

MHSAA
Speech & Debate
State Championships



JUDGE PACKET

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

- Will be separated into Varsity and Novice Divisions at several tournaments.
- The Tournament Director shall prepare a list of topics on current foreign and domestic issues. The student will draw three questions and return two before he/she begins his/her preparation period.
- The competitor has thirty minutes to prepare his/her speech in an independent and supervised environment. At the end of that time they will come to the competition room to perform.
- The competitor has a maximum of seven minutes to present his/her speech. There is a 30 second grace period. Students who exceed the time limit by more than 30 seconds should not be given first place in the panel.
- The student may use one note card with a maximum of fifty words on it. (This practice is typical for novice competitors but varsity competitors should not develop this habit).
- Students are responsible for providing his/her own extemp files that may include published books, magazines, newspapers, and journals or articles from those sources, provided they are from a published source.
- The competitor will hand the judge their topic. They must take a stand on the issue and explain in the speech why that stance is correct. The speaker should remain on topic.

ORIGINAL ORATORY

- Original Oratory should not be more than ten minutes. There is a 30-second grace period. Competitors that exceed the time limit by more than 30-seconds should not be given first place in the panel.
- The oration should be on an appropriate subject. It is the original thought and writing of the competitor. The orator must be truthful. Any non-factual reference, especially a personal one, must be so identified.
- No more than 150 words of the oration may be a direct quotation from any other source.
- The competitor's coach should have an original copy of the Oratory on file for verification purposes. The speech must have a works cited page indicating the location of all quoted materials.
- The performance is memorized.
- While judging, consider thought, composition, and delivery. The main focus should be on the phrasing of the speech.
- Although many orations deal with a current problem and propose a solution, the judge is expressly reminded that this is not the only acceptable form of oratory. The oration may simply alert the audience to a threatening danger, strengthen its devotion to an accepted cause, or eulogize a person. The orator should be given free choice of subject and judged solely on the effectiveness of its development and presentation.

DECLAMATION

- The selection has a maximum time of ten minutes. It must be memorized. There is a 30-second grace period. Students who exceed the time limit by more than 30-seconds should not be given 1st place in a panel.
- A selection in this event must have been originally delivered as a speech by it's author, a person other than the present speaker.
- An introduction is required and should include the author's name and the actual circumstances under which the original speech was delivered.
- The event is only open to 9th and 10th grade students.
- The speaker should convey the original author's message in a sincere, honest, and realistic manner. Attempts at dramatization rather than communication should be avoided.
- A copy of the Declamation should be present at the tournament for verification purposes.
- Although many orations deal with a current problem and propose a solution, the judge is expressly reminded that this is not the only acceptable form of oratory. The oration may simply alert the audience to a threatening danger, strengthen its devotion to an accepted cause, or eulogize a person. The orator should be given free choice of subject and judged solely on the effectiveness of its development and presentation.

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IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

- The total time given to each speaker shall not exceed seven minutes. There is a 30-second grace period. Students who exceed the time limit by more than 30 seconds should not be given first in the panel. Participants will use this time for both preparation and delivery.
- The timing of this event begins immediately after the competitor chooses his/her topic. Vocalize to the competitor every 30 seconds as it passes until he/she is ready to perform. Whatever time is left is the amount of time the competitor has to speak. DO NOT restart their time.
- The judge will show the competitor his/her three topic choices from which the student will select which one he/she will prepare and deliver within his/her allotted seven-minute period.
- Once a participant has seen the topics he/she must remain in the room and may not converse with any other individual until his/her presentation is completed.
- The competitor may use a notecard/legal pad to help them collect his/her thoughts during prep time, but they may not use them during the actual speech.
- The tournament director shall prepare topics that are varied, coming from such area as objects, holidays, aphorisms, abstract nouns, famous people, fictional people, or any other thematic group that is appropriate for high school students. Participants are expected to relate to the topic by adapting it to a thesis he/she develops.
- Any notes used during prep must be thrown away before the student leaves the room.

EXPOSITORY SPEAKING

- The speech must be an original composition of the contestant designed to inform, not to entertain primarily. A copy of the speech must be present at the tournament for verification purposes.
- The speech should describe, clarify, illustrate, or define an object, idea, concept, or process. It should not be persuasive.
- A fabricated topic/subject may not be used.
- A student may not use any portion of his/her Original Oratory entered at any tournament.
- The maximum time of presentation is five (5) minutes; there is no minimum time. There is a 30-second grace period. Students who exceed the time limit by more than thirty seconds should not be given first place in the round.
- No note cards, audio aid, and/or visual aids are allowed. No animals or other person(s) may be used as aids and may not be part of the contestant's presentation.

DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION

- The selection shall not require more than ten minutes with a 30-second grace period. If a student goes passed the grace period they cannot receive first place in the round.
 - An introduction must be given and is included in the time limit. The introduction should be written by the student to contextualize the performance, and state the title and the author.
 - The selection shall be a cutting from a published work such as a printed novel, short story, play, or poetry. Recorded material that is not printed and published is prohibited. Monologues are acceptable.
 - With a spotlight on character development and depth, this event focuses on the student's ability to convey emotion through the use of a dramatic text.
 - The selection must be serious in tone.
 - The selection must be memorized.
 - There are no movement limits in this event but students are reminded that this is a contest in interpretation and not solo acting.
 - No props or costumes of any kind are allowed.
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HUMOROUS INTERPRETATION

- Humorous Interpretation is designed to test a student's comedic skills through script analysis, delivery, timing, and character development. Competitors may portray one or multiple characters.
- The selection shall not require more than ten minutes with a 30-second grace period. If a competitor goes over the grace period they may not receive first place in the round.
- An introduction must be given and is included in the time limit. The introduction should be written by the student to contextualize the performance, and state the title and the author. The selection shall be a cutting from a published work such as a printed novel, short story, play, or poetry. Recorded material that is not printed and published is prohibited. Monologues are acceptable.
- With a spotlight on character development and depth, this event focuses on the student's ability to convey emotion through the use of a dramatic text.
- The selection must be memorized.
- There are no movements limits in this event but students are reminded that this is a contest in interpretation and not solo acting.
- No props or costumes of any kind are allowed.

DUO INTERPRETATION

- The selection has a maximum time of ten minutes. It must be memorized. There is a 30-second grace period. Students who exceed the time limit by more than 30-seconds should not be given 1st place in a panel.
 - Performances should also include an introduction written by the students to contextualize the performance and state the title and the author. The two students should participate equally in the introduction.
 - The selection shall require not more than ten minutes with a thirty second grace period.
 - The selection shall be a cutting from a published play, a fictional or non-fictional work, or a poem. The selection must be memorized.
 - Participants will establish a focus for the other character, but except during the introduction, eye contact and physical contact is not allowed during the presentation. Students should react to verbal and nonverbal expressions but may not touch each other.
 - No props or costumes are used.
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STORYTELLING

- The selection has a maximum time of five minutes. It must be memorized. There is a 30-second grace period. Students who exceed the time limit by more than 30-seconds should not be given 1st place in a panel.
- Students have five minutes to introduce and deliver their story.
- Students will prepare a five minute version of any story that should be tied to the theme given for the tournament.
- A chair will be provided for each student but usage is not required.
- No costumes or props may be used.
- Movement is not limited in this event. Students may not use material that has been used in prior tournaments or is being used in another event.
- The presentation should be narrator focused.
- The student will tell the story in his or her own words from memory, but should not change the author's intent.
- The performance should be given from memory.

DUET ACTING

- The selection has a maximum time of ten minutes. It must be memorized. There is a 30-second grace period. Students who exceed the time limit by more than 30-seconds should not be given 1st place in a panel.
 - Selections shall be cuttings from a single source or from a published novel, short story, play, poem, or screenplay.
 - No contestant may use the same literary work that they have used in previous competition years or are currently using in Duo Interpretation.
 - The material may be humorous, dramatic, or a combination of both.
 - Each performer may play one or more characters so long as performance responsibility in the cutting remains as balanced as possible.
 - Performances should also include an introduction written by the students to contextualize the performance and state the title and the author. The two students should participate equally in the introduction.
 - The material must be delivered from memory.
 - No costumes or props allowed.
 - During the performance, on-stage focus is allowed (STUDENTS MAY LOOK AT EACH OTHER).
 - Contestants may have physical contact.
 - Two chairs are allowed for use to facilitate blocking and to create levels, atmosphere, and environment but their usage is not required.
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PROSE INTERPRETATION

- The selection has a maximum time of ten minutes. There is a 30-second grace period. Students who exceed the time limit by more than 30-seconds should not be given 1st place in a panel.
- Students must use a manuscript and are reminded that this is a contest in interpretation not acting.
- The manuscript should not be used as a prop and costuming of any kind is not allowed. This is a contest in interpretation and students should read from their manuscript fifty percent of the time.
- Movement should be limited in this event.
- Prose includes fiction (short stories and novels) and non-fiction (articles, essays, journals, and biographies). Monologues from plays are not allowed.
- All material must come from a published source as defined by the National Catholic Forensic League.



POETRY INTERPRETATION

- The selection has a maximum time of ten minutes. There is a 30-second grace period. Students who exceed the time limit by more than 30-seconds should not be given 1st place in a panel.
- An introduction is required and is included in the time limit.
- Students must use a manuscript and are reminded that this is a contest in interpretation not acting.
- The manuscript should not be used as a prop and costuming of any kind is not allowed.
- This is a contest in interpretation. Students should read from their manuscript fifty percent or the time. Movement should be limited in this event.
- Selections must come from a published source. One or more poems by be used with appropriate transitional material.

MHSAA JUDGE TIME SHEET AND INSTRUCTIONS

Beginning with the 2014-2015 Competition Season, judges will be expected to keep time in all rounds they adjudicate. It is important that this new policy is implemented in order to provide uniformity in the expectations of coaches and students, to provide consistency in the judging process, and accountability in the reporting and recording of the results.

