

# PREPARING TO BE A PROFESSIONAL CURRICULUM

*Developed by:*

*Allie Griner, Gordon County 4-H/Extension Agent  
& Abbie Salmon, Floyd County 4-H/Extension Agent*

This curriculum is a series of lessons developed by University of Georgia faculty to teach youth basic professionalism skills. These lessons provide simple guidelines and practical activities for all youth to learn to present themselves to others as a professional. The target audience is 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade youth. Each of these lessons can be used as standalone lessons, or the curriculum can be taught as a whole. There is not an order to the lessons, though some lessons may naturally relate to or refer to other lessons in the curriculum.

### Professional Communication

- Lesson Plan
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Student Handout
- Lesson Evaluation (Paper and Qualtrics Versions)
- Pre-Recorded Video Lesson

### Professional Dress

- Lesson Plan
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Student Handout
- Lesson Evaluation (Paper and Qualtrics Versions)
- Pre-Recorded Video Lesson

### Interviews

- Lesson Plan
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Student Handout
- Lesson Evaluation (Paper and Qualtrics Versions)
- Pre-Recorded Video Lesson

### Thank You Notes

- Lesson Plan Presentation
- PowerPoint
- Student Handout
- Lesson Evaluation (Paper and Qualtrics Versions)
- Pre-Recorded Video Lesson



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# Georgia 4-H Lesson Plan

**Title of the Lesson:** Preparing to Be a Professional-Interviews 101

**Submitted by:**

- Allie Griner, Gordon County 4-H Agent
- Abbie Salmon, Floyd County 4-H Agent

**Contact Information:** allie723@uga.edu

**Grade Level(s):** 9th-12th

**Subject(s):** Career Readiness/Workforce Preparedness

**Estimated Time to Prepare the Lesson:** 5 minutes

**Estimated Time for Lesson Delivery:** 30 minutes

**Description/Lesson Overview:** Interviews are a standard form of communication in the professional world. Most jobs require candidates to go through an interview process and often scholarships or awards may require interviews of their top candidates. During this lesson, youth will learn about how to prepare for these opportunities and present themselves in the best light as a professional.

**Objectives:**

*After participating in this lesson, the youth will be able to:*

- Define a professional interview
- List at least 3 ways to prepare for a professional interview
- Name at least 3 recommended things to do during and after the professional interview
- Write and present an elevator speech

**Materials:**

- Pencils/pens
- 1 copy per youth of enclosed Interviews 101 Tip Sheet with Elevator Speech Template

**Preparation:**

Make needed copies of Interviews 101 Tip Sheet with Elevator Speech Template

**Vocabulary:**

- Interview - a formal meeting in which one or more persons question, consult, or evaluate another person



## Procedure:

*Note: You can provide the Interviews 101 Tip Sheet with Elevator Speech Template at the beginning of the lesson for youth to take notes, or on Slide 10 when you have youth write the elevator speech.*

*[Slide 1 – Tell Me About Yourself]*

Interviews are a standard form of communication in the professional world. Most jobs require candidates to go through an interview process and often scholarships and awards also require interviews of their top candidates. Today we are going to talk about how you can prepare for these opportunities and present yourself in the best light as a professional. Can you tell me some of the times you have been interviewed? What were you being interviewed for?

*[Take answers as youth talk about their previous experiences with interviewing]*

*[Slide 2 – What is an Interview?]*

So, what is an interview? In its simplest definition, an interview is a conversation between two people where one person is trying to get information about something from the other person, such as qualifications for a position (think of jobs or awards), knowledge about a topic or event (think of informational interviews you do for your DPA project), or their opinion on an issue (think of a media interview of a well-known person). Today we will be focusing specifically on the first kind, interviews related to professional settings.

*[Slide 3 – How to Prepare]*

Preparation for an interview is key. Even though you are talking about yourself, you will want to be prepared to answer questions in a way that reflects your best qualities. To do that, here are some tips:

- Know your topic – review the application and resumé/portfolio you submitted, or materials related to the subject of the interview. Because this information is the starting point of what the interviewer knows about you, you can expect questions about these items.
- Know your audience – who is interviewing you, and what are they looking for? If you are interviewing for a job as an administrative assistant, you will want to make sure you highlight your organizational skills, but if you are interviewing for a scholarship related to leadership, you will want to instead focus on your experience as a club officer or a teen leader.
- Have 2-3 points of pride to highlight – based off of knowing your audience, make sure you know what things you do want to mention during the course of the interview. If you are interviewing for the leadership scholarship, plan to try to work your experience as a camp teen leader or a club officer into an answer to the question, even if they don't directly ask you about that particular item on your application
- Plan to ask questions at the end or have a final statement – often interviews will end with a question from the interviewer that says “Do you have any questions for us?” or “Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't asked you about?” Always have at least one question for the interviewers that shows you have taken your time to research about the position or award. It could be something like “I saw on your website that you are starting a new program. Could you tell me a little



more about that?” or about the application process itself “When should I expect to hear back from you following all the interviews?” If they ask if you have anything else to share, this time is a great one to add in a statement about one of your points of pride that you did not get to mention in the interview.

- Practice, practice, practice – as with everything else, the more you interview, the better you get at it. Practice often with your parents, your 4-H agent, even your friends can give you interview questions that get you used to answering questions live. You can find lists of questions using a simple Internet search for “interview questions.”
- On the day of the interview, you can do a few things to help your interview preparation
  - First, be on time; plan to arrive 10 minutes early, so that you show your interviewer you are punctual and to give yourself time to take a moment to relax prior to your interview.
  - Also, you can do a [power pose](#). [Play the video] Our body language matters a lot, even to ourselves, so having a chance to put your body and mind in a place where you feel confident can help your interview tremendously.

#### [Slide 4 – First Impressions]

From the moment you meet your interviewer, your interview has begun. It is important to realize that first impressions are crucial in setting the tone of the interview, and are formed in the first three seconds of meeting someone.

- Your appearance plays a major role in setting the tone for a good first impression. Some ways to give a good first impression include:
  - Dress professionally from top to bottom. Make sure your clothes are clean and ironed, and that you are wearing clothing and shoes appropriate to the situation. It is always better to be more formal than less, so a good rule of thumb for what to wear to an interview is:
    - For guys – suit and dress pants, nice shirt, tie, matching dress shoes & socks
    - For ladies – dress/pants suit/professional blouse and dress pants or skirt, matching dress shoes that are close-toed and low-heeled
  - Eliminate distractions like tattoos, piercings, excessive jewelry, facial hair. You want to highlight your personal accomplishments rather than your appearance. An interview is not the time to make a personal statement. If you get the job, then you can express yourself more freely.
  - Get rid of the gum!
- First impressions also include your body language. We talked about your power pose before the interview to make you feel more confident. Once you meet your interviewer, you will also want to do the following to indicate positive body language:
  - Smile and make eye contact
  - Firm handshake with each interviewer
  - Have good posture
  - Walk with confidence
  - Do not sit until interviewer sits or you are invited to do so
- Finally, your demeanor is also evaluated in those first three seconds. You will want to be:
  - Friendly and enthusiastic, not standoff-ish or monotone



- Relaxed and happy to be there
- Confident but not arrogant – no name-dropping or acting better than anyone
- Watch what you say, everywhere – avoid foul language and inappropriate topics, even while you are waiting for the interview, as the other staff members are watching you as well

### *[Slide 5 – During the Interview]*

Once the interview begins, a few tips to keep in mind include:

- Speak to each interviewer, not just one; you don't want to ignore anyone, include everyone in the conversation.
- Think about the question before answering; It is okay to pause to gather your thoughts. You also do not want to interrupt the interviewer by anticipating the question, and eliminate “um” or “er” from your vocabulary.
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question. It is better to ask and answer the correct question than to misunderstand and answer the wrong question and give information the interviewer is not looking for.
- Thoroughly answer the questions, so not just a yes or no, but add some detail to your answer. However, get to the point of your details and do not ramble. You will want to explain acronyms or terms that are not common to everyone. Assume they are educated, but not experts in everything that you have done. Also, if they ask a yes or no question, start your answer with “Yes” not “Yeah” and then add your few details.
- Answer questions honestly but positively. Be honest in your interview, even about your faults, but frame things positively. Don't oversell or undersell yourself, and avoid sarcasm and negativity.
- Keep your composure – stay calm and don't fidget. Keep your hands in your lap or use them as you are talking.
- Make a connection with the interviewer – remember, you are just having a conversation with another person, so if they mention something that interests you, it is okay to indicate your interest. For example, if the interviewer notices your 4-H experience on your application and says that they were a 4-H'er too, you can say something such as “That's great! What kinds of things did you do in 4-H?”

### *[Slide 6 – At the End of the Interview]*

At the end of the interview, there are appropriate ways to conclude your time with the interviewer.

