

Hendersonville High School Commando Invitational

TOURNAMENT DATE

Saturday, February 13, 2027

Music City Legends Commando Invitational
Hendersonville High School
123 Cherokee Rd
Hendersonville, TN 37075
(615) 824-6162

Tournament Director: James Bingaman
Contact Email: james.bingaman@sumnerschools.org



Dear Coaches,

You are invited to the **2027 Music City Legends Commando Invitational**, hosted by Hendersonville High School on **Saturday, February 13, 2027**.

We are excited to welcome teams for a day-long competition in both the High School Division and the Middle School Division. The High School Division will be a **THSSDL Bid Tournament** for the 2027 THSSDL State Championship, as well as a **TOC-UK Bid Tournament** and a **NIETOC Bid Tournament**. Both Divisions will follow the **NSDA** and **THSSDL** rules for all events. Only THSSDL Member Schools will be able to earn THSSDL Bid Points.

High School Events: Dramatic Interpretation, Duo Interpretation, Duet Acting, Extemporaneous Speaking, Humorous Interpretation, Impromptu Speaking, Improvisational Duet Acting, Informative Speaking, Original Oratory, Original Spoken Word Poetry, Poetry, Program Oral Interpretation, Prose, Storytelling, TV Broadcasting, Public Forum Debate, Congressional Debate.

Entry Fees	
Single Entry	\$10
Team Entry	\$20

SIX Individual Entries or a fraction thereof and must provide ONE judge for every TWO Public Forum teams.

Judges must be available for the entire competition to count toward a school's requirement and should expect to judge in both middle and high school events. Coaches can enter judging preferences, and we will try to accommodate those if possible.

Lunch will be provided for judges.

The Tournament will run through Tabroom.com, so judges should bring an internet-capable device, as critiques will be completed online.

Middle School Events: Dramatic Interpretation, Duo Interpretation/Duet Acting, Improvisational Duet Acting, Extemporaneous Speaking, Humorous Interpretation, Impromptu Speaking, Original Oratory, Poetry, Prose, Storytelling, TV Broadcasting, Public Forum Debate.

Judging: Teams must provide ONE judge per

Entry Policy
You may enter an unlimited number of events, with a limited number of entries per event.
Tripling is allowed except for competitors entered in TV Broadcasting, Extemporaneous Speaking, or Public Forum Debate.
TV Broadcasting and Extemporaneous Speaking competitors may double, BUT not in those events.
Public Forum competitors MAY NOT double.

Tournament Schedule

Registration: **7:00 - 8:00 AM**

Open Assembly: **8:00 AM**

Round 1: **8:30- 10:00 AM**

Round 2: **10:00 - 11:30 AM**

Round 3: **11:30 AM- 1:00 PM**

Middle School Finals/ High School Semifinals (If needed): **1:30 - 3:00 PM**

High School Finals: **3:30 - 5:00 PM**

Awards: **5:30 PM**

Registration Deadlines	
Registration Opens	Thursday, December 31, 2027 at 12:00 PM
Registrations Closes	Saturday, February 6, 2027 at 12:00 PM
Judge Information Due	Wednesday, February 10, 2027 at 8:00 PM
Drops Online Until	Wednesday, February 10, 2027 at 8:00 PM
Change Fees Apply After	Wednesday, February 10, 2027 at 8:00 PM

Student Concessions

Light concessions will be available for student competitors to purchase in the cafeteria; students can also buy lunch from a variety of food trucks. A list of Food Trucks with menus will be available on the Hendersonville Speech and Debate Website once they have been booked. Please use the following link to access our website.

(<https://sites.google.com/view/hendersonville-speech-debate/commando-invitational-2027>)

Judge/Coach Concessions

We pride ourselves on having one of the best hospitality/judges' lounges of the season because we know how much time, energy, and money the judges, coaches, and parents pour into these students and teams. Without them, much of this wouldn't be possible. So to honor that, Judges and Coaches will have breakfast and lunch provided. They will also be welcome to enjoy the assortment of on-site food trucks.

