

Judges' Handbook

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IMPORTANT REMINDERS

1. Remember that our purpose for being here is to enhance the education of each person who competes. This is more important than winning. All of these contests are for contestants' educational growth.
 - Please make helpful, detailed comments on the ballot
2. Please do not tell the contestants, "I don't think I can judge this. What do I do?" They want to believe that you are the expert! Read the rules and then trust yourself to make a fair and thoughtful decision. Although you are the only judge in the round, you are one of four adult judges who will evaluate that individual or team during the tournament.
3. Do not fret over your decision. Many students are very good and, so it is left to the judge to make that one, subjective decision which will determine the winner of that round. You are a capable, fair, honest, noble critic; so don't agonize beyond the necessary difficulty of choosing.
4. **For the sake of time, please do not give oral critiques. And do not reveal your decisions. Send your ballots promptly to the Tab Room or ballot table.**
5. Please check that you have filled out all necessary information on your ballots. For example, most events require you to write a rank (or win/loss) and speaker points.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE TOURNAMENT SITE...

1. Check with your school's coach to let him know you are present. He may have registered you already or may ask you to go sign in at the judging table.
2. Attend the general assembly. Many judges skip this and miss a lot of pertinent information.
3. Attend the judges' meeting (usually held in the judges' lounge). The coach hosting the meet will meet with judges to go over judging responsibilities for the meet.
4. The judges' lounge is your base location for the day. It is where you will be fed, and where you should remain when you are not judging. This is the first place the Tab room will look for you when needing information from you or when looking for a replacement judge.
5. Rounds are often "posted" in the judges' lounge. These "postings" are sheets of paper that list the event, student codes in the round (codes, not names, are used), the room,

and the judge. Check all the postings and see if your name or code is listed. If it is, proceed to the indicated room at the indicated time. You will return your ballots (critique sheets) to the judges' table outside the tab room when you complete your judging. Posting may take place throughout the day, or may happen only at the opening assembly. Make sure you check for your name or code on all event postings each time, no matter how the postings are distributed.

6. If you are not assigned to judge a round, do not observe other rounds.
7. Lunch may be provided for judges and coaches free of charge, or you may need to purchase a lunch ticket in advance. Snacks are usually provided throughout the day in the judges' lounge.
8. If you have a question during the day, the best place to get it answered is at the ballot table since rules and regulations vary from meet to meet.

WHEN YOU GET TO THE CLASSROOM...

1. Never walk into a round and tell the students that you have no idea what is going on or that this is your first time judging. Even if you have no idea what is going on and it is your first time, let those kids think that you are a polished professional. Let them believe they are performing for someone who really knows his/her stuff! When judging, as in real life, one is often called upon to "perform." If you keep this booklet with you, you will have enough information to play the role of an "expert" in a specific event even if it is your first time judging that event.
2. Have the contestant give you his/her name and code so you can verify that he/she is in fact supposed to be in your round. Many times students go to the wrong rooms. Double check for them and send word to the tab room when someone is missing. DO NOT judge a contestant that is not on your master ballot.
3. It is necessary for you to write and take notes while a competitor is performing, but be certain to look at the competitors also. What you see in many events is just as important as what you hear. Try to watch and write simultaneously, the best you can. You are the most important person in the room, so you may ask them to wait for you to conclude notes before the next performance, but do not take more than a few seconds to do this. Keeps the round going by writing as much as possible during the actual performance.
4. Feel free to keep order in your round. If anyone inside or outside the room is making it difficult for the performers to perform, do what is necessary to alleviate the situation.
5. Even if the competitors ask you, do not give oral critiques during a round. It is your responsibility to get your ballots completed and returned to the judging table as quickly as possible.
6. At times you may find yourself judging a round in which you know the contestant. If it is a son or daughter or a very close acquaintance, you need to report to the ballot table so you can be moved, but if it is someone you don't know well and you feel you can be an objective judge, go ahead and judge the person.
7. It is okay enjoy yourself! Being a judge does not mean you have to be solemn and serious. Enjoy yourself and encourage the contestants to enjoy themselves.
8. AFTER A ROUND IS OVER, PLEASE, DO NOT REVEAL YOUR RANKINGS OR DECISION!

