

Primer for judging individual events

I have intentionally kept this primer short and to the point. If you have any questions, please ask.

Tournament organizers call speech events “individual events” (i.e.). This refers to all non-debate events. When you judge i.e., you will judge different events from round to round (listed at the end of this primer). You will probably not judge the same event twice.

Arriving at the Tournament

When you arrive at the tournament, check in with your coach or the registration table. The tournament should hold a brief orientation meeting to emphasize certain suggestions and answer questions. The tournament directors will guide you to the judges’ lounge, where they will find you when they are ready for you to judge.

Judging a Round

When you enter a room, you will judge 5-7 speakers. You and they will follow this procedure:

1. Each speaker presents his/her performance, in a pre-set order. The tournament decides the order. Ask the speakers for it when you enter a room.
2. Each speaker will give you a ballot on which you will comment on his/her performance. You may only comment through writing. You may not provide direct, verbal feedback (a welcome relief).
3. You will time each student and tell them their time after they have finished.
4. After the final speaker, you will rank the students from best to worst in the room. The best speaker will earn a 1; the worst will earn a 7 or 6, depending on how many speakers are competing in your room. You will enter this information on both the individual students’ ballots and a master round ballot of all competitors given to you just before the round.
5. In addition to an overall rank, you will assign quality points to each student. You must assign quality points from 70-100. Consider this a school grade. This explains to the speaker how good their performance was absolutely, not just in relation to the other speakers in the room. Therefore, if a speaker earned a rank of 3, but quality points of 95, s/he knows she still did well.
6. You will turn in your ballot and move to the next round.

Each different event requires different judging criteria, and speakers perform according to a different set of rules for each. On the master ballot for the round, you will find the rules and judging criteria. If you have not judged the event before, take a minute to familiarize yourself with the rules and judging criteria.

Rules and Suggestions

- Bring a stopwatch for timing. If you do not have one, ask your coach.
- Stick around the judges’ lounge. Tournament organizers will look for you there if they need you.

- Learn where the ballot table is. You will turn in and receive your ballots there. You will also go there to ask questions should you have them.
- Remember that you are in charge in the room. Take charge as you enter, and you will reassure the speakers.
- Remind all people in the room to turn off cell phones.
- Give no oral critiques or feedback.
- Act pleasantly. Nothing throws off a speaker's performance more than an ill-tempered judge.
- Write as much as you can. Ballots exist to provide speakers with feedback. They do not work if you write little to nothing on them.
- You may spend a round off. Bring something to do if you must sit for an hour or so.
- Ask questions if you have problems. Learn who to ask.

Events

Ballots will contain more detailed rules for each event.

- *Humorous Interpretation*: a single event where the speaker enacts a humorous skit, playing all roles, with limited movement and no props or costumes.
- *Dramatic Interpretation*: a single event where the speaker enacts a dramatic skit, playing all roles, with limited movement and no props or costumes.
- *Duo Interpretation*: a two-speaker event where the speakers enact a skit, playing all roles, with limited movement, no direct interaction, and no props or costumes.
- *Impromptu Speaking*: a single event where the speaker delivers a speech on a prompt s/he was given approximately five minutes before.
- *Extemporaneous Speaking*: a single event where the speaker delivers a researched speech on a current events topic s/he was given a half-hour before.
- *Prose Poetry*: a single event where the speaker delivers a performative reading of a collection of prose and verse written by others.
- *Oratorical Interpretation*: a single event where the speaker delivers an interpretation of a speech written and published by another author.
- *Original Oratory*: a single event where the speaker delivers a speech s/he has written.