



Lesson Plan

The FFA Creed as a Speech

Created: 01/2024 by the National FFA Organization

There are many contests in FFA that focus on public speaking. In this lesson, students will explore the FFA Creed and its history, and they will memorize and recite part of the creed.

Student Learning Objectives:

After completing these activities, students will ...

1. Recall the history of the FFA Creed.
2. Complete a team activity to memorize and present the FFA Creed.
3. Answer analysis questions about the FFA Creed.

Suggested Grade Level:

Grades 9 and 10 (This lesson is written so instructors can scale up or down based on class needs.)

Suggested Time: 90 minutes (*Time requirements may vary based upon student understanding and class schedule.)

Resources/References:

1. Website: The Origins and Revisions of the FFA Creed (2020), <https://footnote.wordpress.ncsu.edu/2020/01/16/the-origins-and-revisions-of-the-ffa-creed-1-17-2020/>
2. Research Article: The Contributions of E.M. Tiffany and the FFA Creed to Leadership Development within the FFA (2008), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ839886.pdf>
3. News Article: FFA Instructor's Bucket List Bullet Sparks Discovery (2014), <https://hpi.com/2014/12/15/ffa-instructors-bucket-list-bullet-sparks-discovery/>
4. Video: FFA E.M. Tiffany Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5jmscdXGOs>

Related Resources:

1. "I Believe," <https://FFA.box.com/s/5aekdnwy6j9dkf940cfk82385wobm2on>

Equipment and Supplies Needed:

1. A copy of the "The FFA Creed as a Speech" worksheet for each student
2. A copy of the "Creed Speaking LDE Presentation Rubric" for each student/partner set/group Rubric ([Word](#), [PDF](#), [Google](#))
3. A copy of "Image 1" printed or projected
4. Internet access to play the video for Part 2 in real time or embed it in a PowerPoint ahead of time

Vocabulary:

1. Creed
2. Belief

Cross-Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts

Improve reading comprehension.
Develop public speaking skills, including memorizing and reciting a speech.

Virtual Instruction Ideas:

This lesson can be taught virtually. All student handouts can be sent or posted electronically. All links can be posted onto the preferred learning management system.

Student Activity Sheets:

Direct access to student activity sheets without lesson plan or answer key for easy upload to a learning management system or printing for classwork.

<https://ffa.box.com/s/mwciaktiv14hwyweezsifr72v6juyinh> (Word)

<https://ffa.box.com/s/pnmo8ewrhbyqa0wg4gl5r7rlhdyii7zn> (Non-Designed Word)

<https://ffa.box.com/s/e4w2udoeps9ietdlo15ig3wo37nk85q8> (PDF)

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_7ifWw7-G9fzf8iK_ybEoeUdGTR_sJ76hKUw_jEV64/copy (Google)

These Activities Are Aligned to the Following Standards:

FFA Precept

- FFA.PL-A.Action: Assume responsibility and take the necessary steps to achieve the desired results, no matter what the goal or task at hand.
- FFA.PL-B.Relationship: Build relationships, work as a team player and appreciate the talents of others.
- FFA.PL-D.Character: Conduct oneself appropriately in relation to others regardless of the situation.
- FFA.PL-F.Continuous Improvement: Accept responsibility for learning and personal growth.
- FFA.PG-H.Social Growth: Successfully interact with others and adapt to various social situations.
- FFA.CS-M.Communication: Effectively interact with others in personal and professional settings.
- FFA.CS-N.Decision Making: Analyze a situation and execute an appropriate course of action.
- FFA.CS-O.Flexibility/Adaptability: Be flexible in various situations and adapt to change.

