**Speech Coaching Handbook**

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SPEECH SEASON OVERVIEW AND ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Things to Consider…

Funding: You need to discuss your budget with your Activities Director to determine how you will pay for…

* speaker registration/entry fees (usually $6-$7 per competitor per tournament)
* transportation
* judges (You are generally required to bring one judge for every 6-7 competitors-- each tournament will have their requirements listed on their invitation. Judging stipends vary by school-- some schools pay their judges, some use volunteers. Additionally, you may wish to provide stopwatches for your judges.)
* materials/supplies (Note: you are not required to offer all categories; some schools pay for all of their speakers’ supplies, others require the students to purchase their own):
	+ Serious Poetry, Serious Prose, Serious Drama, Great Speeches, Humorous Interpretation, Original Oratory, Duo Interpretation: students need access to books, play scripts, or print or online information
	+ Extemporaneous Reading: there is a required poetry book and a prose book; you have the option of using just one, or using both; you need at least one book per competitor in this event. You can obtain information about this year’s books on the MSHSL website, [www.mshsl.org](http://www.mshsl.org); select Speech” from the Activities dropdown, then scroll to the bottom of the page
	+ Storytelling: there is a required book; it is most convenient to have one per competitor in this event; again, see [www.mshsl.org](http://www.mshsl.org/) for book details
	+ Informative: most competitors create and/or utilize visual aids, though that is not required
	+ Extemporaneous Speaking: filing system, generally accordion files or file boxes with dividers; some teams have each competitor maintain their own files, others do one filing system per team; also, magazine or newsfeed subscriptions are sometimes paid for by the school
	+ Discussion: filing system, either a 3-ring binder, folder, or accordion file, or a computer or other electronic device, one per competitor; information about this year’s topic is available at www.mshsl.org
	+ Creative Expression does not generally have any special supply needs

How will you get determine your team?

* How will you get the word out about Speech Team/ how will you recruit members?
* Will everyone who wants to participate be allowed to participate?
* If everyone is allowed to participate, will you conduct “interviews” or “auditions” to determine which category is the best fit for each competitor? Or will you let them choose their category? And if you do hold auditions or interviews, what materials will you use?

Captains:

* Will you have team captains?
* How will you select captains?
* How will you use your captains?

Coaching Practices:

* When will you hold practices for coaching your competitors? (Many teams allow for one or two 20-30 minute practices per week per competitor with a coach; some teams have all competitors practice on the same weekday evening; some teams encourage competitors to practice with team captains, etc.)
* Will your practices be required or optional?
* Will competitors have a “standing” practice time (such as, “every Wednesday at 3:15pm”), or will you post a sign-up sheet (print or electronic) regarding your availability each week?
* Are there others who can assist you with practices, like captains, teachers, community members with a background in communication?

Rules:

* A complete set of Rules and Policies, Frequently Asked Questions, as well as other useful information, can be found at [www.mshl.org](http://www.mshl.org). Select “Speech” from the Activities menu, then find these document and others linked at the bottom of the page

Judges:

* How will you find judges? (former competitors, teachers, parents, community members—and yes, *you* can be a judge)
* Will judges be paid or volunteer?
* How will you train your judges? (Please note that our MSCA Code of Ethics states that you are responsible for bringing “well-prepared, fair, and constructive judges to tournaments”) (see pp. 8-24 for a sample training handbook)

Tournaments:

* How will you know which speakers are attending which tournaments? (Some schools assume everyone is going unless a speaker tells them otherwise; other schools have speakers sign-up for the tourneys they can attend.)
* It is not required that you are registered with the MSHSL, but if you are not, you can only participate in invitationals, and not conferences, subsections, sections, or state.
* Invitationals:
--You may participate in as many or as few invitationals as you wish. To find out about tournaments, you can view calendars at <http://www.mnsu.edu/cmst/ctam/index.html> (scroll to the “HS Speech Calendar” tab at the bottom) and at [www.Speechwire.com](http://www.Speechwire.com) (click on “calendar” at the top). In both cases, you must contact the tournament host/host school in order to receive an invitation to attend. If registration is done via SpeechWire, you will need a SpeechWire account. Go to [www.speechwire.com](http://www.speechwire.com), and choose “click here to log into your team account or create a free account”. The page to which you will be directed will allow you to set up your account; the link that says, “click here to view the registration handbook” will step you through the process if you’d prefer. If at any time you need a real person to help you, you can email support@speechwire.com.
--Each invitational host will provide you with the information you need for the tournament, generally via an email from the host, an email that comes through SpeechWire, or in print through postal mail.
--Invitationals will charge you a fee per entry, generally $6-$7. Sometimes duos count one entry, sometimes as two.
--You are required to bring your own judges to invitationals. Anyone can be an invitational judge, though many invitationals discourage you from bringing recent high school graduates that have competed in Speech if they might be put in the situation of judging former competitors or former teammates. It is up to you if you pay your judges, and if you do, how much. It is the responsibility of the coach of each team to ensure that their judges are competent to judge. A sample judges’ training packet is found later in this document.
* Conferences:
--Not all schools are a part of a conference, and there is no central place to look up your school to find out if you are or not. You will need to contact your Activities Director (AD) to find out if you are in a conference.
--If you are in a conference, your AD can tell you if your conference does hold a Conference Speech Tournament (some do, some don’t), and if yours does, get you the information you need. (Conferences vary greatly in if and how they conduct their Conference Speech Tournaments, so I am unable to provide any more detailed information.)
* Subsections/Sections:
--Not all sections have subsection tournaments.
--If you are registered with the MSHSL, you can determine your Section assignment (it will be a number 1-8, and either “A” or “AA”, such as “1AA”) by going to [www.mshsl.org](http://www.mshsl.org), selecting “Speech” from the activities dropdown, then finding your school on the schools dropdown on the upper-right of the Speech page. Once you find your school, a new page will pop up and tell you your Section assignment on the right-hand side.
--From that screen, if you click the back arrow to return to the page you were on, you can find your section in the grid on the right, as well as the date and location of your subsection (if applicable) and section tournament(s). Clicking on your section will take you to a page dedicated to your section; locate “Speech”, and you’ll find the name and contact info of your tournament manager. Contact this person for information related to your subsection or section tournament.
--Your Subsection/section tournament may charge you a fee per entry.
--You will NOT need to provide judges for your Subsection or section tournament; the judges for these tournaments are MSHSL-registered judges. You may, however, be responsible for bringing Tab Room workers, timers/readers, or people to help in other capacities.
--Your Section tournament manager will require you to bring copies of scripts, ISBNs or proof of publication, and your Community Standards form (found on the MSHSL Speech page, scroll to the lower-left under “News” to find the form; this form is to be submitted via fax to the MSHSL prior to your first subsection/section tournament).
* State
--The top three finishers in each category at each section competition qualify for State.
--The date and location of the State tournament for your class (A or AA) can be found on the right-hand side of the MSHSL speech page.
--There is no entry fee for State tournament competitors.
--You do not need to provide judges for State.
--You will need to submit a script and/or proof of publication for competitors in certain categories.

Other team policies:

* Can competitors earn a school letter in Speech? If so, find out the requirements from your Activities Director.
* Will you have a set of team expectations and consequences (such as penalties for missing practice or not showing up for a tournament)?
* Will you have a dress code for tournaments?
* Will you publish all policy information in a handbook? (see p. 6-7 for a sample)

Communication:

* How will you communicate information to team members and their parents? Ideas include team meetings, a bulletin board of information, emails, website, texts (Remind 101), newsletter (print or digital).

**MSHSL Speech Categories**

**Creative Expression**Students write and perform their own 8-minute piece of original writing (although 20% of the material may come from other sources). The mood of the writing may be serious or humorous. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

**Drama, Poetry, and Prose Interpretation**
In these three categories, students choose a serious piece of literature and perform an 8-minute interpretation of it. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

**Humorous Interpretation**In this category, students choose a humorous piece of literature and perform an 8-minute interpretation of it. The selection may be taken from prose, poetry, or a play, as long as the mood is essentially humorous. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

**Duo Interpretation**This category pairs two students together to perform an interpretation of prose, drama, or poetry. The mood may be serious, humorous, or both; students are not limited in the number of characters they may perform in the 8-minute time period. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

**Extemporaneous Reading**Students read aloud various 6-minute selections from a book of either poetry or prose (your choice) interpreting the reading in such a way as to add meaning and interest. Students are given a list of story selections and poems at the start of the season that will be used at all competitions. Each tournament will require the reading of 3-4 of those stories or compilations of poems.

