



Manitoba 4-H Council Inc.

4-H Communications Competition Tips

Name That Speech

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You've been bombarded with information on how to write a speech or a visual presentation. You should have a catchy introduction, a well-organized body and a wrap-it-all-up conclusion. Parents and leaders have examined your style... good eye contact, stand straight, use the cue cards but DO NOT READ, dress neatly, etc. But have you thought of how to title your presentation?

Sure you have. My presentation is about my dog, Spot, that is always hiding from me, so I will call it "My Dog Spot." It explained what the speech is about, but does it catch everyone's attention?

Let me tell you a story about a 4-H member who did her speech about a baby that her mom baby-sat. Debbie wrote the speech about all the cute things the baby did, and how she helped her mom take care of her. When Debbie went to name her speech the first thing that came to her mind was "Petie" because that was the baby's nickname. Debbie never thought about the title because it was the name she always called the baby. Little did she know the judges were to take this title into account on communication night.

Debbie said her speech, and to her amazement, she won first place, which meant she would be able to go on and compete at the Area level. To fix those things that went wrong, she went to the judges for some pointers. The judges had some very helpful hints, such as try more eye contact, and don't play with your cue cards. But the most memorable comment they gave was that they were really impressed with the title of her speech. "We searched the dictionary and name books but couldn't figure out what a Petie was. Debbie, the name of your speech caught everyone's attention before you went up to say it."

What the judges meant was that having a catchy title is just as important as the speech itself. A title that doesn't give away the essence of the speech, but it somehow explained throughout it, is an effective way of getting the audience's and the judges' attention. If you catch their attention before you speak, it will be a lot easier to keep it and get your message across or to tell your story. People like to be kept guessing so you don't have to give away why you named your speech as you did right away. Debbie didn't explain the baby's nickname was Petie until the last half of her speech.

Think about it. Maybe instead of "My Dog Spot" you could call your speech "Can You Find that Spot?"