Before you leave:

- Thank them for the interview
- Shake hands with each interviewer again

After you leave:

- Consider sending the interviewer a thank you note. By sending a thank-you note, you show your interviewer common courtesy and respect. So few job applicants send thank-you notes that you automatically stand out if you do and it gives you a chance to make points you forgot to make in your interview and reiterate points too



## *[Slide 7 – Tips for Virtual Interviews]*

Many interviews are now moving to virtual formats. There are a few additional tips for participating in a virtual interview.

- First, keep your camera still. It is okay to use a phone to do a virtual interview, but prop the phone up somewhere to where you are not having to hold it in your hands.
- Make sure the video is focused directly on your face, not looking down or up on you.
- Check your background – you will want to make sure it is clutter free and any thing that can be seen in the background is appropriate.
- Have a fidget item – While many of us use our hands to express ourselves when we talk, that gets lost on video and it just looks like you are moving around a lot. If you don't know what to do with your hands, it is okay for you to have a fidget item in your hands as long as it can't be seen in the video to keep you still instead of moving around.

## *[Slide 8 – Common Questions are Common]*

As we said, interviews are just conversations where someone is getting information from you, but they get that information through asking questions. There are several questions that are very common that we will talk about today, but also know that there are thousands of questions an interviewer can ask to get the information they are wanting, so you will not be able to anticipate every question. However, these are some of the few questions you can expect.

- Tell me about yourself. – this question is often the first one you get in an interview, so you will want to have an answer ready for this open-ended question. We are going to talk on our next slide about a great way to prepare an answer for this question.
- Why do you want this job/scholarship? – this question asks for your motivation as to why you are applying.
- Why do you feel you are the most qualified? – this question is one that asks you to highlight your best qualities AS RELATED TO THE JOB/AWARD. This question is a great one for you to share your points of pride you have already identified.
- What is your greatest strength? – don't be arrogant, but honestly state something RELATED TO THE JOB/AWARD that you do well.
- What is your greatest weakness? – on this question, again, be honest, but because you are talking about something that doesn't present you in the best light, also include what you do to help yourself overcome this weakness.
- If you could be any animal, tool, food, what would you be? – we call this question an imagination question; it sees how you can think on your feet and get at your personality; the answer to the question is not as important as how you are able to frame it in relation to the topic of the interview.
- Is there anything you would like to add? – we mentioned before that this question is a standard one for ending an interview; again, you can highlight a point of pride you didn't have a chance to mention before. Or if they ask instead if you have any questions, you can have a question ready for them.







*[Slide 9 – Elevator Speech]*

I mentioned on the last slide that we were going to have a great way to prepare for the “tell me about yourself” question. The answer to that question is something that we call an elevator speech, also known as your personal commercial.

- It is a clear, brief message about yourself, typically around 30 seconds.
- As we said, it answers the tell me about yourself question, but it can also be used as an introduction to others in professional settings, such as potential employers at a career fair, a networking event, or even the donors meet and greet at 4-H State Congress. The reason it is called an elevator speech is that it was meant for you to be able to introduce yourself to someone if someone you were excited to meet got on an elevator with you, and you only had the elevator ride to introduce yourself.
- The parts of an elevator speech include:
  - Who you are – your first and last name
  - Your current situation – where you have been working or what you have been working on
  - What is your goal – why you are applying for this job/award, or where you are hoping to go in the future
  - Why you are the best candidate – a chance to highlight those points of pride and gain someone’s support

*[Slide 10 – Let’s Practice]*

Write your elevator speech using the provided template and then practice with a partner by asking each other “Tell me about yourself.”

*[Give participants 10-15 minutes to write their elevator speech and practice with each other]*

Would anyone like to volunteer to give their elevator speech to the group?

*[Take a few volunteers]*

*[Slide 11 – An interview is not a test of your knowledge, but your ability to use it at the right time]*

Remember the key is not to have the answer to every possible question, even your elevator pitch, memorized, but to be able to respond to your interviewer’s questions with thoughtful answers. As we stated at the beginning, an interview is just a conversation where the goal is to share meaningful information with the other person. After today’s lesson, I hope you feel more prepared to have those conversations as you seek awards, scholarships, and jobs.

**Useful Resources for More Information:**

- UGA Career Center – [www.career.uga.edu](http://www.career.uga.edu)

**Suggestions to Condense the Lesson:**

- Have youth complete the elevator speech template on their own at home



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[georgia4h.org](http://georgia4h.org) | 1-800-ASK-UGA1

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**Suggestions for Expanding the Lesson:**

- Have youth practice interviewing each other with the list of common questions on Slide 8 – Common Questions are Common

**References/Credits:**

QuickTalks. (2016, February 26). Amy Cuddy - More confidence in 2 minutes (Condensed Talk). [YouTube video]. QuickTalks. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7dWsJ-mEyl>

**GA Counts Keywords:**

Career Exploration, Communication, Job Skills, Oral Communication, Workforce Preparation

4HC1



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Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I am currently \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(what are you doing now i.e. grade in school, current job, etc.)

and my goal is to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(what is your goal AS RELATED TO THIS JOB/AWARD?)

Over the past few years, I have

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(give examples of your RELATED work/volunteer experience)

with \_\_\_\_\_ as the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(company/organization) (position/role)

Through these experiences, I have developed a better understanding of

\_\_\_\_\_  
(subject)

as well as learned \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(skills/knowledge)

that I hope to use in the future.

**An interview is a conversation between you and someone who is getting information from you**

### **How to Prepare**

- Know your topic
- Know your audience
- Have 2-3 points of pride to highlight
- Plan to ask questions at the end or have a final statement
- Practice, practice, practice
- Day of:
  - Be on time; plan to arrive 10 minutes early
  - Do a power pose

### **First Impressions**

It only takes three seconds to form an opinion

- Your appearance
- Your body language
- Your demeanor

### **During the Interview**

- Speak to each interviewer
- Think about the question before answering
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question
- Thoroughly answer questions, but get to the point
- Answer questions honestly but positively
- Keep your composure
- Make a connection with the interviewer

### **At the End of the Interview**

Before You Leave

- Thank them for the interview
- Shake hands with each interviewer again

After You Leave

- Consider sending the interviewer a thank you note if appropriate

### **Tips for Virtual Interviews**

- Keep camera still
- Video focused on your face
- Check your background
- Have a fidget item



**Preparing to Be a Professional: Interviews**  
Lesson Evaluation

Please select the appropriate response regarding your level of confidence in accomplishing the following tasks	<u>Before</u>				<u>After</u>			
	This Lesson				This Lesson			
1 – Not At All Confident,    2. Somewhat Confident,    3. Confident,    4. Very Confident	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Define a professional interview								
2. List at least 3 ways to prepare for a professional interview								
3. Name at least 3 recommended things to do during and after an interview								
4. Write and present an elevator speech								

**In one or two sentences, complete the following:**

The most important thing I learned is...

One thing the presenters might change for next time...

One thing the presenters should definitely keep for next time...

**Information About You:**    Grade: \_\_\_\_\_    Gender: \_\_\_\_\_    Number of Years in 4-H: \_\_\_\_\_

# TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

And Make It Sound Good!

Interviews 101



# WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

## A CONVERSATION...



...between you and someone who is getting information from you, such as:

- Qualifications for a position
- Knowledge about a topic or event
- Opinion on an issue



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# HOW TO PREPARE



- Know your topic
- Know your audience
- Have 2-3 points of pride to highlight
- Plan to ask questions at the end or have a final statement
- Practice, practice, practice
- Day of:
  - Be on time; plan to arrive 10 minutes early
  - Do a [power pose](#)



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# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

**It only takes 3 seconds to form an opinion**

- Your appearance
- Your body language
- Your demeanor



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# DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Speak to each interviewer
- Think about the question before answering
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question
- Thoroughly answer questions, but get to the point
- Answer questions honestly but positively
- Keep your composure
- Make a connection with the interviewer



# AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW

## Before You Leave

- Thank them for the interview
- Shake hands again

## After You Leave

- Consider sending the interviewer a thank you note if appropriate



# TIPS FOR VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

- Keep camera still
- Video focused on your face
- Check your background
- Have a fidget item



# COMMON QUESTIONS ARE COMMON

## But also expect the unexpected



Tell me about yourself.

Why do you want this job/scholarship?

Why do you feel you are the most qualified?

What is your greatest strength?

What is your greatest weakness?

If you could be any animal, tool, food, etc. what would you be?

Is there anything you would like to add?



