application. If there are additional requirements of membership for the award, these requirements take precedence over this eligibility requirement.
- Applications that do not follow the instructions and provide appropriate documentation will be noted in judging process as incomplete and will be disqualified.

GENERAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

- All submissions must use the online submissions process. All award applications must be submitted by March 8, 2026, 11:59 p.m. EST. No late entries will be accepted. Incomplete applications will be disqualified.
- A separate submission must be completed for each award in which a member is submitting.
- An applicant may only submit one entry in each category.
- Entries must be for materials produced/completed from January 1 to December 31, 2025.
- Entries must be the original work of the applicant/nominee or team.
- Previous national award winners may not enter the same category in consecutive years.
- The same entry may not be submitted in more than one category.
- Rules and guidelines for each award will be strictly enforced.
- Multi-State entries are to be submitted in the State and Region of the primary applicant. The primary applicant should come from the state with the most members on the team.
- Communicator awards will be judged at the State, Regional and National Level.
- All Regional and National awards will be presented at the NAE4-HYDP Conference.
- For team awards, at least one member of the team must be an NAE4-HYDP member and meet the eligibility requirements to apply. Team awards may have up to 10 members (applicant and up to 9 other individuals). Only 1 team member may be listed per line on the application. Applicants will not be able to add names of team members or information to their award application once it has been submitted.
- For those award categories that do not have separate individual and team divisions, both individuals and teams may apply.
- Entries that incorporate newer technology tools like podcasts, blogs, video, etc. are encouraged. Keep in mind that judging continues through June and multiple judges will need to access any online content, so be sure that your submission remains available throughout the judging period. Applications that do not allow access for judges to view technology pieces will be disqualified.

ABSTRACT:

Each entry must include an abstract. The abstract should include the following information:

- **Objectives:** What are the goals of the entry? List what you tried to accomplish with the entry.
- **Target Audience:** Identify the target audience, for example a news article might target daily readers or a promotional flyer for 4-H Day Camp might target 9–11-year-old youth.
- **Current Population:** Once you have identified the target audience, give the current population of the audience. This could be the general population of your county or area, number of subscribers to the newspaper or 4-H youth enrolled in your program or event.
- **Methods Used:** Describe any methods utilized to develop the entry item. This may include recording methods for items such as media presentations, online blogs, videos, podcasts, etc. It may also include sources read; information gathered for entries such as educational pieces, educational packages, media presentations, etc.
- **Impact Results:** Include outcomes as a result of your entry such as knowledge change, participation increases, funds raised, etc. if those are known at the time of the entry.
- **Information on the role the applicant had in the entry:** This is important on team entries. List the roles for each person in developing the entry.
- **Publisher's Requirements:** List requirements for submission of items such as news articles, radio/audio programs, video programs, etc. Include how the editor wants the article and photos submitted. For audio/video programs list the requirements for production and publishing online. If your university marketing department requires you to include appropriate Extension logos on items, closed captioning on videos, or other requirements, include that information. If you use outside printing businesses list their requirements. If you use a university template or template from a site such as Canva or Adobe Express, please note that here.
- **Production Costs:** List the estimated costs to create, publish, distribute, etc. for your entry. For some items the cost might be zero but for most entries there is a supply cost. You might also include the value of your time to create the product if you don’t have any expenses associated with printing, etc.

- Additional information may be requested on individual applications.
- Abstracts may be uploaded as a PDF. Create the document using an 8.5 x 11” layout with one-inch margins, single-spaced, 12-point font and a maximum length of three single-sided (3) pages.

AWARDS:

Communicator Awards are sponsored by Fair Publishing House.

COMMUNICATOR AWARDS CLASSES:

1. Educational Package (Individual and Team categories)
2. Educational Piece (Individual and Team categories)
3. Exhibit
4. Feature Story
5. Media Presentation
6. News Story
7. Periodical Publication (Individual and Team categories)
8. Personal Column
9. Promotional Package (Individual and Team categories)
10. Promotional Piece (Individual and Team categories)
11. Published Photo
12. Radio/Audio Program
13. Social Media Package/Campaign (Individual and Team categories)
14. Social Media Piece (Individual and Team categories)
15. Video Program

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EXTENTION
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

EDUCATIONAL PACKAGE

Individual and Team Categories

PURPOSE:

To educate through accurate, concise information (research based as applies) on one subject. It is not a promotional package.

