



EMORY
UNIVERSITY

Barkley Forum for Debate, Deliberation, and Dialogue

Dear Forensics Director:

It is our pleasure to welcome the member schools of the Barkley Forum for High Schools to the 71st Annual Barkley Forum for High Schools at Emory University in Atlanta, which will be held January 23, 24, and 25, 2026. It is an equal pleasure to invite applications from other schools to be with us in January. We are excited to welcome you back to the Emory University campus **in person** in Atlanta, GA this year.

All competitors will be required to submit **one required [release form](#)**, and we will be following [Emory University's guidelines for visitors](#) regarding COVID-19. If students test positive for COVID-19, we ask that they refrain from participating in the tournament.

Applications to attend (including the competitive records/qualifiers for each student applying) from non-member schools must be entered on tabroom no later than **December 1, 2025**, and admission will be granted based upon space available and competitive record. Indications of attendance from member schools must be entered on tabroom by the same date. Shortly thereafter, an email will be sent to all the schools that have been selected to attend.

Please note that there will **NOT be in-person registration** or an in-person Opening Awards Assembly. Schools should check in on tabroom no later than 11:00 a.m. on Friday, January 23rd. We encourage all of you to view the pre-recorded **Opening Awards Assembly** for all students, coaches, and judges that will be released on Friday morning, January 23rd. We will recognize the new Key Coaches and hear from the 2025 Georgia Speaker of the Year, retired Executive Director of Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Sally Bethea.

With the exception of the Pelham Debates (which will start at 1:30 Friday with participants responsible for paying for parking), all events will begin on Emory's campus **after 4:00 p.m. on Friday**, January 23rd, which is the earliest we are permitted to park on campus.

In The Pelham Debates (policy), Public Forum, and Lincoln-Douglas, we are accepting three entries from Member Schools and three applications from non-member schools. In Congressional Debate, we are accepting ten entries from Member Schools and ten applications from non-member schools. In Speech Events, Member Schools may enter four entries in any one event. We will accept applications for up to four entries per event from non-member schools. **NEW:** Triple entries **will** be allowed provided they are not in the same pattern and provided one of the events is not Extemporaneous Speaking.

The **Final Awards Ceremony will be held in the Emory Student Center on Sunday**. You will not want to miss the Presentation of the Silver Keys and supportive awards, as it is nationally unique.

We hope to bring you the best possible forensics experience we can offer. May we hear from each of you soon.

Sincerely,
Mikaela Malsin, Tournament Director
Kara Grant, Tournament Administrator

TOURNAMENT-WIDE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

- **Expectations for competitive integrity:** The Barkley Forum for High Schools believes that competitive integrity is more important than competitive success. We also believe firmly that every participant has the right to participate in a respectful, safe, and supportive environment. We expect that every competitor, judge, coach and observer will engage in a spirit of fair and affirming competition and will act in good faith to preserve the integrity of the tournament. We expect participants to abide by the honor codes and integrity policies of their represented academic institutions. We expect that no participants will lie, cheat, steal or otherwise undermine the fairness of the tournament and that all participants will hold themselves to the highest standards of honesty and integrity in competition. In events with disclosure, honest disclosure is expected. **Your participation in the Barkley Forum for High Schools indicates that you understand these expectations and will abide by them.**
- All invitations to and memberships of the tournament are contingent on each coach, judge, and student comporting themselves in a manner that is **respectful of others at the tournament**. Disrespectful behavior towards judges, tab room staff, or students will not be tolerated and may result in dismissal from the tournament and/or a school's membership being revoked.
- We have immense respect for the educators who make speech and debate programs available in schools, the schools who support those speech and debate programs, and the students who have put in the hard work required to attend the Barkley Forum for High Schools. In order to respect all of these entities, we have these policies and procedures in place:
 - To stay true to the founding principle of the Barkley Forum for High Schools – to encourage the development of high-quality forensics programs at high schools around the country – the tournament will **only accept applications from students representing their high schools; as a result, no hybrid teams are allowed. No independent entries will be allowed, and no entries representing entities other than high schools will be allowed**. Rare exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of the tournament director. If you would like to request an exception, please email Mikaela Malsin at emorybfhs@gmail.com to describe your situation.
 - If a student is not accompanied by their debate coach to the tournament, they must have a hard copy of a letter on school letterhead from the school's administration indicating the student has permission to compete on behalf of the school. If the student is not able to provide the letter upon request during the tournament, tournament administration reserves the right to remove the student from the competition and forfeit all previous rounds.
 - If students qualify to participate in the tutorials (i.e., clear), they are expected to be available through the final exhibition round to respect their opponents and the participants who will learn from their performance. If a student must leave the tournament and cannot participate in a tutorial or exhibition round for which they have qualified, they will forfeit their award and all rounds. Special circumstances may lead to rare exceptions to this rule at the tournament director's discretion. We are providing this information so you may make your travel plans accordingly.
 - Unless approved by the tournament director, if you choose not to participate in a tutorial or exhibition, you forfeit all previous rounds. We will submit your results reflecting no wins/last place in each round to the TOC, NIETOC, and other entities to whom we provide results.
 - In order for the tournament to function effectively, if you know there will be circumstances that will require you to leave prior to the conclusion of the tournament, please let us know as soon as you are aware of these circumstances.
- All participating students are required to submit this [Release of Liability form](#) and have a legal guardian signature if under 18. Forms should be completed and submitted by January 16, 2026 at 11:59 EST. Coaches will be able to see who has filled them out on tabroom.

- Participating schools assume any and all responsibility and liability for both student and adult participants from their schools **and by registering attest that an adult will be present at the tournament and will assume all responsibility for the school's students.** Additionally, while Emory will be conducting background checks on all judges we provide, all judges provided by the schools must have completed a successful background check conducted by the schools.
- **Entourage Rule:** Anyone providing coaching or research support for any contestants in the Pelham Debates, Public Forum, or LD should be entered in the judge pool for a minimum of 2 rounds (4 flights, if applicable) and be available to judge elimination debates. Anyone providing coaching or research support for any contestants in Congressional Debate must be entered as a judge and available for elimination debates. If there is a reason someone requires an exception, they should reach out to tournament administrators prior to the tournament for approval. Should a school violate the entourage rule, debaters in LD and Pelham will lose prefs for two rounds, teams in Public Forum will lose strikes for two rounds, and schools with Congressional Debaters will be fined the fee for an uncovered judge.
- Please make sure all judges and students are informed about the tournament's **Title IX policy**, which is available [here](#) and linked on tabroom.
- We require that all judges, coaches, and participating students have an established, functional Tabroom.com account - including a cell phone number listed.
- At the final awards ceremony on Sunday evening, we will be presenting the results and awards from all final rounds as well as the top 5 speakers in Pelham and Public Forum.
- It is an expectation of the tournament that students will accurately represent material read during speeches. In order to ensure compliance, students may record their opponents' speeches. It is the responsibility of coaches to ensure that their debaters and parents understand this tournament requirement and complete the paperwork necessary to ensure compliance with applicable state laws.
- **If participants enter spaces the Barkley Forum is not using for rounds (professor offices, classrooms that are not on the pairing), they will be disqualified.**
- Generative Artificial Intelligence -
 - in events in which speeches must be the original created work of a competitor (OO, Informative, Extemp, Improptu) students are prohibited from quoting or paraphrasing text directly from generative AI sources. Generative AI should *not be cited as a source*. The exception is that a student delivering a speech about the topic of AI may quote AI to illustrate their points about AI, in accordance with existing quoted word limits. While generative AI may be used to guide students to articles, ideas, and sources, the original source of any quoted or paraphrased evidence must be available if requested.
 - In debate events, generative AI should *not be cited as a source*; while generative AI may be used to guide students to articles, ideas, and sources, the original source of any quoted or paraphrased evidence must be available if requested.
 - In Interpretation events, students are prohibited from performing material created by generative AI sources. Generative AI should *not be used as a source of material*; while generative AI may be used to guide students to articles, ideas, and material, the original source of any material that is performed must be available if requested.
- **NEW: Dr. Ed Lee**, Emory College of Arts and Sciences' Senior Director of Conflict Management and Organizational Logistics and Senior Director Emeritus of The Barkley Forum, will serve as the **Director of Tournament Standards and Practices** during the tournament should our guests have an issue, concern or complaint that cannot be resolved by the event tab room personnel. For the past several years, we have offered the services of the Emory University Ombuds Office, and when we explored the underutilization of that resource, we realized that tournament patrons were still contacting tab rooms directly regarding conflicts around policies and practices of the tournament. We decided to create a new