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# ELEVATOR SPEECH

## AKA Your Personal Commercial



- Clear, brief message about yourself
- Answers the tell me about yourself question
- Can also use it as an introduction to others
- Parts
  - Who you are
  - Your current situation
  - What is your goal
  - Why you are the best candidate



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LET'S PRACTICE





**AN INTERVIEW IS NOT A TEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE,  
BUT YOUR ABILITY TO USE IT AT THE RIGHT TIME**



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# REFERENCES

1. QuickTalks. (2016, February 26). Amy Cuddy - More confidence in 2 minutes (Condensed Talk). [YouTube video]. QuickTalks. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7dWsJ-mEyl>



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# Georgia 4-H Lesson Plan

**Title of the Lesson:** Preparing to Be a Professional-Professional Communications 101

**Submitted by:**

- Allie Griner, Gordon County 4-H Agent
- Abbie Salmon, Floyd County 4-H Agent

**Contact Information:** allie723@uga.edu

**Grade Level(s):** 9th-12th

**Subject(s):** Career Readiness/Workforce Preparedness

**Estimated Time to Prepare the Lesson:** 5 minutes

**Estimated Time for Lesson Delivery:** 30 minutes

**Description/Lesson Overview:** Communication is the sharing of information with others. The information we share and how we share it with our friends and our family is different from what and how we share information with people we are interacting with in a professional setting. While with our friends and family, we can use casual and informal ways of communicating, including slang, humor, and sarcasm, but in the professional world, it is a more formal setting and there are general guidelines you are expected to follow in order to present a positive image to others. During this lesson, youth will learn about these guidelines related to phone and email communication and how to conduct themselves as a professional in these types of interactions.

**Objectives:**

*After participating in this lesson, the youth will be able to:*

- List at least 3 tips for making a professional phone call
- List at least 3 tips for writing a professional email
- Write a request for a professional reference/recommendation letter

**Materials:**

- Pencils/pens
- 1 copy per youth of enclosed Professional Communication 101 Tip Sheet with Requesting a Recommendation Template & Checklist

**Preparation:**

Make needed copies of Professional Communication 101 Tip Sheet with Requesting a Recommendation Template & Checklist





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## Procedure:

*Note: You can provide the Professional Communication 101 Tip Sheet with Requesting a Recommendation Template & Checklist at the beginning of the lesson for youth to take notes, or on Slide 10 when you have youth complete the template for a request for a recommendation letter.*

### *[Slide 1 – Hey Bruh...And Other Things Professionals Don't Say]*

Communication is the sharing of information with others. The information we share and how we share it with our friends and our family is different from what and how we share information with people we are interacting with in a professional setting. While with our friends and family, we can use casual and informal ways of communicating, including slang, humor, and sarcasm, but in the professional world, it is a more formal setting and there are general guidelines you are expected to follow in order to present a positive image to others.

Today we are going to talk about some of these guidelines related to phone and email communication and how you can conduct yourself as a professional in these types of interactions.

### *[Slide 2 – How to Make a Phone Call]*

While making a phone call may seem as basic as typing in the numbers and pushing send, there is more to think about when making a phone call as a professional.

- The first thing to think about is when are you making the call. Professionals typically have standard working hours and it is inappropriate to call them before or after that time. If you are calling a business, you would want to call during business hours, which is typically 8AM-5PM. If you are calling an individual directly, a good rule of thumb is to call no earlier than 9AM and no later than 7PM.
- Once you have dialed the number and someone answers the phone, introduce yourself with your first and last name and ask for who you wish to speak to. You may have a name of a person you want to talk to, or you may know that you need to talk to the person in charge of something, you can ask for that person by position. For example, “My name is Jessica Smith and I would like to speak to the 4-H agent in Clover County.”
- Once you get the right person on the phone, then have your conversation. Give more than one-word answers, because phone microphones may not pick up completely, so the person you are talking to will be able to understand your answer. Also, if you didn't hear what the other person said, don't sit in silence. Instead say, “I'm sorry. I didn't catch that. Could please you say it again?”
- At the end of the call when you both have the information you needed from the call, thank them for their time.
- If the person is not available, but someone answers the phone, ask to leave a message or ask when a good time to call them back would be. If no one answers but you get a voice mailbox, state your full name and number and reason for calling. Many people now do not answer their phones if they do not recognize a number, so leaving a voicemail may be the only way you are able to get a response from the individual.



- If you haven't heard back from them in a few days, give them a call back. They may not have received your message, but be sure not to call too soon as the person may be on vacation or sick and not returning calls at that time.

### *[Slide 3 – Other Phone Tips]*

A few other phone tips for professionals:

- If someone calls you, and especially if they leave a message, call them back. Also, communicate back with them in the way that they first communicated with you. If they call you, call them back, do not text. If they text you first, then it is okay to reply by text.
- Make sure your voicemail greeting message is appropriate - record a professional greeting that states your full name, what message you would like the caller to leave you, and state how you will follow up. Take off all ring-back tones and do not have extraneous noise in the background of your message.
- When speaking to someone in person or in a professional situation, silence your phone and put it away. This action shows respect for the other person and that you are giving them your full attention.
- The 10-foot rule means that if you are with a group of people and you need to take a call, you need to step at least 10 feet away from the group so that your phone conversation does not interfere with the in-person conversation
- As a note, texting is not yet considered a professional method of communication. It is becoming more common and may soon become an accepted practice, but it is recommended that you do not use text as your first method of communication with someone in a professional setting unless they text you first.

### *[Slide 4 – How to Write an Email]*

Email is another method of communication and one that it is important to handle professionally, as much of business is handled via email. The most important thing to keep in mind when you write an email is to treat it more like a business letter than a text. While it is electronic messages, it is a formal method of communication and should be treated as such. A checklist for writing an email can be seen here.

- First, make sure your email address is one that looks professional. [jsmith@gmail.com](mailto:jsmith@gmail.com) is better than [sassyclover1282@gmail.com](mailto:sassyclover1282@gmail.com).
- Use a clear subject line. The subject line lets your recipient know what the email message is about before they even open the email. Always include a subject, and make sure it is specific rather than vague. A subject line stating Question about Job Posting #297 is better than just Question.
- Use standard punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar in paragraph style with no acronyms.
- Use standard fonts or colors and leave out emojis.

These first four points also help your message to be recognized as a legitimate email rather than a spam message.

- In the actual email message, start with a salutation like Hi, Hello, or Dear with the person's name. In professional settings, this is typically a Dr., Mr., or Ms. followed by their last name.
- Add a touch of humanity – this statement means to acknowledge that you are talking to another person, not just a computer screen. This can be something common that you share, like if you are



emailing one of your high school's teachers, you can say something like "I'm sure you're excited about spring break coming up, I know I am!" If you don't know them well, you can just say something like "I hope you're doing well."

- Introduce yourself and who you are to them if you don't know them well – Hi my name is Jessica Smith and I'm interested in your job posting #297.
- Get to the point of why you're emailing within 1-2 sentences. "I am looking for the address where I need to submit my completed job application."
- Do your part in solving what you need to solve – make sure you have already done all you can to find the answer before asking someone's help. You can tell them what you have already done so they don't suggest that as the answer to your problem "I have already looked on the position announcement and your website, but haven't been able to locate it."
- Be specific and polite in your request – giving them a clear action to take will make it easy for them to respond to your email and give you a higher likelihood of a reply. You also want to be reasonable and respectful, rather than whiny and demanding. "Will you please send me the mailing address of where I should send the application?" sounds much better than "Send me the address. I can't turn in my application."
- A closing of "Sincerely" or "Thanks" followed by your first and last name is an appropriate way to end an email.

While all of this list sounds very formal, understand that it is better if you are too formal than if you are too informal.

*[Slide 5 – What's Wrong with this Email?]*

So let's look at this email and based on the checklist we just went over, I want you to tell me what's wrong with it.

*[Take answers from the participants; nearly everything on the list is not followed here]*

*[Slide 6 – Professional Example]*

Great job pointing out all that was wrong with that email! We are going to look at this example of a person with the same problem needing to be solved, but did so in a much more professional manner. Can you tell me what this person did right in composing this email?

*[Again, take answers here. This email is written to all standards as listed on the checklist.]*

*[Slide 7 – Other Email Tips]*

Here are some additional email tips to keep in mind.

- First, don't expect an instant response. Email is meant to be a way to communicate with someone electronically, but it is not an instant message. Typical response time is 24-48 hours. If a need is urgent, consider calling them instead. With that being said, you also need to work to be proactive on tasks and not wait until the last minute to email for something that you need. Send an email with enough time



for them to be able to reply with what you need. You can send follow-up emails as needed to check in , but do give them adequate time to respond to you first.

- When someone does reply to you, send a brief thank you email as a response.
- If someone emails you, email them back – it is respectful to respond to someone who has communicated with you. As in the phone tip section, communicate back with them in the way that they first communicated with you, so if they emailed you, respond by email.