Fees:

Please make your checks payable to **Hendersonville Speech & Debate**. If you are mailing checks, please send them to the following address:

Attention: James Bingaman
Hendersonville High School
123 Cherokee Road
Hendersonville, TN 37075

Drops:

If you are aware of drops, please don't wait until you arrive to notify us. You are welcome to use the online drop/add until the deadline. If you have any changes after the deadline, there will be Drop and Add fees. Feel free to email James Bingaman, Head Coach & Tournament Director @james.bingaman@sumnerschools.org.

Weather:

If inclement weather causes the tournament to be canceled, we, along with our principal, will make that determination the day of the tournament. If your school has confirmed its entry and decides not to attend and the tournament is held, your school is still responsible for all fees and judges.

Awards

We will give Sweepstakes Awards for the top THREE schools in both middle and high schools divisions, in addition to individual awards for the top 6 speakers in each event

Dramatic Interpretation:

Event Overview

Dramatic Interpretation is NOT an acting contest. No props or costumes will be allowed. This event emphasizes 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 of performance evaluation. 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, or 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. 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. ***If the contestant exceeds the 30-second grace period, the contestant cannot be ranked first for that round.***

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Humorous Interpretation:

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

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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 generally upright and focus offstage. All other rules are the same as Dramatic Interpretation.

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Program Oral Interpretation:

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 time 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 expresses ideas, experience, or emotion through the creative arrangement of words by sound, rhythm, and meaning. Poetry may rely on verse and stanza form. The piece should not have been used by the contestant prior to the 2026-2027 school year.

Contest: Contestants must use a manuscript during the performance. 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 25 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.

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. ***If the contestant exceeds the 30-second grace period, the contestant cannot be ranked first for that round.***

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.

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.

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Original Oratory

All oratory must be written by the contestant. Oratory is an event of polished speech art and persuasion. The speaker should convey a message. 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.

No more than 150 words of the oration may be direct quotations 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. The contestant must not have used it prior to the 2026-2027 school year.

The speech must be no more than ten minutes in length, with a 30-second grace period for going over time. 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. *If a contestant exceeds the 30-second grace period, they cannot be ranked first for that round.*

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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. The rounds will be mixed between Domestic & International topics.

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 ability to outline new ideas and interpret 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 limit. Speakers will be penalized for failing to observe time limits, although individual judges have absolute discretion over the penalty amount. Judges are REQUIRED to time with an accurate timing device (e.g., stopwatch function on a smartphone). They must also give visual time signals during the speech, if the speaker requests them. *If the contestant exceeds the 30-second grace period, the contestant cannot be ranked first for that round.*

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Informative Speaking

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.)

Contest: This contest comprises only memorized speeches composed by the contestants, and the contestant should not have used the speech before the 2026-2027 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.

Subject: Effective speeches provide new information or perspectives on a topic, including those that are widely known. The contestant is responsible for choosing a worthwhile topic. A fabricated topic may not be used. Any non-factual reference, including a personal reference, must be so identified.

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 that requires an electrical cord, battery, or solar power to operate (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. Expedient setup and takedown of aids is expected. If a visual aid displays published pictorial material, the source must be included in the works cited page but does not need to be cited orally.

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. ***If the contestant exceeds the 30-second grace period, the contestant cannot be ranked first for that round.***

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.

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.

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Impromptu Speaking

Topics: Topics will include proverbs, abstract words, events, quotations, and famous people.

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.

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.

Time: The maximum time limit is 7 minutes, with a 30-second grace period, including both preparation and speaking. The official start time is when the speaker draws three topics from the envelope, not when they select their topic and return the other two. If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Each judge may rank as they see fit. Judges are REQUIRED to time with an accurate timing device (e.g., stopwatch function on a smartphone). They must also give verbal time signals during the prep period and visual time signals during the speech, if the speaker requests them. No minimum time is mandated. *If the contestant exceeds the 30-second grace period, the contestant cannot be ranked first for that round.*

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Poetry

Literature: Will be from a published printed work of poetry, but may not be from a play. The material should be of recognized literary merit. Song lyrics, even if they are used in a play or musical, are acceptable materials for performance. More than one poem may be performed. Poems should be related. Transitions may be used. Material from the Internet that is not printed and published in any other media is prohibited. A student may not use a cutting from a work of literature that the student used in THSSDL competition in any previous contest year. The original published source of any selections used must be immediately available at the tournament, along with a complete script of the cutting. The literature may not be the student's own work.