structure where Ed will work in partnership with the event tab rooms to manage those particular issues. The tab room director will connect concerned parties to Ed, and he will work with tournament patrons by listening and offering a flexible range of options for addressing issues and concerns informally. Please note that Ed *is* a mandatory reporter for Title IX related complaints. His role is to mitigate conflict that might arise from tournament policies and practices, but he is not a decision maker regarding event tabulation; that role is filled by each event's tab room directors.

- **NEW:** In addition to their competitive debate program, the Barkley Forum has a decade of experience facilitating dialogues on the campus to learn about our differences and build connected communities through the appreciation of similarities. This year, we are offering an opportunity for high school students who are here for the BFHS to participate in a **World Café dialogue inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Strength to Love***. The dialogue will be held on **Sunday, January 25th, at 11:00 a.m.**, and lunch will be provided for participants. More details and information on how students can sign up to participate will be forthcoming.
- For use while you are on campus, consider downloading [Emory Mobile](#). Under "Campus Connection," there are maps, and there are also instructions for getting connected to WiFi, dining information, etc.
- Please note that Emory is a **tobacco-free campus**. For more information: www.tobaccofree.emory.edu.

HISTORY AND TRADITIONS

1956 - THE 71st ANNUAL BARKLEY FORUM FOR HIGH SCHOOLS - 2026

The Barkley Forum for High Schools is dedicated to those who have built the current tournament experience. The Barkley Forum for High Schools has several institutions dedicated to honoring excellence in forensics. The [listing of Member Chairs](#) honors schools with strong forensic programs of today and yesterday. Retired [Key Coaches](#) are recalled and honored.

The Forum salutes those who guide students in education, citizenship, character, creativity and recognition. The Forum congratulates those moderators who know how to teach students to motivate themselves and direct the necessary work to raise funds, to discipline young minds, to run interference where necessary, and to stimulate educational experience rather than pettiness. The Barkley Forum especially appreciates those coaches who can teach the value of vision beyond the trophy.

Your participation in the 71st tournament affirms the pride Emory takes in the efforts of the various schools that have built the Forum. Emory recognizes its debt to you. Thus, in a way thanking you and them, the 71st year will salute success.

BARKLEY FORUM MEMBERSHIP

Three hundred thirteen schools do hold or have held Chairs of Membership in the Barkley Forum for High Schools at Emory University. Click [here](#) for a full listing of member schools. The currently active schools, all reflecting quality performance of the past, have automatic reservations at the annual January meetings. Their memberships are valid for a minimum of two years. It is not necessary for the schools holding active Chairs to apply for participation in the current year. However, they should register their students online by the deadline to facilitate the acceptance of the maximum number of non-member schools. **Guaranteed reservations will only be held until December 1st to maximize competitive opportunities for all schools.** After December 1, member schools may apply and will be placed on the wait list; at this point, records need to be entered for each student being submitted for consideration.

A member school may be absent for two years without endangering its standing. The third absence in succession vacates the Chair. Likewise, a member school may render an inferior performance at the Barkley Forum for one year without endangering its standing. Two successive years of substandard performance will question the membership. Guests are optional candidates for membership by three successive years of better-than-average performance. A number of schools are now under consideration.

Membership recognizes high quality forensics performance resulting from commitments from the schools. Cary Academy (NC), Eastview High School (MN), Everglades High School (FL), L.C. Anderson High School (TX), Lambert High School (GA), Marlborough High School (CA), Monta Vista High School (CA), Phoenix Country Day (AZ), and School Without Walls (DC) were named member schools in 2025.

GOLD KEY AWARDS

The most prestigious presentation made by the Barkley Forum at Emory is the presentation of the GOLD KEY. A select number of Directors of Forensics will be added in 2026 to this exemplary list of previous recipients. The recognition of those so named will take place at the online Opening Awards Assembly that will be available Friday morning at the beginning of the tournament.

The complete listing of the notable coaches and honorary designees can be found [here](#). Invitation to the KEY Society is a lifetime designation as long as the KEY coach comports himself or herself with dignity and the high standards to which role models in the debate community are held.

In 2025, Shane Cole (Oak Grove - Mississippi), Lynne Coyne (Myers Park - North Carolina), Colton Gilbert (Little Rock Central - Arkansas), Jeffrey Miller (Marist - Georgia), and Tim Sheaff (Honorary - in memoriam) were tapped into membership in the KEY society.

AWARDS TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The SILVER KEY - In commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Barkley Forum in 1980, the Grand Championship was denoted by the SILVER KEY, a small sterling silver emblem duplicating the design of the prestigious Gold KEY awarded only to the KEY Coaches. The SILVER KEY indicates a Barkley Forum Champion and may be worn only by the first-place individual debaters in the Pelham Debates and Public Forum and the first-place winners in the Pelham Debates, Lincoln-Douglas, Extemporaneous Speaking, Original Oratory, Dramatic Interpretation, Duo Interpretation, Program Oral Interpretation, Humorous Interpretation, Informative Speaking, Impromptu Speaking, Public Forum and Congressional Debate. The KEY has no written marking visible to the public and is a piece of fine jewelry suitable for any occasion. While trophies will be granted as usual for the appropriate victories, the SILVER KEY belongs to the Barkley Forum victors of the future.

The Trophy KEY - Uniquely, the Barkley Forum trophy is a larger KEY cast from an antique brass KEY hidden in Georgia from Sherman's March to the Sea in 1864. This original KEY was discovered and donated to the Emory Barkley Forum by Susan and Thomas Glenn Pelham. Nashville attorney Larry David Woods, a distinguished alumnus of Emory and former President of the Forum as well as National President of the Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha debate fraternity, gave a grant to have KEYS cast each year from the original.

MELISSA MAXCY WADE SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD

Emory University forensics has a long history of encouraging students to use their forensics skills for the greater good of our society. Both as a collective and as individual members, the Barkley Forum encourages service to others. The Barkley Forum was at the forefront of the urban debate league movement to bring debate to disenfranchised students. When middle school students expressed a desire to debate in Georgia, the Barkley Forum formed partnerships to provide those opportunities to students. The Barkley Forum for High Schools itself was originally founded as a service to the forensics community in Georgia.

While we value and reward competitive success at the Barkley Forum for High Schools, we also value service to others, and we wish to reward and recognize a student competing in our tournament who has a passion for social justice work and a desire to continue to use his or her gifts and skills to serve others in his or her community.