Common Core – Reading: Informational Text

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

Common Core – Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

AFNR Career Ready Practices

- CRP.01. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee. Career-ready individuals understand the obligations and responsibilities of being a member of a community, and they demonstrate this understanding every day through their interactions with others.
- CRP.02. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills. Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive.
- CRP.04. Communicate clearly, effectively, and with reason. Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal and/or visual methods.
- CRP.06. Demonstrate creativity and innovation. Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization.
- CRP.09. Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management. Career-ready individuals readily recognize problems in the workplace, understand the nature of the problem, and devise effective plans to solve the problem.
- CRP.12. Work productively in teams while using cultural/global competence. Career-ready individuals positively contribute to every team, whether formal or informal.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Information Literacy

- Information, Communications, and Technology Literacy
- Leadership and Responsibility
- Productivity and Accountability
- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
- Think Creatively
- Work Creatively with Others

Lesson Plan:

1. **Bell Ringer:** (Project Image 1 onto the board.) Tell students: *You have 30 seconds to look at the image on the board. Don't write anything, just observe the image.* Give them 30 seconds, take the image away and then say: *Now you have 30 seconds to write down as many items from the image that you can remember. Do not work with a neighbor; do this independently.*

Image 1 ([Word](#), [PDF](#), [Google](#))

2. **Introduction:** Put the image back on the board. *How many of you could remember three items from the image? How about six items? Nine items? All of the items? Can anyone share how they were able to remember so many items?* Allow students to share if they have a technique. *One of the most common ways people can memorize items from an image like this is by creating a story. For example, you might remember some of the items by telling yourself this story: "The tiger that plays the trumpet rode his bike to the big tree to celebrate a friend's birthday with cake, new shoes and playing ball under the sun." That story helps you remember eight of the 13 items. The story is unique and told in your own words, which makes remembering it easier.*

With public speaking, most of the time, you must memorize your speech. In FFA, there are three public speaking contests: the FFA Creed, prepared public speaking and extemporaneous public speaking. Now that you have been introduced to what public speaking is in Lesson 1 and have some speaking practice under your belt from the demonstration in Lesson 2, we are going to explore the public speaking associated with FFA leadership development events (LDEs). This lesson will focus on Creed speaking, since that speech is already provided for you.

3. **Activity:** Each student needs a copy of the worksheet "The FFA Creed as a Speech."
 - a. **Part 1:** Students will read the historical article about the FFA Creed and complete the questions attached.
 - b. **Part 2:** Before beginning Part 2, it is important to discuss with students how the FFA Creed is considered prepared public speaking. *Now that you know the history behind the FFA Creed and the passion that E.M. Tiffany used to write the Creed, let's categorize it. Based on the different speech types we learned about in Lesson 1, the FFA Creed would be considered inspirational. It is also considered a prepared speech since it has already been prepared, and a competitor or speaker has plenty of time to memorize it. The National FFA Organization has a leadership development event just for the FFA Creed.*

Play the video explaining the FFA Creed Speaking LDE: [FFA.org/participate/lde/creed-speaking/](https://ffa.org/participate/lde/creed-speaking/).

Break students up into groups, preferably five students per group. Each member of the group will be assigned a paragraph from the FFA Creed. They will memorize their assigned paragraph and be prepared to present it to the rest of the class with their group. In addition to memorizing the Creed, each group will create one question that will be asked to other groups after they recite the FFA Creed.
*Teacher Tip: You can get creative with your students and rather than having them memorize the paragraph, they can sing it, rap it, recite as a slam poem, etc.

Each group will recite the FFA Creed and answer one question from another group. (To avoid repeating similar questions, assign groups together for the question; for example, Group 1 will ask Group 2 a question; Group 2 will ask Group 3 a question and so on.)

A rubric to grade the presentation is provided. This rubric mirrors the rubric used in the FFA Creed Speaking LDE.

4. **Follow-up:** Split the class in half. Have each group make a circle. Explain that they will play a memory game. The group is going on a camping trip, and they each need to think of an item they will take with them. The first person says their name and names the item they will be bringing on the camping trip. The second person repeats the first person's name and their item, then adds their own name and names the item they will bring. The third person must then recall the names and items from the first two students and add theirs. The pattern continues until everyone has gone. At the end of the activity, discuss the following questions: What is a strategy that helped you remember the names and items of the people before you? How can this help when memorizing a speech?

5. **Optional – Extended Learning Opportunities (Not factored into time requirement):**
 - a. Encourage students to memorize the entire FFA Creed and recite it in front of the class as a bonus assignment. Extra credit or prizes could be offered to those who complete this challenge.
 - b. Host an FFA Creed speaking contest at the chapter level or in an agriculture class to decide which FFA member will represent your chapter in the LDE at a competitive level. By using this lesson in class, students who may not normally want to compete will now have the background and experience to feel more confident.
6. **Exit Ticket:** A creed is a statement of belief. Write two or three sentences that can serve as your own personal creed.