Time: The maximum time limit is five (5) minutes with a 30-second “grace” period. The introduction to the selection is considered part of the overall time limit. Penalties will be imposed for exceeding the time limit. *If the contestant exceeds the 30-second grace period, the contestant cannot be ranked first for that round.*

Performance: Vocal, facial, and bodily expressions may be used as long as they do not call attention to the interpreter as a performer, detract from the meaning of the material, or constitute acting or impersonation. Contestants must use a manuscript.

Judging criteria: Oral Interpretation of Poetry will be evaluated on appropriateness of the selection to the event and to the contestant. Of special consideration will be the contestant's handling of the special language problems presented by poetry — meter, rhyme, imagery where applicable, and his/her ability to communicate meaning. The judge will also consider the contestant’s vocal and physical control and how well the contestant handled the manuscript.

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Prose

Literature: Literature for performance will be from a published, printed prose work — fiction or nonfiction — such as novels, essays, short stories, etc., but not from poetry or plays. You may perform more than one cutting. Cuttings should be related. Transitions may be used. Material from the Internet that is not printed and published in any other media is prohibited. A student may not use a cutting from a work of literature that the student used in THSSDL competition in any previous contest year. The original published source of any selections used must be immediately available at the tournament, along with a complete script of the cutting. The literature may not be the student's own work.

Time: The maximum time limit is ten (10) minutes with a 30-second “grace” period. The introduction to the selection is considered part of the overall time limit. Penalties will be imposed for exceeding the time limit. *If the contestant exceeds the 30-second grace period, the contestant cannot be ranked first for that round.*

Performance: Vocal, facial, and bodily expressions may be used as long as they do not call attention to the interpreter as a performer, detract from the meaning of the material, or constitute acting or impersonation. Contestants must use a manuscript.

Judging criteria: Oral Interpretation of Prose Literature will be judged on the basis of the appropriateness of the selection to the event and to the contestant. The student’s understanding of the selection and the author, vocal and physical control, communication of meaning, and how well she/he handled the manuscript will also be considered.

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Storytelling

Storytelling is one of the oldest performing art forms, and contestants should consider its rich heritage. The purpose of this event is to give the student an opportunity to assume the role of a storyteller and thus recreate for the listener the delights of an interesting story. As part of this interpretation, the student should indicate an understanding of the atmosphere and/or culture from which the story came.

Contest Requirements: Stories may be from published, unpublished, retold or original sources. If they are from any source other than the contestant, credit should be given to the source in the introduction. Subject matter may be humorous or serious in nature. The story may be told in the contestant’s own words without the use of notes. The contestant may use his/her own personal storytelling style or adopt another appropriate style. The contestant may use characterization and gestures while telling the story, but the emphasis is on the storyteller and his/her art. Movement is allowed. Hand props and costumes are not allowed. The contestant may stand or be seated.

Time: The maximum time limit is eight (8) minutes with a 30-second “grace” period. Any introduction given by the contestant shall be considered part of the overall time limit. Penalties shall be imposed for exceeding the time limit. *If the contestant exceeds the 30-second grace period, the contestant cannot be ranked first for that round.*

Judging criteria: Storytelling shall be judged on the choice of the story, the style of storyteller (which includes both oral and physical skills that enable the contestant to recreate the story in the mind of the audience), and on the ability to “tell” rather than “recite” the story.

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TV Broadcasting

Television Broadcasting is designed to give the student an opportunity to present a five-minute newscast as it might be seen on television.

Contest requirements:

- Draw (conducted by tournament officials, not the judge).
- Each participant shall be given thirty (30) minutes to prepare a five (5) minute television newscast.
- Contestants will receive packets at eight (8)- minute intervals according to their speaking order.