**Storytelling**Students retell selected folk stories in their own words, interpreting and performing various characters during the 6-minute retelling. Students are given a list of stories at the start of the season that will be used at all competitions. Each tournament will require the telling of 3-4 of those stories.

**Original Oratory**
Students in this category research a topic of their choosing, and then write their own 8-minute speech on that topic. The intent of the speech is to persuade, and while the speech may contain elements of humor, the mood is essentially serious. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

**Informative**
Students research a topic of their choosing, and then write their own 8-minute speech on that topic. The intent of the speech is to inform, and most speeches are supported by a visual aids, though VAs are not required. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

**Great Speeches**Students choose a speech that was delivered by someone else, and analyze why the speech is considered to be "great". The 8-minute performance will include portions of the original great speech interspersed with the student's research and analysis of the speech. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

**Extemporaneous Speaking**Students build research files on current events, and then deliver 7-minute speeches based on questions related to national or international politics (your choice). At each tournament, students will draw questions of national or international interest, and will then have 30 minutes to formulate their response using the research files they have created. Each round of competition will draw from new questions.

**Discussion**Students build research files about a pre-selected topic (selected by the MSHSL, not the student) and then participate in round-table discussions of related sub-topics with 5-7 other students. Students are given an outline of topics and sub-topics at the start of the season, and each tournament will draw from 3-4 of those sub-topics.

For the complete rules, visit [www.mshsl.org](http://www.mshsl.org), select “Speech” from the activities pull-down menu. Scroll to the bottom of the page; the rules and policies are on listed under “Resources”.

Northfield Raiders Speech Team Handbook

Coaching Staff

* Head Coach: Mrs. Jody Saxton West

N.H.S. email: jody.saxtonwest@nfld.k12.mn.us

Office Telephone : 645-1271

Cellular Phone : 651-755-7428

Communications

* It is crucial that each Speech team member accept responsibility for communicating with the coaches, and for accessing the communications that are vital to the success of our program.
* Each team member must join the Speech Team Schoology course; the access code can be obtained from Coach Saxton West.
* The Schoology messaging system will be a primary means of communication.

Season Calendar

* A season calendar that contains our team meetings, events, and tournament schedule is available on our Schoology page. As specific tournament details are often not known until just prior to the tournament, please check the “Tournament Schedule Details” file on Schoology regularly.

Practice Information and Expectations

* Each team member will be scheduled for approximately one practice with a coach, captain, or group of teammates every week. Additional practice times may be arranged.
* Practice schedules will be posted on Schoology and posted on the door of Mrs. Saxton West’s classroom (S106).
* Team members are expected to **attend and be on time to all scheduled practices**. If a team member is unable to attend a practice, **Coach Saxton West must be notified ahead of time**. (Note: Please notify Coach Saxton West, even if she is not the coach with whom you were scheduled to practice. She will notify your coach of your absence.) Being late to or missing a practice without prior notification will result in consequences as outlined in the “Consequences” section of this handbook. If a team member is absent from school on the day of his or her practice, it is considered an excused absence, as long as every effort is made to reschedule the practice. The team member is expected to make contact with Coach Saxton West, ideally via email, Schoology message, or phone message the day of the absence, or in person the first day of return to school, to reschedule the practice.
* Team members should have a folder or binder dedicated to Speech materials, which **must be brought to all practices and tournaments**. The folder or binder should contain a copy of this handbook, a lettering points tracking sheet, all critiques acquired during the season, and the following (if applicable): an up-to-date copy of their script (even if the team member has the script memorized), Storytelling or Extemporaneous Reading selections list, topic outline for Discussion or Extemporaneous Speaking. Additionally, the following should be brought to every practice for students in the pertinent categories: Storytelling books, Extemporaneous Reading books, research files (Discussion), research files and notecards (Extemporaneous Speaking), and visual aids and easels (Informative).
* In addition to practicing with coaches and captains, team members are expected to practice outside of scheduled time. When given an assignment by a coach, team members are expected to complete that assignment by the deadline set forth by the coach.

Tournament Information and Expectations

* **All team members will be** **registered for all tournaments**, unless prior arrangements have been made with Coach Saxton West to be excused from a competition. Please **respect the deadlines for making these arrangements** as delineated on the “Tournament Schedule Details” file on Schoology.
* Occasionally we compete in tournaments, such as the Section 1AA Tournament, where we are limited in the number of competitors we may bring. In the event that we have more participants eligible to compete than we are allowed to enter in the tournament, the Head Coach will determine which speakers will compete. In making that decision, consideration will be given to elements such as placing potential (the likelihood of placing at the top of the category), work ethic, personal responsibility, dedication to the team, and years in Speech.
* Should a team member become ill or have another emergency on the morning of a tournament, he or she (or a parent) should call Coach Saxton West's cellular phone prior to our departure time.
* Should a team member miss the bus on the morning of a tournament, he or she should call Coach Saxton West’s cell phone to get directions for meeting the team at the tournament. Missing the bus is not a valid excuse for not competing in the tournament.
* If bad weather or other emergency necessitates the cancellation of a tournament (or our electing to not attend), information about that cancellation will be posted on Schoology. If Internet service is interrupted, every effort will be made to reach team members by telephone. Any team member who does not have reliable access to Internet at home should arrange for a team member who does have access to contact them in the event of a cancellation.
* Team members will ride the team bus to and from tournaments. If it is necessary for a team member to ride with a parent or other adult, arrangements must be made with Coach Saxton West **at least one day** **ahead of time, and a written permission slip must be obtained**.
* Team members are expected to dress in appropriate tournament attire. Jeans, tennis shoes, and t-shirts are unacceptable. Preferred attire is suits, skirts, dress pants, dress shirts, ties. Shirts may not be "revealing" in any way, including an exposed midriff, shoulders, or cleavage. Solid, non-distracting colors are ideal. Skirts must not be higher than 1” above the knee, and may not be tight-fitting. If a skirt is worn, non-patterned pantyhose or tights are required. Dress shoes are required; heels must not be higher than 2”. The same outfit can certainly be worn to all tournaments, just as other activities have a single team uniform. Team members are expected to remain in tournament attire for the entire tournament, including awards. (Team members may wear casual clothes that are in accordance with the NHS dress code on the bus rides to and from tournaments.) Team members are expected to have their hair pulled back from their face, so as not to distract during performance. Males should be clean-shaven, or have facial hair neatly-groomed. Jewelry should be conservative.
* Team members not qualifying for the final round of competition at a tournament are expected to attend either the final round of their own category, or a final round in which a teammate is competing, unless given permission to attend another category.

Lettering

* Team members may earn (an) N.H.S. “letter(s)” for their involvement in Speech. It is the responsibility of the team member, not the coach, to keep track of performance points earned. A lettering points tracking sheet will be distributed to each team member at the start of the season, and will be due to Coach Saxton West the day following the Section tournament.
* A letter may be earned for a season of Speech if the following criteria are met:

1. Regular attendance at team meetings, events, and practices with a Coach. Missed deadlines and unexcused absences from practices, team meetings, mandatory events, or tournaments will negatively impact your ability to letter.

2. The team member earns **50 or more points\*** for performances at Invitational, Conference, and Section Tournaments during the season:

•For Invitational and Conference Tournaments:

 •If the tournament DOES have a final round:

 If the team member does not qualify for finals:

If preliminary round average is a 1 or 2 = 10 points

 If preliminary round average is a 3 or 4 = 7 points

 If preliminary round average is a 5 = 5 points

 (to compute averages, round to higher point value at 0.5 or

 lesser (i.e., an average of 4.5 rounds to a 4 = 7 points), and round to

 lower point value at 0.6 or higher (an average of 4.6 rounds to a 5 = 5

 points))

 If the team member does qualify for finals:

 If in finals and places in the top three = 12 points

 If in finals, but does not place in the top three = 10 points

•If the tournament does NOT have a final round:

 If the team member finishes in the top 3 in the category = 12 points

 or

If round average is a 1 or 2 = 10 points

 If round average is a 3 or 4 = 7 points

 If round average is a 5 = 5 points

 (to compute averages, use rounding information detailed above)

•For Section Tournaments:

 If the team member does not qualify for finals:

If preliminary round average is a 1 or 2 = 15 points

 If preliminary round average is a 3 or 4 = 10 points

 If preliminary round average is a 5 = 5 points

 (to compute averages, use rounding information detailed above)

 If the team member does qualify for finals:

 If in finals and places in the top three = 50 points (going to State)

 If in finals, but does not place in the top three = 15 points

\* The 50-point value is based on a competitive season consisting of six invitational tournaments, one conference tournament, and one section tournament opportunities for the team member. The point value will be adjusted if the season differs from that schedule.