Listed below are the time limits of all the MHSAA Platform Events:

10-minute time limit:	Original Oratory Humorous Interpretation Duo Interpretation Poetry Interpretation	Declamation Dramatic Interpretation Prose Interpretation Duet Acting
7-minute time limit:	Impromptu Speaking	Extemporaneous Speaking
5-minute time limit:	Expository Speaking	Storytelling

*****Each of these events has a 30-second grace period. If the performer continues more than 30 seconds passed the initial time limit he/she/they may not be given first in the round*****

Judge Statement to the Competitors

Before the round begins you should vocalize the following statement to the competitors in the room:

"In this round, time will be kept on each performance. The time limit for this round of (insert event name here) is (insert time limit from above) with a 30-second grace period. I will provide you signals indicating that you have 5 minutes, 4 min., 3 min., 2 min., 1 minute, 30 seconds, and stop."

Debate Timing Rules

- Refer to the debate ballot provided for the times of each speech in the debate.
- Ask the competitors if they would like time signals or if they plan to keep their own time.
 - If the competitors want to keep their own, the judge must keep time as well for your own records.
 - If the competitors want the judge to provide time signals, you should keep time and provide time signals for 2 minutes remaining, 1 minute remaining, 30 seconds left, and stop.
- There is no official grace period in debate. The speaker should stop speaking at the indicated stop or as soon as they finish their current statement.
- Debate Times
 - Public Forum Debate = 4-4-3-4-4-3-2-2-3-2-2
 - Lincoln-Douglas Debate = 6-3-7-3-4-6-3
 - Policy Debate = 8-3-8-3-8-3-8-3-5-5-5

DEBATE EVENTS

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE

- Schools may pre-register no more than five (5) entries. Students entering Congressional Debate may not enter events in Flight A and Flight B.
- No substitutions will be made in Congressional Debate. If a student does not show up or chooses not to compete, the school will lose that seat.
- Laptop computers and iPad-type devices may be used by delegates, but if caught using the internet during the session, the delegate will be automatically disqualified.
- Each preliminary room will have 20 or less competitors. The total number advancing to the final Super Congress session will be determined by the number of preliminary chambers established.
- A copy of the bill book will be uploaded on this website and a copy emailed to each school registered in the tournament. **Bill Books will not be supplied to delegates once they arrive on the Oak Grove Campus.**

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE (VARSITY AND NOVICE DIVISIONS)

- The debate will follow the standard 6-3-7-3-4-6-3 format.
- Each debater has four minutes of prep time to use as they wish.
- Four preliminary rounds will determine breaks to elimination rounds.
- **New Rule in 2012-2013: A novice debater is a competitor in their first year of forensics competition in ANY event.**
- Laptop computers and iPad-type devices may be used by debaters, but if caught using the internet during rounds, the competitor will be automatically disqualified from the event, not the round.

POLICY DEBATE

- Three preliminary rounds will determine breaks to elimination rounds. This also depends on the number of entries and pace of the tournament.

- The debate will follow the standard 8-3-8-3-8-3-8-3-5-5-5-5 format.
- Each team has five minutes of prep time to use as they wish.
- The competition may use open or closed cross examination based on the preference of the judge(s).
- Laptop computers and iPad-type devices may be used by debaters, but if caught using the Internet during round, the competitor will be automatically disqualified from the event, not the round.

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

- The debate will follow the 4-4-3-4-4-3-2-2-3-2-2 format.
- Each team will have 2 minutes of prep time to use as they wish.
- Four preliminary rounds will determine breaks to elimination rounds.
- Debaters shall have a coin toss in the presence of the judges with the team winning the coin toss determining whether it will choose which side to uphold or whether it will speak first. The loser of the toss will have the other choice.
- Laptop computers and iPad-type devices may be used by debaters, but if caught using the Internet during round, the competitor will be automatically disqualified from the event, not the round.

Basics of Debate

- There are three main types of debate at Mississippi High School Tournaments: Lincoln Douglas, Public Forum, And Policy Debate.
- Lincoln Douglas Debate is one-on-one debate. The topic changes every two months. LD topics tend to be more philosophical in nature.
- Public Forum Debate is two-on-two debate. The topics change every month and tend to deal with current event issues.
- Policy Debate is two-on-two debate with a topic that stays the same all year. The topics are either about foreign or domestic policies.

A few things to consider:

- A good judge will use a “tabula rasa” approach. This means that they will judge the round based only on what the debaters actually say without considering their own beliefs or arguments they might have made.
- A good judge will take notes during a debate round. It can be hard (virtually impossible) to keep up with all the arguments in the round if you aren't taking notes.
- A good judge will listen attentively to each debater until the end of the round. Sometimes the deciding factor in the round is presented at the last minute.

What to look for in a debate round: These are generalities that apply to all forms of debate. For more in depth information, see speechanddebate.org to learn about the specific details for each kind of debate.