### *[Slide 8 – Tips to Request a Reference/Recommendation Letter]*

There are a few guidelines you should follow when requesting a professional reference or recommendation letter. First, choose someone that knows you well; specific letters are better than general ones.

Also, always make sure to ask the person for each reference or recommendation letter you need. Ask early, at least 2 weeks before you need it, to give them plenty of time; ask even if they are just listed as a reference and don't need to write a letter. You also want to make sure they are going to give you a positive recommendation. It's better for you to find out before they write a negative one for you.

Give the recommender the following information:

- The title and description of what you are applying for
- The format and submission requirements of the recommendation
- The deadline for the recommendation
- A copy of your resume or portfolio, or a couple of key points you want them to highlight about you – make it easy on your recommender by helping them know what you want them to write about

Follow up before the deadline – around 3 days or so before you need the letter, just to double check that it is submitted or to give them an additional reminder, do not harass them ahead of time. Three days also gives you time to find someone else, but realize you are putting that second person in a time crunch

Once your application is complete, send a thank you note to show them your appreciation for their time and effort on your behalf, and let them know the outcome of the application.

### *[Slide 9 – What's Wrong with this Email?]*

As in our general professional email examples, I would like for you to review this request for a recommendation letter and tell me what is wrong with it based on the checklist we just reviewed for requesting recommendation letters.

*[Take answers here; almost all of the checklist items have not been followed]*

### *[Slide 10 – Let's Practice]*

Because this example is one you will likely use in the future, it is now your turn to write a request for a recommendation letter. You can choose who you are asking to write your recommendation letter and what you are applying for, and using the template provided, create for yourself an example of a professional way to ask for a recommendation letter.







[Give participants about 5-10 minutes to complete the template]

[Slide 11 – Communication – the human connection – is the key to personal and career success]

Would anyone like to share what they gained from today’s activity? Anything you all would like to share? As this quote states, communication is the critical piece to forming strong relationships, both personal and professional. Today I hope you have learned more about how to communicate in a professional manner and will be more confident the next time you need to say “Hello Mr. Smith” instead of “hey bruh”.

**Useful Resources for More Information:**

- UGA Career Center – [www.career.uga.edu](http://www.career.uga.edu)

**Suggestions to Condense the Lesson:**

- Have youth complete the recommendation letter request template on their own at home

**Suggestions for Expanding the Lesson:**

- Have youth practice making professional phone calls with a partner

**References/Credits:**

Corrigan, Paul T. & Nabb, C.H. (2015, April 16). Re: Your Recent Email to Your Professor. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay>

Recommendation Letter Etiquette: Guidelines for Requesting a Faculty Reference. (n.d.) *Seattle Pacific University*. Retrieved from <https://spu.edu/depts/eng/documents/RECOMMENDATIONLETTEREtiquette.pdf>

**GA Counts Keywords:**

- Career Exploration
- Communication
- Job Skills
- Oral Communication
- Written Communication
- Workforce Preparation

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## How to Make a Phone Call

- Call within reasonable hours
- Introduce yourself and ask for who you wish to speak to
- Have your conversation
  - Give more than one-word answers
  - Ask for clarification if you don't hear something the person said
- Thank them for their time at the end of the call
- If they are not available:
  - Leave a message with the person answering the phone, or ask when a good time to call back would be
  - Voicemails – Speak clearly while stating full name, number and reason for calling.

## Other Phone Tips

- If someone calls you, call them back
- Make sure your voicemail greeting message is appropriate
- When speaking to someone in person or in a professional situation, silence your phone and put it away
- Follow the 10-foot rule
- Texting is not yet considered a professional method of communication

## How to Write an Email

Treat as a business letter

- Have a professional email address
- Use a clear subject line
- Use standard punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar in paragraph style
- Use standard fonts or colors
- Use a salutation like Hi, Hello, or Dear with name
- Add a touch of humanity
- Introduce yourself if you don't know them well
- State why you are emailing
- Do your part in solving what you need to solve
- Be specific and polite in your request
- Closing with full first and last name

## Other Email Tips

- Don't expect an instant response
- When they do reply, send a brief thank you
- Check your email regularly
- If someone emails you, email them back



# Requesting a Recommendation

## Template & Checklist

---

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am applying for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (list title and give a brief description of job position/award)

Would you be willing to give me a positive recommendation for this application? The application packet is due \_\_\_\_\_ and I would appreciate it if you would be willing to write me a recommendation letter. The letter must be

\_\_\_\_\_

(list format/submission requirements here)

I have included my résumé/4-H portfolio, and a few things I would like you to highlight are:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(write a few points to highlight related to job/award)

Please let me know if you are willing to write this letter for me. I sincerely appreciate your support.

Thank you,

(YOUR NAME HERE)

### CHECKLIST

#### Did you...

- Choose someone who knows you well?
- Ask the person, are you willing to give me a positive recommendation for...?
- Give the recommender the following information?
  - Title and description of what you are applying for
  - Format and submission requirements of the recommendation
  - Deadline for the recommendation
  - A copy of a résumé or portfolio; a couple of key points you want them to highlight about you
- Follow up a few days before the deadline to confirm that the recommendation was sent or to remind them to complete



# Requesting a Recommendation

## Template & Checklist

---

- Send a thank you note to show your appreciation for their time and effort on your behalf and let them know the outcome of your application



Preparing to Be a Professional: Professional Communication  
Lesson Evaluation

Please select the appropriate response regarding your level of confidence in accomplishing the following tasks	Before This Lesson				After This Lesson			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1 – Not At All Confident,    2. Somewhat Confident,    3. Confident,    4. Very Confident								
1. List at least 3 tips for making a professional phone call								
2. List at least 3 tips for writing a professional email								
3. Write a request for a professional reference/recommendation letter								

In one or two sentences, complete the following:

The most important thing I learned is...

One thing the presenters might change for next time...

One thing the presenters should definitely keep for next time...

Information About You: Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Years in 4-H: \_\_\_\_\_

# HEY BRUH...

## AND OTHER THINGS PROFESSIONALS DON'T SAY

**Professional Communication 101**

# HOW TO MAKE A PHONE CALL



- Call within reasonable hours
- Introduce yourself and ask for who you wish to speak to
- Have your conversation
  - Give more than one-word answers
  - Ask for clarification if you don't hear something the person said
- Thank them for their time at the end of the call
- If they are not available:
  - Leave a message with the person answering the phone, or ask when a good time to call back would be
  - Voicemails – state full name and number and reason for calling



# OTHER PHONE TIPS



- If someone calls you, call them back
- Make sure your voicemail greeting message is appropriate
- When speaking to someone in person or in a professional situation, silence your phone and put it away
- Follow the 10-foot rule
- Texting is not yet considered a professional method of communication



# HOW TO WRITE AN EMAIL

## Treat as a Business Letter

- Have a professional email address
- Use a clear subject line
- Use standard punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar in paragraph style
- Use standard fonts or colors
- Use a salutation like Hi, Hello, or Dear with name
- Add a touch of humanity
- Introduce yourself if you don't know them well
- State why you are emailing
- Do your part in solving what you need to solve
- Be specific and polite in your request
- Closing with full first and last name



# WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS EMAIL?

Untitled - Message (HTML)

File Message Insert Options Format Text Review Help Tell me what you want to do

Clipboard Basic Text Names Include Tags Boomerang My Templates

We won't be able to deliver this message to [abcsmith@uga.edu](mailto:abcsmith@uga.edu) because the email address is no longer valid.