Materials:

- The packet will consist of materials provided by the wire services of Associated Press International and /or any computer-generated news service. Each contestant and judge should receive the same packet of materials.
- Printed materials provided to the contestant shall include categories of interest from international, national, state, local (if available), human interest, sports, and weather.
- The contestant may use only the printed materials provided by the contest director, with the exception of a dictionary (if brought by the contestant) and original transitions.
- A format opening and closing shall be given to each contestant by the contest director, but an original opening and closing may be used.

Preparation:

- Through a process of selecting and editing, each contestant shall arrange news items into a logical, sequential television newscast.
- The contestant may not confer with anyone during preparation.

Performance:

- When possible, judges should view each contestant live on the TV monitor.
- During the performance, the contestant will receive hand signals from an official of the tournament indicating the amount of time he/she has left as follows:
 - 4 minutes left 1 minute left 5 seconds left
 - 3 minutes left 30 seconds left 0 time left
 - 2 minutes left 10 seconds left

Penalties (i.e., a drop in rank and/or points) will be imposed on contestants going more than ten (10) seconds over or under the time limit. ***If a contestant exceeds the grace period, they cannot be ranked first for that round.***

Judging Criteria: Television Broadcasting shall be judged on the student's selection and organization of news stories, vocal control, diction, eye contact with the camera, adherence to the time limit, poise as a newscaster, and overall performance.

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Improvisational Duet Acting

Contest Requirements:

- 3 Preliminary Rounds
- Contestants will draw three prompts out of a field of twelve.
 - 1. Round 1: Person v. Person
 - 2. Round 2: First Line/Last Line
 - 3. Round 3: Three Words
- Contestants have 1 minute to prepare a scene, with a 5-minute time limit and a 30-second grace period.
- Before contestants begin, the judge should clarify how time signals will be communicated, then use hand signals during the performance to help them stay within the time limit.
- No makeup, costumes, or lighting are permitted, but a table and/or two chairs may be used.
- The scene must contain only two characters with balanced sharing of dialogue.
- An introduction by one or both contestants is optional to set the scene, and a resolution of the conflict must be evident at the end of the scene.
- Contestants must remain outside the performance room until it is their time to perform.

Final Round: Contestants will draw a total of three prompts out of a field of twelve. Each prompt will include a person, a place, and an event. Contestants have 30 seconds to select one prompt from the three chosen, then return the two unused prompts to the judge.

Contestants will not be allowed to discuss the prompt prior to the beginning of the scene. The scene may last up to 5 minutes with a 30-second grace period. ***If a contestant exceeds the grace period, they cannot be ranked first for that round.***

Props: Contestants may utilize two chairs or chair-desk combination pieces for their scene. They may not make use of any hand props, costuming, or character makeup.

Judges should evaluate performances on characterization, scene construction, entertainment, and use of the prompt.

HINTS FOR JUDGES:

- 1) The scene must be a self-contained unit holding together a story itself.
- 2) Contestants must address the prompt.
- 3) Criteria for judging include: teamwork of actors, timing, movement, consistent characterization, good speaking, pantomime of props, and the comedic or dramatic effect on the audience.

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Duet Acting

The emphasis in these events is on the student's ability to develop and sustain a character in a short cutting from a play. An introduction should be included with each entry to set the mood for the selection and to give any necessary background material.

Literature:

- Two actors will present a selection or cutting from a published, printed play of recognized literary merit.
- Each of the 2 performers may play one or more characters. (c) Both performers should participate in the memorized introduction.

Time:

- The maximum time limit is ten (10) minutes with a 30-second "grace" period.
- The introduction to the selection and performance is considered part of the overall time limit. Both actors should participate in the introduction.
- Penalties will be imposed for exceeding the time limit. *If a contestant exceeds the grace period, they cannot be ranked first for that round.*

Performance:

- Costumes and stage makeup may not be used.
- A maximum of two (2) hand props per team may be used (i.e., a book, letter, fan, etc.) and one (1) stage prop per performer (i.e., stool, table, etc.), but others may be pantomimed. Penalties will be imposed for the use of more than the specified number.
- Literature will be performed from memory.