Aligned to the following standards:

FFA.PL-A; FFA.PL-B; FFA.PL-D; FFA.PL-F; FFA.PG-H; FFA.CS-M; FFA.CS-N;
FFA.CS-O; CCSS.RI.9-10.1; CCSS.RI.9-10.4; CCSS.SL.9-10.1; CCSS.SL.9-10.4; CRP.01;
CRP.02; CRP.04; CRP.06; CRP.09; CRP.12

Name: _____

The FFA Creed as a Speech

Part 1

Directions:

Read the historical article about the FFA Creed below and answer the questions.

Extra! Extra! Read all about the history of the FFA Creed and its creator, Erwin Milton (E.M.) Tiffany!

In the summer of 1928, with seven generations of American farmers behind him, E.M. Tiffany focused on writing the *Creed of a Future Farmer*. At the time, Tiffany was an agriculture teacher trainer in Wisconsin. The ideas for the creed came from his family's generational experience within the agriculture industry and his wish to state the ideals of future farmers with words expressing their faith in farming and the country lifestyle. As a former agriculture teacher and the son of a farmer, Tiffany knew firsthand the hardships of farming and witnessed the eagerness his students had to tackle farming projects. So as Tiffany prepared an exhibit for the first National FFA Convention, he started writing his *Creed of a Future Farmer* with the first line, "I believe in the future of farming with a faith born not of words but of deeds." This creed became the official Wisconsin FFA Creed and was part of the Wisconsin FFA Exhibit at the first National FFA Convention.

Following the first National FFA Convention, Tiffany's creed appeared in the February 1929 issue of *The Agricultural Education Magazine*. At that time, another creed, *Future Farmers Creed* (author unknown), was also printed in the first few issues of the FFA Manual. FFA members were confused on which creed they should be reciting. During the Third National FFA Convention, delegates voted 39 to 16 that Tiffany's creed would become the official FFA Creed for the Future Farmers of America.

So, who is Erwin Milton Tiffany? Tiffany was born in Kansas in 1883. He completed his bachelor's degree at Kansas State College and a master's degree at the University of Wisconsin, both in agricultural education. His resume is impressive: after serving in the United States Armed Forces during World War I, he was a classroom vocational-ag teacher, served as the director of the Texas State College of Industrial Arts, was an instructor at Kansas State College, a school principal in Oregon, an itinerant teacher-trainer, and an assistant and associate professor for agricultural education at the University of Wisconsin. When asked about his inspiration for writing the FFA Creed, he gave most of the credit to the FFA organization itself, stating: "I have often said that it is the organization that has made the Creed what it is; and it is the work of the members and the leaders that has made the organization what it is. Without these, the Creed itself would be meaningless. With them, it may, and I fervently hope that it does, contribute vitally to the spirit which is essential to achievement."



Since its adoption in 1930, the FFA Creed has had two official revisions — at the 38th convention in 1965 and the 63rd convention in 1990. There have also been several minor editorial changes over the years. While a majority of the FFA Creed has remained the same, some words have been updated in the revisions. For example, in the first line of the first paragraph, "I believe in the future of farming" now reads "I believe in the future of agriculture." The revisions helped keep the FFA Creed aligned with current vocabulary. However, the ultimate message that the FFA Creed provides to FFA members remains the same: the FFA Creed represents the fundamental beliefs of future farmers.

Name: _____

1. Why do you think E.M. Tiffany felt confident in writing the *Creed of a Future Farmer*?
2. What catalyzed E.M. Tiffany to begin writing his *Creed of a Future Farmer*?
3. Why do you believe it is important for the National FFA Organization to have a creed?
4. What was the result of the vote at the Third National FFA Convention regarding the official FFA Creed?
5. Name two professional accomplishments that E.M. Tiffany could put on his resume.
6. Why do you think it is important to revise the FFA Creed occasionally?