Additionally,

1. A team member who double-enters at a tournament may only record the point value of the higher-ranking category, not both categories.

2. Points may not be carried over from one season to another.

3. Team members who do not meet the above criteria but have shown a commitment to the team for three years may be awarded a letter.

4. All letters are granted at the discretion of the Head Coach and Activities Director, and these criteria may be altered at their discretion.

Consequences

* Should a team member fail to meet the expectations outlined in this and other Northfield Public Schools or Minnesota State High School League handbooks, consequences may be issued, including but not limited to: verbal reprimand, written reprimand, attending a tournament in full tournament dress but not being allowed to compete, forfeiture of privilege of lettering, removal from the team. Consequences will be issued at the discretion of the Head Coach and Activities Director.



Speech

Judging
Handbook

Dear Raider Speech Judge,

SPEECH!

Thank you so much for your willingness to serve as a judge for the Northfield High School Raider Speech team! You are an integral part of our program.

Should you need to contact me, you may do so by email (jsaxtonwest@northfieldschools.org or cellular phone (651-755-7428) (please, if you need to contact me the morning of a tournament, call my cell phone).

Tournament details: Before each tournament for which you are scheduled to judge, I will send you an email with information about departure times, tournament format, anticipated return times, etc.
Transportation: Regarding transportation to and from tournaments, you are welcome to ride the bus with the team or drive yourself. It is important that you let me know your plans, as I don’t want to hold the bus waiting for you if you are driving! If you ride the bus, we depart from the front of the High School.

Dress: I request that you dress professionally, yet comfortably. Dress slacks or khakis with a sweater or dress shirt are great; if you do choose to wear jeans, please make sure they are in good condition with no holes. It is difficult to predict the temperature of the schools we’ll be visiting, so layers are a good idea.

Food: Some tournaments provide a continental breakfast for judges, some provide a lunch, some both, some neither. I will try to relay this information to you before each tournament. I think it is a good idea to carry a little cash for the concession stand, just in case.

Other supplies: Please bring a couple of pens with you, particularly if you have a particular type of pen that you prefer—you’ll be doing a lot of writing! I will provide you with a stopwatch for the day (to use for timing performances). You may
 also bring reading materials, electronic, or paperwork for the downtime between rounds.

Pay: Each time you judge, you will fill out a card or a claim form that I will submit to our payroll department. They will mail you a check at the address you provide.

Judging assignments: For most tournaments, we do not get to choose what categories we are assigned to judge. For that reason, I have included information about every category in this packet. Please bring this information with you each time you judge.

Thanks again for your willingness to serve in this capacity!

Gratefully,

Jody Saxton West

Head Coach

Northfield High School Raider Speech

# A Day in the Life of a Speech Judge

1. To receive your judging assignment and the schedule for the day, please find me or another Northfield coach in the “Judges’ Lounge”. If at any point during the day you need to find me, I am generally in the tab room. You can also call my cell phone (651-755-7428).
2. If you are unfamiliar with or uneasy about any category that you are assigned to judge, please read over the relevant information in this packet. Still unsure? Just ask me or another experienced judge—I’ll be happy to give you pointers! What is most important is that you do not just trade assignments with another judge—this creates chaos for the tournament managers.
3. Please locate the rooms in which you will be judging so that you are able to arrive on time to each round of competition.
4. Arrive to your assigned room about 5-7 minutes before the round is scheduled to begin. Smile, greet students, be warm and welcoming, though don’t ask questions about what school they are from, what grade they are in, etc.. They are likely nervous; you can put them at ease and set a positive tone for the round with your attitude.

\* If you are judging a “draw” category (Ex. Reading, Ex. Speaking, or Storytelling), the students will not all be in the room at the same time, as they are on a staggered speaking schedule. You may need to go into the hallway to call in your next speaker at the time listed on your schedule. They will hand you their critique sheet, and will wait for you to give them a “ready” signal before they begin. After their performance, they will likely leave (you may keep their critique sheet for reference), and you can call in the next speaker. The speakers may choose to stay after their performance to watch their competitors; this is acceptable (even encouraged!).

\* If you are judging Discussion, there will be table or a group of desks where the speakers will sit “round table” style. You will likely have a desk of some sort off to the side. Please see the “Discussion” section of this packet for more details, as many of the following steps regarding speakers and critique sheets will not apply.

\*For most categories, you will be judging in a classroom. If possible, sit in the center of the room, about 1/3 of the way to the back. Make sure you have ample writing surface—if not, rearrange desks until you do. (If you are judging a draw category, it is likely to be a small room, and may have few if any desks. Just find a space where you have a writing surface.)

1. THE GOLDEN RULE: *Act like you know what you are doing, even if you do not*! NEVER tell the kids it is your first time judging Speech or your first time judging that particular category. It puts unnecessary stress on them, and undermines your professionalism. You can always seek help from me or other experienced judges between rounds.
2. The speakers will have critique sheets. Collect these sheets from each speaker before the round begins. Cross-reference the critique sheets with the list of speaker codes you have. Once everyone is present, you can fill in their codes and names on your ballot, if that has not already been provided for you.
3. When you are feeling ready and organized (critiques are in order, you’ve got a working pen, the stopwatch is ready to go), put the first speaker’s critique sheet in front of you, and call their name or speaker code. He/she will walk to the front of the room, and will wait for you to give a signal (a smile, or a nod, or sustained eye contact) to begin. Begin timing with the stopwatch when the speaker begins “acting” or speaking.
4. As they perform, listen intently. Provide positive non-verbal feedback (smiling, nodding, eye contact, attentive body posture) even if the performance is lackluster. If the performance is humorous, it is okay to laugh out loud. Do not, however, make any verbal comments, either positive or negative, during or after the performance.
5. While the speaker is performing, write comments on the critique sheet. While you may need to look at the paper to do this, if you are writing a lengthy comment, do look up as often as possible to let them know you are still listening attentively.
6. When the speaker is finished, stop the stopwatch, applaud, then take time to write any final comments on their critique sheet. Again, do NOT provide any oral critiques; don’t even say, “That was wonderful!” or “Well done!”. Be sure to record the length of the performance on the critique sheet, as well. This is incredibly helpful information for the speaker and their coach. When you’re finished with written comments for that speaker, reset the stopwatch, and find the critique for the next speaker. Repeat steps 7-10 until you’ve heard all of the speakers.
7. After the last speaker, you need to rank (and sometimes rate) the students on the ballot. Each tournament will give you instructions on how they want you to do this. Please see the section “Using Ranks and Rates” in this handout for more information. If you believe that a speaker has violated a rule, do NOT let that suspected violation affect your ranks or rates. Judge and score that speaker as though the rule violation did NOT occur; when you drop off your ballot at the ballot drop, ask to speak to the Tournament Manager. You can then share your concerns with him or her, and he or she will adjust the ranks and rates if necessary.
8. Some tournaments want you to return the critique sheets to students at the end of the round, and others request that you bring the critique sheets to the ballot drop. Discussion critiques (often called “flow sheets”) are always brought to the ballot drop so they can be photocopied; Storytelling, Ex. Reading, and Ex. Speaking critiques are usually brought to the ballot drop, too, unless the tournament host has requested that they be placed somewhere else.
9. Bring your completed ballot to the ballot drop as soon as possible.
10. If there is time to spare before your next round, you may go to the judges’ lounge. Otherwise, proceed to your second, and then third, rounds.

 15. After third round, please hang out in the judges’ lounge until finals are posted. (If the
 tournament does not have final rounds, please speak to me to determine if you are free to leave.)
 As postings of final rounds are made available, check to see if your name or code is listed. If so,
 note the category, room assignment, and start time. In many final rounds, there will be three
 judges; your ranks and rates will be compiled to determine tournament medalists. Not everyone
 will be called upon to judge a final round. If you are not, you may leave, hang out in the lounge,
 or go watch a final round.

1. After final rounds, you are free to leave, or are welcome to stay for the awards ceremony.

# Ranks and Rates

Each tournament will provide you with details as to how they wish you to numerically evaluate speakers, but generally, you will use a system of “ranks” and “rates”.

The RANK indicates who you feel was the best speaker in that round, the second best speaker, etc. A rank of “1” means the speaker was the best in that round; a “2” is next, etc. Often, if there are more than five speakers in a round, you will be asked to rank the top four students 1-4, and then give all others a “5”.

