

Speech Judge Training Notes

(approx. 2 hours)

1. Welcome and Thank You! Judges are an integral part of the tournament process; the students would not be able to do this activity without your participation.
2. Handout **MFA Handbook** packet and go over every aspect of the individual categories. (Requirements, restrictions, time minimums and limits, what kinds of pieces are in each category, the distinctions between categories, etc.)
Note: In general time limits are 4:30-10:30 for Speech categories. However, exceptions are Ensemble (4:30-15:30) and Extemp. (3-7 minutes, hand signals for counting down)
3. Show **examples of a ballot for each category** and explain the CORRECT way to fill out a ballot.
 Show (fake) examples of an “excellent” ballot and a “horrible” ballot.
4. Explain how we **determine what categories a judge can do**:
 Experience with/affinity for reading, writing = Poetry, Prose
 Experience with/affinity for reading, writing, and theater = HI, DI
 Experience with/affinity for acting/theatre = Storytelling, Ensemble, Duo, HI, DI
 Experience with/affinity for speeches = ODec, OO
 Experience with/affinity for original writing, analysis of writing = OW, OO
 Experience with current events = Extemp.

Note: In order to be an effective judge, you need to:

- enjoy being entertained by live performance/interpretation,
- be able to observe details of a performance and write comments (positive AND criticism) about the performance,
- be able to determine which performance was best based on the criteria for that category,
- and EXPLAIN why you chose a performance as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc. as compared to the other competitors in that round.

Let me know what categories you think you'd be most qualified to judge, but no guarantees. Also, let me know what categories do you feel you are not qualified to judge.

5. Explain **what happens in a round**:
 - You **MUST** be on-time to the tournament. Usually this will mean being at the school, in the Judge's Lounge, no later than 8:30am.
 - There are typically **four rounds** per tournament, but you might not judge all four of the round. You are hired for the entire day, but if you have been told that you are definitely not judging the last round, you may leave **AFTER** you have checked in with the coach who hired you.
 - When “postings” are done, you will be given a piece of paper with your last name, room number, and the speaker codes (numbers instead of names) for the competitors in that round.

- Pick up the correct ballot for the category you are judging (they are all different colors with the name of the category in the top right corner), one for each competitor.
- Go into designated classroom and sit in THE BACK at a desk.
- You must have a pen to write with (dark ink), your ballots, and a stop-watch. You are NOT allowed to eat in the competition room, but you can bring/drink water.
- When the competitors come into the room, they should write their speaker codes, title, and author of their piece on the board (if there is a board in the room).
- ALL cell phones must be off.
- There are typically 4-8 competitors in a room, and they present their (different) pieces one at a time. They must all be silent during and clap after each piece. (Basically they need to be respectful. If they are not, note it on the ballot so their coach will know.)
- Make sure you start timing the competitor as soon as he/she starts speaking, and be sure to write their time (ex: 8:14 long) on the ballot (top back).
- Students CAN'T come into room while another student is performing, they must wait outside until the competitor has finished and everyone is clapping.
- Some students are “double-entered,” (usually signified by double letters or a 2 before their code), meaning that they are competing in more than on category. Make sure that they go first in your round if they haven't been to their other category yet. After they have performed for you, they should then ask (politely) to leave and go to their next round.
- If a competitor comes into your room who is NOT listed on your sheet, **DO NOT** let them perform! If you do it will wreak havoc on the results/fairness of the competition. Instead insist that they go to the Tab room and get a ballot from Tab (with “TAB” written on the top) before you judge them.
- Once all of the competitors on your list have gone, finish writing your ballots and bring them to Tab room, then go back to Judge's lounge. It is very important that you be in the Judge's Lounge whenever you are not judging. Do not roam around the school and NEVER leave the school premises without checking in with your coach first!

-IMPORTANT: Judge the competitors according to the criteria on the ballot – **your subjective feelings about a piece are secondary to these criteria**. If two competitors are both great, you must then get picky about details and chose 1st, 2nd, etc. by the details. You must ALWAYS pick a 1st, 2nd, etc. – no ties!

If a round is close in terms of rankings, it is always good for you to put on their ballots that “it was close” (and explain why) so the student knows that it was something minimal (i.e., “You sneezed!”) that determined the rankings.

-Your pay will be \$_____ a tournament, paid _____.

-Food for breakfast and lunch (usually very good!) is provided at the tournaments, but feel free to bring your own.

-You should bring something with you to do between rounds (book, work, etc.).

-You can car-pool with us (in the bus) or take your own car, just let me know a few days before the tournament. Most judges prefer to take their own car so that they don't need to stay through the awards ceremony. (Ex: Often the last round may finish at 3:30, but award won't be over until 6pm.)

-Registration for tournaments is usually due the Wednesday before a tournament, so please let me know by the **Tuesday before the tournament** if you will be available to judge or not.