CRITERIA:

- Must consist of two or more components of the communicator awards categories (see list of award categories on page 3) and be educational in nature (not promotional).
- There will be 3 spaces provided on the application to upload materials or provide links. If you have more than 3 different items, you may need to combine items into no more than 3 PDFs.
- The purpose(s) of each component as described in the individual section will be considered in evaluating the educational package.
- All components must be utilized as one unit/lesson/program.
- Please provide links to electronic media in the link field(s).

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
EDUCATIONAL PACKAGE COMPONENTS		
Content is accurate, credible and research-based, as applies	15	
Content is well written using correct grammar, uncomplicated sentences and short paragraphs	15	
Content designed to make user understand/become aware/informed, educated	15	
Elements are appropriate for the target audience	10	
Elements are visually appealing (neat and clear; effective use of design and layout)	15	
Components meet the criteria of the individual sections	5	

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EXTENTION
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

EDUCATIONAL PIECE

Individual and Team Categories

PURPOSE:

To educate through accurate, concise information (research based as applies) on one subject. It is not a promotional piece.

CRITERIA:

- Must apply to one subject.
- Entry is one piece. Piece must be uploaded with application.
- Web pages, project books, educational guides, or fact sheets may be included. Videos or Power Points should be entered in the appropriate categories not as an educational piece.
- If entry is an online piece, provide the link in the link field in the application.

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
EDUCATIONAL PIECE		
Content is accurate, credible and research-based, as applies	20	
Content is well written using correct grammar, uncomplicated sentences and short paragraphs	15	
Content designed to make user understand/become aware/informed, educated	15	
Elements are appropriate for the target audience	10	
Effective use of design and layout techniques (white space, arrangement of page, typographical techniques, color, bold, fonts etc.)	15	

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EXHIBIT

PURPOSE:
To inform about a program or share educational information in a brief period of time. To provide educational and/or promotional material that is accurate, concise, and makes the audience respond in a positive way.

CRITERIA:

- Must provide pictures of the exhibit. Content of the exhibit must be legible in the pictures. Consider including a picture of each panel of the exhibit as well as one of the entire exhibit. Compile pictures into one Word or PDF document and upload in the application.
- Include in abstract a description of where and how the exhibit was used.
- Entry must be original work of the applicant.
- Examples of an exhibit: professional poster, fair display, camp display, library display, marketing display

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
EXHIBIT		
Content is accurate, credible and research-based, as applies	15	
Content designed to make user understand/become aware/informed, educated	15	
Content is well written – captions and text are appropriate for the exhibit and provide cues as to how the exhibit is to be interpreted.	10	
Appearance is neat, attractive and professional.	15	
Effective use of design and layout	10	
Exhibit shows creativity and has the power to hold attention.	10	

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FEATURE STORY

PURPOSE:
To capture the mood of the event or person(s) and create reader interest. This is not a news story. Article should focus on unique or special interest story.

CRITERIA:

- Upload original submitted copy and copy of published story.
- If article was published online, applicant must include web address in the abstract. A PDF, screenshot, or similar saved copy of the published feature story article should also be provided as an attachment.
- Associated photos appearing with story may be included.

A ***feature story*** explains the significance of an event. It offers analysis. A feature story leaves more room for emotion and descriptive language. A feature story goes beyond the news. It might interpret or add depth to the news, entertain or instruct.