To... [abcsmith@uga.edu](mailto:abcsmith@uga.edu)

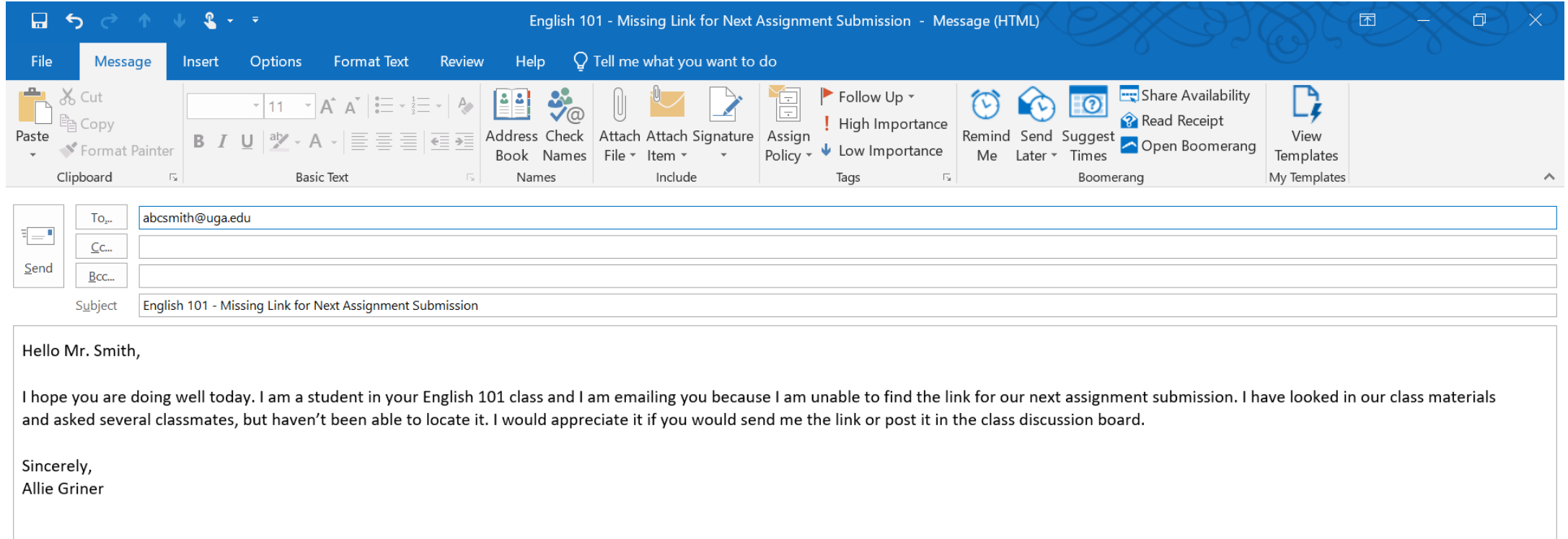
Cc...

Bcc...

Subject

[i cant](#) find the link. 😞 where is it

# PROFESSIONAL EXAMPLE



The screenshot shows an email client window titled "English 101 - Missing Link for Next Assignment Submission - Message (HTML)". The interface includes a ribbon with tabs for File, Message, Insert, Options, Format Text, Review, and Help. The Message tab is active, displaying various tools for text formatting, insertion, and actions. The email header shows the recipient as "abcsmith@uga.edu" and the subject as "English 101 - Missing Link for Next Assignment Submission". The body of the email contains a polite and professional message from a student.

English 101 - Missing Link for Next Assignment Submission - Message (HTML)

File Message Insert Options Format Text Review Help Tell me what you want to do

Cut Copy Paste Format Painter Clipboard

Basic Text

Names

Include

Tags

Follow Up

High Importance

Low Importance

Remind Me

Send Later

Suggest Times

Share Availability

Read Receipt

Open Boomerang

View Templates

My Templates

To... abcsmith@uga.edu

Cc...

Bcc...

Send

Subject English 101 - Missing Link for Next Assignment Submission

Hello Mr. Smith,

I hope you are doing well today. I am a student in your English 101 class and I am emailing you because I am unable to find the link for our next assignment submission. I have looked in our class materials and asked several classmates, but haven't been able to locate it. I would appreciate it if you would send me the link or post it in the class discussion board.

Sincerely,  
Allie Griner



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# OTHER EMAIL TIPS



- Don't expect an instant response
- When they do reply, send a brief thank you
- Check your email regularly
- If someone emails you, email them back



# TIPS TO REQUEST A REFERENCE/ RECOMMENDATION LETTER

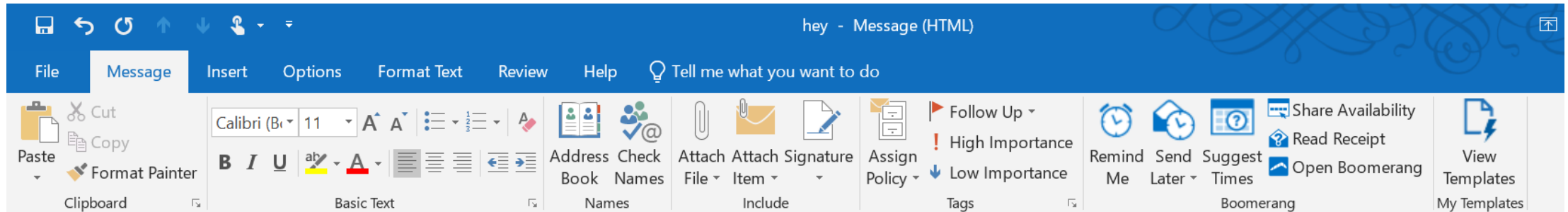
- Choose someone who knows you well
- Always ask the person early, are you willing to give me a *positive* recommendation for...?
- Give the recommender the following information:
  - Title and description of you are applying for
  - Format and submission requirements of the recommendation
  - Deadline for the recommendation
  - A copy of a resumé or portfolio, or a couple of key points you want them to highlight about you
- Follow up before the deadline
- Send a thank you note



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# WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS EMAIL?



 We won't be able to deliver this message to **abcsmith@uga.edu**  because the email address is no longer valid.

To...	<a href="mailto:abcsmith@uga.edu">abcsmith@uga.edu</a>
Cc...	
Bcc...	
Subject	hey

Can you write me a recommendation letter? I have to turn it in tomorrow. Thanks so much!

Allie



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LET'S PRACTICE



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# COMMUNICATION – *THE HUMAN CONNECTION* – IS THE KEY TO PERSONAL AND CAREER SUCCESS

PAUL J. MEYER



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# REFERENCES

1. Corrigan, Paul T. & Nabb, C.H. (2015, April 16). Re: Your Recent Email to Your Professor. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay>
2. Recommendation Letter Etiquette: Guidelines for Requesting a Faculty Reference. (n.d.) *Seattle Pacific University*. Retrieved from <https://spu.edu/depts/eng/documents/RECOMMENDATIONLETTEREtiquette.pdf>



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# Georgia 4-H Lesson Plan

**Title of the Lesson:** Preparing to Be a Professional-Professional Dress: Tips & Tricks to Be Your Best

**Submitted by:**

- Allie Griner, Gordon County 4-H Agent
- Abbie Salmon, Floyd County 4-H Agent

**Contact Information:** asalmon3@uga.edu

**Grade Level(s):** 9th-12th

**Subject(s):** Career Readiness/Workforce Preparedness

**Estimated Time to Prepare the Lesson:** 10 minutes

**Estimated Time for Lesson Delivery:** 45 minutes

**Description/Lesson Overview:** It takes just a glance for someone to evaluate you when you meet for the first time. With every new encounter, you are evaluated and yet another person's impression of you is formed. These first impressions can be nearly impossible to reverse or undo, making those first encounters extremely important, because they set the tone for all the relationships that follow. This lesson will provide tips and tricks for youth to better understand professional dress.

**Objectives:**

*After participating in this lesson, the youth will be able to:*

- Identify the differences between casual, business casual, and professional dress.
- Identify the appropriate occasions to wear each type of dress
- Follow the appropriate steps to tie a tie

**Materials:**

- Necktie per participant

**Preparation:**

Review PowerPoint materials. Collect neckties for participants.





## Procedure:

### *[Slide 1 – Professional Dress]*

You might have heard dress for the job you want not the job you have before. Hopefully, we all know this doesn't mean showing up for a job interview dressed like Spiderman. Today we are going to talk about how important it is to dress appropriately for the situation.

### *[Slide 2 – Making A Great First Impression]*

It takes just a quick glance, maybe three seconds, for someone to evaluate you when you meet for the first time.

- Even though we are taught to not judge a book by its cover this is a natural occurrence.
- In this short time, the other person forms an opinion about you based on your appearance, your body language, your demeanor, your mannerisms, and how you are dressed.
- With every new encounter, you are evaluated and yet another person's impression of you is formed. These first impressions can be nearly impossible to reverse or undo, making those first encounters extremely important, because they set the tone for all the relationships that follow.

So, whether they are in your career or social life, it's important to know how to create a good first impression. You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

### *[Slide 3 – The Basics]*

I know these are things your parents have probably said to you 1,000 times and the reason is they are important how we care for our bodies is an outward reflection of how we care for ourselves on the inside.

- Make sure to practice overall good hygiene. This means showering, brushing your teeth, combing your hair, shaving, and being well kept. Sometimes you may have to do these things more than just one time a day like after sports practice or eating Italian food. Also, don't forget the deodorant! However, remember that body spray doesn't take the place of deodorant and it's important to not wear too much!

### *[Slide 4 – Dress To Impress]*

When going into a professional situation like an interview, it's important to dress appropriately to the situation.

If you are interviewing for a job at a fast-food restaurant, a three-piece suit wouldn't necessarily be appropriate.

What do you think might be an appropriate dress for this situation?

*[Take time for participants to share]*



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You guys are definitely on to something. When we look at interviewing for a job we recommend that you wear the best attire for that profession.