Name: _____

Part 2

Directions:

Working with your group, you will memorize the FFA Creed and recite it in front of the class. Break up the paragraphs evenly, assigning approximately one paragraph per person (if you have more than five members, you can split the paragraphs; if you have less than five members, you can assign two paragraphs per person or split the Creed evenly.) Your group will also create one unique question about the FFA Creed that you can ask other groups after they present the Creed, similar to the Creed Speaking LDE in FFA.

Below is the official FFA Creed:

The FFA Creed

I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words but of deeds — achievements won by the present and past generations of agriculturists; in the promise of better days through better ways, even as the better things we now enjoy have come to us from the struggles of former years.

I believe that to live and work on a good farm, or to be engaged in other agricultural pursuits, is pleasant as well as challenging; for I know the joys and discomforts of agricultural life and hold an inborn fondness for those associations which, even in hours of discouragement, I cannot deny.

I believe in leadership from ourselves and respect from others. I believe in my own ability to work efficiently and think clearly, with such knowledge and skill as I can secure, and in the ability of progressive agriculturists to serve our own and the public interest in producing and marketing the product of our toil.

I believe in less dependence on begging and more power in bargaining; in the life abundant and enough honest wealth to help make it so — for others as well as myself; in less need for charity and more of it when needed; in being happy myself and playing square with those whose happiness depends upon me.

I believe that American agriculture can and will hold true to the best traditions of our national life and that I can exert an influence in my home and community which will stand solid for my part in that inspiring task.

The creed was written by E.M. Tiffany and adopted at the Third National FFA Convention. It was revised at the 38th and 63rd Conventions.

Paragraph memorization assignments: List below which group member is responsible for each paragraph of the FFA Creed. Also, use the space provided to create your question. There are sample questions used in the FFA Creed Speaking LDE on the next page.

Paragraph 1: _____

Paragraph 2: _____

Paragraph 3: _____

Paragraph 4: _____

Paragraph 5: _____

Your group's question: _____

Name: _____

Sample FFA Creed Speaking LDE Questions:

How can FFA members use the Creed to better their lives?

What is your favorite line or phrase in the FFA Creed? Why?

How can living and working on a good farm or being engaged in other agricultural pursuits be pleasant as well as challenging?

How do the words of the creed apply in today's global economy?

What agricultural pursuits do you see as the most exciting?

Why is it important for those in agriculture to demonstrate leadership?

As an FFA member, why is the Creed important to you?

Why do you believe in the future of agriculture?

What do you think is meant by "with a faith born not of words, but of deeds"?

Name some of the better things we now enjoy that have come to us from the struggles of former years.

What do you think is meant by "I believe in less dependence on begging and more power in bargaining"?

Discuss a time when you demonstrated playing square with others.

How would you describe "honest wealth"?

What do you think is meant by the lines "I believe ... in less need for charity and more of it when needed"?

What do you see in the future of agriculture?

Why should we be concerned with the achievements won by the past generations of agriculturists?

What are some challenges of agricultural life?

What are some joys of agricultural life?

As fewer FFA members have the opportunity to live and work on a good farm, how can our organization remain true to the industry of agriculture?

The industry of agriculture is constantly changing and the FFA Creed has been revised to reflect those changes. When we revisited the Creed, why was the word farming changed to agriculture?

What part of the FFA Creed means the most to you and why?

If the FFA Creed were to be revised again next year, what specific areas would you recommend changing? Why?

Name: _____

Creed Speaking LDE Presentation Rubric

100 points

Chapter		State		Number		
Indicators	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
Oral Communication – 30 points						
Pace	Speaks very articulately at rate that engages audience.	Speaks articulately but occasionally speaks too fast or has long unnecessary hesitations	Speaks too slow or too fast to engage audience		X 2	
Tone	Voice is upbeat, impassioned and under control	Voice is somewhat upbeat, impassioned and under control	Voice is not upbeat; lacks passion and control		X 2	
Volume	Emitted a clear, audible voice for the audience present	Emitted a somewhat clear, audible voice for the audience present	Emitted a barely audible voice for the audience present		X 2	
Non-verbal Communication – 30 points						
Eye contact	Eye contact constantly used as an effective connection Constantly looks at the entire audience (90–100 percent of the time)	Eye contact is mostly effective and consistent Mostly looks around the audience (60–80 percent of the time)	Eye contact does not always allow connection with the speaker Occasionally looks at someone or some groups (less than 50 percent of the time)		X 2	
Mannerisms and gestures	Hand motions are expressive and used to emphasize talking points No nervous habits	Sometimes exhibits nervous habits Hands are sometimes used to express or emphasize	Displays some nervous habits Hands are not used to emphasize talking points; hand motions are sometimes distracting		X 2	