For example, a feature story might highlight the childhood story of an ice skater in the Olympics. A news story would provide the facts about the competition and how the skater placed.

https://pavilion.dinfos.edu/Article/Article/2601985/get-your-story-straight-news-vs-feature-article/
https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/cm350

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
FEATURE STORY		
Does the story capture the mood of the person or event?	25	
Is there originality? Does the interest build on fresh ideas? Does the story attract and hold reader's attention?	20	
Is it well written using correct grammar, short sentences, short paragraphs, and easily understood by the reader? Does the story flow smoothly?	20	
Did submitted copy follow journalism guidelines?	10	

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MEDIA PRESENTATION

PURPOSE:
To provide educational and/or promotional material that is accurate, concise and holds the audience's attention.

CRITERIA:

- Individual/Team must produce the program using PowerPoint, Prezi, Canva, Google Slides, or similar presentation programs.
- Presentation can be used live or in a recorded format and may be submitted with or without audio (voice-over).
- Upload the presentation with the application or provide a link to the presentation. If submitting a recording, please also submit a PDF file of the slide presentation, as well.
- Materials must be original work of the applicant.

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
MEDIA PRESENTATION		
Content is accurate, credible and research based, as applies	20	
Content is well written using correct grammar, uncomplicated sentences and short paragraphs	15	
Content designed to make user understand/become aware/informed, educated	15	
Elements are visually appealing (neat and clear); Effective use of design and layout (white space, fonts etc.)	15	
Elements are appropriate for the target audience	10	

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NEWS STORY

PURPOSE:
To present factual information or results in a manner clear and understandable for reader.

CRITERIA:

- Upload original submitted copy and copy of published news story. Published news story may be scanned or a photo of the published story may be submitted.
- A news story is intended to be a written article not an interview by a news team.
- If an article was published online, the applicant must include web address in the abstract. A PDF, screenshot, or similar saved copy of the published news story is to be uploaded as an attachment or provided in the link field.
- Associated photos appearing with the story may be included.

A ***news story*** reports the facts about an event. Word choice in news articles tends to be more direct and concise. A news story provides information about an event, idea, or situation. A news story typically follows the inverted pyramid style presenting the most important information first (who?, what?, when?, why? and how?).

For example, a feature story might highlight the childhood story of an ice skater in the Olympics. A news story would provide the facts about the competition and how the skater placed.

https://www.nonprofitcopywriter.com/article-writing-tips.html

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
NEWS STORY		
News value: is the material newsworthy? Is essential information given? Do the facts tell the story? Does the writer avoid editorializing and/or expressing personal opinions?	25	
Well written, using correct grammar, uncomplicated and short sentences, and simple.	15	
Is the article well organized? Are the most important facts presented first? Are the facts presented clearly so the reader understands?	15	
Does the writer(s) style exhibit a fresh approach? Does the story attract and hold the reader's attention?	10	
Did submitted copy follow journalism guidelines?	10	

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4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

PERIODICAL PUBLICATION

Individual and Team Categories

PURPOSE:

An information piece designed to inform, update, and make reader respond in a positive way. Examples may include newsletters, State Association publications, magazines, tabloids, etc.

CRITERIA:

- Must submit two different issues (not necessarily consecutive), but both must be from the same series (i.e. two newsletters or two State Association publications).
- The entry may be in printed or in electronic format but must be uploaded electronically.
- Electronically produced publications must include web address in the abstract. A PDF, screenshot, or similar saved copy of the published issues are to be uploaded as an attachment or link provided in the appropriate field.

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
PERIODICAL PUBLICATION		
Content is accurate, credible and research based, as applies	20	
Content is well written using correct grammar, uncomplicated sentences and short paragraphs	15	
Content designed to make user understand/become aware/informed, educated	15	
Elements are appropriate for the target audience	10	
Elements are visually appealing (neat and clear); Effective use of design and layout (white space, fonts etc.)	15	

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EXTENTION 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

PERSONAL COLUMN

PURPOSE:

To develop a personal style of writing for publication in any type of print media. It should contain pertinent, appropriate, credible information congruent with the writer's style.