Determining ranking order can be difficult, and most judges develop their own “system” for doing so. Some try to place the critique sheets in their order of preference as the round progresses. For example, if Abby speaks first, when she is done, you set her critique aside. Next up is Bobby. After Bobby’s performance, you determine that Abby was better than Bobby, so you place Bobby’s critique *under* Abby’s in your pile. Third to speak is Cassie, who is not as good as Abby, but better than Bobby; Cassie’s critique goes *between* Abby’s and Bobby’s. At the end of the round, the top critique in the round is your “1”, the next critique your “2”, etc. Of course, this needs to be done very subtly, so the speakers are not disappointed to see their critique go to the bottom of the pile when it is obvious that you have been ordering them after each speaker!

A more subtle way to do this is the “dot” method. On the ballot, you’ll make dots next to each speaker’s name. Abby is up first; at the end of her performance, she is your “1” (if only by default). She gets one dot next to her name. Next up is Bobby, and he is not as good as Abby— give him two dots by his name. If you determine that Cassie, your third speaker, is better than Bobby but not as good as Abby, leave Abby’s one dot, give Cassie two dots, and add a third dot next to Bobby’s name. At the end of the round, the “one dot” speaker is your “1”, the “two dot” speaker your “2”, etc.

RATES are also sometimes required. The rate gives the tab room an indicator of the strength of each performance as well as the round as a whole. Let’s say the instructions ask you to rate students from 80-100. A rate of “100” would send the message that this performance was top-notch, you could not ask for more. A rate of “97” indicates it was a strong performance, but there is a little room for improvement. (A couple notes: most tournaments will request that you do not duplicate rates—that is, do not give two speakers a “95”. Also, some tournaments, especially early in the season, will request that you try to keep all rates between 90-100, even if the instructions indicate to rate as low as 80. Please honor these tournament requests.) You can use rates convey other information, as well. For example, if in a round of five speakers the two best speakers were nearly equally amazing, yet the other three were not quite as polished, you might rank and rate this way:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Student | Rank | Rate |
| Abby A.  | 1 | 98 |
| Bobby B. | 2 | 97 |
| Cassie C.  | 3 | 92 |
| Donald D.  | 4 | 91 |
| Ella E. | 5 | 90 |

In rounds with more than five speakers, the rate also indicates who you felt was the better speaker out of all of the students that received ranks of “5”:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Student | Rank | Rate |
| Abby A.  | 1 | 98 |
| Bobby B. | 2 | 97 |
| Cassie C.  | 3 | 92 |
| Donald D.  | 4 | 91 |
| Ella E. | 5 | 90 |
| Fiona F.  | 5 | 88 |

Even though Ella and Fiona are “tied” in rank, your preference for Ella over Fiona is indicated by the rate.

TO REITERATE: If you believe that a speaker has violated a rule, do NOT let that suspected violation affect your ranks or rates. Judge and score that speaker as though the rule violation did NOT occur; when you drop off your ballot at the ballot drop, ask to speak to the Tournament Manager. You can then share your concerns with him or her, and he or she will adjust the ranks and rates if necessary.

# Some Speech Vocabulary

Awards: a ceremony at the close of the tournament where the top finishers in each category are announced

Ballot: the paper where the judge records the ranks and rates earned by speakers each competitive round; ballots are to be turned into the ballot drop area as soon as possible after each round

Ballot Drop: generally a table near the tab room where judges submit their ballots after each round

Code: the code by which a speaker is identified at a tournament. The code is generally a combination of letters and numbers that reference the speaker’s category, school, and self.

Critique: a sheet of paper with each competitor’s information, used by the judge for making written comments about the speaker’s performance. This will be returned to the speaker for use by him/her and his/her coach.

Cutting: a performance selection that has been “cut” from a longer selection, such as a novel or screenplay. Two speakers may be performing from the the same novel, but have different “cuttings”.

Draw categories/draw events: categories where students draw (usually from an envelope) a slip of paper that contains the selection they will be performing that round. Ex. Reading, Ex. Speaking, and Storytelling are draw events.

Finals: a final round of competition in which students who qualified by earning top scores in preliminary rounds will compete head-to-head

Flow sheet: in Discussion, a critique sheet on which the judge makes written comments as to the “flow” of the discussion. The judge generally writes one ongoing commentary, which is later photocopied by the tab room staff for distribution to all speakers in that round.

Interpretation (Interp) categories: includes Prose, Poetry, Drama, Humorous, Duo Interpretation, Ex. Reading, Storytelling, and Creative Expression

Introduction/Intro: a required component of interpretation categories that introduces the title and author of the selection, generally near the beginning of the performance, often after a short teaser

Judges’ Lounge: an area designated for judges; food is often available in this area, and speakers are generally not allowed in this area

Piece: term used to refer to a competitor’s speech

Posting: refers to hanging posters (or occasionally showing a PowerPoint presentation) to let speakers, coaches, and judges know who has qualified for final round, as well as the location, time and judges for each final round. This occurs after scores for the preliminary rounds have been tabulated.

Public Address (P.A.) or Public Speaking categories: includes Ex. Speaking, Informative, Original Oratory, Great Speeches (and Discussion is sometimes considered P.A., for lack of a better classification)

Rank: the number assigned by the judge (generally 1-5) at the close of each round that corresponds to the order of the performers in each round, from most preferred by the judge (1) to least preferred (usually 5)

Rate: a number assigned by the judge at the close of a round (generally 80-100) that is an indicator of the strength of the performance and the strength of the round (higher numbers indicate greater strength)

Round: a round of competition; there are generally 2-3 preliminary rounds per tournament, and there may be a final round

Rules: generally refers to the official rules for each event; most tournaments use the rules set forth by the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL), though some use the rules set forth by the National Speech and Debate Association

Script: term used to refer to the actual pieces of paper containing a competitor’s speech

Selection: term used to refer to a competitor’s speech or performance piece

Tab Room: short for tabulation room, this is where the ranks and rates from each judge for each speaker are tallied to determine who qualifies for final round, and each speaker’s place (1st, 2nd, etc) for the tournament.

Task: In Discussion, the topic or problem that will be the focus of the round. Tasks are generally not known to the speakers before the round, and are usually given to Discussion judges at the start of the tournament or at the start of each round.

Teaser: in interpretation categories, a short portion of the speaker’s piece that comes at the start of the performance and before the introduction

Visuals: in Informative, the visual aids used by the speaker during his/her speech

# Interpretation Categories

General Interpretation Delivery (Creative Expression, Duo Interpretation, Extemporaneous Reading, Humorous, Serious Drama, Serious Poetry, Serious Prose, Storytelling)

* The introduction should set up the theme, mood, and scene of the speech.
* Characters should be distinct in narration and dialogue, and should be believable.
* Bodily movement, facial expressions, and gestures should be appropriate to the piece.
* Fluency and pace should vary accordingly.
* The selection should be of literary merit, appropriate to the speaker and the audience.
* Sample comments:
	+ *Slow down a little so we can hear each word and really picture the scene.*
	+ *Your ending is a bit abrupt. Can you find a way to prepare us for it?*
	+ *Avoid “over dramatizing” or “acting”. Let you voice and subtle gestures convey the meaning and mood of the character or scene.*
	+ *Consider using pauses more effectively. Pause to give us time to absorb the magnitude of the scene, or to consider the weight of the words of your character.*
	+ *You appear poised and confident when portraying the “mother”; perhaps you can find a way to become more familiar with the “father” character so he is more believable.*

## Creative Expression

Time limit: 8 minutes

* The performance of a speech must contain at least 80% original material (written by the speaker). Any material that is not the speaker’s own work must be cited.
* The mood of the speech may be serious, humorous, or a mix of the two.
* The student may use pantomime, storytelling, impersonation, or any of a variety of performance styles. The speaker is allowed to move about the room.
* Things to look for:
	+ Evidence of creativity in both the material and the performance.
	+ A clear message or theme that is carried throughout.
* Sample comments:
	+ *I like how you move between having a narrator introduce the characters, and then hearing from the characters themselves.*
	+ *You’ve done a comedic take on a subject that is generally presented as serious; I’m so impressed with your originality!*
	+ *You tell us that your character loves to write poetry, perhaps we could hear a little of “her” work?*
	+ *Be careful in your use of self-deprecating humor; it is only effective if it does not make your audience uncomfortable and if it enhances the theme of or character-development in the piece.*
* From the MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual:

Creative Expression is the performance of material written by the contestant, so no more than 20% may be material from other sources. All materials quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from other sources must be documented orally and in the written text. Because the presentation has been created by the student, judges should consider evidence of creative imagination in both writing and performance. The mood may be serious, humorous, or both. The objective is to encourage creativity through a variety of genre and performance styles. The total performance should reflect a unity of style, tone and theme. The contestant may use pantomime, storytelling, interpretive reading, impersonation, or any combination of these performance styles. Properties, costumes, instrumental music, and stage makeup are NOT allowed. An introductory statement, included within the eight (8) minute time limit, must precede the presentation. This introduction may, at the student's discretion, include a "teaser." A copy of the script must be filed with the Contest Manager before each contest. Updated copies of the script must be submitted at Subsection, Section, and State levels. The use of a script is optional, provided it is not used as a prop. THE TIME LIMIT IS EIGHT (8) MINUTES, INCLUDING THE INTRODUCTION. IF THE SPEAKER HAS BEEN WARNED THAT TIME HAS EXPIRED, THE SPEAKER MAY ONLY FINISH THE SENTENCE ALREADY BEGUN. A THIRTY (30) SECOND GRACE PERIOD SHALL BE PROVIDED AT ALL LEVELS OF COMPETITION.

