



JUDGING TIPS

*(original document by Rachael Castillo,
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Finding your ballots

- Log in to your account at tabroom.com
- Click on your email address in the upper right corner of the page.
- If the ballots have been published, you will see your ballots on the next page. You will know because you'll see a green button that says "START ROUND"

Preparing for the round

- Click "START ROUND" to access your ballot so the tournament admin know you are present and aware of the round.
- At the top of the page, you will see the rules for the event you're judging. Read those! Call the tabroom if you have any questions. I will send the phone number for that later. If you want to preview the event rules ahead of time, [you can find those here](#).
- Go immediately to your assigned room. No competitors are to enter the classroom before you.

Running the round

- If you are judging impromptu, improv, or broadcasting, students should wait outside until it is their turn so they don't hear the prompt ahead of time. In all other events, students can watch each other.
- You don't need to ask the students who wants to go first. Instead, ask who is doubling or tripling. Students who are doubling or tripling and have not yet competed in their other event(s) should be allowed to go first and then leave to go to their other event(s). Also, students competing in Congress should be allowed to go first. If multiple students are doubling or tripling, go by the order of their names on the ballot. Students who are only doing one event should remain in the room while the other competitors perform.
- As the students speak, you should take some notes to help you make your decisions at the conclusion of the round. You can take these notes in tabroom or in a separate document.
- If a student asks for time signals, please give them. Judges in impromptu, improv, and exemp should always give time signals.
- Please don't leave until everyone has spoken! Some students might be quite late because they have other events to complete first. If you're concerned that the round has ended and a student has not shown up, please call the tabroom.

Submitting your ballot

- At the conclusion of the round, rank each competitor 1st through 6th (or however many there are in your round). First place goes to the competitor whose performance was most impressive, and last place goes to the competitor with the greatest room for improvement.
- You will also give each competitor a score between 70 and 100. A score of 70 is extremely low and rare. The student in first place must get the highest score, and the students in last place must get the lowest. There will be a rubric on your ballot.
- You may be hearing arguments and ideas with which you disagree, and some students might be performing pieces with mature material. **Please keep personal biases out of your decisions** and judge only on the students' presentations.

- **It is very important that you submit your ballots quickly.** As soon as you have decided on ranks and scores, submit your ballot! You can add more comments/feedback later. Don't delay the tourney!
- You have to write at least a little feedback for each competitor before the site will allow you to submit.
- You will be the only judge in the room for round 1-3, but don't worry! Your decision is not the only one that counts. They will do the same thing 3 times for 3 separate people, so just trust your gut. For finals, there will be 3 judges in the room.

Making written comments

- Written comments are arguably the most important part of a ballot! They are what help students and coaches improve their presentations for future competitions.
- Try to encourage the competitors with positivity. Many are participating in Speech and Debate not to win but to gain speaking experience. This should be an easy, friendly environment for them.
- At the same time, it's frustrating for students to place last (or even second) and not know why they didn't place first. Try to maintain a balance of praise and advice. Students want to know how they can improve!! See below and next page for tips.

Try to use both praise and constructive criticism. For example:

Eye Contact:

"excellent focus on the audience"

"made me feel a part of your speech"

"eyes moved from walls to ceiling"

"looked around and over the audience"

Poise:

"confident and polished presentation"

"your professionalism impressed me"

"fidgeting with hands"

"avoid pacing back and forth"

Articulation:

"excellent volume and speaking rate"

"good variation of tone and vocal emphasis"

"some mumbling and slurring of words"

"needed to speak more slowly"

Quality of Material / Choice of Selection:

"selection was well-suited for audience"

"topic was interesting"

"selection was too... for this audience"

"topic was too... for this event"

Quality of Writing / Skill of Interpretation:

"Fine character development"

"great use of metaphor and analogy"

"gestures not true to character"

"needed better support for main ideas"

Even when all competitors in your round are great and it is difficult to rank them 1-6, they will wonder why they were given lower rankings. Please offer reasons for the rankings assigned. Example:

"There were many seasoned competitors in this round, and I ranked others higher than you because their characters were more fully-developed / their eye contact really pulled me into their pieces / your movements were not as fluid - keep working on making your gestures more natural."

Helpful Words

Areas of Critique

believability
characterization
cohesion
confidence
content
delivery
enthusiasm
enunciation
eye contact
facial expressions
gestures
innovation
movements
posture
rate of speech
stage presence
volume

Posture, Gestures

at ease
calm
charming
elegant
face the audience
fidgety
graceful
hunched
natural
poised
repetitive
tense
unnatural

Oomph

animation
energy
enthusiasm
gusto
life
liveliness
passion
pizzazz
sparkle
stage presence

Strong

amazing
breathtaking
beautiful
brilliant
decent
delightful
dynamic
enjoyable
excellent
extraordinary
fabulous
fine
first-class
first-rate
grand
great
impressive
incredible
logical
lovely
marvelous
perfect
pleasant
remarkable
satisfactory
spectacular
splendid
stunning
superb
terrific
wonderful

Weak

artificial
awkward
broad
dull
faulty
flawed
incoherent
mellow
monotonous
mumbled