JUDGING INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

- Write comments and notes, but also look at the competitors
- Don't let the ballot distract you from the performance—write brief comments as you watch, and then go back to write more detailed comments.
- After each performance, make a note of who is now ranked 1st, 2nd, and so on. This makes it easier to rank students at the end.

MANUSCRIPTED INTERPRETATION EVENTS:

ORAL INTERPRETATION (PROSE or POETRY)

Oral interpretation is made up of two different types of literature, prose (or stories) or poetry. No plays may be done in this category. The contestant reads from a manuscript which should be in a notebook. An introduction which includes the name of the piece and the author should be included. The event has a maximum time of 10 minutes.

MEMORIZED INTERPRETATION EVENTS

DRAMATIC AND HUMOROUS INTERPRETATION

These events essentially judged the same. The obvious difference is that one deals with humorous material and the other with dramatic. Any type of literature may be performed – prose, poetry, plays, monologues, short stories, etc. These events are memorized with a maximum time of 10 minutes. An introduction which includes the author and title must be included in the performance.

DUO INTERPRETATION

This is a fun and unusual event if you have not seen it before. Two people present a memorized selection (maximum time of 10 minutes) featuring two or more characters. Contestants may perform any type of literature as long as the presentation is divided evenly between the 2 contestants. During the introduction the contestants may interact on stage and touch and look at each other. But during the actual presentation, they must use “off-stage focus” and may NOT touch each other. No props or costuming is allowed. Students may move during the presentation as they create the scene in the audience's mind.

PUBLIC SPEAKING EVENTS

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

Unlike the other events, this event begins 30 minutes after all other events start because students have 30 minutes to prepare. Contestants draw current event topics they will speak on. They are then given 30 minutes to prepare before they come see you. PLEASE NOTE: These students come to you one by one at timed intervals. They will not come all at once – leave the room door open between speakers, so that the next speaker knows it is permissible to enter. Begin as soon as the first speaker arrives – do not wait for all to arrive.

This is a timed event in which the judge must take the contestants in order and as they are ready. Do not ask a contestant to wait for you to finish the previous ballot. They are restricted to 30 minutes of prep and cannot have any more than that. As the student enters the room, confirm his name and code. Ask for his topic slip. Make sure he speaks on topic.

First and foremost, he MUST answer that question. In this event most competitors will ask for time signals. The maximum time is 7 minutes.

ORIGINAL ORATORY

Original Oratory speeches are written by the competitor and must be memorized. The maximum time limit is 10 minutes. The key is that the work is original in its arrangement of material and treatment of the topic.

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING EVENTS

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

The maximum time limit is 5 minutes. The contestant does a random draw from three topics in the prep room, and then enters the competition room in a fashion similar to extemp. Topics may include quotations, bumper stickers, political sayings, proverbs, etc.

WHAT TO DO

1. Check the posting area
2. Go to room and find a desk with good sight and hearing positioned to front of room.
3. Have contestants write their codes, names, and title of selection on the board, and transfer this information to your individual judging sheets.
4. Check your list of competitors to those present. Start as soon as you can.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

1. On each ballot are the criteria used to evaluate each contestant. As much as possible try to evaluate them in these areas marking them superior, excellent, average, or needs improvement.
2. Areas in which you rank them average or needs improvement should have constructive comments so that the student knows how to improve. Nothing is worse than a low rank with no comments on how to improve. By the same token, nothing is worse than an all negative ballot. **FIND SOMETHING POSITIVE TO SAY ABOUT EACH CONTESTANT.**
3. At the end of the round, rank the contestants first through last. Ties are NOT allowed.
4. Some tournaments use speaker points on their ballots. If they do, assign a speaker point value to each contestant in line with the rank received. As they go down in ranks, they should go down in speaker points. Ties are frowned upon.
5. Some tournaments use master ballots. If they do, fill out the master ballot – make sure it corresponds exactly to the ballots. Turn all of this in to the ballot table.
6. Make sure you sign your name on the ballot.