CRITERIA:

- Entries may be published in a newspaper column, magazine column, blog, etc. Newsletters are typically not considered personal columns.
- Upload original submission and copy of published column of multiple different issues.
- Published columns may be scanned or a photo may be uploaded.
- Electronically produced column must include a web address in the abstract. A PDF screenshot, or similar saved copy of the published columns are to be uploaded as an attachment, or the link can be provided in the appropriate fields of application.

A ***personal column*** is not a news story. It is more personal and uses first and second person (I and you). A personal column might state the writer's opinion and often appears in multiple issues of a newspaper or magazine.

https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/cm360

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
PERSONAL COLUMN		
Content is pertinent and appropriate for the tone of the column. Writer has developed a personal style.	25	
Content is well written using correct grammar, uncomplicated sentences and short paragraphs	15	
Has the writer used items that are timely? Does it include information that the reader needs at this particular time?	15	
Is there originality in the column and was the imagination used?	10	
Did submitted copy follow journalism guidelines?	10	

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4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

PROMOTIONAL PACKAGE

Individual and Team Categories

PURPOSE:

To attract audience member's attention and make them respond in a positive way.

CRITERIA:

- Entry must consist of two or more pieces such as video, brochure, poster, bookmark, tabloid, or any other combination of promotional pieces. Package pieces are not limited to those in individual sections.
- Identify the promotional pieces in the abstract.
- All components of the promotional package must be a part of the same program/event.
- A PDF, screenshot, or similar saved copy of the published issues are to be uploaded as an attachment or in the link fields of the application.

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
PROMOTIONAL PACKAGE		
Designed to make the reader respond in some positive manner	20	
Content is concise yet holds all essential information	15	
Content attracts immediate interest and holds attention of user	15	
Elements are visually appealing (neat and clear); Effective use of design and layout (white space, fonts etc.)	15	
Do all pieces complement each other?	10	

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4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

PROMOTIONAL PIECE

Individual and Team Categories

PURPOSE:

To attract reader's attention and make reader respond in a positive way. Examples include poster, brochure, flyer, tabloid, newspaper insert, t-shirt, etc., but not a press release.

CRITERIA:

- Upload the document or a photo of item if it is not in document form.

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
PROMOTIONAL PIECE		
Designed to make the reader respond in some positive manner	20	
Content is concise yet holds all essential information	20	
Content attracts immediate interest and holds attention of user	20	
Elements are visually appealing (neat and clear); Effective use of design and layout (white space, fonts etc.)	15	

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PUBLISHED PHOTO

PURPOSE:
To tell a story through a photo. Photo should be of high quality and follow photograph principles of composition. May be black and white or color and published digitally or printed.

CRITERIA:

- Upload original photo (with submitted text, if any).
- Upload the publication in which the photo was published. (i.e. may be published in newspaper, fair catalog, brochure, magazine, promotional piece, social media etc.). If actual publication cannot be uploaded, a scanned version or a photo of the publication may be used or the link provided in the link field.
- Include details of where the photo was published in abstract information.

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
PUBLISHED PHOTO		
Composition: Consider pleasing arrangement, good subject, placement of subject, center of interest, camera angle, simplicity, lighting, framing, and background. Keep in mind the specific purpose of the photo as it relates to the composition.	25	
Photographic Quality: Consider the technical skill of the photograph as indicted by the methods used to photographically record the subject(s). Variations in quality that would be emphasized in reproduction should be properly noted and evaluated. There should be sharp focus, good contrast, and lack of distortion.	25	
Storytelling Ability: Does the picture tell a story? Would the picture help in a definite way to get a point across? Does it have human interest appeal? Does it look natural? Does it reflect a mood?	25	

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4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

RADIO/AUDIO PROGRAM

PURPOSE:
To provide educational or promotional information that is accurate, concise and makes the listener respond in a positive manner or to attract the listener's attention, hold attention and make the listener respond in a positive way.

CRITERIA:

- Upload audio file(s) or provide link to the radio/audio program.
- Only one radio/audio program may be submitted. If a series of radio/audio programs were developed, describe in the abstract how the entry fits into the series.
- Individual/team must produce the program.
- May include radio programs, podcasts, etc. that are not part of a video. If available, include a transcript of the program.