- In this situation, you might consider a collared shirt and khakis or dress pants and a nice top.
- Also, it's important to maintain your professional appearance. While you might not dress as nicely for work each day as you do for an interview you should dress appropriately for your job. If your job requires a uniform, make sure to always wear your complete uniform. This might include specific shoes or a head covering.

Now when interviewing for an educational opportunity like a scholarship or college admission what do you think might be an appropriate dress?

*[Take time for participants to share]*

Thank you guys for your input. For this situation, we do recommend business professional or Sunday best attire. This would be dress/pants suit with tie/professional blouse and dress pants or skirt.

*[Slide 5 – Casual Dress]*

Now we are not saying that you have to constantly be in business attire all of the time. There is a time and place to be casual, comfortable, and dress for what you are doing.

- Casual attire is considered informal and suited for everyday use. Some things that are always considered casual are shorts, tennis shoes, athletic sandals, flip flops, tank tops, and t-shirts.

Where are some places that you might wear casual attire?

*[Take time for participants to share] Examples include: School, shopping, out to eat with friends, camp*

*[Slide 6 – Business Casual]*

Business casual is more formal than casual but less formal than professional dress. This type of dress still portrays a professional appearance but is typically more comfortable.

- For women business casual attire would include dress pants, khaki pants, knee-length skirts and dresses, polos, blouses, closed-toed shoes or sandals (not flip flops or athletic)
- For men business casual attire would include dress pants, khaki pants, collared shirts, closed-toed dress shoes (no tennis shoes), dress socks, and a belt. Jackets are not required.

Where are some places that you might wear business casual attire?

*[Take time for participants to share] Examples include: Office, church, school presentation, band concert*

*[Slide 7 – Business Professional Dress]*

Professional Dress is a formal dress code that you will often see worn in banks, law offices, other professional businesses.



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- For women, professional dress would include a skirt or pantsuit, closed-toed shoes, neutral blouse, or button-down shirt with minimal accessories.
- For men, professional dress would include a suit and tie with a button-down shirt. Dress shoes should also be worn with matching socks and a belt.
- For this type of dress for both men and women it is incredibly important that clothing fit appropriately and be freshly ironed.

Where are some places that you might wear professional attire?

*[Take time for participants to share] Examples include: Interview, giving a presentation, weddings, funerals, and other special events*

*[Slide 8 – Picture #1]*

Now we are going to play somewhat of a game. I want you guys to guess is the picture on the slide casual, business casual, or professional dress?

*[Allow participants time to answer. Discuss their response.]*

*(Answer: Professional Dress)*

*[Slide 9 – Picture #2]*

What about this picture?

*[Allow participants time to answer. Discuss their response.]*

*(Answer: Casual Dress)*

*[Slide 10 – Picture #3]*

What about this picture?

*[Allow participants time to answer. Discuss their response.]*

*(Answer: Casual Dress)*

*[Slide 11 – Picture #4]*

What about this picture?

*[Allow participants time to answer. Discuss their response.]*

*(Answer: Business Casual Dress)*



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[Slide 12 – Picture #5]  
What about this picture?

[Allow participants time to answer. Discuss their response.]

[Answer: Professional Dress]

*[Slide 13 – What Not To Wear]*

There are some important things to think about when selecting what to wear for any occasion.

- Make sure your clothes are clean and ironed, and that you are wearing clothing and shoes appropriate to the situation.
- Clothes shouldn't be too large or too small or too short or too long.
- Also, eliminate distractions like tattoos, piercings, excessive jewelry, and facial hair.

You want to highlight your personal accomplishments rather than your appearance. An interview is not the time to make a personal statement. If you get the job, then you can express yourself more freely.

*[Slide 14 – Dress Your Best]*

It is always better to be more formal than less. In some situations, it may be very, very close between you and other applicants or you and other people competing in Project Achievement. Judges or employers might be looking for that one thing that puts you a step above the others.

So suggested dress for what to wear to an interview or a professional setting is:

- For men – suit and dress pants, a nice shirt, tie, matching dress shoes & socks
- For women – dress/pants suit/professional blouse and dress pants or skirt, matching dress shoes that are close-toed and low-heeled

*[Slide 15 – Learn By Doing]*

Now we are going to “Learn By Doing”.

How many of you know how to tie a tie?

[Allow participants time to answer. Discuss their response.]

What are some situations you might have to tie a tie?

[Allow participants time to answer. Discuss their response.]

We typically think of only boys having to wear ties, but it is equally important that girls also know how. Some restaurants require their servers to wear ties regardless of if they are male or female. Also, I think it is an





important skill to know in case you encounter someone who needs help tying a tie like at graduation or if a friend has an interview.

Now everyone get out your Tie Guide. Use this guide to see if you can learn to tie a tie.

[Allow participants 5 minutes to practice.]

Were you guys able to learn by doing? Would anyone like to share how to tie a tie?

[Allow participants time to answer. Discuss their response.]

[Slide 16 – Inspiration] Today I'm going to leave you with a quote from Giorgio Armani. Read Quote. Allow your appearance to reflect so you will be remembered in a positive light.

**Useful Resources for More Information:**

- UGA Career Center – [www.career.uga.edu](http://www.career.uga.edu)

**Suggestions to Condense the Lesson:**

- Have youth practice tying a tie after the lesson

**Suggestions for Expanding the Lesson:**

- Have youth work in groups to practice tying the tie on themselves and group members

**References/Credits:**

Thomas, R. B. (2012). *Making A Great First Impression* [4-H Lesson].

Your Guide to Business Professional Attire (With Examples). (2019). *Indeed*. Retrieved from <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/starting-new-job/business-professional-attire>

Photos By: Keith Mickler (Slide 13), Beth Lumpkin (Slide 14), Abbie Salmon (Slides 4-12,15), Jennifer Smith (Slides 5-6)

**GA Counts Keywords:**

- Career Exploration
- Job Skills
- Workforce Preparation



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Make sure collar buttons are undone. Then, bring the narrow side to the middle of the shirt, on top of the buttons if you have them.

1



Cross the large end over the narrow end

2



With one hand grab the joint (the place where the two sides overlap) and hold at the top; with opposite hand pull the large end out where the seam will be facing away



3



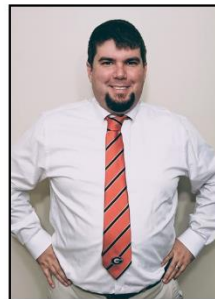
Cross the wide end over again and then pull the large end through the top loop from behind the previously formed joint

4

### Straighten and Adjust



5



Congratulate Yourself!

6

Photos by: Abbie Salmon





Preparing to Be a Professional: Professional Dress  
Lesson Evaluation

Please select the appropriate response regarding your level of confidence in accomplishing the following tasks	Before This Lesson				After This Lesson			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1 – Not At All Confident,    2. Somewhat Confident,    3. Confident,    4. Very Confident								
1. Identify the differences between casual, business casual, and professional dress								
2. Identify the appropriate occasions to wear each type of dress								
3. Follow the appropriate steps to tie a tie								

In one or two sentences, complete the following:

The most important thing I learned is...

One thing the presenters might change for next time...

One thing the presenters should definitely keep for next time...

Information About You: Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Years in 4-H: \_\_\_\_\_

# PROFESSIONAL DRESS

Tips & Tricks to Be Your Best



# MAKING A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION

- “A Quick Glance” – 3 seconds to form an opinion.
- What is that opinion based on?
- Why is it important?



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# THE BASICS

- Practice good hygiene
- Shower daily or more often if necessary
- Brush teeth
- Comb hair
- Neatly groomed
- Wear deodorant
- Don't wear overpowering fragrance



# DRESS TO IMPRESS

- Dress to the occasion
- Job: best attire for that profession
- Maintain your professional appearance
- Educational: business professional/Sunday best