- Organization: Which debater lays out his/her case in the clearest and most logical manner?
- Clash: Do the debaters address each other's points directly?
- Depth of Analysis: Do the debaters understand their own arguments? Are they able to explain and defend their points cogently? Do they do more than just repeat the main idea of their arguments? Can they apply the same depth to refuting their opponent's arguments? Do they do more than just assert that their opponent is wrong?
- Effective use of time: Do the debaters use their time to sufficiently address the important arguments in the round? Do they use their cross-examination/crossfire time effectively (are they asking good questions?). Do they use prep time effectively?
- Presentation: Speakers should be fluent and easily understood. They should use appropriate terms and pronunciation. Taking notes during their speeches should be relatively easy.
- Persuasion: Which debater is the most convincing? Who uses both logic and evidence to refute their opponent's arguments and defend their own points.
- Evidence- Is evidence used effectively? Do the debaters link the evidence to their arguments in a way that adds credibility to their points?

At the end of the round, who convinced you that they had the better arguments? Sometimes the better speaker is not the better debater, but that doesn't happen very often. Also bear in mind that presentation is important, but debate is more about substance than style.

An Introduction to Evaluating Original Oratory (OO)



Basic Understanding

Original Oratory is a ten-minute oration written and performed by the student. Oratory requires students to balance that content with delivery and style. Orators must be articulate, engaging, and smooth with their delivery at both a vocal and physical level. The purpose of the event is to inform and persuade the audience on a topic of significance.

Structure

While orations are all different, the arguments made within them are comprised of three important components. First, a student must clearly establish a claim. This is a declarative statement that establishes the point the student sets out to justify in the speech. Next, the student must clearly establish why the argument is valid. This is known as the warrant for an argument. This means that orators go beyond asserting their claims to explaining why their claims should be accepted by the audience. Finally, the student must provide an impact for the argument, explaining why his or her argument matters.

Evaluating the Round

There are three key areas to consider when evaluating an Original Oratory.

First, *importance*: the speaker's topic should be important to the human condition. This appears in the beginning of the speech through a well-developed thesis. Throughout the oration, the student should use ethos to build credibility and offer examples supporting the significance of the topic. The delivery can also indicate importance. Pathos is created through a personable, invested delivery that speaks to the audience emotionally. The speaker should be clearly passionate about the topic in order to establish pathos. Throughout the round, judges are instructed to ask themselves if the supporting examples establish the critical need to evaluate the topic now.

Second, *relatability*: relatability is how the speaker connects the audience to the topic. The speaker should use inclusive rhetoric, giving the audience the sensation that they are affected by the topic. Logical evidence supporting this sentiment should be given throughout the speech. Judges should consider whether they are personally impacted by the issue being discussed and examine whether they feel motivated to care about the topic.

Third, *originality*: when evaluating originality, it is important to note that there are few truly original topics. Instead, consider how inventively the speaker addresses the topic. Judges ought to consider whether the rhetoric is unique and how new and exciting the examples are.



Notes

Gestures and delivery should be employed to further these three objectives. Through effective intonation and physical imagery, the speaker should illustrate the importance, relatability, and originality of the topic. The speaker should build credibility through a confident demeanor.

Filling out the Ballot

The judge ranks each contestant, with "one" being the best, and assigns speaker points. Points are generally in a range between 90 and 100 points, with 100 being outstanding. The judge writes on the ballot how the speaker can improve—e.g., eye contact, clarity, emotion, etc., and what the student did well. This is an educational activity and all feedback is welcome. ✎

An Introduction to Evaluating Extemporaneous Speaking

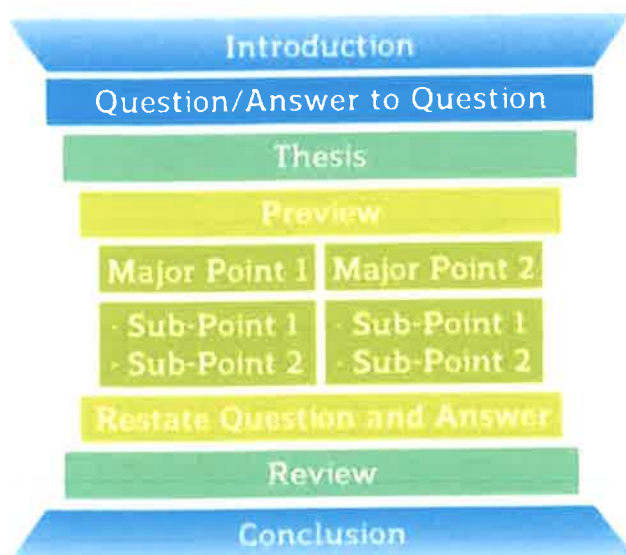


Basic Understanding

Extemporaneous Speaking is a speech on current events with limited preparation time. The competing student's understanding of important political, economic, and cultural issues is assessed along with critical thinking and analytical skills. There are two types of Extemporaneous Speaking. In International Extemporaneous Speaking, students prepare a speech related to international current events. Topics range from country-specific issues to regional concerns to foreign policy. In United States Extemporaneous Speaking, students deliver speeches related to domestic current events. Topics range from political matters to economic concerns to U.S. foreign policy.