Judging criteria:

Duet Acting will be evaluated on the choice and appropriateness of the selection, the team's general acting ability, which includes such factors as understanding and development of the character, and physical control, including the blocking of the scene, vocal control, teamwork, and believability

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Pantomime

Pantomime is a silent, solo category; the performer may play as many roles as desired within the time limit.

It is not an improvisation, but a prepared and rehearsed performance.

It may be classic mime (birth-life-death cycle) or a single story mime (published or from the contestant's own imagination). It should silently comment on human events.

The maximum time limit is five (5) minutes with a 30-second "grace" period. Penalties will be imposed for exceeding the time limit.

Any oral introduction to the mime is to be counted in the overall time limit.

No hand props will be permitted. No portion of the clothing may be removed and used as a hand prop. The student may sit on a chair.

No stage makeup or character costumes (i.e., clown suits, beggar rags, etc.) are permissible, but body suits, leotards, tights, etc., may be worn. b. Judging criteria: Pantomime will be judged on the basis of the student's skill in the pantomime arts — precise movements which clearly show both situation and action; characterizing posture and movement which indicate age, health and personality of a character; the grace of the performer.

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After Dinner Speaking

The After-Dinner speech is generally designed to entertain or to satirize. It should be structured like any speech, not a monologue or stand-up comic routine. While it is basically humorous, the After-Dinner speech can offer some serious thought or comment on its subject.

Contest requirements:

- The After-Dinner speech may be on any subject, provided it is in good taste, but it is usually designed to entertain the listener. The speaker may have a subject of light or semi-serious nature, but he/she should project a light touch of satire or an amusing representation of truth.
- It should not be a monologue or collection of jokes, but a well-organized speech.
- The maximum time limit is eight (8) minutes with a 30-second “grace” period. Penalties will be imposed for exceeding the time limit. *If a contestant exceeds the grace period, they cannot be ranked first for that round.*
- The speech must be memorized.
- The speech must be the original work of the student. No more than 150 words may be quoted from another source. Any quoted material and ideas that are not original with the student should be cited in the speech.
- Contestants are required to submit a copy of their speech to the Tournament Director prior to the contest with a signed statement verifying the originality of the work.
- Visual aids are prohibited.

Judging criteria:

- After-Dinner Speaking will be judged on the subject of the speech and its development. Organization of the speech will be considered as well as the general communication skill of the contestant. These include a clear, strong speaking voice and natural gestures. The originality and appropriateness of the topic and the overall effect of the speech will be considered as well

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Original Spoken Word Poetry

Material: Students will write and perform original poetry. Original Spoken Word Poetry is poetry written for performance that expresses ideas, experiences, or emotions through the creative arrangement of words by sound, rhythm, and meaning.

Quotation: No more than 150 words of the original poetry may be direct quotation from any other speech or writing, and such quotations must be identified in a printed copy of the speech. An introduction is permitted, but not required.

Delivery: Memorize the delivery; no book or script may be used.

Time: The maximum time limit is 5 minutes with a 30-second grace period. Time spent walking to and from the camera counts toward the recording time if the performance is done via recording. If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. *Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st.* No other penalty is prescribed for going over the grace period. Ranking is at each individual judge’s discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

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Public Forum Debate

Resolution: Specific resolutions for district tournaments held during certain months and the National Tournament topic are available online at www.speechanddebate.org/topics. Public Forum Debate focuses on advocacy of a position derived from the issues presented in the resolution, not a prescribed set of burdens.

Entries: An entry consists of two students from the same school, each debating both sides of the resolution and advancing on its own record. No substitution is permitted once the tournament has begun.