The Barkley Forum established this award in 2013 as the Social Justice Award, and in 2016 we renamed the award the Melissa Maxcy Wade Social Justice Award in honor of Melissa's retirement after 43 years of service to Emory University. Melissa embodies the spirit of this award. She has always sought out ways to empower people from all walks of life to find their voices to make the world a better place.

Any forensics competitor who is active on their squad and who will be attending the 2026 Barkley Forum for High Schools may be nominated for the award. Nominations can be from coaches, judges, or other members of the forensics community who are familiar with the student's work.

Nominations should include:

- Nominee information:
 - Nominee's Name
 - Nominee's School
 - Nominee's Year in School
- Nominator Name and Affiliation
- The reasons for the nomination, preferably including anecdotes and examples of the student's service

Nominations should be emailed to emorybfhs@gmail.com by January 2, 2026. Finalists for the award will be announced during the week prior to the tournament, and the award will be presented at the Closing Awards Ceremony on Sunday at 7:00 p.m.

In addition to a framed award, the award recipient will receive a \$250 cash prize to be directed to the charitable organization of the recipient's choice and a \$100 cash prize for the recipient's/nominator's debate program. The 2025 recipient was Eshaam Bhattad – Adlai E. Stevenson High School (Illinois).

DATES, CONTACT INFORMATION, APPLICATION PROCESS

IMPORTANT DATES

December 1, 2025: All entries and applications due online (Members and Non-members). On this date, Member Schools who are not entered will forfeit reserved entry. **For non-member school applications to be considered, each student's competitive record should be entered on Tabroom.**

December 5, 2025: All non-members will be notified about whether they have been accepted for entry into the tournament.

January 1, 2026: Congressional Debate bills and resolutions are due (upload to tabroom.com) by 6:00 p.m. EST. Reminder: we will accept up to two per school, but no more than one per student.

January 2, 2026: Nominations for the Melissa Maxcy Wade Social Justice Award are due (email to EmoryBFHS@gmail.com)

January 10, 2026: Deadline to enter judges and to request hired judging.

January 10, 2026: Congressional Debate Docket released.

January 16, 2026: Last day changes can be requested without penalty fees. Deadline to submit students' [Release of Liability form](#).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Barkley Forum Email Address (preferred method of contact): EmoryBFHS@gmail.com

Tournament Administrator Telephone (preferred phone contact): 678-205-6281

Barkley Forum Telephone: 404-727-6189

Tournament Website: <http://bfhs.tabroom.com>

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process at the Barkley Forum High School Tournament is required to accommodate an efficient registration process. Please review the following procedures. **These procedures apply to both member schools and non-member schools.**

Step 1

Enter students online, including student records, which will automatically place them on the waitlist. **ALL entries—including students' competitive records ("qualifying information" when you click on the student's name on tabroom) for non-member schools—must be entered online by December 1, 2025.** We will assume any MEMBER school not submitting entries will not be in attendance because they will not want to prevent the entry of worthy non-member schools.

NOTE for Non-Member Schools:

We ask you to provide records for each student who is being recommended for entry at the tournament. Entry into the Barkley Forum High Schools Tournament for non-member schools is based on the

student's record. Therefore, it is important that the student records be carefully completed. The records should be entered online ("qualifiers" on tabroom) by December 1, 2025.

Step 2

The Barkley Forum will first count the Member entries for each event. Non-member applications will be considered based on available space and the student's record in each event.

Step 3

The Barkley Forum will email the coach listed in tabroom.com as the primary contact when students are admitted. When coaches look at their entry on tabroom.com, students who are admitted into the tournament will have "In" under "status" next to their names, and students who are still on the waitlist will have "WL" under "status" next to their names.

The Barkley Forum will continue to admit students off the waitlist until the tournament starts. If your student is accepted off the waitlist, tabroom.com will generate an email to the coach on record for the school. We expect that those students will attend unless you email emorybfhs@gmail.com to let us know they will not.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ALL SCHOOLS:

Once you receive the email confirming your entry into the tournament, we expect that you will attend. If you decide not to attend the tournament and do not drop your entrants by the January 16th drop date, you will be charged for your entries.

If students qualify to participate in the tutorials (i.e., clear), they are expected to be available through the final exhibition round to respect their opponents and the participants who will learn from their performance. If a student must leave the tournament and cannot participate in a tutorial or exhibition round for which they have qualified, they will forfeit their award and all rounds. Special circumstances may lead to rare exceptions to this rule at the tournament director's discretion. We are providing this information so you may make your travel plans accordingly.

JUDGING AND FEES

JUDGING

Each school will be responsible for furnishing competent judges in each event in which they participate. Judging requirements pertain to preliminary rounds. All judges are expected to judge in elimination rounds. **All entered judges are expected to be available unless the tab room has been informed otherwise.** If you are in the judging pool and fail to show up for your judging commitment, there will be a penalty assessed by tournament administrators. Also, a judge's availability must match their commitment (e.g. If a judge is in for 3 rounds and has conflicts for all but 2 rounds, we will charge for a hire for the round that judge is unavailable.).

No inexperienced judges are allowed to cover obligations. Judges are strongly encouraged to provide a written RFD.

Background Checks: Emory will be conducting background checks for all tournament hired judges, and all judges provided by the schools must have completed a successful background check conducted by the schools.

Entourage Rule: Anyone providing coaching or research support for any contestants in the Pelham Debates, Public Forum, or LD should be entered in the judge pool for a minimum of 2 rounds (4 flights, if applicable) and be available to judge elimination debates. Anyone providing coaching or research support for any contestants in Congressional Debate must be entered as a judge and available for elimination debates. If there is a reason someone requires an exception, they should reach out to tournament administrators prior to the tournament for approval. Should a school violate the entourage rule, debaters in LD and Pelham will lose prefs for two rounds, teams in Public Forum will lose strikes for two rounds, and schools with Congressional Debaters will be fined the fee for an uncovered judge.

Judge Entry Deadline/Deadline to Request Hired Judging: If you wish to hire judging for the tournament, we suggest you request a hire early on tabroom.com. **The deadline to enter judges in all events and the deadline to request hired judging is January 10, 2026.**

Judge Opt-In: Judges may opt-in as diversity enhancing. They will be marked on the preference/strike sheet if applicable. In LD, the tab room will assign unassigned diversity enhancing judges into debates where they would be a 3-3 or better unless that is a bubble round. The tab staff will never publicize or disclose if such a substitution was made. In addition, **if you are a judge who represents a group that is underrepresented in the current landscape of debate and would like to opt in to the elim judge placement system in LD or Public Forum** to ensure proportional representation, please email Kara Grant at emorybfhs@gmail.com. We will pay diversity enhancing judges \$40 for every elimination round judged beyond their commitment.

Elimination Round Obligation: For all events except those in the Speech Division: all judges are required to judge the first **full** elimination round OR judge one round past the last elimination round in which their school participated (whichever comes last). For LD and PF, the first full elimination rounds are The Walter Alan Ulrich Tutorial and The Dr. Kenneth Barfield Public Forum Tutorial, respectively. Please note that the number of rounds of commitment **ONLY** applies to preliminary rounds. For **speech events**, if a judge is available on Sunday, they are committed for all rounds on Sunday. Although a debate division may release a judge's obligation one round past a school's elimination, the Speech Division operates best when all judges are available for a particular day and are available for all rounds on that day.

Substitutions: Under no circumstances may a judge give their ballot to another judge without notifying the tabroom.