Structure

Each round of competition begins with a draw—all students report to a draw room and await their turn to draw topics. A staff member calls out student codes based upon a pre-assigned speaker order. When a student's code is called, s/he approaches the table and takes three questions from an envelope. The student then has the opportunity to select one of those questions, return the other two to the envelope, and prepare for 30 minutes using research s/he has brought along, commonly called files. Students may consult articles and evidence they have on file, but may not use the Internet during preparation. Students create a thesis responding directly to the chosen question and organize their speech around their answer to the posed question. A sample speech is outlined as follows:



Take Note

Judges are encouraged to give students time signals throughout the speech to signal how much of their seven minutes remains. Students are not permitted to watch the speeches of the competitors presenting before them, but once a student has delivered his or her speech, s/he may watch the rest of the remaining speeches in the round. Tournaments have different rules for the use of notes—be sure to check whether speeches must be completely memorized or if notes are permitted.

Evaluating the Round

There are three key areas to consider when evaluating an Extemporaneous Speaking round. First, *argumentation and analysis*, students should organize an approach to the question that examines critical areas of analysis. Students must answer the question and address the justification and impact of their answer. Students should convince the audience that they possess a clear understanding of the topic. Second, *source consideration*, students establish credibility through their analysis of source material. Throughout the development of the speech, competitors should cite their sources. Citations may include the source of the material and the date. Judges should consider the quality and variety of sources students are presenting. Third, *delivery*, judges should take into consideration the major areas of delivery. Use of voice, movement, and expression should factor into the judge's evaluation. Speakers should employ ethos, or credibility, in their speech through a confident delivery. Pitch, tone, pacing, and volume should be employed to express the argument.

Filling Out the Ballot

The judge ranks each contestant, with "one" being the best, and assigns speaker points, generally in a range between 90-100 points, with 100 being outstanding. The judge writes on the ballot how the speaker can improve—e.g., eye contact, clarity, emotion, etc., and what the student did well. As students only have 30 minutes to research, organize, and practice a speech, it is important to note that minor fluency issues may not weigh as much in the judge's assessment of the quality of the speech. Argumentation, source analysis, and delivery should be employed together in assessing the overall quality of the performance. ✎

An Introduction to Evaluating Interpretation (DI), (HI), (DUO)

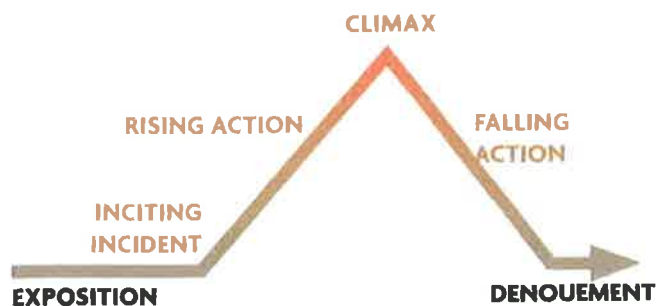


Basic Introduction

Interpretation events include Dramatic, Duo, and Humorous. Dramatic Interpretation is an individual event focused on the performer's ability to convey emotion through the use of a dramatic text. Duo Interpretation is a two-person team event that utilizes off-stage focus to convey emotion and environment by focusing on the relationships and interactions between characters. Humorous Interpretation is an individual event designed to test the performer's ability to use comedic skills to connect with the audience. Judging interpretation events, or Interp, can be thought of as judging the acting abilities of performers.

Evaluating the Round

When judging interpretation, it is helpful to keep the Dramatic Structure in mind.



Exposition sets the scene and gives background information. Exposition occurs throughout the cutting and enhances the audience's understanding of what the character is experiencing. The Inciting Incident sets a conflict into motion and represents the beginning of the Rising Action, which complicates the plot. The Climax is the point of greatest intensity and the turning point of the plot. Falling Action resolves the conflict and Denouement gives a glimpse of life after the conflict.

There are three key areas of an interpretation that come together to create the performance the judge will evaluate. First, *cutting*, or the process of removing text from a full-length play, book, or short story and transforming it into a 10-minute piece. The cutting should create a compelling and understandable story. Second, *blocking*, or the movements a performer makes to convey space, emotion, and action. Blocking should enhance the performance, not distract from the story. Movements should be motivated by either internal or external factors. Internal motivation stems from how the

character is feeling, while external motivation comes from a physical reaction to external factors. Blocking should not only be motivated but also easy to understand. Third, *characterization* the performer should make informed decisions about the character(s) based on the text of his or her piece. Characterization reveals the personality of the character through line delivery, vocal and facial expression, and varying levels of levity and intensity. The situation should inform the intensity of the performance, rising to a peak at the climax.

Filling Out the Ballot

Performers are ranked on a scale, generally from one to six, with the best performance receiving the one ranking. The judge will also assign speaker points, typically in a range from 90-100, with 100 being outstanding.

Interpretation events take place without the use of costumes or props, and performances are given from memory. Each performance has a 10-minute time limit with a 30-second grace period. If a performance exceeds the grace period, the student cannot be ranked first. There is no other prescribed penalty. The judge will also write comments to the performers on the ballot addressing different areas of the interpretation. When critiquing a cutting, judges ought to reference areas of the Dramatic Structure that were strong or weak and suggest ways in which the student can improve upon the cutting. Judges should consider if they could easily identify what the performer was doing in the scene and which character was speaking. If the performer's blocking is ineffective, the judge ought to indicate ways the performer can improve on the ballot. Critiquing characterization requires the judge to consider whether the character's response to a situation is believable. The ultimate goal of blocking, cutting, and characterization is to create a fully-realized performance that moves the audience. The performer who combines these three factors the best should receive the one ranking.

Writing the Ballot

Debate (Public Forum, Lincoln-Douglas, Policy)

What to write:

1. **Constructive feedback on each debater's performance.**

- consider speaker's clarity, organization, logic, understanding of topic, professionalism, use of time
- keep in mind that initial speeches will almost always be pre-written - most students will be *reading* their first speeches

Examples of Less than Helpful Feedback

- Nice tie/suit/dress, etc.
- First speech seemed *too* rehearsed
- Great argument

Examples of More Helpful Feedback

- Use time more effectively - had 1 full minute left in first speech
- Slow down and speak more clearly, especially during rebuttal
- Provide roadmap to organize points in each speech

2. **Reason for Decision**

- note specific reasons you voted for the winning team, based on the arguments you heard in the round
- "Team A was better" is NOT a reason for decision. Make reference to the debate itself, not just the skills of the debaters.

Poor Reasons for Decision

- Debater X was the superior speaker
- " " was better organized
- " " did a great job
- " " was more confident
- " " had more evidence

Better Reasons for Decision

- Debater X clarified that the most important issue in the round was equality, and proved that her side better ensured equality
- Team Y's well organized rebuttals showed that Team X really could not solve the problem of climate change
- Team B did not provide an answer to the argument that the Con side would ensure safer schools by maintaining current rules
- Debater Y's confident presentation of scientific evidence on the benefits of nuclear power outweighed Debater Z's purely hypothetical statements
- Team A's first and third contentions were unrefuted throughout the round

Speech

What to write:

1. **Constructive feedback on each speaker's performance.** Consider:
 - Sound - appropriate pacing, volume, clarity, and vocal quality (all events)
 - Sense - logical and organized delivery (speech); clear interpretation of characters, themes, demonstrated understanding of the literature, effective transitions (interp)
 - Sight - physical movement and presence appropriate to the speech or piece (all events)

Read, consider, and comment on the criteria included on the ballot. (Varies for each speech event.)

2. **Reason for ranking within the round,** relevant to criteria on the ballot.

Less Helpful Explanations of Ranking

- Great speech!
- Good job!

More Helpful Explanations of Ranking

- Excellent poise and delivery, but topic/piece itself was less compelling than others in the round.
- Fantastic characterization, pacing, and understanding of piece. Best presentation in the round.
- Clear initial answer to the prompt, but disorganized in supporting your ideas.
- Great selection of material, but verbal hesitations and lack of confidence took away from the presentation.

Overall

Be specific in your feedback. “Good job” is not particularly helpful to competitors.

Please do not include comments that discourage students from continuing this activity. This is, above all, a learning experience for students!

Never write on a ballot, “Debate is not for you,” “You’re just not funny - maybe you should give up Humorous Interp,” or “Why are you in this event?”

Judging 101...instructions for beginning judges and those who need a refresher course....

First.... Thank you for judging. The tournament cannot happen without you.

So...now what?

1. Arrive at the school or tournament location at least 15 minutes prior to the time you are scheduled to be there. Check in with the judge table and report to the judges' lounge.
2. As soon as the tab room can, it will send someone into the lounge to hand out master ballots and students ballots for the first round in your time slot. If you hear your name, say, "Here!" This helps the process. A master ballot is a ballot that lists all of the competitors in the room where you will judge. Students will not see this ballot. At most tournaments, there is also a student ballot that you will fill out. You make constructive comments for the students in your room; the students receive these.
3. After you receive your ballots, you should report directly to your assigned room. You should locate a seat in the room that puts you near the back of the room and that gives you a direct view to where the students will perform. Sometimes you will have to decide the best place for you to sit and for the students to perform. We have had rounds in labs, lecture halls, auditoriums, offices, hotel rooms, and closets! Most of the rounds you will judge will be in a classroom. You want a minimum of 10 feet and a maximum of 25 feet between you and the performer if that is possible. If not, just adjust. I promise the kids will. Then--**turn your cell phone off or on silent!**
4. In a perfect competition world, you would wait for all competitors to enter the room for the round and then check the roll. That will probably never happen because most are cross-entered, meaning they are in another event as well as the one you are judging. When it is time for the round to start, announce the first name and number. The student (or students if in Duo) will come forward. If that student is not there, then just go on to the next performer.
5. There should be a maximum of 7 competitors or teams assigned to your room. Sometimes there are fewer; rarely are there more. As they come into the room between performances, allow students to perform. If performer Number 1 arrives after performer Number 3 has performed, then ask Number 1 to go next. Continue the round until you hear all performers on the list. **Do not hear a student who is not on the list unless that person has a note from the tab room. If a student appears in your room and is not on the list, then you should send that person back to check the postings.** If a student tells you he is cross-entered and asks to leave, **please allow him or her to do so.** The master ballot usually indicates those who are cross-entered. Sometimes a cross-entered student will ask if he or she can go first or next because he or she needs to get to another round of competition. This is usually fine, but you could have several who are cross-entered. You can determine who goes first of those who are cross-entered by asking where they are in the speaking order of their other event. Let the one go first who has to speak the soonest in the other room. There are many variables that could put the schedule off, and most students know that they have to perform their events within a stated time frame. Although this sounds complicated, I promise it works itself out fairly easily.

6. If a competitor is not there and you have heard everyone else, check the time. If the time frame for the round suggests the round should almost be over or if the end time for the round is past, check with the tab room. The persons there generally give you a number to text or call so that you do not have to leave the room. If you leave the room, you might miss a student who is running to get to the room due to no fault of his or her own. Please be patient if the tab room tells you to wait for the student. It is almost never the student's fault that he or she is late.
7. Students usually write the names of their selections on the board (if the room has one) next to their name and code (a letter, a number/name combo, a number, etc.—the type of code depends on the tournament). The code and name of the student are on the master ballot, along with a space (most of the time) for you to write the selection title. **Do not ask a student his or her school.** The tab room knows that information, and the student's code is used for identification. Many competitors and coaches believe that it is important to maintain anonymity as much as possible. We veteran coaches know that as the tournaments and year move on, everyone knows where everyone is from anyway, but we strive to keep competition as unbiased as possible.
8. Make comments as you hear the students. The comments you write on the students' ballots are what the performers see after the tournament is over. Please use constructive criticism and give suggestions for improvement. (We have a list of suggested comments to write.) It is very hard for a student to get a ballot that has a rank of 6 with only the comments "Good job" on the ballot. If the student did a good job, why did he or she receive last place in the round? Although you may not like the selection (and that is a category on the criteria for judging), please do not let that be the sole reason you rank a person last. The sole comment of "I'm just not feeling it" that my students got from a judge in the semifinal round of a national circuit tournament was not an appropriate comment. Try to find at least one positive thing to say about their performances. Please don't let your only comment be, "I like your tie."
9. You may hear pieces that disturb you. There may be pieces that you think are a bit "edgy" for high school students. Please remember that these students must have a decency clause on file with the coach that says the piece that student is performing meets the approval of his or her parents and the coach. Also, keep in mind that we all have different measurements for "edgy" or "mature." Try to separate your beliefs and standards from the piece you are judging; however, if you truly believe a student should not be doing the piece because it is inappropriate, come to the tab room to ask about it. Sometimes students decide to "alter" their pieces they have gotten approved by coach and parent because . . . well, because they are kids and make unwise decisions sometimes. Do not be afraid to ask the tab room (**not the child**) about the piece. If our students are performing something that we have not approved, we want to know it. (By the way, that has happened to me. I had two seniors one year at the state tournament who decided it would be fun to put back all of the profanity we had slashed from the piece. The judge asked the tab room about it; the boys were disqualified, were punished by my principal, their parents, and me, and had to write letters of apology to all the adults who had heard the selection that day.)
10. If you are judging in a tournament that has a master ballot only, then write notes on a legal pad or in a notebook (always good to have one of those with you). You can use these comments or notes to help you rank the students. When you hear all of the competitors, dismiss the ones who remain. Then rank the students and assign points.

11. A dear friend taught me a trick when I first began coaching. After you hear the first speaker, place his or her ballot face down on the desk beside you. After you hear the next performer, decide if you like that person better or worse than the one you heard first. If you like the person better, turn the ballot face down and slide it under the first one. If you do not like the second performer as well as you liked the first, then place the ballot face down on top. Continue inserting ballots into your stack where you think they fall as the round continues. When you finish, turn the ballots face up, and you have the performers in rank-order—best to last. Then you can assign points to match the ranks.
12. Points that you give each student are totally a subjective thing, but they must match the ranking. In other words, if your second place person has 48 points, then your first place person cannot have 47. You may tie points, but that makes it very hard on the tab room; however, you may not tie ranks. Someone has to be first, and someone has to be seventh (if you have seven competitors). The range of points in Mississippi is usually 35-50, with 50 being a near perfect performance. We usually ask that you do not give anyone a 35 unless that student does only part of a piece and stops in performance or is obviously a student who did not take the event seriously and is performing to make his coach happy or to mock the event. In those cases, a 35 is appropriate. Please write the reason for the low score on the student ballot. We also ask that you consider the fact that if you give everyone a 50 or 49 with point ties, then the results from other rooms will be skewed, but try not to start your first place with a 40. Again, this can skew the results because you gave your best person only 40 points. Student points are used in events only when a tie must be broken.
13. Students have ten minutes to perform for most events. There is also a 30-second grace period. That means that a student could go 10:30 without penalty. There is usually no minimum time. This time information will be on the ballot and in the tournament program (usually). If you time the round (some judges do not time), then note the time on both master and student ballots. If there is a penalty attached to overtime (usually it will say a student cannot receive 1st), then adjust your rankings accordingly, noting it on the ballot. If a student would have had first place but must receive 2nd because of overtime, the student needs to be aware of this so that he can cut the selection for the next tournament. You can use your cell phone to time; just make sure it is on “Silent,” and make sure the students know that you are using it for timing purposes only. A Student may ask for time signals. If you do not feel comfortable giving them, tell the student “No.” TV Com, Extemp, and Impromptu are exceptions to this. These events are not prepared events, meaning the student creates the content of the presentation after he or she gets to the tournament. If there are no timecards available, then you should give finger signals. Just ask how the student would like the signals. Students usually say, “Three down.” This means you hold up three fingers when a performer has 3 minutes left before time runs out; then hold up two fingers when there are two minutes left, etc.
14. When you finish ranking the students, take your master ballot and your student ballots to the ballot table and wait for the people there to check your ballots for accuracy. This is a way of double-checking for the tab room. We check them again in the tab room. We pride ourselves in Mississippi on being accurate; we make mistakes, of course, but we try to check and double-check everything. The person checking your ballots will tell you everything is “OK” (if it is), and you report back to the judges’ lounge for additional assignments.

15. Please stay in the judges' lounge (except for bathroom breaks). You may not be used every round; we try to rotate judges so that all are used. If we have plenty of judges, then we can give judges a little break between rounds of judging; when we are short on judges, you usually judge round after round. If we cannot locate an assigned judge, the tournament halts until readjustments are made. The judge chart is a jigsaw puzzle, and if we lose or misplace a piece of the puzzle, we cannot continue until we find the piece or replace it. Think of yourself as a puzzle piece!
16. When you judge multiple times, you should not judge the same event two times. Again, **should** is the operative word . . . there are always exceptions. If you find yourself assigned to the same event twice, tell the people in the tab room before you go judge the round. You may see the same students in different events; in fact, that is very likely. Remember you are judging the performance the student gives in that event and that round. In the judges' lounge, please do not discuss your judging experiences. Your discussions about whom you heard and how good (or bad) students were could influence someone else as she or he heads off to judge. Please do not confer with other judges in final rounds where there are multiple judges. Please don't begin a round that has more than one judge until all judges are present. In early or preliminary rounds, you will probably judge alone; in later rounds, you may be part of a panel of judges.
17. Be positive. Be a cordial judge. They students can tell if you resent being in the room to judge. You should not "chat" with them, but you do not have to remain stone-faced through their performances. Feel free to react appropriately to their performances. Even if the performance is bad, please watch and look interested.
18. Have fun . . . if you have a question, ASK when you have the question! We would rather you ask the question first than hear the round and then bring the issue to our attention.

Some NO-NO's

NEVER leave a room while a student is performing.

NEVER answer a cell phone and carry on a conversation during a round; never text during a round.

NEVER sleep during a student's performance or put you head down on a desk where you are sitting; pay attention to a student's performance.

NEVER use a laptop during a round--or any other technical device, except a cell phone for timing.

NEVER reveal a decision to a student.

NEVER carry on a conversation with another person in the room while a student is performing.

NEVER discuss performances with other students at a competition, including students from your school.

NEVER challenge a student and/or his or her piece. (Come to the tab room with questions.)

NEVER wait until all students are present to begin a round.

NEVER prevent a student from leaving your room to go to another event.

NEVER punish a student in your rankings for his or her going to another event.

NEVER punish a student by lowering her or his rank because you are irritated that you had to wait for the student.

NEVER write sarcastic or mean comments on a child's ballot.

NEVER enter the tab room to chat with anyone.

NEVER enter the room to judge if the room is still being used for another round.

Although the “never’s” above seem like common sense, they have all happened at recent tournaments. Please give the student your undivided attention; even if the student is not prepared or is just bad, please don’t indicate that to the student by not watching him or her. After every tournament, our students tell us about the judge who never looked up from his newspaper or the judge who fell asleep during the round. They show us ballots where the judge has written harsh things. (I once had a precious child—who I admit was very inexperienced and probably not very good--get a ballot from a judge that said, “Choose another activity; you are bad at this one.”) Such a comment is so discouraging to students. I have had many students who refused to compete after a couple of tournaments where this had happened. Students want constructive criticism; they want to get better. You can help them achieve their goals!