JUDGING DEBATE EVENTS

STUDENT CONGRESS

Student Congress is a half-day event for judging. You will be judging for an entire session, which lasts several hours. Student Congress is a group of usually 25 students that carry out a congress session much like the U. S. Congress. The various congress contestants will stand up before the group and give sponsorship speeches, speeches in favor of and speeches against various pieces of legislation. It is the job of the judge to evaluate each 3 minute speech given in the chamber. Additionally you will be asked to evaluate the presiding officer's handling of the chamber on an hourly basis.

1. Usually, the tournament director or other tab room person will ask you to judge Congress. Sometimes you will be posted. When you are selected, go to the assigned Congress room.
2. In the Congress room you will usually be located in the back of the room. You will be provided with ballots and an overall sheet with all the congress participants' names on it.
3. Congress judging is fast and furious. You award from 1 to 6 points for each speaker and write some comments and fill in the appropriate information. **SO YOU NEED TO BE QUICK!**
4. The Congress ballot asks the judge to assign NFL points to each speech. This means you use a range of 1-6 with 6 being the top score. No ranks are given on the ballots.
5. At the end of the session you may be asked to determine the top speakers in the session. This method varies from tournament to tournament, but the parliamentarian in the room will help you to do the tabulation.

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

Public Forum debate is meant to be a form of debate that lay people can easily appreciate. There will not be much jargon having to do with debate theory. But you should keep track of the arguments made and the responses given on a piece of paper.

1. Students will toss a coin. The winner decides EITHER pro (for the resolution)/con (against the resolution) OR first speaker/second speaker.
2. Speaking times and order are printed on the ballot. In general, each speaker gives a 4 minute speech. After one affirmative and one negative speaker, there will be a 3 minute period of crossfire discussion.
3. Make sure that the team that goes Pro has contestant names and code in the appropriate boxes on the ballot.
4. After the debate is over, you have to decide which side convinced you better – pro or con. You must write a reason why you voted for the winning team.
5. You will also have to grade each speaker in categories using the point system that is outlined on the ballot. Customarily the team that wins has higher total points than the losing team.
6. Each side has a total of 2 minutes of prep time.
7. You are usually expected to keep the time in the debate and give time signals to the speakers.

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

There is one speaker who is assigned the affirmative side of an issue (affirmative) and one who is assigned the negative side of the issue (negative). They present their case using the following time configurations. Sometimes you will have a timer, but most times you will need to keep time.

- The affirmative speaker has 6 minutes to make his opening speech
- The negative speaker has 3 minutes to cross-examine the affirmative speaker.
- The negative speaker has 7 minutes to make his opening speech.
- The affirmative speaker has 3 minutes to cross-examine the negative speaker.
- The affirmative speaker has 4 minutes to make a rebuttal/refutation speech.
- The negative speaker has 6 minutes to make a closing speech.
- The affirmative has 3 minutes to make a closing speech.

*Please note that both speakers have 3 minutes of preparation time during the debate that they may use. You need to keep track of this too and let them know how much of that time they have used each time they utilize it.

You should take a legal pad and a couple of pencils with you to take notes as you listen so you keep track of what has been said. In this way you can better evaluate how and why you make your decision.

During the rounds the two students will be offering values for choosing their side of the resolution. They must justify their choice and tell how the resolution leads to the particular value they have chosen. They may use evidence from philosophers. They may use examples. Both debaters must clash with their opponent's arguments and give justification as to why their arguments are superior. At the end of the round, you will have to decide which debater supported and defended their side of the case better. You will assign a winner and determine speaker point for each contestant.