Name: _____

Indicators	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
Poise	Portrays confidence and composure through appropriate body language (stance, posture, facial expressions)	Maintains control most of the time; rarely loses composure	Lacks confidence and composure		X 2	
Question and Answer—40 points						
Response to questions	Responds with organized thoughts and concise answers	Speaks effectively and sometimes gets off topic Answers lacks organization	Response fails to answer question		X 2	
Support	Always provides details that support answers/basis of the question	Usually provides details that are supportive of the answers/basis of the question	Sometimes overlooks details that could be very beneficial to the answers/basis of the question		X 3	
Knowledge of agriculture	Answer shows knowledge of agriculture	Answer shows limited knowledge of agriculture	Answer shows no knowledge of agriculture		X 3	
<i>Gross Total Points</i>						
Time Deduction*						
Accuracy Deduction**						
Net Total Points						
Rank						

* -1 point per second over 4 minutes, determined by the timekeepers

** - 2 points per word, determined by the accuracy judges

Image 1



KEY: The FFA Creed as a Speech

Part 1

Directions:

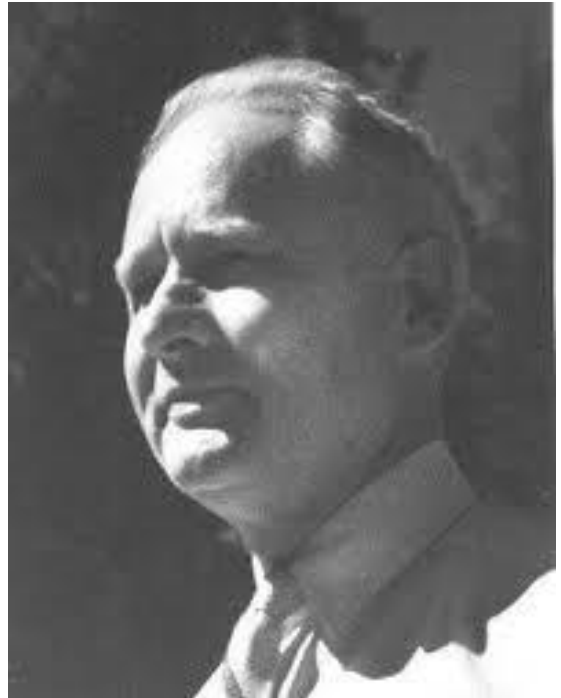
Read the historical article about the FFA Creed below and answer the questions.

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Name: _____

1. Why do you think E.M. Tiffany felt confident in writing the *Creed of a Future Farmer*?

Tiffany is a generational farmer and has connections and experiences with the life of being a farmer, including watching his dad farm, as well as experience teaching farm boys as an agriculture teacher.

2. What catalyzed E.M. Tiffany to begin writing his *Creed of a Future Farmer*?

He was working on a display for the Wisconsin FFA and was inspired to write the Creed to reflect the beliefs and hard work of American farmers and future farmers.

3. Why do you believe it is important for the National FFA Organization to have a Creed?

Answers will vary.

4. What was the result of the vote at the Third National FFA Convention regarding the official FFA Creed?

Tiffany's creed was selected following a 39 to 16 vote by the delegates.

5. Name two professional accomplishments that E.M. Tiffany could put on his resume.

Answers will vary but should include two of the following: bachelor's degree in agricultural education, master's degree in agricultural education, member of the armed forces during World War I, a classroom vocational-ag teacher, served as the director of the Texas State College of Industrial Arts, was an instructor at Kansas State College, a school principal in Oregon, an itinerant teacher-trainer, and an assistant and associate professor for agricultural education at the University of Wisconsin.

6. Why do you think it is important to revise the FFA Creed occasionally?

Answers will vary.