Speech Basics

There are three categories of Speech; Spontaneous, Original & Interpretation

Spontaneous Events (Limited Preparation Time)

Event #1: Impromptu Speaking:

- Select a topic from three provided (Concrete Nouns, Abstract Nouns, Quote/Proverb/Saying)
- Six minutes total, with a 30 second grace period. Sliding preparation time (Suggested 3 min. Prep and 3 min. Speech)
- Structure: Opening/Thesis, 2-3 points of analysis, conclusion
- Content: Link the Topic to something meaningful (Hammer = Value of hard work)
- Incorporate movement
- 3x5 notecard may be used

Judge Instructions for an Impromptu Speaking:

IVDL Impromptu (IMP) Rules: If you as the judge believes a rule has been violated, please confer with tabroom staff.

PLEASE DO NOT REVEAL TOPICS TO ANY CONTESTANT UNTIL IT IS THEIR TURN TO SPEAK.

A. As this is the first Speech tournament of the year for IVDL, the competitor may use notes, written on the provided notecard. There is no specific penalty for the use of notes, but the judge may consider impacts on delivery when deciding ranks.

B. The contestant should remain in the room until all speakers in the panel have spoken.

C. The performance must begin and end from the center stage area. Contestants must remain in the staging area throughout the performance. However, during their preparation time, the only restriction is that they must stay in the classroom.

D. The entire speech may be no more than 6 minutes. There is sliding preparation, which means that the contestant decides how much time to dedicate to preparation and how much time to dedicate to speaking. The suggested split is 3 minutes prep and 3 minutes speaking. Timing begins the moment the selection of the topic has been made. (Please allow the contestant 10-15 seconds to review the three topic choices and make a selection. Additionally, please allow the contestant a few moments to compose themselves as they transition from preparation to the speech.)

E. There is no minimum or maximum speaking time. Please note in your comments if the competitor exceeds a total of 6 minutes and 30 seconds but do not otherwise penalize them. If the competitor requests, the judge may provide time signals at their discretion.

Guidelines for Judging: These are guidelines only, not rules; they should be used only when appropriate to the speech. Keep in mind that there is no requirement that a contestant must use a particular style of delivery. Please use the following to help you evaluate each contestant and rank the round.

Purpose: The primary purpose of this event is to demonstrate the contestant's ability with limited preparation time to compose and deliver a coherent and focused oral essay. Some contestants will pre-write "canned" speeches which may contain copious information and be delivered with few flaws, but have weak connections to the selected topic. This violates the spirit of the event, but not the rules, and should be considered in evaluating the speakers.

Composition: Did the contestant present an organized speech? Did the contestant clearly and effectively discuss, analyze and evaluate the selected topic? Was the speech logically relevant and related to the topic?

Delivery: Was the speaker poised, sincere and comfortable in delivery? Did the speaker use effective oral presentation skills (volume, diction, speed of delivery)? Did the speaker use effective body language (gestures, facial expression, eye contact)? Did the speech exemplify the highest standards of language usage and vocabulary? Did the speaker avoid slang, poor grammar, and mispronunciations?

THE CONTESTANTS MAY TIME THEMSELVES USING STOPWATCHES OR THEIR PHONES. PLEASE CLARIFY WITH THE SPEAKERS THAT PHONES MUST BE IN AIRPLANE MODE AND THAT IVDL ENCOURAGES THEM TO SET THEIR TIMER ON A TABLE/DESK RATHER THAN IT BEING IN THEIR HAND.

You, as the judge, however are still the official timer for the round. You must keep time and note it on the ballot.

Event #2: Tall Tales:

- The student receives a topic set of THREE words from the Judge and MUST incorporate all three words into the speech
- The three words will typically be a character, a setting and an object
- Six minutes total, with a 30 second grace period. Sliding preparation time (Suggested 3 min. Prep and 3 min. Speech)
- TALL, wild, fantastic! The wilder the better!
- Use your best story-telling techniques (voices, body language, movement, face)

Judge Instructions for a Tall Tales Speech:

IVDL Tall Tales (TT) Rules: If you as the judge believes a rule has been violated, please confer with tabroom staff.

You will be given a set of topics for this round. You are responsible for distributing topics to each competitor before they perform. PLEASE DO NOT REVEAL TOPICS TO ANY CONTESTANT UNTIL IT IS THEIR TURN TO SPEAK.

A. As this is the first Speech tournament of the year for IVDL, the competitor may use notes, written on the provided notecard. There is no specific penalty for the use of notes, but the judge may consider impacts on delivery when deciding ranks.

B. The contestant should remain in the room until all speakers in the panel have spoken.

C. The performance must begin and end from the center stage area. Contestants must remain in the staging area throughout the performance. However, during their preparation time, the only restriction is that they must stay in the classroom.

D. The entire speech may be no more than 6 minutes, with a 30 second grace period. There is sliding preparation, which means that the contestant decides how much time to dedicate to preparation and how much time to dedicate to speaking. The suggested split is 3 minutes prep and 3 minutes speaking. Timing begins the moment the selection of the topic has been made. (Please allow the contestant 10-15 seconds to review the three topic choices and make a selection. Additionally, please allow the contestant a few moments to compose themselves as they transition from preparation to the speech.)

E. There is a maximum speaking time of 6 minutes and 30 seconds. Please note the time violation if the competitor exceeds a total of 6 minutes and 30 seconds but do not otherwise penalize them. If the competitor requests, the judge may provide time signals at their discretion.

Guidelines for Judging: These are guidelines only, not rules; they should be used only when appropriate to the speech. Keep in mind that there is no requirement that a contestant must use a particular style of delivery. Please use the following to help you evaluate each contestant and rank the round.

Purpose: The primary purpose of this event is to demonstrate the contestant's ability with limited preparation time to compose and deliver a fun and coherent Tall Tales. The Tall Tale should be entertaining with unbelievable and fantastic elements. It should be delivered as if it were true and factual, using your best story-telling techniques and strategies. To make the Tall Tale more engaging, enjoyable and captivating for the audience, contestants should use their natural tools, like their voice, their body and their face.

Composition: Did the contestant present an organized speech? Did the contestant incorporate all three elements from the chosen topic? Did the Tall Tale proceed logically and clearly,

including outrageous and exaggerated elements and structured with a beginning, a middle, and an end?

Delivery: Was the speaker poised, sincere and comfortable in delivery? Did the speaker use effective oral presentation skills (volume, diction, speed of delivery)? Did the speaker use effective body language (gestures, facial expression, eye contact)? Was the Tall Tale creative and inventive in its use the the three assigned words in the topic? No speaker who fails to incorporate all three words into the speech should be ranked ahead

THE CONTESTANTS MAY TIME THEMSELVES USING STOPWATCHES OR THEIR PHONES. PLEASE CLARIFY WITH THE SPEAKERS THAT PHONES MUST BE IN AIRPLANE MODE AND THAT IVDL ENCOURAGES THEM TO SET THEIR TIMER ON A TABLE/DESK RATHER THAN IT BEING IN THEIR HAND.

You, as the judge, however are still the official timer for the round. You must keep time and note it on the ballot.

Original Events (Researched and Written by the Competitor)

Event #3: Original Oratory:

- The original work of the student. They research and write the speech
- Students use the same speech the entire year, revising regularly to improve
- Oratory is intended to be PERSUASIVE, to convince the audience to change behavior
- The speaker identifies a problem, explains why it is bad and proposes solutions
- Use all the Tools in your Speaker Toolbox. Verbal strategies and non-verbal strategies
- Memorized and delivered from memory
- An Original Oratory should aim to be 6 minutes in length

Judge Instructions for an Original Oratory:

IVDL Original Oratory (OO) Rules: If you as the judge believes a rule has been violated, please confer with tabroom staff.

A. As this is the first Speech tournament of the year for our League, the competitor may use notes or a manuscript. There is no specific penalty, but the judge may consider impacts on delivery when deciding ranks.

B. Any non-factual reference, including a personal one, must be so identified.

C. The performance must begin and end from the center stage area. Contestants must remain in the staging area throughout the performance.

D. There is NO mandatory length for an Original Oratory speech, however, we encourage students to aim for 6 minutes. There is no minimum time. Please note in your comments if the speech was excessively short or too drawn out. Length of speech may be a factor in your ranking.

Guidelines for Judging: These are guidelines only, not rules; they should be used only when appropriate to the speech. Keep in mind that there is no requirement that a contestant must use a particular style of delivery. Please use the following questions to help you evaluate each contestant and rank the round.

Purpose: The primary purpose of an oration is to persuade, motivate, and/or inspire on a topic of general concern.

Composition: Since this speech is originally written by the student, please consider the overall quality and effectiveness of writing? Was the speech organized clearly and easy to follow? Did the speech contain good reasoning and logic rather than shallow thinking and broad generalization? Did the speech contain evidence, examples, or expert opinions in support of ideas or conclusions?

Delivery: Did the speaker use effective oral presentation skills (volume, diction, speed of delivery)? Was the speaker poised, sincere and comfortable in delivery? Did the speaker use effective body language (gestures, facial expression, eye contact)? Did the speech exemplify the highest standards of language usage, style and vocabulary? Did the speaker avoid slang, poor grammar, and mispronunciations?

Event #4: Informative Speaking:

- The original work of the student. They research and write the speech
- Students use the same speech the entire year, revising regularly to improve
- Informative is intended to TEACH/EDUCATE on a topic of interest
- Students may use visual aids (usually posterboards/easel, objects/items)
- Speaker movement and manipulation of Visual Aids should be choreographed for effect
- Use all the Tools in your Speaker Toolbox. Verbal strategies and non-verbal strategies
- Memorized and delivered from memory
- An Informative is a maximum of 6 minutes

Judge Instructions for an Informative Speech:

IVDL Informative (INF) Rules: If you as the judge believes a rule has been violated, please confer with tabroom staff.

A. Visual and audio aids may be used during the presentation. No live animals or other persons may be used as visual aids or to help set up and/or present the speech. All aids must be removed from in front of the audience at the conclusion of the speech.

B. As this is the first Speech tournament of the year for IVDL, the competitor may use notes or a manuscript. There is no specific penalty, but the judge may consider impacts on delivery when deciding ranks.

C. No costumes shall be worn by the contestant. Items of dress necessary to the presentation may be put on during the speech. These must be considered aids and may not be part of the speaker's beginning or ending attire.

D. Any alteration to the contestant's physical appearance must be substantially restored to its original state by the end of the performance. Contestants may not use any prop that would be considered contraband.

E. Nothing may be handed or distributed to the judge or other members of the audience.

F. The primary purpose of the speech is to describe, clarify, explain or define an object, idea, concept or process. Fabricated topics/subjects may not be used.

G. The performance must begin and end from the center stage area. Contestants must remain in the staging area throughout the performance.

H. There is NO mandatory length for an Informative speech, however, we encourage students to aim for 6 minutes. There is no minimum time. Please note in your comments if the speech was excessively short or too drawn out. Length of speech may be a factor in your ranking.

Guidelines for Judging: These are guidelines only, not rules; they should be used only when appropriate to the speech. Keep in mind that there is no requirement that a contestant must use a particular style of delivery. Please use the following to help you evaluate each contestant and rank the round.

Purpose: Any appropriate subject may be used, but the primary purpose of the speech shall be to describe, clarify, explain, and/or define an object, idea, concept, or process. Topics/subjects fabricated by the speaker may not be used. This is a speech to inform, not a performance, and the emphasis should be placed on the oral presentation rather than on audio or visual aids used in support of the informative goal of the speech.

Composition: Did the speech display effective writing? Was the speech organized clearly and easy to follow? Did the speech focus on the stated topic? Did the speech contain evidence, examples, orexpert opinions in support of ideas or conclusions?

Delivery: Did the speaker use effective oral presentation skills (volume, diction, speed of delivery)? Was the speaker poised, sincere and comfortable in delivery? Did the speaker use effective body language (gestures, facial expression, eye contact)? Did the speech exemplify the highest standards of language usage, style and vocabulary? Did the speaker avoid slang, poor grammar, and mispronunciations? Did the visual aids (if any) support the content? Were the visual aids handled smoothly and without distraction?

Interpretation Events (Performing Published Literature)

Event #5: Interpretation (Dramatic OR Humorous)

- Speeches are selected from published literature
- Selections may be parts or whole plays, skits, stories, novels, movie scripts, etc.
- Selections may have more than one character, all portrayed by the speaker
- Interpretation speeches are intended to ENTERTAIN with planned story-telling
- Speakers differentiate characters with voice, body, face and movement
- Speakers want to impact their audience emotionally, with drama or humor
- Memorized and delivered from memory
- An Interpretation is a maximum of 6 minutes

Judge Instructions for an Speech Interpretation:

IVDL Dramatic AND Humorous Interpretation (DI & HI) Rules: If you as the judge believes a rule has been violated, please confer with tabroom staff.

A. The title of the selection and name of the author shall be given by the contestant during the introduction, which may be given at any point during the performance.

B. The contestant shall suggest the thoughts, emotions, the ideas and the purposes of the author.

C. As this is the first Speech tournament of the year for IVDL, the competitor may use notes or a manuscript. There is no specific penalty, but the judge may consider impacts on delivery when deciding ranks.

D. No props (the use of something extraneous to the body) or costumes shall be permitted.

E. The performance must begin and end from the center stage area. Contestants must remain in the staging area throughout the performance.

F. There is NO mandatory length for an Informative speech, however, we encourage students to aim for 6 minutes. There is no minimum time. Please note in your comments if the speech was excessively short or too drawn out. Length of speech may be a factor in your ranking.

Guidelines for Judging: These are guidelines only, not rules; they should be used only when appropriate to the speech. Keep in mind that there is no requirement that a contestant must use a particular style of delivery. Please use the following to help you evaluate each contestant and rank the round.

Purpose: The primary purpose of the event is to demonstrate through interpretation and delivery the contestant's comprehensive understanding of selected literature.

Selected Literature: Was the selection effectively edited and easy to follow with transitions in time, character, mood and emotion clearly evident?

Delivery: Did the speaker use effective oral presentation skills (volume, diction, speed of delivery)? Did the speaker demonstrate mastery of performance details (voice, facial expression, body language, and movement) to achieve clarity, force and aesthetic effect in recreating the character(s) and situations? Did the speaker convey an understanding of the mood and emotion of the character(s)? Did the speaker consistently portray the character(s)?

Event #6: Storytelling

- