

rev 09/2014

This briefing is meant only to serve as clarification and overview, not an in-depth analysis. Please consult the Speech Handbook and actual speech ballot for specifics to each category. Refer any further questions to the Speech Moderator or Tournament Director in the Tabulation Room.

Ballots

You will receive a packet of ballots. On the top is the master ballot, which provides you with the event you're judging, the room in which that event is located, your judge code (which remains the same all day), and a list of the student codes who should compete in your room. The rest of the packet are comment ballots.

- On the master ballot you must enter two pieces of information: piece titles as they correspond to the student code and rank.
- On the comment ballots are abbreviated guidelines for the event. You must complete the top section (your judge code and name, your affiliation (if unaffiliated, write UN with the school that hired you), student code, piece title, round, date), comments, Reason for Rank, and Rank.

Competition Room Standard Operating Procedures

- Generally, you want to sit in the back of the room with contestants seated until called to speak.
- Make sure the room is arranged for smooth running.
- Close the door to avoid distractions from outside.
- Eating and drinking in the competition room is not allowed by either students or judges with the exception of water.
- Ask everyone in your room to turn off and stow cell phones and any other noisemakers.

Remind students of competition etiquette:

- Everyone should be quiet and attentive throughout the round.
- If the room permits, you may ask students to write their codes and titles on the board.
- Students are instructed not to reveal their names or school, and you should not ask.

Before you begin the round, please check the speaker codes of those assigned to your room.

- DO NOT allow a speaker not on your list to perform unless you receive a note from the tab room.
- Also, do not proceed in a round if you are affiliated with a competitor in the room. Affiliations include students who are family, from your school, or have any other close relationship with you.
- Any questions, see Tab.

Some speakers are double-entered as signified by an asterisk.

- Ensemble students may not be properly marked – it is always best to ask which students are double-entered, just to be sure.
- Please wait no longer than 5-10 min. for students to arrive at the round.
- Allow double-entered students who are in the room to speak first and then dismiss them immediately after their presentation so they can go to their other category.
- During the shuffle you can check for latecomers who should be waiting outside the room.
- Single-entered students should remain in the room throughout the round. Proceed through competitors in as efficient a manner as possible. If you suspect a competitor is missing, send a student to inquire at the Tab room.

Before you begin judging, please thoroughly review the criteria on your ballots before you go to your round. Each event has unique criteria on which you should already have already been coached, but it is always a good idea to refer directly to the ballot. Don't assume anything!

Timing and Intros

Most events run 5-10 min., including intro and teaser. Exception: XT (runs 3-7 min).

All events have a 30 second grace period on either end.

- You may not grant a speaker first place if they exceed the grace.
- Please stop a speaker only if he/she exceeds the max grace by 1 min. (i.e. 11:30).

Students may sing for up to 30 cumulative seconds.

While we ask you to time each presentation, we no longer allow you to provide hand signals for any other event than Extemp. If you judge Extemp, provide students with hands signals.

All interp events feature a 30 sec.-1 min. introduction (approximates, not actual limits).

- Intros must provide the author, title, and any essential background information.
- It should also engage you, preparing you for the tone and theme.
- Exceptions include
 - ST (authors are sometimes unavailable)
 - OW (authored by the speaker)
 - OO (introduction built into the format)
 - ODEC (must additionally include date and location speech was given).

Some events may also feature a 15-45 sec. (again approximate) teaser prior to the intro to further engage you.

Scripts

(Pre-Dec 1) Regarding scripts:

- NPR, PR, NPO, PO, and ODEC must use a script.
- ST must be memorized.
- The remaining events offer optional script use, including XT which allows a note card.

(Post-Dec 1) Regarding scripts:

- We are past the memorization deadline.
- NPR, PR, NPO, and PO must still use a script.
- ST, HI, DI, DUO, OO, and XT must be memorized.
- The remaining events offer optional script use.
- In ODEC the podium is also optional.
- PLEASE NOTE – the use of a script by a student in a memorized event is an automatic last place!

Judging and Commenting Guidelines

All Speech presentations should be tasteful and thought-provoking—yes, this is subjective criteria.

- Material selected for sheer shock value, regardless of the skill of the presenter, should be judged as inferior to material of proven literary merit.
- Please be as objective as possible, understanding that different schools and individuals have different standards.
- Language choice is the prerogative of the student and his or her coach. Any language you may ordinarily consider inappropriate may be essential to the impact of the selection. Students are aware that selections with mature language may offend you.

Please write as many constructive comments on the ballot as time allows. While we do want to encourage the comments with positives, it is equally important that they receive critical remarks on what can be done to improve the performance. Remember: critical comments can and should be constructive. A ballot with glowing remarks about a student's brilliance and a rank of fifth is not fair to the student. Students need to know why they are not first. Finally, be sure to complete the "Reason for Decision."

Please refrain from providing oral comments to students at any point in the tournament. Not all students handle this well, no matter how good your intentions. They will be able to read your ballot comments at the end of the day.

Completing Ballots

When you have heard and ranked all the speakers,

- Transcribe the ranks from the comment ballots to the master ballot (or vice versa).
- It helps Tabulation if you put the ballots in the same order that they are listed on the master ballot.
- Make sure that all info is filled out – especially student code, judge code, and ranks.
- Return the ballots to the Tab Room.
- Return to the Judges' Lounge to await your next assignment.

Outside Rounds

Please remain in the lounge unless you need to use the restroom. As we start a round, remain in or near the judges' lounge until all judges have been assigned and for a few minutes after. Sometimes we have to make a quick substitution. If we can't find you to issue ballots or seek clarifications, you will delay the tournament.

We really do need you for the full day, but if for some reason you need to leave, please check in with Tabulation first.

So as not to create bias, do not discuss your ranks or comments until after the tournament is complete. Even if you are not assigned to judge a round, please do not go observe any round other than finals. If there is a snafu, we might need you last minute. Tab room will announce when all judging assignments have been made.

New judges: If you have never judged before, please see Tab immediately so we can try to pair you up with an experienced judge.

Note a change in Ensemble rules for 2014: Max time is down to 10 minutes.

The Maine Forensics Association thanks you for your hard work and for being a part of this very special and important activity!

Event Summaries

NPR & NPO Reading: Novice categories feature students competing in forensics for their first season only. Please evaluate these competitors on the basics: poise, projection, enunciation, use of gesture and face, etc.

PR & PO Reading: Speakers in these categories should be of a higher caliber than the novice levels. Students will present a selection or multiple selections on a similar theme featuring excellent language and literary devices: imagery, alliteration, local color, assonance and consonance, onomatopoeia, etc. Students may use characters and voices but they should be secondary to the language itself.

HI & DI: These pieces should emphasize characters more so than the PR and PO events. Physicalization through posture, gesture, and facial expression is essential. Students should establish a mood and build to a climactic ending. Sources often include plays, published movie scripts, prose, and poetry.

DUO: Using the same elements as HI and DI, DUO includes two students, side by side, without touching one another. They may look at one another only within the introduction. On top of the characterization, DUO requires the students to work together and react to one another, again, without touching or making eye contact. (Looking at one another is allowed in the intro) Gestures and dialogue should elicit appropriate responses from each other.

ENS: Two or more students presenting a scene or scenes of a literary work. Staging is more flexible than DUO—they can touch and make eye contact—and may include stools, chairs, and/or music stands. **CHANGE IN RULES for 2014:** Max time is down to 10 minutes.

ST: Students tell a story based mythology, legends, fables, and short stories written or from oral tradition. Great latitude is extended to the student in terms of characterization, movement, and expression. Props, costuming, and instruments ARE allowed.

ODEC: Students deliver a speech previously presented to an audience. Emphasis is on delivering the speech with the power and impact it contains, not as an imitation of the original speaker.

OO: Students will present an original informative or persuasive speech. Basics of good presentation should be emphasized. You additionally must assess word choice, grammar, structure, reasoning, and evidence. The speech must back up the thesis with a minimum of two sources per major point.

OW: Students will present original material of any genre. OW gives equal weight to both writing and presentation.

XT: This is a limited prep event in which students craft an original speech that answers a randomly selected question: for, against, or addressing both sides of the issue. Students must cite expert sources—magazines, journals, books, etc.—that reinforce their own rhetoric. A student should cite at least two sources per major point. Please provide competitors with time signals [exemplify]. Students know to wrap up quickly after “stop.”