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
RADIO/AUDIO PROGRAM		
Is the subject matter practical, educational or promotional, and presented clearly and concisely?	15	
Is the radio/audio program timely and purposeful? Is the radio/audio program appropriate for the intended audience?	10	
Do opening remarks attract the attention of the audience and arouse their interest?	10	
Do questions or topics discussed flow freely, making a smooth transition that is easy to follow? Do topics follow one another in a logical sequence?	10	
Is the “close” friendly and direct? Does it prompt the listener to “tune in” in the future?	10	
Does the entire show have sparkle, a personality? Does enthusiasm show and does information get across to the audience?	10	
Does the technical quality of the recording meet broadcast standards? Is the recording crisp and clear, not garbled? Was the recording level properly set and maintained?	10	

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EXTENTION
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

SOCIAL MEDIA PACKAGE/CAMPAIGN

Individual and Team Categories

PURPOSE:

To attract audience member's attention and make them respond in a positive way. This entry may be promotional or educational.

CRITERIA:

- Entry must consist of two or more social media items such as video, posts, photos, graphics, etc.
- Identify the items in your abstract.
- All components of the social media package/campaign must be a part of the same program/event.
- Please include links and or screenshots of all items in a support materials document – up to 3 pages allowed.

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
SOCIAL MEDIA PACKAGE/CAMPAIGN		
Designed to make the reader respond in some positive manner	20	
Content is concise yet holds all essential information	15	
Content attracts immediate interest and holds attention of user	15	
Elements are visually appealing (neat and clear); Effective use of design and layout (white space, fonts etc.)	15	
Do all pieces complement each other?	10	

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EXTENTION
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

SOCIAL MEDIA PIECE

Individual and Team Categories

PURPOSE:

To attract audience member's attention and make them respond in a positive way. This entry may be promotional or educational.

CRITERIA:

- Entry consists of one social media item such as video, post, photo, graphic, etc.
- Please include links and or screenshots of item in a support materials document

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
SOCIAL MEDIA PIECE		
Designed to make the reader respond in some positive manner	20	
Content is concise yet holds all essential information	15	
Content attracts immediate interest and holds attention of user	20	
Elements are visually appealing (neat and clear); Effective use of design and layout (white space, fonts etc.)	20	

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EXTENTION
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

VIDEO

PURPOSE:

To provide educational or promotional information that is accurate, concise, and makes the listener respond in a positive manner or to attract the listener's attention, hold attention and make the listener respond in a positive way.

CRITERIA:

- Either pre-recorded illustrated or live (do not include media voice overs on slide presentations). Video recordings with voice over are acceptable.
- A video entry should be developed using a storyboard, outline or script. Describe the development process in the abstract. Impromptu video or news interviews will NOT be considered. The applicant(s) should have a significant role in planning and preparing for the piece, but it can be professionally produced.
- Upload video file or provide a link to the video.
- Only one video may be submitted. If a series of videos were developed, describe in the abstract how the entry fits into the series.

	POINTS POSSIBLE	ACTUAL POINTS
ABSTRACT		
Objectives, Target Audience, Current Population	10	
Methods Used	5	
Impact Results	5	
Information on the role the applicant had in the entry, Publisher's Requirements, Production Costs	5	
VIDEO		
Content is accurate, credible and research based, as applies. Content designed to make user understand/become aware/informed, educated.	20	
The subject matter is mainly aimed at a 4-H audience, but also appealing to the general public. If intended for general public as a promotional piece, does it accomplish this goal?	10	
Opening remarks (audio and visual) attract the attention of the audience and arouse their interest.	10	
Questions or topics discussed flow freely, making a smooth transition that is easy to follow. Topics follow one another in logical sequence.	10	
Enthusiasm shows in the video. Information gets across to the audience. There is enough variation in voice quality to keep the show from becoming monotonous.	10	
The technical quality of of the recording met broadcast standard, is crisp and clear, not garbled or blurry. The recording level was properly set and maintained?	15	