Judging Requirements:

Pelham Debate	3 rounds per team. An individual judging Pelham cannot judge anything else during the preliminary rounds. Please have all judges post their paradigm on tabroom.com.
Lincoln-Douglas	3 rounds per entry. The preliminary rounds are flighted, and one round consists of two flights. An individual judging Lincoln-Douglas cannot judge anything else during the preliminary rounds. Please have all judges post their paradigm on tabroom.com.
Speech Events	Minimum 1 full-time judge for every five (5) entries or fraction thereof. Please mark any students in their first year out of high school on tabroom.
Congressional Debate	One qualified judge per 5 entries or fraction thereof must be provided exclusively for Congressional Debate. Schools with more than 5 entries must indicate at least one judge who can serve as a parliamentarian. Please let us know (via email at emorybfhs@gmail.com) if your judge can serve as parliamentarian.
Public Forum	3 rounds per team. The preliminary rounds are flighted, and one round consists of two flights. An individual judging PF cannot judge anything else during the preliminary rounds. Please have all judges post their paradigm on tabroom.com. All paradigms must align with the Barkley Forum's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and expectations for competitive integrity.

FEES/PAYMENT

If your school would like to request a fee waiver, please write Kara Grant at emorybfhs@gmail.com. Please note: if you are due any refund after you have paid, that refund will be processed via check and mailed to your school after the tournament.

Event Fees:

Pelham Debate	\$125 per team
Lincoln-Douglas	\$110 per singleton
Speech Events	\$65 per entry slot
Congressional Debate	\$65 per entry slot
Public Forum	\$110 per team

Judging Fees for Hiring Judges (**January 10th is the deadline to request hired judges**):

Pelham Debate	\$200 per uncovered team
Lincoln-Douglas	\$300 per uncovered participant
Speech Events	\$150 per uncovered judge (per five entry slots or fraction thereof)
Congressional Debate	\$200 per each uncovered Congress judge (per five entries or fraction thereof)
Public Forum	\$200 per uncovered team

Penalty Fees:

Drops: Any schools making drops after January 16, 2026 will be responsible for their entry fees for dropped entries.

If, during the tournament, your school is assessed any of the following fines and you would like to contest it, please fill out [this form](#), and a determination will be made about whether the fine will be waived after the conclusion of the tournament.

Missing Judges: \$50 per prelim round and \$100 per elim round. If a judge is missing at the round start time and the tab room is required to make a replacement, we will add this fee. Repeated offenses may result in membership being suspended or a school not being invited to return.

Judge Name Fee: You will be charged \$100 for needing to change the name of a judge, adding a judge, or dropping a judge in Pelham, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum once pref and strike sheets have become active. This policy is solely intended to make the sheets more accurate for students and easier to fill out.

Judge Constraint Fee: If you do not provide the correct information regarding which teams and/or specific contestants your judges cannot judge and we need to replace your judge as a result, we will charge \$100 per change in prelims and \$200 per change in elims.

These are the payment methods available:

1) Credit card payment

There is no additional fee for paying via credit card. Click on the “Pay Now” button on [this site](#).

2) Check - DELIVERED IN PERSON

Bring a check made payable to Emory University to the tournament and **deliver it in person** on the first day of competition. Our mail service is challenged! If you **must** mail a check, please mail it to this address and alert Kara Grant at emorybfhs@gmail.com that the check is in the mail:

Barkley Forum for Debate, Deliberation, and Dialogue
Emory University
Mailstop 1022-001-1AC
Atlanta, GA 30322

3) ACH/EFT

Contact Kara for the procedure if you would like to pay via ACH/Electronic Funds Transfer.

4) Cash

Cash payments will only be accepted if they are paid directly to Kara Grant or Angela Henderson - who will give you a written receipt - in the Barkley Forum office (Alumni Memorial University Center Suite 135) on Friday, 1/23. Only correct change can be accepted.

HOTEL AND PARKING

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

It is suggested that each school make its own arrangements for housing as early as possible. There are no rooms available on the Emory campus for guest accommodations. The Barkley Forum suggests that you contact one of the following unless you have other arrangements for the weekend:

SPECIAL TOURNAMENT HOTELS

Marriott Century Center (\$149/night; click [HERE](#) for online reservations; discount available **until 1/9/26**)

Note: there is a \$5 per vehicle per night parking charge; they can accommodate buses; also, schools must submit a rooming list by 1/9, and payment will be due 10 days before arrival

2000 Century Blvd., Atlanta, GA 30345
(404) 325-0000

Emory Conference Center (\$189/night; click [HERE](#) for online reservations - very limited Thursday night availability due to multiple events, so reserve early if arriving Thursday; \$16/night parking)

1615 Clifton Road, NE
(404) 712-6565
(800) 933-6679 (toll-free)

OTHER HOTELS NEAR THE CAMPUS

Courtyard Atlanta Decatur Downtown/Emory
130 Clairemont Avenue (404) 371-0204

Hampton Inn & Suites Atlanta Decatur/Emory
116 Clairemont Avenue (404) 377-6360

Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites
2183 North Decatur Rd. (404) 320-0888

Courtyard Atlanta Executive Park/Emory
1236 Executive Park Dr., N.E. (404) 728-0708

University Inn
1767 North Decatur Road (800) 654-8591

PARKING ON CAMPUS

Special parking arrangements will be required due to the lack of parking on the Emory University campus. Closer to the tournament, we will be posting where on campus each division of the tournament will be located and which parking deck is closest to competition rooms.

With the exception of those with participants in the Pelham Debates (who will need to pay for their parking on Friday), please do not arrive on campus until 4:00 on Friday, which is the earliest we can secure access to the parking decks.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- What is the best way to contact the Barkley Forum if I have questions or need to make changes?
 - Email is the best way to reach us: emorybfhs@gmail.com
- To whom should checks for payment be made payable?
 - Emory University. Email emorybfhs@gmail.com if you need a current W-9.
 - It is strongly encouraged that you **bring your check in person** to the tournament because of delays with mail service.
- The website is telling me the application for one of my students is incomplete. What do I do?
 - You need to enter the competitive records/qualifiers for all your students so we can consider them for admission.
 - Member schools do not need to enter records if they are entering prior to the December 1 deadline, but after 12/1, Member Schools need to enter records for their students to be considered, as well.
- How can I tell if my students are admitted or on the waitlist?
 - After the December 5, 2025 admittance date, when you look at your squad on tabroom.com, the students who have “In” under “status” next to their names are ADMITTED. Students who have “WL” under “status” next to their names are WAITLISTED.
- How will I know if students are removed from the waitlist and entered in the tournament?
 - After the December 5th initial admittance date, when students are removed from the waitlist, an email is automatically sent to the email address on record with tabroom.com.
- Is there a release form required to participate?
 - Yes, each student should have [this completed form](#) on file - signed by the student if over the age of 18 and by a parent or legal guardian if the student is younger than the age of 18. - by January 16, 2026.
- I don't have students debating in the Pelham Debates, but we have to wait until after the final debate in Pelham before the awards assembly is held. Why?
 - The Barkley Forum for High Schools is designed to celebrate all forensics events. The Awards Assembly celebrates speech and debate in all of its forms, and the tournament is one of the few tournaments that continues the tradition of recognizing that we are all part of a broader community celebrating the pedagogy of speech and debate that encourages students to critically engage their world and become part of a broader citizenry. We encourage everyone who is able to attend the final rounds of all events to celebrate the achievements in all divisions.
- The registration deadline has passed, and I just found out about your tournament. What do I do?
 - Email the Tournament Administrator at emorybfhs@gmail.com and indicate which events you have students interested in entering. Any schools (Member schools or non-member schools) must enter records for each student applying for the tournament if it is after the December 1 application deadline.