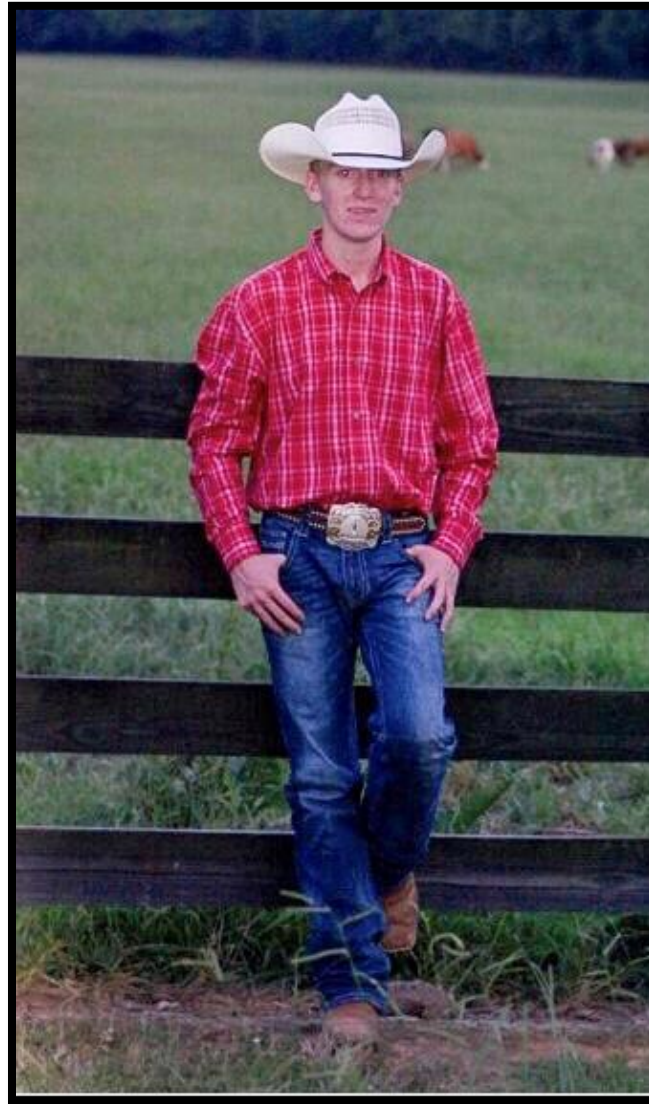


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# CASUAL DRESS

- Informal
- Suited for everyday use
- Comfortable



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# BUSINESS CASUAL DRESS

- Informal office wear
- Well put together



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# PROFESSIONAL DRESS

- Formal office wear
- Traditional



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# CASUAL, BUSINESS CASUAL OR PROFESSIONAL DRESS?



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# CASUAL, BUSINESS CASUAL OR PROFESSIONAL DRESS?



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# CASUAL, BUSINESS CASUAL OR PROFESSIONAL DRESS?



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# CASUAL, BUSINESS CASUAL OR PROFESSIONAL DRESS?



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# CASUAL, BUSINESS CASUAL OR PROFESSIONAL DRESS?



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# WHAT NOT TO WEAR

- Dirty or unkempt clothing
- Clothing too large or too small
- Clothing too long or too short
- Attention seeking pieces





# DRESS YOUR BEST

- It is always better to be more formal than less
- You will stand out above the rest



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# LEARN BY DOING



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**“ELEGANCE IS NOT STANDING OUT, BUT  
BEING REMEMBERED.”**

**-GIORGIO ARMANI**



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# REFERENCES

1. Thomas, R. B. (2012). Making A Great First Impression [4-H Lesson].
2. Your Guide to Business Professional Attire (With Examples). (2019). Indeed. Retrieved from <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/starting-new-job/business-professional-attire>
3. Photos By: Keith Mickler (Slide 13), Beth Lumpkin (Slide 14), Abbie Salmon (Slides 4-12,15), Jennifer Smith (Slides 5-6)





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# Georgia 4-H Lesson Plan

**Title of the Lesson:** Preparing to Be a Professional-Thank You Notes: A Simple Gesture that Can Mean so Much  
**Submitted by:**

- Allie Griner, Gordon County 4-H Agent
- Abbie Salmon, Floyd County 4-H Agent

**Contact Information:** asalmon3@uga.edu

**Grade Level(s):** 9th-12th

**Subject(s):** Career Readiness/Workforce Preparedness

**Estimated Time to Prepare the Lesson:** 5 minutes

**Estimated Time for Lesson Delivery:** 30 minutes

**Description/Lesson Overview:** Thank you notes are a written form of expressing gratitude. During this lesson, youth will learn tips and tricks related to writing thank you notes and how to best communicate their sincerest thank you.

## Objectives:

*After participating in this lesson, the youth will be able to:*

- Identify situations when a thank you note would be appropriate
- Write a personal thank you note
- Appropriately address an envelope

## Materials:

- Pens
- 3 thank you notes/envelopes per participant
- Addressing Notecards Template
- Optional handout: The Seven Steps to a Great Thank You Note listed in references

## Preparation:

Review PowerPoint materials. Make needed copies. Collect pens, thank you notes, and envelopes.



## Procedure:

*[Slide 1 – Thank You]*

We all have had times in our lives when we felt we needed to tell someone to thank you. It might have been for a gift you received, a State Congress project donor or just to say thank you to your parents for being there for you. Take a moment to think about one of these times.

*[Slide 2 – Saying Thank You]*

As humans, there are several different ways we might say thank you. You might just come out and say “Thank You”. You might give someone a hug to show your appreciation or you might want to write a thank-you note.

What are some ways you have told someone thank you?

*[Take time for participants to share]*

*[Slide 3 – Thank You Notes: When]*

Thank you notes are a written form of expressing gratitude. When do you think might be an appropriate time to send a thank-you note?

- One example might be to recognize a gift, donation, or sponsorship. What are some examples of this? (Project donors, a relative who send birthday gifts, if someone pays your way to attend an event, etc.)
- Another example would be to recognize someone for going above and beyond.
- What are some ideas of people who might fall into this category? (parents, leaders, military service members, emergency service professionals, etc.)
- Our final example is to say thank you to someone supporting you or giving you their time. Someone giving you their encouragement or time is as important as someone who gives you financial support. What might be some examples of this? (parents, teachers, coaches, 4-H agents, friends, etc.) One person that falls into this category that often gets overlooked is the person that conducts your job interview. By sending a thank-you note, you show your interviewer common courtesy and respect. So few job applicants send thank-you notes that you automatically stand out if you do and it gives you a chance to make points you forgot to make in your interview and reiterate points too.
- If you are unsure if you should write one, then the answer is yes, write one! It is better to show appreciation for little things than to ignore something that someone has done for you.



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## *[Slide 4 – Thank You Notes: The Basics]*

Now that we have a better understanding of who and when to send a thank you note to let us talk about the basics of writing one.

- Thank you notes should be personalized to the situation. Don't make all of your thank you notes the same. Take this time to communicate how appreciative you are for the occasion and for the specific contribution this person has made to your life.
- Thank you notes should be handwritten in your best handwriting in blue or black ink. An exception to this basic rule is that in the case of a job interview, it might be ok to send an email if that will be the most efficient way in case a job might be filled quickly.
- Use appropriate stationery. It's not important to have the best or most elegant stationery to write a thank you note, but use your best judgment.
- While your mom might love a hand made card with a drawing of a unicorn on it that wouldn't be appropriate for someone who awarded you a scholarship. A notecard that has a simple thank you on the front and a matching envelope are always appropriate.

## *[Slide 5 – Thank You Notes: The Specifics]*

Now let us get a little more specific about what to include in a thank you note.

- A good thank you note should include a greeting like-Dear, Mr. Arch.
- It should also include the specific reason you are writing. Many times a donor might make multiple donations in a year so it is important to be specific.
- You should also include why what they did made a difference in your life to make the note a little more personal. This might also be a great time to share a life update about yourself. For example, if you received a scholarship you might express how excited you are to be able to take part in the opportunities your school has to offer.
- You should always communicate again your sincerest thank you and end with your closing remarks. Closing remarks would be something like With thanks or Sincerely.
- Then, end your note with your signature.

## *[Slide 6 – Thank You Notes: Mailing]*

Now that your card is written it's important to get it in the mail quickly. You need to make sure that the thank you note is addressed appropriately.

- Make sure you have the return address in the top left-hand corner, the delivery address in the center, and a stamp with correct postage in the top right-hand corner.
- It's important to get your thank you note in the mail in a timely manner and should be in the mail ASAP. However, a late thank you note is better than no thank you note.







*[Slide 7 – Scenario #1]*

Now let's learn by doing. One the next four slides you will see a scenario of a time that you should send a thank-you note. We will practice at least 2 of these. Now is also a great time to view your handout to use as a guide.

*[Read scenario #1]*

*[Give about 3 minutes and move on to the next scenario.]*

*[Slide 8 – Scenario #2]*

*[Read scenario #2]*

*[Give about 3 minutes and move on to the next scenario.]*

*[Slide 9 – Scenario #3]*

*[Read scenario #3]*

*[Give about 3 minutes and move on to the next scenario.]*

*[Slide 10 – Scenario #4]*

*[Read scenario #4]*

*[Give about 3 minutes and move on to the next scenario.]*

*[Slide 11 – Gratitude]*

Would anyone like to share what they gained from today's activity? Anything you all would like to share?

*[Take time for participants to share]*

Now the true test is that I challenge you to take the time now once our session is over to write a thank you card for someone truly deserving, address it and drop it in the mail. I promise if done right it will make their day. To end today I will leave you with a quote, "Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgiving, turn routine jobs into joy and change ordinary opportunities into blessings." I hope you all have gained a lot from this session and will be up to the challenge!

