

# Tips for Successful Classroom Presentations

*The following are some general tips for AITC presenters at all grade levels.*

1. **Involve the classroom teacher in your presentation** by giving them a task to perform. A good way to do this is to discuss it with the teacher before you start; “I could really use your help during the presentation. I need you to.... (pass out materials, help students plant seeds or cut cornstalks, etc.)” Keeping the teacher involved will help keep students engaged (and it will prevent the teacher from “tuning out” during your presentation).
2. Prompt students’ thinking by asking them questions instead of simply feeding them information. “Who thinks they can name some products made from corn?” Also, quiz them on things you’ve already said: “Remember earlier, I said that there are different kinds of corn. What kind of corn did I say this was?” **Don’t just lecture.**
3. **Make the kids feel important** and keep them alert! Tell them that you are going to be asking their teacher to choose children who are listening and well-behaved to pass out materials (such as corn and soybean seeds, cups, etc.) during your presentation. Use as many students as possible. This saves you time and keeps the kids interested.
4. **Avoid “down time.”** Continue discussion and questioning while materials are being distributed, corn stalks are being cut, etc. Otherwise, the students will “disengage” from your presentation, and you’ll have to regain their attention.
5. If a student asks a question you can’t answer, offer to find out for them. Ask them to write the question down so you can take it with you. Find the answer and drop a note or an e-mail to the class later.
6. If the children become unruly, be pleasant, but be firm: “You need to put everything down on your desk and listen to my directions.”
7. If you know you’re uncomfortable with a specific presentation, choose a different one. Or, visit with others who have had success with that grade level and ask to observe their presentation.
8. **Have fun!** Don’t be afraid to “ham it up.” The kids will love it, and you’ll have fun, too.
9. Make sure to tell the class how your job relates to agriculture, i.e. farmer, veterinarian, agricultural lender with a bank, etc.
10. **Finally, remember that YOU are what makes the presentation special!** Share a little of your own story with the children. Your knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm about agriculture will be remembered if you weave it into each lesson you present.