- How do I hire a judge?
 - If you are not able to provide a judge in an event, please request the number of rounds/judges you need to hire on tabroom.com by January 10, 2026. It will automatically charge you for a judge hire, and the Barkley Forum staff will make sure a tournament judge covers your obligation.
- Where do I find schedules?
 - Full schedules are posted on tabroom under the “schedules” tab; these schedules and building locations are tentative and subject to change.
- Why can’t you confirm the building locations for all events until so close to the tournament date?
 - Since our tournament falls very close to the beginning of the semester, we have to wait to get final confirmation from the university about rooms and buildings until after classes are underway.
- On the schedule, I see “tutorials” and “exhibitions” listed on Saturday and Sunday. What are those?
 - When the Barkley Forum for High Schools began, the state of Georgia did not allow competition on Sundays. In the spirit of the educational aims of the tournament, the “rounds” were renamed “tutorials” and “exhibitions.” No competition there; just education! Tutorials are any outrounds up until the final round, and the exhibitions are the final rounds in all events. You will notice that many of those rounds have been named for influential and impactful forensics educators.
- I would like to be hired as a judge for the tournament. How do I do that?
 - Fill out the form available [here](#). All judges hired by the tournament will need to complete a background check.
- Do you have a judges’ lounge?
 - Yes, we will have a few centrally located places on campus where judges can congregate and will provide coffee and snacks. Please note: we will NOT be providing single use water bottles. Emory is committed to sustainability and strongly discourages the use of single use plastic water bottles. Please bring a reusable water bottle that you may refill at one of the water bottle refill stations on campus.

SCHEDULES

2026 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Tentative schedules are posted on tabroom. Locations are subject to change.

The **Opening Awards Ceremony** will be virtual and distributed prior to the start of competition. We will hear from the 2025 Georgia Speaker of the Year and honor the new inductees into the Gold Key Society.

All schools should check in on tabroom by 11:00 a.m. EST on Friday, January 23rd. Online registration/check-in will open on Thursday, January 22nd at 7:00 p.m.

Pelham Debates ONLY will start on campus at **1:30 on Friday**, 1/23; they will be responsible for paying for parking.

All other events (besides Pelham Debates): **please do not arrive on the Emory campus earlier than 4:00** on January 23rd, when we have permission to park on campus. Rounds for all other events will start at or around 4:30 on the Emory campus.

The final awards assembly is scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 25th in the Emory Student Center.

EVENT INSTRUCTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PELHAM DEBATE

For 31 years, Mr. Thomas Glenn Pelham presided over the Barkley Forum for High Schools. As the winning coach at the tournament in 1959, he appreciated the difficulty of competition. As Director of Forensics at Emory from 1960-1972, he was the architect who crafted the traditions of the tournament and of the Barkley Forum organization. His death in April 1987 created a void in national forensics, which simply cannot be filled. In recognition of his striking achievements, the Barkley Forum honored him by naming the policy debate competition The Pelham Debates.

The Barkley Forum for High Schools will use the National Speech and Debate Association topic for the current year. **A member school is guaranteed entry for three teams** of varsity strength composed of two speakers each. The Barkley Forum tournament is highly competitive. In fairness to your debaters, we recommend that you only bring students fully prepared for experienced level debate.

Non-member schools will be granted admission on the basis of applications that speak to the varsity experience of debaters. Substitutions will be discouraged. The Barkley Forum will designate a swing team should it be necessary to even the number of participating teams.

Each team will debate both sides of the proposition, three rounds affirmatively and three rounds negatively in a cross-examination (8-3-5) format with eight (8) minutes of preparation time. All teams will debate the six preliminary rounds. There will be five exhibition tutorial rounds for the thirty-two teams that are invited to participate.

We will have a mutual judge preference system for the Pelham Debates (using an ordinal ranking system - view instructional video [here](#) if you have questions about ordinal ranking), so it is especially important that your judges are entered accurately in a timely fashion. **If your judges are not entered by January 10th, you will be required to pay the full judge hire fee.** More details will follow via email closer to the tournament date. Please note that the judge preferences do not apply to the Thomas Glenn Pelham Silver Key Debate. Please have all judges post their judge philosophy at tabroom.com under “paradigms” by January 10th. **You will not be allowed to enter prefs until all your judges have supplied a paradigm.**

Judges will be assigned by mutual preference in all preliminary rounds and in the tutorials up to and including The Richard B. Sodikow Tutorial. The exhibition rounds in all divisions will be evaluated by a panel of judges from the Key Coaches of the Barkley Forum.

Judges are required to vote for one and only one team and to make their decision within 2 hours and 5 minutes from the posted start time of the prelim debates, and 2 hours and 20 minutes for elimination debates. This time limit will be strictly enforced by the tournament. Participants in the Phyllis Flory Barton Tutorial (octos) must flip for sides on Sunday morning by 7:20 a.m.

We will observe a 15-minute forfeiture policy for all competitors in the Pelham Debates. If competitors are not in their posted rounds, ready to debate by 15 minutes after the posted round start time, they will be forfeited by tournament administration. If competitors are having difficulty finding a competition space, please contact the tab room prior to the round start time.

Anyone providing coaching or research support for any contestants in the Pelham Debates should be entered in the judge pool for a minimum of 2 rounds and be available to judge elimination debates. If there is a reason someone requires an exception, they should reach out to tournament administrators prior to the tournament for approval.

Maverick teams are not permitted to enter prior to the tournament. If a team becomes maverick due to an illness of a partner during the tournament, the ill debater may miss no more than 2 debates to be able to return and continue debating. Mavericks may not debate in elimination rounds. If a team has debated collectively for at least 4 rounds in prelims, it is possible they could clear, but the ill debater must return to the team and inform the tab room they are able to debate *prior* to the pairings for elimination rounds being released.

We encourage evidence sharing through share.tabroom.com and not through email chains.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

The purpose of Lincoln-Douglas debate is to provide a public forum for issues of value. Thus, arguments should be constructed using sound and ethical rules of persuasion. Clash is required. Affirmative teams must support the resolution and negative teams must oppose the resolution. The affirmative position must be fully developed in the first speech. Cross-examination is to be emphasized in the evaluation process. The time limits for the contest will be as follows:

Affirmative Constructive	Six minutes
Negative Cross-examination	Three minutes
Negative constructive	Seven minutes
Affirmative Cross-examination	Three minutes
Affirmative Rebuttal	Four minutes
Negative Rebuttal	Six minutes
Affirmative Rebuttal	Three minutes

Four minutes of preparation time will be assigned to each speaker to be allocated as the speaker chooses. The topic for debate will be the national topic debated during the months of January and February.

A member school may enter three debaters of varsity strength. A non-member school may apply for three slots. We will have a partial triples out round to try to ensure that all debaters with a 4-2 record or better clear.

We will have a mutual judge preference system for the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, so it is especially important that your judges are entered accurately in a timely fashion. **If your judges are not entered by January 10th, you will be required to pay the full judge hire fee.** More details will follow via email closer to the tournament date. Please note that the judge preferences do not apply to The Dale Lauder McCall Exhibition. Please have all judges post their judge philosophy on tabroom.com under “paradigms” by January 10th. **You will not be allowed to enter prefs until all your judges have supplied a paradigm.**

Judges will be assigned by mutual preference in all preliminary rounds and in the tutorials up to and including The Patricia Bailey Tutorial. The exhibition rounds in all divisions will be evaluated by a panel of judges from the Key Coaches of the Barkley Forum.

