

Judging

MSM Forensics Festival

Thank you for judging this weekend! Tournaments do not happen without volunteers like you!

When: Saturday, February 7th ; report to MSM by 8:40am. You can grab some breakfast and get to your room for the first round. We ask that judges be present all day unless prearranged. Judges are assigned by the computer based on stated availability. We typically have a few no shows and will ask for fill-in judges as needed. If you are in the judge's lounge, it is easy to plug in the missing spots and keep the tournament on schedule.

Ballots will be digital! Please **bring a device** and know your tabroom.com email. I recommend a laptop or tablet, but a phone will work.

Judges meeting recording: Strictly optional, but if you would like more judging information, I hosted a zoom to answer questions and explain the process. [Link to recording here.](#)

Dress: casual

Food: We will have breakfast, lunch, drinks and snacks a plenty. And coffee. Always coffee.

Tips from the MSM coach:

- Relax:) At one point, I really worried about 'judging.' These contestants work so hard and what if I got it wrong??? Then I remembered that one of the lesson's Forensics teaches kiddos is that you don't always win. Theatre, and life, are subjective. I pray over it. I do my best to focus on the performance. And then I make the best decision I can and let the rest fall out.
- Always find ways to praise each performer. At least one positive for each constructive critique is the best option.
- Have fun! This may seem like an overload of info. No worries. The ballot really will walk you through the event and what you need from time to criteria. When in doubt, ask one of the MSM girls in the navy tshirts or myself.
- Take a break when needed. Don't forget to eat lunch. It lowers the stress level! If you are assigned to more than 2 long rounds back-to-back, feel free to stop in tabroom to let me know. We can sub in another judge:)

Tips from an MSM competitor:

- At the beginning of the round, it's always nice to ask if any performers who are double (or more) entered would like to go first. Order is not important.
- Ask a student in the room to timekeep if a timekeeper is not assigned.
- Remember, performance comes before content!! (judge on how it is performed not a dislike of the content in the piece)
- Constructive Criticism is appreciated the most (the more notes, the more helpful it is to help the performer for next time)
- Give your full attention to the performer while they are performing! (you can look at the list of other people in the round, your cellphone, or check your watch when they're done)

Ballots

Each event has a special ballot to help the judge know what is important and necessary in a round. [Here is a link to the online ballots](#) and they will be on tabroom once you are assigned ballots. Also, you should only judge an event once. For instance, if you judge High School Dramatic early, you should not judge them later in the day. You CAN judge the Junior High Dramatic. The goal is never to judge the same piece and student twice.

Events

Dramatic: solo acting, serious , up to < 10 minutes

DUO: 2 performers acting, < 10 minutes

Humorous: solo acting, funny, < 10 minutes

***Impromptu Speaking:** improvised speech on a given topic, 7 minutes to prep and present

***Improv:** 2 performers create an original scene, 7 minutes to prep and present

Informative: speech with visuals, < 10 minutes

Oratory: speech that compels, < 10 minutes

Poetry: interprets one or more poems with feeling, <5 minutes

Prose: interprets a short story, <5 minutes

Storytelling: brings a children's book to life physically from memory,< 5 minutes

Musical theatre: sings a song from a musical, < 5 minutes

Duet Acting: 2 performers act out a scene,

Solo Acting: 1 performer acts out 2 monologues, <3 minutes

Dramatic Song Lyric: 1 performer interprets a song with feeling, <5 minutes

*an envelope of topics will be given to you-ask tabroom for more details if new to the event

Possible videos - start here and you will see others:

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/how-to-judge-informative/>

Judges Etiquette in rounds

*All competitors DO NOT have to be in the room to begin performances.

*If a competitor is double entered, allow that competitor to leave after performing.

*Please remain in the room until all competitors have performed OR time is up for your round.

*If you have a "no show", inform tabroom - but wait the full time if someone was missing.

*Write CONSTRUCTIVE comments on the ballots. Let the performers know what they do well and what they need to work on to better the performance. Comments should be HELPFUL not harmful. Please DO NOT give verbal feedback.

*Fill out the judge's ranking sheet after all performances. #1 should be the performance you liked best. This is digital. Submit this ASAP. You can go back and add comments later.

*Unfortunately, we do not have time for oral feedback to the performers.

*If you have any questions or concerns speak with the workers at the judges' table or the tournament director.

*If this is a finals round, DO NOT DISCUSS PERFORMANCES OR RANKING WITH THE OTHER JUDGES!

*Thank you for judging this weekend. Please stop by the hospitality lounge and enjoy some food and fellowship.

Speech (NSDA website, the basics of event judging)

In speech, a typical round will contain six -eight different contestants, although this number can fluctuate depending on how many students are entered in the event. Prior to the start of the round, the judge will pick up a set of ballots from the tournament organizer. These ballots are where judges will record their thoughts on each performance, suggestions for improvement, and general feedback for the performer. At the end of the tournament, each school will receive all the about their competitors so contestants can use your feedback to improve!

The judge will meet the students in the assigned room and watch the entirety of the round, which usually lasts for one to one-and -a-half hours. During each speech, the judge will make notes on the ballot, keep the contestant's time(or ask a fellow room member), and ensure the round runs smoothly.

In speech, it is common for competitors to enter in more than one event for the tournament, this is called being double-entered. Student's who are cross-entered should be allowed to speak earlier in the round if they have another event to go to, and should be excused for entering the round late if they were competing in a different event in the same round. At the end of the round, the judge will evaluate the speakers and rate them on a scale from one to the number of contestants in the round, with the best performance receiving the one ranking. After the rankings are complete, judges should return their ballots to the tournament organizer.

During preliminary rounds of the tournament, there is usually only one judge per round. However, when students begin competing in final rounds, rounds will have more than one judge. This is called a panel.

Your role is to manage the round so the competition runs smoothly and on time and that competitors comport themselves in a way that is courteous and ethical. You are expected to provide an objective evaluation of each performance and rank/rate performances without bias or undue influence. Contestants should not be asked to identify their school affiliation or any other information that is not pertinent to judging the content of their performances. You should feel free to write ballot comments and penalize contestants who exhibit any unsportsmanlike conduct, such as being a bad audience member or acting in a discourteous or disruptive manner.