Procedure and Order of Speeches: Prior to EVERY round, a coin is tossed virtually or by one of the teams. The team that wins the flip may choose one of two options: EITHER the SIDE of the topic they wish to defend (pro or con) OR the SPEAKING POSITION they wish to have (begin the debate or end the debate). The remaining option (SIDE OR SPEAKING POSITION) is the choice of the team that loses the flip. Once the speaking positions and sides are determined, the debate begins (the con team may lead, depending on the coin flip results). Following the first two constructive speeches, the two debaters who have just given speeches will stand and participate in a three-minute "crossfire". In "crossfire," both debaters "hold the floor." However, the speaker who spoke first must ask the first question. After that question, either debater may question and/or answer at will. At the conclusion of the summary speeches, all four debaters will remain seated and participate in a three-minute "Grand Crossfire" in which all four debaters are allowed to cross-examine one another. The speaker who gave the first summary speech must ask the first question. The speakers from each team will continue to ask and answer questions. Teams should alternate asking and answering questions rather than letting one team dominate, to keep the teams balanced. All speakers are encouraged to participate in the Grand Crossfire. Speakers should listen respectfully to opponents' questions and answers.

Public Forum Debate Time Limits	
First Speaker - Team A	4 Minutes
First Speaker - Team B	4 Minutes
Crossfire	3 Minutes
Second Speaker - Team A	4 Minutes
Second Speaker - Team B	4 Minutes
Crossfire	3 Minutes
Summary - First Speaker - Team A	3 Minutes
Summary - First Speaker - Team B	3 Minutes
Grand Crossfire	3 Minutes
Final Focus - Second Speaker - Team A	2 Minutes
Final Focus - Second Speaker - Team B	2 Minutes
Prep Time	3 Minutes per Team

Use of Electronic Devices: Internet-enabled devices and internet use are permitted at the National Tournament. The use of internet-enabled devices and internet at the qualifying tournament will be the autonomous decision of each district. Laptop use must comply with the Guidelines for Use of Internet-Enabled Devices in Debate Events.

Timing: Judges will determine how time will be kept in the round. Prep time for each team is three minutes.

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Congressional Debate

1. A **session** is defined as including:
 - A. Minimum of three hours.
 - B. 18-20 students as the optimum number for a three-hour session; otherwise, a session should be lengthened by ten minutes per each additional student beyond 20. Chambers may not be larger than 30 students.
 - C. Election of a presiding officer. The presiding officer must be elected with a majority of the vote. If one candidate does not receive a majority of votes, eliminate the candidate with the fewest votes and vote again. If candidates are tied for the fewest number of votes, vote to determine which of the tied candidates should remain in contention. Repeat this process until one candidate receives a majority of votes.
 - D. New seating chart (necessary accommodations for students with special needs may be made).
 - E. Resetting of precedence/recency. See 'Recognizing Speakers' below.
 - F. New legislation that has not been debated in a previous session at that tournament.
 - G. Optional rule for districts: Time for debate per legislation item should last no more than one-third of a session's floor time. It will not be used at the National Tournament.
2. **Recognizing Speakers**
 - A. When more than one speaker seeks the floor, the presiding officer must follow the precedence/recency method:
 1. First recognize students who have not spoken during the session.
 2. Next recognize students who have spoken fewer times.
 3. Then recognize students who spoke earlier (least recently).
 - B. If a tournament is not using preset recency, before recency is established, the presiding officer should recognize speakers fairly and consistently. They may not link recognition of speakers to previous recognition of students asking questions, moving motions, or longest standing (standing time). Before precedence is established, the presiding officer should explain their recognition process and it must be fair, consistent and justifiable.
 - C. Preset, randomized recency will be used in every round of Congressional Debate at the National Tournament. All district tournaments must use preset, randomized recency in Congressional Debate.
 - D. During any session, precedence/recency should not reset, to ensure that all students in a chamber have an equal opportunity to speak and receive evaluation from scorers. When a new session begins, precedence/recency will be reset along with a new seating chart, and election of a presiding officer.
 - E. Scorers will include answers to questions when evaluating speeches.
 - F. A speaker may yield time on the floor during debate (for questions or clarifications) but that speaker will remain in control of their three minutes (see #6 below regarding questioning).
3. **Speeches introducing legislation** are allotted up to three minutes, followed by two minutes of questioning by other delegates. A student from the school (or at the national level, the district) who wrote the legislation gets the privilege of recognition (called *authorship*), regardless of precedence; otherwise the presiding officer may recognize a "sponsor" from the chamber, provided this recognition follows the precedence guidelines above. Regardless, this speech of introduction must be followed by two minutes of questions. Should no student seek recognition for the authorship/sponsorship, the chamber will move to lay the legislation on the table until such time that a student is prepared to introduce it.
4. **The first negative speech** must be followed by two minutes of questions.
5. **Following the first two speeches** on legislation, the presiding officer will alternately recognize affirmative and negative speakers, who will address the chamber for up to three minutes, followed by one minute of questioning by other delegates. If no one wishes to oppose the preceding speaker, the presiding officer may recognize a speaker upholding the same side. When no one seeks the floor for debate, the presiding officer may ask the chamber if they are "ready for the question," at which point, if there is no objection, voting may commence on the legislation itself. There is no "minimum cycle" rule; however, if debate gets "one-sided," the chamber may decide to move the previous question.
 - A. In the event a student speaks on the wrong side called for by the presiding officer and the error is not caught, the speaker shall be scored and the speech shall count in precedence, but the speaker must be penalized at least three points for not paying close attention to the flow of debate.