Debates should start as soon as all participants and the judge are in the room. All decisions must be entered by one hour and fifteen minutes after the announced start of the flight or tab will flip a coin to decide the winner of the round.

Anyone providing coaching or research support for any contestants in Lincoln-Douglas should be entered in the judge pool for a minimum of 2 rounds and be available to judge elimination debates. If there is a reason someone requires an exception, they should reach out to tournament administrators prior to the tournament for approval.

We encourage evidence sharing through share.tabroom.com and not through email chains.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE

Entry: Each member school is invited to enter ten delegates. Non-member schools will be granted admission of up to ten delegates on the basis of applications that speak to the delegates' level of experience. No Pelham debater, Lincoln-Douglas contestant, Public Forum debater, or Speech Events entrant may enter Congressional Debate at the Barkley Forum for High Schools.

Judges: One qualified judge per 5 entries or fraction thereof must be provided exclusively for Congressional Debate by any school who has entries in this event. **Schools with more than 5 entries must indicate at least one judge who can serve as a parliamentarian.**

Legislation: Each participating school's coach may submit **up to two items of student-written legislation** (no more than one per student) to Tabroom.com by Thursday, January 1, 2026 (6:00 p.m. EST) only using provided templates. Coaches should review to ensure quality, suitable for substantive debate. When uploaded, legislation must be categorized in one of the following areas:

- Commerce (business, banking, finance)
- Defense
- Education and Health Care
- Elections and Government Reform
- Energy, Environment, and Scientific Development
- Foreign Relations and Aid
- Immigration and Border Protection
- Justice (including policing, firearms, and drugs)

Legislation will first be assessed (school/student identity withheld) by an independent review panel to select a field of bills and resolutions best suited for debate and distributed as evenly as possible across the topic areas above. Following the legislation released by the review panel, coaches will receive instructions for their registered students to cast a ballot for their favorite items between January 9-12. Coaches are responsible for communicating to registered contestants; coaches may not vote. From among the student vote, the highest-rated items will be earmarked for finals, followed by each set of rounds prior. Each round will have three items of legislation assigned, for a total of 15 items altogether. The lowest-rated items will not make the docket. The complete docket will be released January 10.

Chamber assignments will be released at 4:15 p.m. on January 23, adjusting for drops to ensure as balanced a competition as possible, and students are strongly discouraged from communicating with other contestants to negotiate agenda orders or presiding officers ahead of the tournament. With a smaller legislation packet of only three items per session (9 for prelims, collectively), there should not be a need for determining agenda ahead of time.

Rules: The BFHS uses NSDA Congressional Debate rules as a foundation, with [pilots and modifications described in this Google Doc.](#)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

Public Forum Debate was added to the events at the Barkley Forum for High Schools in honor of the 50th anniversary of the tournament in 2005. Public Forum Debate is designed to engage students in debate about current, controversial issues in front of community audiences.

Each member school is invited to enter **three teams** in Public Forum Debate. Non-member schools will be granted admission of up to three teams on the basis of applications that speak to the level of experience of the teams. We will have a partial triples out round to try to ensure that all teams with a 4-2 record or better clear.

Unless otherwise stipulated by tournament officials, rules for procedure will be those contained in the [National Speech and Debate Association's Unified High School Manual](#). A Public Forum round begins with the electronic flip of a coin on tabroom.com between the competing teams to determine sides and speaker position.

The time limits for the contest will be as follows:

Team A Speaker 1 - Constructive	Four Minutes
Team B Speaker 1 - Constructive	Four Minutes
Crossfire	Three Minutes
Team A Speaker 2 - Rebuttal	Four Minutes
Team B Speaker 2 - Rebuttal	Four Minutes
Crossfire	Three Minutes
Team A Speaker 1 - Summary	Three Minutes
Team B Speaker 1 - Summary	Three Minutes
Grand Crossfire	Three Minutes
Team A Speaker 2 - Final Focus	Two Minutes
Team B Speaker 2 - Final Focus	Two Minutes
Preparation Time (per team)	Three Minutes

The topic for debate will be the national topic debated during the month of January.

Contestants will get judge strikes for preliminary rounds that will be equivalent to 15% of the judge pool. **If your judges are not entered by January 10th, you will be required to pay the full judge hire fee.** Please have all judges post their judge philosophy on tabroom.com under “paradigms” by January 10th. **Teams will not be able to enter strikes until their judges’ paradigms are posted.** All paradigms must align with the Barkley Forum’s commitment to diversity, inclusion, and expectations for competitive integrity. In addition, judges should mark as a conflict any student:

- (1) whose high school you attended in recent years;
- (2) to whom you are related;
- (3) who attends a school with whom you have had a coaching or judging relationship, paid or unpaid, during the past two school years (does not apply if your only relationship to a school was as a hired judged at that school's tournament);
- (4) who attends a school that has offered to hire you to coach or judge in the future;
- (5) for whom you have ever had primary instructional responsibility as, e.g., a school coach or a personal coach
- (6) with whom you have or have in the past had personal friendships or romantic relationships, or with whom you socialize in non-debate settings;
- (7) who personally has provided your transportation or housing at this tournament, or who attends a school that has provided your transportation or housing at this tournament;
- (8) who has been hired by, or who has an outstanding explicit or implicit offer from, a debate business (e.g., workshop or brief company) to which you have financial ties.
- (9) if your current, or in the past two years, coach of record is currently coaching the student.
- (10) If you coach or debate for a college/university, any student that is debating for your program next year or whom your school is still actively recruiting.
- (11) with whose coach(es) you have or have in the past had romantic relationships.
- (12) to whom you bear any other relationship that might reasonably be thought to compromise your impartiality as a judge. To determine whether a relationship meets this test, you might ask yourself, "If I were a competing student and knew nothing about my judge except that he or she bore the relationship in question to my competitor or my competitors coach, would I have any doubts about his or her impartiality?" If the answer is "yes," you should mark students to whom you bear that relationship as conflicts.

Once confirmed, decisions are final. To encourage the pedagogical aims of the tournament and to avoid any confusion with ballot entry, we encourage judges to disclose their decisions but only *after* they have entered their decision on Tabroom.

No Pelham debater, Lincoln-Douglas contestant, Congressional Debate contestant or Speech Events entrant may enter Public Forum Debate at the Barkley Forum for High Schools.

Anyone providing coaching or research support for any contestants in the Public Forum division should be entered in the judge pool for a minimum of 2 rounds and be available to judge elimination debates. If there is a reason someone requires an exception, they should reach out to tournament administrators prior to the tournament for approval.

Maverick teams are not permitted to enter prior to the tournament. If a team becomes maverick due to an illness of a partner during the tournament, the ill debater may miss no more than 2 debates to be able to return and continue debating. Mavericks may not debate in elimination rounds. If a team has debated collectively for at

least 4 rounds in prelims, it is possible they could clear, but the ill debater must return to the team and inform the tab room they are able to debate *prior* to the pairings for elimination rounds being released.

Spectators are always allowed in rounds at the Barkley Forum for High Schools. However, we empower the judge to enforce all requests from competitors to have observers not utilize technology (phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) while observing. If an observer needs to use an electronic as an accommodated device, they are welcome to speak with the tab room.