**Useful Resources for More Information:**

- UGA Career Center – [www.career.uga.edu](http://www.career.uga.edu)



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**Suggestions to Condense the Lesson:**

- Have youth complete practice thank you notes after the session

**Suggestions for Expanding the Lesson:**

- Have youth develop their own scenario for which a thank you note may be appropriate and write the scenario on an index card. Collect the index cards and then have each youth select one of the cards and write a thank you note based on the scenario they selected.

**References/Credits:**

Rivetto, L. (2013). The Seven Steps to a Great Thank-You Note. *Michigan State University Extension*. Retrieved from <https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/236/66837/CYI048ThankYouNoteHandout.pdf>

**GA Counts Keywords:**

- Career Exploration
- Written Communication
- Job Skills
- Workforce Preparation

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**Return Address**  
Your Address Here

Stamp Goes Here

County 4-H Office  
4444 Clover Lane  
Green, GA 44444

Thank You Note Recipient Name  
P.O. Box or Street  
City, State, Zip Code



**Delivery Address**  
The Recipient's Address Goes Here



Preparing to Be a Professional: Thank You Notes  
Lesson Evaluation

Please select the appropriate response regarding your level of confidence in accomplishing the following tasks	Before This Lesson				After This Lesson			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1 – Not At All Confident,    2. Somewhat Confident,    3. Confident,    4. Very Confident								
1. Identify situations when a thank you note would be appropriate								
2. Write a personal thank you note								
3. Address an envelope								

In one or two sentences, complete the following:

The most important thing I learned is...

One thing the presenters might change for next time...

One thing the presenters should definitely keep for next time...

Information About You: Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Years in 4-H: \_\_\_\_\_

# THANK YOU.

A simple gesture that can mean so much

# SAYING THANK YOU

- There are multiple ways we as human communicate being appreciative



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# THANK YOU NOTES WHEN

- To recognize a gift, donation, or sponsorship
- To recognize someone for going above and beyond
- To thank someone for supporting you or giving you their time

If you are unsure if you should write one, then the answer is yes, write one!



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# THANK YOU NOTES THE BASICS

- Personalized to the situation
- Written in your best handwriting
- On appropriate stationery



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# THANK YOU NOTES

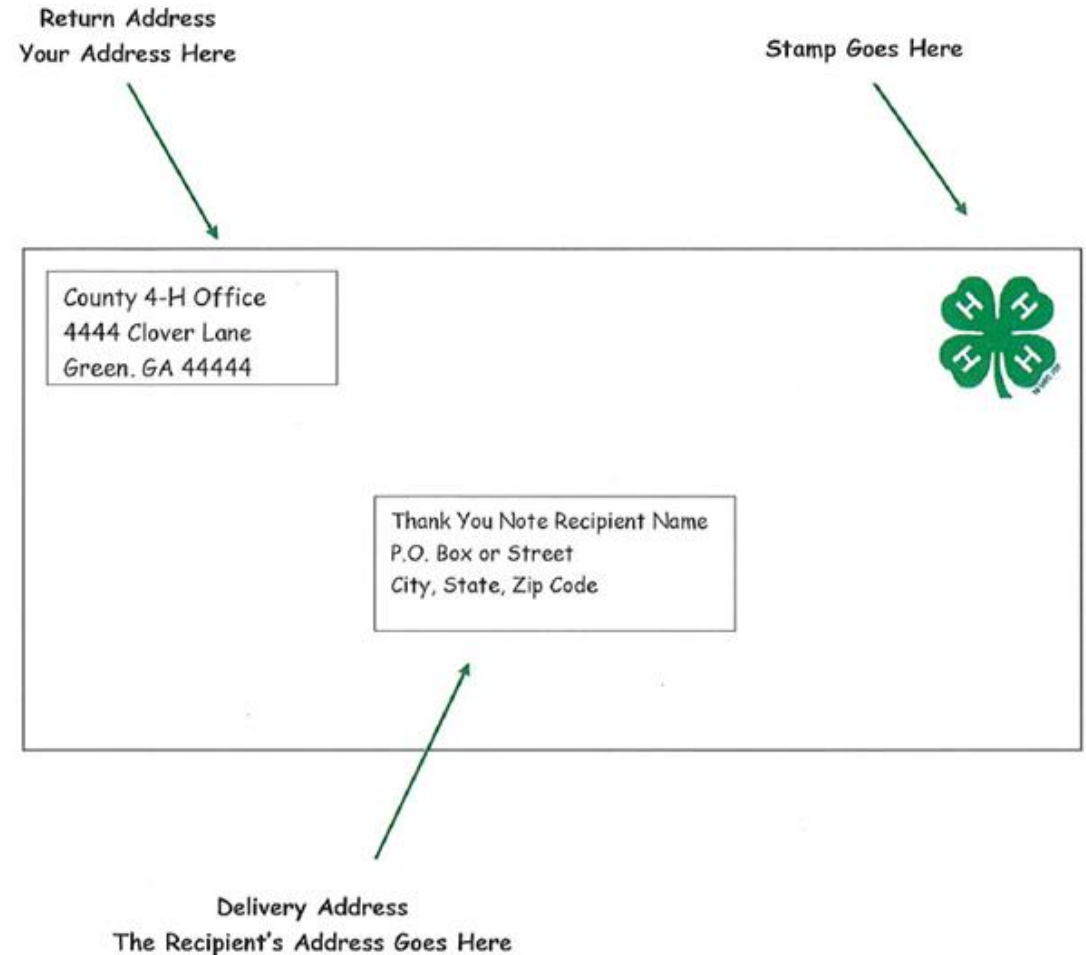
## THE SPECIFICS

- Greeting
- Reason you are writing
- Why what they did made a difference in your life
- Life update or repeat of your thanks
- Closing remarks
- Signature



# THANK YOU NOTES MAILING

- Addressed appropriately
- Include a stamp
- Mailed in a timely manner



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**GEORGIA** CONGRATULATIONS! YOU  
4-H  
HAVE JUST BEEN AWARDED A  
\$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP TO  
COLLEGE FROM YOUR LOCAL  
BANK!



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**GEORGIA** ABOUT SEVERAL FIRES  
IN THE AREA, AND WANT TO  
THANK YOUR FIRE  
DEPARTMENT FOR ALL THAT  
THEY DO TO KEEP YOUR  
COMMUNITY SAFE.



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**GEORGIA**



**YOUR TEACHER WROTE YOU A  
RECOMMENDATION LETTER  
FOR YOUR COLLEGE  
APPLICATION.**



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**GEORGIA** HAD A JOB INTERVIEW  
4-H  
TODAY WITH A PLACE YOU  
WOULD REALLY LIKE TO  
WORK.



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**GEORGIA**

4-H

**WE CAN TRANSFORM COMMON DAYS INTO  
THANKSGIVING, TURN ROUTINE JOBS INTO JOY AND  
CHANGE ORDINARY OPPORTUNITIES INTO  
BLESSINGS.”**

**—WILLIAM ARTHUR**

**WARD**



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# REFERENCES

1. Rivetto, L. (2013). The Seven Steps to a Great Thank-You Note. Michigan State University Extension. Retrieved from <https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/236/66837/CYI048ThankYouNoteHandout.pdf>



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**PowerPoint:** A PowerPoint is included for each lesson in the curriculum series.

**Videos:** Each lesson has a narrated video that can be played for students with or without additional instruction. Embedded in each video is an answer to a question that you can ask to verify that youth watched the video

Professional Communication

Duration: 24:16 minutes

Link: <https://www.loom.com/share/e4dcc2ef7b034e968e774d41f3330672>

Question to verify viewing: Name one of the Georgia 4-H ambassador tracks mentioned in the video.

Answer: STEM, Ready4Life, Healthy Living

Professional Dress

Duration: 21:44 minutes

Link: <https://www.loom.com/share/32f367482b974d508e858e0596cac31b>

Question to verify viewing: Name four famous former 4-H members.

Answer: Jennifer Nettles, Jimmy Carter, Luke Bryan and Dolly Parton

Interviews

Duration: 14:23 minutes

Link: <https://www.loom.com/share/5eaf8deed81a4e72a321422beb606421>

Question to verify viewing: How many 4-H'ers took part in Project Achievement last year?

Answer: 4,909 in 166 categories

Thank You Notes

Duration: 12:24 minutes

Link: <https://www.loom.com/share/44dab0eb21f248cbb8f658da93de0117>

Question to verify viewing: What are summer camp counselor leaders at Rock Eagle called?

Answer: Micos

**Qualtrics:** A lesson evaluation is available for each of the lessons. Contact Allie Griner to receive an electronic copy of the Qualtrics evaluation tool.



Questions about these resources can be directed to:

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