- B. In the event a student speaks on an item of legislation *not currently* being debated, said speech shall count in precedence, but zero points shall be awarded.
6. **The presiding officer fairly and equitably recognizes members to ask questions** following each speech. The presiding officer starts timing questioning periods when they have recognized the first questioner, and keeps the clock running continuously until the time has lapsed. There are two different questioning methods.
- A. **Traditional questioning:** Speakers are encouraged to ask brief questions, and may only ask one question at a time. Two-part/multiple-part questions are not allowed. There is no formal “permission to preface,” however; presiding officers should discourage students from making statements as part of questioning, since that is an abusive use of the limited time available.
- B. **Direct questioning:** The presiding officer will open the floor for questions following each speech. The presiding officer will recognize questioners for a cross-examination period of no more than 30 seconds. Questioners will be chosen according to a separate questioning recency.
- C. Direct questioning will be used in every round of Congressional Debate at the National Tournament. All district tournaments must use direct questioning in Congressional Debate.
7. The presiding officer will pause briefly between speeches to recognize any motions from the floor; however, they should not call for motions (at the beginning of a session, the presiding officer should remind members to seek their attention between speeches).
8. **Amendments** must be presented to the presiding officer in writing with specific references to lines and clauses that change. This must be done in advance of moving to amend.
- A. The parliamentarian will recommend whether the amendment is “germane”—that is, it upholds the original intent of the legislation—otherwise, it is considered “dilatary.” The title of the legislation may be changed.
- B. A legislator may move to amend between floor speeches. Once that motion is made, the presiding officer will read the proposed amendment aloud and call for a second by one-third of those members present, unless they rule it dilatary.
- C. Should students wish to speak on the proposed amendment, the presiding officer will recognize them as per the standing precedence and recency, and the speech will be counted toward their totals, accordingly.
- D. Simply proposing an amendment does not guarantee an “author/sponsor” speech, and any speeches on amendments are followed by the normal one minute of questioning.
- E. Amendments are considered neutral and do not constitute an affirmative or negative speech on the original legislation.
- F. If there are no speakers or the previous question is moved, the chamber may vote on a proposed amendment without debating it.
9. **All major voting** (such as the main motion/legislation) which a congressperson’s constituents should have a record of, shall be done with a counted vote. Secret balloting is used when voting for the presiding officer.
10. Students should ask permission to leave and enter the chamber when it is in session (move a personal privilege). However, do not interrupt a speaker who is addressing the chamber.
11. **Use of Evidence (also see the section on Congressional Debate Evidence Rules)**
- A. Visual aids are permitted in Congressional Debate, provided they do not require electronic retrieval devices in the chamber.
- B. All evidence used is subject to verification. Honesty and integrity are of utmost importance in legislative debate. Falsification or deliberate misuse of evidence may result in the legislator being suspended by tournament officials.
12. Since the rules above ensure fairness for competition, they may not be suspended; the presiding officer should rule such motions out of order, except to extend questioning and allow for open chambers, provided the tournament staff permits doing so.

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