We encourage evidence sharing through share.tabroom.com and not through email chains.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPEECH EVENTS

Each school may have up to four entries in any event at the Forum. No extra entries are allowed due to space limitations. **NEW:** Triple entries **will be allowed provided they are not all in the same pattern and provided one of the events is not Extemporaneous Speaking.** No Pelham debater, Lincoln-Douglas contestant, Public Forum debater, or Congressional Debate participant may participate in Speech Events.

SCORING

Each student will be ranked by the judge from 1st place to 7th place. Students participating in the Lanny Dean Naegelin rounds will be selected in the following manner:

The top 24 performing speakers in each event after 5 preliminary rounds will be invited to participate on the basis of:

- 1) Total number of ranks in their **best 4 out of 5 preliminary rounds**. In case of a tie:
- 2) Reciprocal fractions from their best 4 out of 5 rounds. In case of a tie:
- 3) Total preliminary ranks. In case of a tie:
- 4) Total reciprocals.

To determine which students will advance in elimination rounds, we will use judge ranks from ONLY the previous elimination round with the following tiebreaking rules: 1) ranks, 2) judge preference, and 3) reciprocal fractions. Should the number of entries in any given event not warrant breaking to quarterfinals, the tab room staff will make that determination during the course of the tournament.

TIMING

For each Speech Event, there is a 30-second grace period for going over the time limit. Violations of time limits, including the grace period, may be penalized at the discretion of the judge for the participant. However, unless clear time signals are given throughout the performance, a student should not be penalized for going over time.

JUDGING

All judges should report to the ballot table no later than fifteen minutes prior to the round's scheduled start time in order to facilitate remaining on schedule. **If you are bringing less experienced judges, please have them review materials and take the judge training (if available for the event they will be judging) on the [NSDA website](#) and make sure they understand the event rules.**

We expect all judges' comments to be **constructively** critical and never demeaning to students and for judges to understand that by judging at the tournament, they are accepting the role of **encouraging educator**.

If a judge is available on Sunday, they are committed for all rounds on Sunday.

SOURCE MATERIAL

With the exception of Extemporaneous Speaking, students may not use the same primary source in more than one event (e.g. using the same source for DI and POI or using the same primary source in Informative Speaking and OO).

PATTERNS

Most likely, the events in Pattern A will be Extemporaneous Speaking, Humorous Interpretation, Informative Speaking, and Program Oral Interpretation. The events in Pattern B will likely be Original Oratory, Duo Interpretation, Impromptu, and Dramatic Interpretation. The pattern designation (Pattern A or Pattern B) for each speech event is subject to change based on available competition spaces for the number of entries in each pattern.

We would again like to showcase the final round of a speech event and highlight it in a way similar to what we have done for the Pelham Debates since the inception of the tournament. **This year, the finals of Humorous Interpretation will be held at the same time as the finals for the Pelham Debates, with Key Coaches adjudicating both events.** After the final rounds, awards for all events will be held simultaneously in the Emory Student Center.

Dramatic Interpretation

Dramatic Interpretation is NOT an acting contest. No props or costumes will be allowed. This event stresses the value of the presentation of the written word and the contestant's ability to interpret the author's meaning. Does the contestant appear to have a thorough understanding of the work he or she is presenting? Character development is a key component in the evaluation of a performance. Does the contestant differentiate between characters and capture the essence of the relationship and interplay between them? As well, has the contestant chosen an appropriate selection for the time allotted? Does the selection form a coherent presentation, one that gives the judge and audience an adequate understanding of the total work?

Contestants will present a cutting from published plays, screenplays, fictional or non-fictional work that is dramatic in nature. Unless otherwise stipulated by tournament officials, rules for source material and adaptations will be those contained in the National Speech and Debate Association's Unified High School Manual.

Manuscripts are not allowed. Time Limit: 10 minutes, inclusive of introduction and transitions, with a 30-second grace period for going over time. The cutting should not have been used by the contestant prior to the 2025-2026 school year.

No Dramatic Interpretation contestant will be eliminated before performing five times. Those reaching the final exhibition round will have performed eight times.

* Any contestant whose material is challenged and who cannot **produce** an appropriate bibliographic reference and a manuscript is subject to disqualification. The Barkley Forum strongly discourages anyone making an unfounded challenge. The Barkley Forum stresses education over unfettered competition.

Humorous Interpretation

This is an individual category in which the selections are humorous in nature. All other rules are the same as Dramatic Interpretation.

Duo Interpretation

This is a two-person category in which the selection may be either humorous or dramatic in nature. No touching or eye contact is allowed other than in the introduction and/or transitions. Contestants must remain in a general upright position and have off-stage focus. All other rules are the same as Dramatic Interpretation.

Program Oral Interpretation

1. **Purpose:** POI is a program of oral interpretation of thematically-linked selections chosen from two or three genres: prose, poetry, drama (plays). At least two pieces of literature that represent at least two separate genres must be used. Unlike the other interpretation events, Program Oral Interpretation may use multiple sources for the program. The title or author of all selections must be verbally identified in either the introduction and/or transitional phrases. The title may identify the primary source (e.g., book, anthology, journal, magazine, newspaper, approved website, etc.) or the specific title within the primary source (e.g., a poem, a play, a short story, a journal/magazine article, a newspaper article, etc.). If more than one author is attributed to the source, at a minimum, the primary author should be verbally cited. A Works Cited of all sources must be available to tournament officials upon request. Competitors are encouraged to devote approximately equal times to each of the genres used in the program. This distinction pertains to these two or three genres as a whole, not types of literature within a genre (such as fiction/nonfiction). Prose expresses thought through language recorded in sentences and paragraphs: fiction (short stories, novels) and non-fiction (articles, essays, journals, biographies). Poetry is writing which expresses ideas, experience, or emotion through the creative arrangement of words according to their sound, their rhythm, their meaning. Poetry may rely on verse and stanza form. The piece should not have been used by the contestant prior to the 2025-2026 school year.
2. **Contest:** The use of a manuscript during the performance is required. Common practices include the use of a binder or folder. Reading from a book or magazine is not permitted. The intact manuscript may be used by the contestant as a prop, so long as it is in the contestant's control by remaining in contact with the body at all times. No costumes or props other than the manuscript are permitted. Pictures, graphics, and/or illustrations are considered a visual aid, even if included in the original manuscript, and may not be displayed. The contestant must address the script; however, introduction and transitional material may be memorized.
3. **Length:** The time limit is 10 minutes with a 30-second grace period. If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.
4. **Publication Rules:** All literature performed must meet the publication rules of the NSDA. Any contestant whose material is challenged and who cannot **produce** an appropriate bibliographic reference will be subject to disqualification. The Barkley Forum strongly discourages anyone from issuing a frivolous or unfounded challenge. The Barkley Forum stresses the value of education over unfettered competition.

5. **Adaptations** to material may only be used for the purpose of transition. Any word changes (to eliminate profane language) and/or additions (for transition) must be indicated clearly in ink. Failure to clearly indicate the addition of words will be subject to disqualification. Changes to the script may only be used for the purpose of transition or to eliminate profane language. The voice of a script may not be changed. For example, changing “She moved to California when she was 13” to “I moved to California when I was 13” is not permitted. Combining small fractions of sentences or singular words to create humorous or dramatic dialogue, scenes, moments, and/or plot lines not intended in the original literature is prohibited. For example, it is not permitted to take one word from page 13 (e.g. home), a phrase from page 211 (e.g. ran away from), and a name, (e.g. Tyler) from page 59 to create dialogue between characters or events that do not exist in the script. Example: adding “Tyler ran away from home.” when this did not occur and was not said in the script is not permitted. Transitions only may be used to clarify the logical sequence of ideas. They are not to be used for the purpose of embellishing the humorous or dramatic effect of the literature.

Original Oratory

All oratory must be written by the contestant. Oratory is an event of polished speech art and persuasion. A message should be conveyed by the speaker. Oratory for persuasion with a solution, such as that intended for civic groups, is the intention of this contest. Judges will be instructed to favor the subtle approach. No visual aids are permitted.

Not more than 150 words of the oration may be direct quotation from any other speech or writing and such quotations must be identified in a printed copy of the oration supplied prior to registration. Extensive paraphrasing from other sources is prohibited.

The orator's script must identify the quoted materials, state the number of quoted words, include a work cited page in APA or MLA format, and both the orator and the coach must attest by signature that the oration is the original work of the contestant. It is the responsibility of the contestant to have a script ready upon request should the speech be challenged.

The speech must be memorized. It should not have been used by the contestant prior to the 2025-2026 school year. The speech must be no more than ten minutes in length with a 30-second grace period for going over time. No orator will be eliminated before performing five times (see section about cumulative scoring). Those reaching the final exhibition round will have performed eight times.

Extemporaneous Speaking

Speakers will draw current interest news topics. They will have a choice of three topics in each round. Topics in each round will, generally, revolve around a theme or topic area. For the 2026 tournament, the themes for each round will *tentatively* be as follows:

Round 1:	Trump Administration 2.0
Round 2:	Middle East and Africa
Round 3:	The Americas
Round 4:	Domestic Social Issues
Round 5:	Eurasia
Quarters:	U.S. Foreign Policy
Tutorial:	Economy
Exhibition:	Potpourri

Speakers will be given thirty (30) minutes of total preparation time before presentation before a single judge and will be asked to leave the preparation room and to proceed to their rounds twenty-five (25) minutes after drawing their topic. Speakers will be graded not only on speaking qualities, but also on their aptitude for outlining new ideas and interpretations of current events. They should demonstrate knowledge of contemporary history.

The contestant should receive no coaching help in the preparation time before his or her speech. No pre-written speeches or notes will be allowed in the preparation room.

The tournament will follow the National Speech and Debate Association guidelines concerning the use of Internet-enabled devices with one exception: **Computers and electronic devices may not be used to compose outlines or any portion of speeches.**

Each speech must be a maximum of seven minutes with a 30-second grace period for going over the time limits. A speaker will be penalized for failing to observe time limits, although individual judges have absolute discretion on the quantity of the penalty. Judges are REQUIRED to time with an accurate timing device (e.g., stop watch function on a smart phone). They are also required to give visual time signals during the speech, if requested by the speaker. No contestant will be eliminated before performing five times.

Those selected for the final exhibition round will perform eight times. Those selected for the final exhibition round will also be subject to cross-examination by another round participant for three (3) minutes after completing their speech.

No students are allowed in the extemp draw room except during their prep time, and no food or drinks are allowed in the extemp draw room except water.

Informative Speaking

1. **Purpose:** An informative speech is an original speech designed to explain, define, describe, or illustrate a particular subject. The general purpose of the speech is for the audience to gain understanding and/or knowledge of a topic. Any other purpose such as to entertain or to convince shall be secondary. The use of audio/visual aids is optional. (See # 4 on Aids.)
2. **Contest:** This contest comprises only memorized speeches composed by the contestants, and speech should not have been used by the contestant prior to the 2025-2026 school year. No participant will be eliminated before performing five times (see section on cumulative scoring). Those reaching the final exhibition round will have performed eight times.
3. **Subject:** Effective speeches provide new information or perspectives on a topic, including those that are widely known. The responsibility for choosing a worthwhile topic rests with the contestant. A fabricated topic may not be used. Any non-factual reference, including a personal reference, must be so identified.
4. **Aids:** Audio/visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. If used, the audio/visual aids should enhance or support the message rather than distract from the overall effectiveness of the presentation. During the presentation, no electronic equipment is permitted. Electronic equipment is defined as any object requiring an electrical cord, battery, or solar power to operate it (projectors, cell phones, radios, iPads, computers, etc.) The use of live animals or any additional people as visual aids is not allowed during the speech. Items of dress put on and/or removed for illustration during the course of the presentation are considered costumes and may not be part of the contestant's presentation. Visual aids may not violate policies as dictated by local and state law

(weapons, drugs, etc.). Contestants may not distribute items to the judges or audience before, during, or after the round. This includes but is not limited to food, objects, handouts, flyers, and promotional merchandise. The Barkley Forum is not responsible for providing any facilities, equipment, including tables, chairs, or easels, or assistance in a contestant's use of visual aids. Expedient set up and take down of aids is expected. If a visual aid displays published pictorial material, the source must be included in the work-cited page but does not need to be cited orally.

5. **Length:** The time limit is 10 minutes with a 30-second grace period. If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.
6. **Quotation:** Not more than 150 words of the speech may be direct quotation and such quotations must be identified orally and in a printed copy of the speech supplied prior to registration.
7. **Script:** Manuscripts must be available in the event of a protest. The script must identify the quoted materials, state the number of quoted words, include a work-cited page in APA or MLA format, and both the speaker and the coach must attest by signature that the speech is the original work of the contestant.

Impromptu Speaking

1. **Topics:** Topics will include proverbs, abstract words, events, quotations, and famous people.
2. **Drawing:** A judge in each section/room shall be provided an envelope containing a uniform set of topics, with a different subject area used for each round. Each speaker will draw three topics, choose one, and return the other two to the envelope. All participants in a round will remain in the room before and after speaking with the exception of double-entered participants.
3. **Preparation and Delivery:** The speaker has seven minutes in which to prepare a response and present a speech without consultation of prepared notes. Contestants may use an index card only while preparing. They may not use any outside source while preparing.
4. **Notes:** No notes shall be used during presentation.
5. **Time:** The maximum time limit is 7 minutes with a 30-second grace period, which includes both preparation and speaking. The official start time is when the speaker draws three topics from the envelope, not when they have selected their topic and returned the other two. If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges are REQUIRED to time with an accurate timing device (e.g., stopwatch function on a smart phone). They are also required to give verbal time signals during the prep period and visual time signals during the speech, if requested by the speaker. No minimum time is mandated.

2025 RESULTS

70th Annual Barkley Forum for High Schools Tournament 2025 Listing of Silver Key Winners*

2025 Silver Key Award Recipients:

Pelham Debates Champions: Sameer Varkantham & Michael Ross, *Berkeley Preparatory*

Pelham Debates Speaker: Michael Ross, *Berkeley Preparatory*

Congressional Debate Champion: Ishaan Quazi, *Seven Lakes*

Lincoln Douglas Champion: Sarah Koshy, *Greenhill*

Public Forum Champions: Kaylee Chen & Ruhi Kurdikar, *The Blake School*

Public Forum Speaker: Jason Zhao, *Strake Jesuit*

Dramatic Interpretation: Sasha-Kay Lindo, *American Heritage Broward*

Duo Interpretation: Unnati Seshadri & Emily Haruka Fortunak, *James Logan*

Extemporaneous Speaking: Zoe Becker, *School Without Walls*

Humorous Interpretation: Sahiti Atluri, *Eastview*

Impromptu Speaking: Kashish Priyam, *Harker*

Informative Speaking: Sahith Reddy, *Plano Senior*

Original Oratory: Sawyer Beach, *St. Mary's Hall*

Program Oral Interpretation: Sasha-Kay Lindo, *American Heritage Broward*

**for full listing of results, view them on tabroom.com*