## Duo Interpretation

Time limit: 8 minutes

* Two speakers will perform a single selection together. The speakers may only make eye contact with one another during the introduction and transitions. The speakers may not have physical contact.
* This piece may be taken from a variety of genres, including plays, prose, or poetry, and may portray a variety of characters. The mood maybe serious, humorous, or a mix of the two.
* What to look for:
	+ When one performer is speaking, the other should be engaged and reacting.
	+ The speakers have a sense of timing; each delivers their lines at a pace appropriate to the line before.
* Sample comments:
	+ *The two of you have a nice chemistry; you are a believable “couple”.*
	+ *Even though your partner has been talking for 15 full seconds, you should not be inanimate. Rather, let your face and body convey a reaction to what your partner is saying.*
	+ *It is critical that you both turn around at exactly the same time. Consider creating a subtle signal that one of you does to let the other know when to turn, or time it to, say, exactly three “beats”.*
	+ *Try to match each other’s volume; the husband character is consistently louder than the wife, and it detracts from the words they are saying.*
* From the MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual:

Duo interpretation features two students interpreting together one or more selections from a single published source or a single anthology of prose, poetry, and/or dramatic literature, serious and/or humorous, with literary merit and appropriate to the readers. The students' script may be limited to a single author or genre but may include material from more than one genre and/or author so long as the material comes from that single published source. Each student may portray one or more characters. Costumes, props, make-up, special lights, scenery, stools, or chairs, music stands, or lecterns may not be used. An introduction must be presented at the beginning of the interpretation and this introduction, along with any transitional remarks necessary for the selection, may be delivered by either or both of the participants. A "teaser" may be used, provided that it comes from one of the selections being used and is duly noted. Duo Interpretation is an oral interpretation event and shall be judged as such. There shall be no body contact between speakers. Facial expressions, movement, and gestures may be used as appropriate to the piece. Eye contact is permitted with audience members during narration. Focal points may be employed during dialogue. Interpreters may refer to each other and make eye contact with each other during the introduction and/or transitions. A copy of the script must be filed with the Contest Manager before each contest. Updated copies of the script must be submitted at Subsection, Section and State levels. Should one original member of a Duo be unable to compete, a substitute may be named to perform in his/her place. The use of a script is optional, provided it is not used as a prop. THE MAXIMUM TIME LIMIT IS EIGHT (8) MINUTES, INCLUDING A REQUIRED INTRODUCTION AND NECESSARY TRANSITIONS. A THIRTY (30) SECOND GRACE PERIOD SHALL BE PROVIDED AT ALL LEVELS OF COMPETITION.

## Extemporaneous Reading

Time limits: 30 minutes preparation, 6 minutes speaking

* In this category, the stories or poems read will be different each time the student speaks. He or she will draw three cuttings from one of two envelopes (either Prose (stories) or Poetry) (drawing will be done in a draw area; judges are not responsible for this portion of the event). The student then has 30 minutes to prepare one of the three selections he or she has drawn, including memorizing a short introduction.
* If a student has chosen Poetry, the selection may be one longer poem, or several shorter poems.
* The speaker may give you the slip of paper that contains the cutting he or she has drawn.
* Competitors will read directly from their book; they are not allowed to memorize in this category. The exception is their introduction, which must be memorized.
* Things to look for:
	+ Fluidity, volume, and pace are varied appropriately throughout the story or poem.
	+ A mood or tone is established by the speaker.
	+ Distinctions are made between characters, both in narration and dialogue.
* Sample comments:
	+ *You obviously chose a selection you like. You seem familiar with the piece and the characters, which allows you to read with greater fluidity.*
	+ *Remember, you’re not just reading to us, you are interpreting the literature. Build this story to its climax and convey its meaning to us.*
	+ *Use your introduction to tell us the theme of the poems (or to familiarize us with the setting of the story).*
	+ *You mispronounced, several words, including \_\_\_ and \_\_\_. Perhaps as you practice each story, you should look up any unfamiliar terms in the dictionary to learn correct pronunciations.*
* From the MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual:

Participation in Extemporaneous Reading teaches a student to introduce and read excerpts from prose or poetry for the purpose of appreciation or enjoyment. The student will declare, prior to each draw, his/her choice of genre. Specific sources for reading will be announced in the fall of each year. The League Office will identify specific poems and stories for contests. NO CUTTINGS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE BEFORE THE ACTUAL CONTESTS. The order of speaking shall be determined by lot. Thirty (30) minutes before the contest begins, the first reader shall draw three cuttings. The reader shall immediately choose one of them, and return the other two which will then be placed with the other cuttings remaining to be drawn. The cuttings chosen shall be recorded by the event manager. Each of the succeeding readers shall, at intervals of eight (8) minutes, in turn, follow the same procedure. In finals at ALL levels of competition, the student may not perform a cutting that she/he has performed in a preliminary round at that level of competition. In the event that the student draws a previously performed cutting, she/he may draw a substitute cutting. After the contestant has drawn a cutting, the student shall not confer or have any communication with a coach or others until the reading has been delivered. Each reader shall present the cutting draw slip to the Room Manager or Judge(s) in the round. While the inadvertent skipping or substitution of a single word or phrase in an Extemporaneous reading may occasionally and understandably occur, students must be careful that entire sentences or more are not skipped during the presentation. Contestants must not read more of the selection than is included in the drawn cutting. For poetry, students must read selections in the order listed on the draw slip. For prose, students must start at the beginning of the prescribed cutting and read as much of the complete cutting as time permits. Students are allowed to stop reading at any point within the last minute. If the time has expired, the student shall complete only the sentence already begun. Allowable cutting would include the elimination of "he said" and "she said" once a character has been established or the omission of language objectionable to the contestant. The student should be judged on the ability to introduce the excerpt with a few appropriate extemporaneous remarks, and to read the selection with effective vocal and bodily expression. The student may use a "teaser" as a part of the introduction. However, the "teaser" must be a part of the actual drawn section of the story or poem, and the “teaser” passage may not be eliminated within the reading subsequently presented. THE ENTIRE DELIVERY TIME, INCLUDING THE REQUIRED INTRODUCTION, SHALL NOT EXCEED SIX (6) MINUTES. NO GRACE PERIOD IS PROVIDED IN THIS EVENT.

***Humorous***

Time limit: 8 minutes

* This piece is intended to be humorous, and is selected from prose, poetry, or a play.
* Things to look for:
	+ Exaggerated characters, voices, gestures, or pauses may help convey the humor, especially in areas of the piece when the humor is subtle.
	+ Characters should be clearly distinguished (by voice, posture, gesture, or a combination thereof) from one another.
* Sample comments:
	+ *Don’t rush over the funny lines-- we won’t laugh if we don’t hear them.*
	+ *Sometimes a funny line should be delivered with a sparkle in your eye and laughter in your voice; but other times, a line or situation is funny even though the character doesn’t intend for it to be. Make sure you deliver those lines as intended, and then pause to allow the humor of the situation to sink in for your audience.*
	+ *Your characters had such distinct personalities, despite the fact that they were both teenage males-- great technique!*
	+ From the MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual:

Humorous Interpretation uses any published selection, either prose, poetry, or dramatic literature, with literary merit and appropriate to the reader. The cutting should amuse, give enjoyment, or create laughter. The student should be judged on ability to get and give meaning through the use of vocal and bodily expression. Poise, vocal and physical delivery, and appropriateness of the selection to the interpreter should be considered. A copy of the script must be filed with the Contest Manager before each contest. Updated copies of the script must be submitted at Subsection, Section, and State levels. The use of a script is optional, provided it is not used as a prop. THE MAXIMUM TIME OF PRESENTATION, INCLUDING THE REQUIRED INTRODUCTION, IS EIGHT (8) MINUTES. A THIRTY (30) SECOND GRACE PERIOD SHALL BE PROVIDED AT ALL LEVELS OF COMPETITION.

***Serious Drama, Prose, and Poetry***

Time limit: 8 minutes

* Drama= a published play; prose= a published story or novel; poetry= a published poem
* Speakers should be judged on the ability to convey the meaning of the selection through use of vocal, facial, and (limited) bodily expression.
* Things to look for:
	+ Characters should be clearly distinguished (by voice, posture, gesture, or a combination thereof) from one another.
	+ The mood of the scene should be communicated vocally, as well as through facial expressions and body language.
* Sample comments:
	+ *You did an excellent job building this selection to its climax; I liked how you alluded to it in your introduction.*
	+ *I would have liked to see more tension in your face and voice during the argument scene.*
	+ *(For poetry) Watch your phrasing. Often the way a poem “looks” when you read it is not the way you would phrase it when performing it aloud. Spend some time considering where it makes sense to pause.*
	+ *The mother and the daughter in your piece have a lot of dialogue, so it is confusing when their voices and postures are so similar. Can you find a way to more clearly distinguish between the two?*
	+ *Even though this is an action-filled piece, can you find some places to appropriately soften your voice or slow the pace? It would add interest to the piece.*
* From the MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual:

SERIOUS DRAMA INTERPRETATION
Serious Drama Interpretation uses any published selection of dramatic literature (plays, radio plays, television plays, or screenplays) with literary merit and appropriate to the reader. The term "dramatic" here refers to the genre of the literature and does not include prose or poetry that is serious. The mood of the cutting must be essentially serious. A copy of the script must be filed with the Contest Manager before each contest. Updated copies of the script must be submitted at Subsection, Section, and State levels. The student should be judged on ability to get and give meaning through the use of vocal and bodily expression. Poise, vocal and physical delivery, and appropriateness of the selection to the interpreter should be considered. The use of a script is optional, provided it is not used as a prop. THE MAXIMUM TIME OF PRESENTATION, INCLUDING THE REQUIRED INTRODUCTION, IS EIGHT (8) MINUTES. NO GRACE PERIOD IS PROVIDED IN THIS EVENT.

 SERIOUS POETRY INTERPRETATION
 Serious Poetry Interpretation uses any published poetry selection, including novels in verse, with literary merit and
 appropriate to the reader. Serious dramatic literature written in verse, such as a tragedy by Shakespeare, is considered
 "Serious Drama" rather than "Serous Poetry." The mood of the cutting must be essentially serious. Selections for poetry
 may include one poem or several clearly-identified poems. The student should be judged on ability to get and give meaning
 through the use of vocal and bodily expression. Poise, vocal and physical delivery, and appropriateness of the selection to
 the interpreter should be considered. A copy of the script must be filed with the Contest Manager
 before each contest. Updated copies of the script must be submitted at Subsection, Section, and State levels. The use of a
 script is optional, provided it is not used as a prop. THE MAXIMUM TIME OF PRESENTATION, INCLUDING THE
 REQUIRED INTRODUCTION, IS EIGHT (8) MINUTES. NO GRACE PERIOD IS PROVIDED IN THIS EVENT.

SERIOUS PROSE INTERPRETATION
Serious Prose Interpretation uses any published selection of prose, fiction or non-fiction. "Novels in verse" are typically considered Serious Poetry. Any selection, with literary merit and appropriate to the reader, that is not poetry, a play or part of a play, or a delivered speech is considered prose. The mood of the cutting must be essentially serious. The student should be judged on ability to get and give meaning through the use of vocal and bodily expression. Poise, vocal and physical delivery, and appropriateness of the selection to the interpreter should be considered. A copy of the script must be filed with the Contest Manager before each contest. Updated copies of the script must be submitted at Subsection, Section, and State levels. The use of a script is optional, provided it is not used as a prop. THE MAXIMUM TIME OF PRESENTATION, INCLUDING THE REQUIRED INTRODUCTION, IS EIGHT (8) MINUTES. NO GRACE PERIOD IS PROVIDED IN THIS EVENT.

 ***Storytelling***

Time limit: 30 minutes preparation, 6 minutes speaking

* In this category, the stories performed will be different each time the competitor speaks. He or she will draw three stories from an envelope (drawing will be done in a draw area; judges are not responsible for this portion of the event). The speaker then has 30 minutes to prepare one of the three selections he or she has drawn, including memorizing a short introduction.
* The competitor may not use his or her book during the performance; stories are to be re-told in the speaker’s own words.
* The speakers should involve their whole bodies, not just voices, in the retelling of the story. These gestures and postures should enhance the story, not distract from it.
* Things to look for:
	+ The speaker should retell the story in a conversational, engaging manner.
	+ Body language should add energy and meaning to the story.
	+ The introduction should set the stage for the story.
	+ Characters should be clearly distinguished (by voice, posture, gesture, or a combination thereof) from one another.
	+ The story should flow smoothly.
* Sample comments:
	+ *Your characters were fun, distinct, and energetic!*
	+ *Try using your introduction to focus on the theme or message of the selection.*
	+ *Instead of just telling us there is a “knock at the door”, can we also see and hear that knock?*
	+ *When your character is running through the woods, make the pace of the piece go faster. As the character tires and eventually falls asleep, slow the pace and lower the volume to add meaning.*
* From the MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual:

Participation in storytelling should train students to recreate a familiar story extemporaneously. A selected list of fifteen (15) stories will be announced in the fall of each year. The order of presentation shall be determined by lot before the contest begins. Thirty (30) minutes before the contest begins, the first storyteller shall draw three titles. The storyteller shall immediately choose one of them and return the other two, which will then be placed with the other stories remaining to be drawn. The title chosen shall be recorded by the Event Manager. Each of the succeeding performers shall, at intervals of eight (8) minutes, in turn, follow the same procedure. In all rounds, including finals, in ALL levels of competition, a student may NOT repeat a story previously performed in preliminary round at that level of competition. In the event that the student draws a previously performed story, she/he may draw a substitute story. After the contestant has drawn a title, the student shall not confer, or communicate in any way with a coach or others until the presentation has been delivered. Each storyteller shall present the storytelling draw slip to the Room Manager or Judge(s) in the round. No books, notes or properties shall be taken to the platform. Introductory comments (which may be preceded by a teaser) must precede the telling of the story. The contestant must not add subplots or make revisions to the story’s actual events that change the original plot or violate the story's style, intent, and mood. Cutting of a lengthy story is allowable to meet time constraints. The use of a concluding statement that ties back to the introduction is allowed but not required. Because this is not a recitation, the contestant will be judged on the ability to recreate the story in his/her own words, with emphasis on a direct conversational style and spontaneous bodily action. The contestant must maintain the story's mood and format and must deliver the story extemporaneously. TIME LIMIT, INCLUDING REQUIRED INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS, IS SIX (6) MINUTES. If the storyteller is warned that time has expired, the storyteller may conclude with one final statement. NO GRACE PERIOD IS PROVIDED IN THIS EVENT. As requested by the Speech Advisory Committee, there will be no Readers in Storytelling. The Tournament Committee asks that Judges have read the stories if they have indicated a willingness to judge this event at any level of competition.

# Public Speaking/Public Address Categories

General Public Speaking Delivery (Extemporaneous Speaking, Great Speeches, Informative, Original Oratory)

* Delivery should be sincere, pleasant, fluid, and convincing.
* Gestures should enhance the meaning of the speech.
* Facial expressions should convey engagement, concern, enthusiasm, etc.—expression should match the mood and the tone of the piece.
* Steps may be taken at appropriate transitional points in the speech.
* Sample comments:
	+ *Your articulation is precise, now work for more vocal variety.*
	+ *Bring gestures up to waist level; commit to each gesture; make gestures stronger and more intentional.*
	+ *You are a poised, comfortable, engaging speaker. You communicated your ideas to the audience very clearly.*
	+ *Let your voice and body language convince us that you believe what you are saying.*
	+ *Help me to know that you are transitioning to your next idea by changing your posture, or perhaps taking a step or two to one side.*

***Extemporaneous Speaking***

Time limits: 30 minutes preparation, 7 minutes speaking time

* In this category, the topics will be different each time the student speaks. He or she will draw three questions from one of two envelopes (either U.S. issues or International issues) (drawing will be done in a draw area; judges are not responsible for this portion of the event). The student then has 30 minutes to prepare a 7-minute speech that answers the one of the questions he or she has drawn. The student may use any materials he or she has brought with them when writing their speech, though they may not use outside materials during the performance.
* The speaker will usually give you the slip of paper that contains the question drawn.
* The speaker is allowed to use one 3 X 5 notecard
* The speech is a combination of facts and opinions, and is generally persuasive in nature.
* After the speech, the speaker will usually give you their notecard (if one was used).
* The speaker may or may not stay to watch the next competitor; either is acceptable.
* Things to look for:
	+ Attention-grabbing introduction that includes the speaker stating the question and his or her answer to that question.
	+ Organization and main points should be made clear by using a preview statement.
		- Example: *The United States new plan for an insurgency in Iraq will be effective for three reasons. One,…two…finally, ….*
	+ Sources (usually at least two) should be cited and credible.
	+ Delivery is clear and fluid.
	+ The question is answered in a convincing way.
* Sample comments:
	+ *Your main points were well supported, and I appreciated that you referenced many credible, up-to-date sources.*
	+ *Perhaps you could have given a brief explanation of how the problems in Peru began. This would provide more structure to your speech, as well as help those of us who are not familiar with the issue.*
* From the MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual:

The Extemporaneous Speech should be an original synthesis of current fact and opinion on a topic drawn by the contestant. Speakers may choose from either U.S. or International topics. The Judge(s) should consider the quality of information presented by the speaker, together with the speaker's use of that information to support the thesis. The subjects for this event shall be taken from the following magazines and newspapers, with an attempt to balance social, economic, and political issues: Time, St. Paul Pioneer Press, U.S. Weekly News, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Newsweek. The MSHSL will publish each fall subject areas chosen from these publications. The MSHSL will provide questions in both U.S. and International areas for each level of MSHSL competition. Questions shall require persuasive rather than informative speeches. The goal of this activity is the encouragement of extensive reading, understanding of many subjects, and the development of reasoned, supportable positions on issues. The order of speaking shall be determined by lot. Thirty (30) minutes before the contest begins, the first speaker shall draw three questions. The speaker shall immediately choose one of them and return the other two, which shall then be put with the other questions remaining to be drawn. The questions chosen shall be recorded by the Event Manager. Each of the succeeding speakers shall, at intervals of eight (8) minutes, in turn, follow the same procedure. In the event that the student draws a previously performed question, she/he may draw a substitute question. In finals at ALL levels of competition, a student may not repeat a question previously chosen at that level of competition. During the thirty (30) minutes of preparation of the speech, students may consult published books, magazines, newspapers and journals and Internet articles downloaded from established news sources, provided: A. They are originals or photocopies of whole pages. B. Provided those originals or photocopies are uncut. C. There is no written material on that original or copy other than highlighting and citation information (such as publication title and date). D. Topical index may be present. No other material shall be allowed in the prep room other than stated above. Extemporaneous speeches, handbooks, briefs, and outlines shall be barred from the prep room. Outlines and notes created in the prep room during preparation time at the tournament are allowed. Students are not permitted the use of computers to do research during the preparation period but may use computers to retrieve already-stored information. After the contestant has drawn a question, the student shall not confer or have any communication in any way with a coach or others until the speech has been delivered. A contestant may use one side of one 3" x 5" note card during the delivery of the speech. Each speaker shall present the question drawn to the Room Manager or Judge(s) of the round. Upon completion of the speech, each speaker shall immediately present any notes used to the Room Manager or Judge(s) who will present the same to the Contest Manager. The Judge(s) shall not be permitted to ask questions of the speakers. Unless otherwise determined by the Region Committee, the questions are to be furnished by the League Office for: a. Subsection Contests: The questions, U.S. and International, will be furnished to the Contest Manager prior to said contest. b. Section Contests: The questions, U.S. and International will be furnished to the Contest Manager prior to said contest. The contestant in Extemporaneous Speaking is responsible for: a. Strict adherence to the question drawn. b. Well-chosen information relative to the question drawn. c. Organization of the material. d. Effective delivery. THE SPEECH SHALL BE EXTEMPORANEOUS AND SHALL NOT EXCEED SEVEN (7) MINUTES IN LENGTH. SPEAKERS WARNED THAT TIME HAS EXPIRED MAY CONCLUDE WITH ONE FINAL SENTENCE. NO GRACE PERIOD IS PROVIDED IN THIS EVENT.

## Great Speeches

Time limit: 8 minutes

* The intention of this speech is to take a great speech from history (though it may be contemporary) and examine why it was great through the student’s own analysis and perhaps some expert support.
* Several speeches around one theme may be used, or several speeches by one speaker, or one speech by a speaker.
* Things to look for:
	+ Attention-getting introduction that may or may not include an exerpt from the great speech.
	+ Analysis should be interspersed with text from the great speech; the amount of analysis and text will vary, although a minimum of 25% of the material must be the contestant’s own material.
	+ Analysis should examine why the speech was important, what impact it had on its audience, the devices used effectively by the writer (i.e. emotional appeals, logic, figurative language, repetition, etc.).
* Sample comments:
	+ *I had troubling distinguishing your analysis from the text of the great speech. Perhaps a step for transition or a stronger change in voice would help.*
	+ *Your analysis could include more about why this speech was important in the setting in which it was originally delivered, as well as why it is still important today.*
	+ *Give clear examples of the devices used by the speechwriter at appropriate points in your analysis.*
* From the MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual:

Great Speeches is an event in which the contestant speaks about either •a single speech OR •an anthology of speeches (not to exceed three) related by common author, theme, or other element. Each speech (public address) must have been delivered by the speaker before the speaker's intended original audience. For example, "Sermon on the Mount" is Biblical Prose; "Antony's Funeral Oration" is Shakespearean Drama. The contestant's analysis should convey the delight, edification, and challenge of contemporary or historical public address. Information about each author/speaker, subject, original audience, and occasion must be included in an introduction. During the presentation, the contestant must also justify the selection for presentation to the contestant's immediate audience. The justification need not be an explicit statement, but may include such subjects as the historical or potential importance, language style, rhetorical technique and audience appeal. Comments about textual accuracy and ghostwriting style may be included where appropriate. All materials quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from other sources must be documented both orally and in the written text. A minimum of 25% of the presentation must be the contestant's own material. How portions of the original speech text are incorporated into the participant's presentation shall be at the discretion of the participant. Statements, analysis and exposition may be either interspersed throughout the presentation or contained in only one or a few portions of the presentation. Updated July 30, 2015 9 For purposes of documentation, the student is required to provide a citation indicating the source of the selected speech within the written and oral text of the student’s speech. Recorded speeches may be used only if their texts have also been published in print or online. Judging should be on the general effectiveness of the student's interaction with the audience to share the greatness of the speech. The Judge's primary attention should be on the participant's judgment in choosing and editing the material, sensitivity to author's ideas and purpose, and, especially, the speaker's analysis of historical potential, and/or rhetorical importance of the speech. The student may, but is not required to, use a rhetorical model. Secondly, delivery emphasis should be on communication. Since this is not a prose interpretation event, posturing, impersonation, and imitation are to be avoided. A copy of the script must be filed with the Contest Manager before each contest. Updated copies of the script must be submitted at Subsection, Section, and State levels. The use of a script is optional, provided it is not used as a prop. THE MAXIMUM TIME OF THE PRESENTATION SHALL NOT EXCEED EIGHT (8) MINUTES. NO GRACE PERIOD IS PROVIDED IN THIS EVENT.

***Informative***

Time limit: 8 minutes

* This is a speech intended to educate its audience about a meaningful, interesting topic. The speech should not be persuasive in nature.
* Most competitors will use an easel (either free-standing or table-top) and visual aids, though this is optional. The visual aids must be 2- OR 3-dimensional, and should add clarity and interest to the speech.
* Things to look for:
	+ Attention-getting introduction
	+ Clear thesis statement and preview of the main points of the speech
		- Sample*: “The Crayola Crayon Company has a unique history, and its future looks as colorful as ever.”*
	+ Clear organization of the speech
	+ Credibility and citation of sources; generally, at least two are expected
	+ If visual aids are used, they should enhance the speech, not distract from it.
* Sample comments:
	+ *Be careful, your speech tends to get a little persuasive in tone. Perhaps you could create some balance by covering some of the negative aspects of the new light bulb.*
	+ *When you are MANIPULATING your visuals, you tend to turn your back to the audience. Practice switching your boards as you talk and maintain eye contact with the audience.*
* From the MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual:

Informative Speaking is an event in which the student presents an original informative composition of which no more than 10% shall be direct quotation. Quality of thought, research, and composition, as well as delivery, should be considered by the Judges. All materials quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from other sources (including visuals) must be documented in the submitted script (within the text or in a Works Cited listing or both) and orally and/or visually during the presentation. The purpose of Informative Speaking is to present information that the audience may or may not possess and that the student believes important for the audience. The use of visual aids is optional. Visual aids may be two-dimensional and/or three-dimensional but may not violate law (weapons, drugs, for example). The use of animals or any additional people as visual aids is not allowed during the speech. Maximum set-up time is two (2) minutes. When set-up is completed or all of the set up time has been used, timing the speaking begins. Expedient take-down is expected. The host school is responsible for communicating any limitations to visual aids dictated by their school policies. The host school is not responsible for providing any facilities, equipment, or assistance in a contestant’s use of visual aid. A copy of the script must be filed with the Contest Manager before each contest. Updated copies of the script must be submitted at Subsection, Section, and State levels. On-the-spot audience surveys adapted to the speech as given, audience handouts, and active audience involvement are not permitted. The rule does not allow for any type of audience participation. The speech is to be a self-contained presentation—eight (8) minutes in length—presented and controlled by the student. The judging criteria will be the following: 1. Appropriate choice of subject and information for the audience. 2. Clear organization. 3. Direct and communicative delivery manner. 4. Predominantly serious informative purpose (which may include the use of humor). 5. Avoidance of predominantly persuasive subjects and techniques (Every Informative Speech contains some elements of persuasion). The use of a script is optional, provided it is not used as a prop. THE MAXIMUM TIME OF PRESENTATION SHALL NOT EXCEED EIGHT (8) MINUTES. NO GRACE PERIOD IS PROVIDED IN THIS EVENT.

## Original Oratory

Time limit: 8 minutes

* This is a persuasive speech intended to get listeners to think or feel a certain way about a particular topic.
* The topic is usually values-based, as opposed to policy-base, although either approach is acceptable.
* Things to look for:
	+ Attention-getting introduction
	+ Clear thesis or central idea statement near the beginning of the speech
		- Sample: *“Extreme competitiveness in our society has spiraled out of control and we must become aware of its destructive consequences.”*
	+ Clear organization of the speech (often organized as *problem, cause, solution*)
* Sample comments:
	+ *Your thesis is unclear. I know that you are encouraging all citizens to vote in primary elections, but I am unsure as to why. Clearly establish the problem and the consequences before calling us to action.*
	+ *I’m having trouble following the structure of your speech; perhaps reconsider your organization.*
	+ *I’m looking for some credible support for the arguments you are making. Perhaps some examples and a quoted source or two would help make your arguments more convincing.*
* From the MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual:

Original Oratory is an event in which the contestant presents his/her own PERSUASIVE composition of which no more than 10% shall be direct quotation. Because these orations have been written by the contestants, judges should consider the high quality of thought and composition, as well as, communicative delivery. All materials quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from other sources must be documented orally and in the written text. The orator should not be expected to solve any of the great problems of the day, but must offer some insight and guidance. The contestant should be expected to speak intelligently and with a degree of originality about the message chosen. The rule does not allow for any type of audience participation. The composition should be especially adapted to oral presentation, and the orator should employ a variety of persuasive skills and strive for eloquence in style. No particular manner of delivery is required, nor is any particular manner of content organization. A copy of the script must be filed with the Contest Manager before each contest. Updated copies of the script must be submitted at Subsection, Section, and State levels. The use of a script is optional, provided it is not used as a prop. THE MAXIMUM TIME OF PRESENTATION SHALL NOT EXCEED EIGHT (8) MINUTES. NO GRACE PERIOD IS PROVIDED IN THIS EVENT

***Discussion***

Time limit for the group: 1 hour

* Each year, a different topic is chosen. Student do research surrounding the topic, and bring this research with them to each round.
* Each round has a different task, which is generally not know to the discussants prior to the round. The goal of the round is to reach consensus on the task in a one hour time limit.
	+ Sample task: *You are members of a volunteer community task force designed to provide healthy entertainment alternatives for juveniles in your community. Your group should brainstorm ideas, come up with specific plans and implementation procedures, and then design a format for presenting these plans to the young people in your community.*
* The task may be in your judging folder at the beginning of the day; if so, you will give it to the group. If it was not in your judging folder, it may be waiting for you at the ballot drop, or a tournament representative will deliver the task to you and the group at the start of the round.
* Once the tasks have been distributed to the speakers, they will take it from there. You will not provide them with any form of oral critique or direction; all comments will be written on your critique (or “flow”) sheet(s). Comments should be directed to both individuals (by name or code) and the group as a whole.
* Things to look for: “Critique Guidelines for Discussion”, from the MSHSL:
1. **ATTITUDE:** objectivity, open-mindedness, considers all views, respect for others, cooperativeness, respect for group goal.
2. **ETHICS:** sincerity preserves group goal, concern for group and its individuals rather than self-advancement.
3. **INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE:** offers own resources for advancement of group task, documentation.
4. **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:** ability to give and receive feedback, awareness of group roles, understands appropriateness of contributions, maintenance of healthy group attitude.
5. **LEADERSHIP:** guiding the discussion, internal summary, resolving conflicts, encouraging others to share resources.

6. **LISTENING SKILLS:** offers verbal and non-verbal cues in response to others, ensure understanding before continuing.

7. **REASONING AND ANALYSIS:** sense of direction, understands need for disagreement, thoughtfulness, awareness of task, inferences, deductions, support, use of fact, use of opinion.

8. **SPEAKING SKILLS:** clarity of expression, vocabulary, clarification techniques, (paraphrasing, question, etc.)

* Sample comments:
	+ *Thomas—great job of presenting an article to back up your point.*
	+ *Samantha—you do a nice job in the leadership role; however, your tone of voice can be a bit demanding. Try softening your tone.*
	+ *Group—you are getting ahead of yourselves. You’re spending a lot of time trying to decide if an option is cost-effective, when you agreed to brainstorm ideas. Don’t evaluate during brainstorming.*
	+ *Joel and Kari—remember, when you give a statistic, you need to cite your source. The rest of the group should have asked you where you got your statistics.*
* From the MSHSL Rules and Policies Manual:

Problem-solving Discussion is an effort on the part of a small group to reach a solution to a problem through informal interchange of facts, inferences, and judgments. This method of discussion seeks consensus rather than majority rule. The focus of this event should be the encouragement of cooperation and critical thinking to arrive at the collective goal of better understanding and problem solving. The topic(s) for Discussion shall be approved each year by the Board of Directors. The Discussion group shall be composed of not more than eight contestants. Additional sections may be scheduled if the number of contestants exceeds eight. The Discussion activity shall be conducted according to the following procedure: • A study outline and bibliography of the main topic(s) and related sub-topics will be posted on the MSHSL website. • The discussion will be task-oriented where participants act as members of a group whose goal is most frequently an agreed-upon statement of policy, rules, lists, etc., which may also include rationale. • Tasks for MSHSL-sponsored contests will be furnished by the League (as are cuttings and questions for other draw categories) and will not mandate any specific agenda. Invitational festival managers should create tasks for their festivals. Specific tasks will be drawn prior to each round of discussion. • The discussants should control their own process of inquiry. Emerging leadership from within the group should develop. Management of time for that round should remain the responsibility of the discussants themselves. Judges are not to participate. At no time should a Judge become a part of the discussion. Judges should not suggest an agenda, give an opinion, or give oral critiques. The basis for judging Discussion should place emphasis on the task and social dimensions of group interaction. These questions may serve as a guide: 1. Did the discussant's contributions add to the group effort? 2. Did the discussant possess sufficient information, and was the information of high quality? 3. Did the discussant's contributions reflect an understanding of major issues? 4. Did the discussant's behavior reflect a respect for the dignity and worth of other participants? 5. Did the discussant exhibit active listening skills? Judges must be given and must use the criteria listed on the "Individual Critique Sheet for Discussion." Judge(s) may write a group critique sheet to be duplicated by the Contest Manager for each member of the Discussion group. THE DISCUSSION PERIOD SHALL NOT EXCEED ONE HOUR (60 MINUTES). NO GRACE PERIOD IS PROVIDED IN THIS EVENT.

Information contained in this document is adapted from Eastview High School’s Speech Judges’ Training material.