Building Your Auction Chant

Practice Resources for ND FFA Auctioneering Students

A strong chant is built one drill at a time. The exercises below are the same kind of warm-ups and number drills used in auction schools across the country. A few focused minutes every day will do more for your chant than one long session the night before the contest.

TONGUE TWISTERS

Start slowly and say every word clearly. Repeat each one several times, then build speed only while staying clear. If you stumble, slow down and start again.

Rubber Baby

Rubber baby buggy bumper. Rubber baby buggy bumper.

Tommy Atatamus

Tommy Atatamus took two T's, tied 'em atop of two tall trees.

Betty Botter

Betty Botter bought some butter, but she said this butter's bitter. If I put it in my batter, it will make my batter bitter. So she bought a bit of better butter, put it in her bitter batter, made her bitter batter better, so 'tis better Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter.

Theopolis Thistle (Helps with "thirty")

Theopolis Thistle, the famous thistle sifter, while sifting a sieve full of unsifted thistles, thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb.

The Big Black Bug

The big black bug bit the big black bear. Made the big black bear bleed bright red blood on the bathroom rug.

Red Leather

Red leather, yellow leather. Red leather, yellow leather. Red ladder, yellow ladder. Red ladder, yellow ladder.

The Stripling Stranger (Helps with "sixty")

The stripling stranger strayed straight toward the struggling stream. The stripling stranger strayed straight toward the struggling stream.

NUMBER DRILLS

Numbers are the backbone of your chant. Say each drill out loud with a steady beat, from the bottom up and back down, until you can run it without stopping or stumbling.

Tens

10-20-30-40-50-60-70-80-90-90-80-70-60-50-40-30-20-10

10-10, 20-20, 30-30, 40-40, 50-50, 60-60, 70-70, 80-80, 90-90

90-90, 80-80, 70-70, 60-60, 50-50, 40-40, 30-30, 20-20, 10-10

10-10-20-20-30-30; 10-10-10-20-20-20-30-30-30; 10-10-10-10, and so on

Quarters

1-1, 1Q-1Q, 1H-1H, 175-175, 2-2, 2Q-2Q, 2H-2H, 275-275, 3-3, 3Q-3Q, 3H-3H, 375-375, 4-4, and so on through 1075

Say "one," "one and a quarter," "one and a half," "one seventy-five."

Two and a Halves

2H-5-7H-10-12H-15-17H-20-22H-25-27H-30-32H-35-37H-40-42H-45-47H-50-52H-55-57H-60-62H-65-67H-70-72H-75-77H-80-82H-85-87H-90-92H-95-97H-100, and back down to 2H

Say "two and a half, five, seven and a half, ten, twelve and a half, fifteen, seventeen and a half, twenty..."

Fives

5-10-15-20-25-30-35-40-45-50-55-60-65-70-75-80-85-90-95-100-95-90-85-80-75-70-65-60-55-50-45-40-35-30-25-20-15-10, repeat

Try two beats on "fifteen."

> **Key:** Q = and a quarter | H = and a half | 75 = seventy-five (e.g., 175 = "one seventy-five")

HOW THE CHANT WORKS

Every chant is built on two numbers: the **"have"** (the bid you already have) and the **"want"** (the next bid you are asking for). Short **filler words** connect them and keep your rhythm steady:

"Ten dollar bid, now fifteen, now fifteen, will ya give fifteen?"

Clarity comes first. Bidders must always hear the numbers, so build speed only after your numbers are clean.

A 15-MINUTE DAILY PRACTICE PLAN

3 min	Breathing and warm-up. Take deep breaths from your stomach and loosen up your lips and jaw.
4 min	Tongue twisters. Pick two or three and work them slow, then fast.
5 min	Number drills. Rotate through Tens, Quarters, Two and a Halves, and Fives.
3 min	Sell an item. Pick something in your house, describe it, open the bidding, run your chant, and close with "Sold!"

PRACTICE YOUR CONTEST INTRO AND OUTRO

Your intro and closing count toward your **Professionalism** score. Practice them word for word.

Introduction

"Hi, my name is _____ from the _____ FFA Chapter, and I'm honored to be contestant number ___ this evening. I have two great items for you."

First Item

"The first item is _____." (Introduce the item and sell it.)

Second Item

"My second item for you is _____." (Introduce the item and sell it.)

Closing

"Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, and judges. Again, my name is _____ from the _____ FFA Chapter, contestant number ___."

PRACTICE TIPS

- **Record yourself** on your phone and listen back. Score your own recording with the contest scoresheet.
- **Practice in front of people.** Sell to your family, your chapter, or a mirror. Look up and scan your "bidders."
- **Listen to real auctions.** Visit a local livestock sale, farm auction, or benefit auction and pay attention to how the auctioneer moves between numbers.
- **Take care of your voice.** Drink plenty of water, warm up before you practice, and stop if your throat becomes sore.
- **Know your item and finish strong.** Describe each item in two or three clear sentences, and always close with a clear *"Sold!"* and the final price.

WATCH AND LISTEN: VIDEO RESOURCES

Listening to great auctioneers is one of the fastest ways to develop your own style. Start with these:

National Auction Association (NAA)

YouTube: **youtube.com/nataauctionassn**. The NAA posts videos from its conferences and auction championships.

International Junior Auctioneer Championship

Watch past contestants ages 12 to 18 at **auctioneers.org** (search "IJAC video archives"). IJAC is endorsed by National FFA and open to FFA members.

International Auctioneer Championship

See the best professional auctioneers compete at **auctioneers.org** (search "IAC video archives").

Follow-Along Bid Calling Drills

On YouTube, search **"Matt Ledbetter repeat after me"** for drills you can chant along with.

Building Your Chant, Step by Step

On YouTube, search **"Building Your Bid Calling Chant"** for a multi-part series that builds a chant from the ground up.

A Champion's Chant

On YouTube, search **"Ralph Wade auctioneer"** to hear one of the most recognized livestock auctioneers in the country. More at **ralphwade.com**.

Tongue Twister Warm-Ups

On YouTube, search **"Betty Botter auctioneer"** to hear how auctioneers run this classic warm-up.

Keep Learning with the NDAA

NDAA member auctioneers are glad to help students grow. Ask your FFA advisor about connecting with an NDAA mentor, and plan to attend the NDAA 75th Annual Convention in Fargo on February 5, 2027, where FFA students receive complimentary one-day admission.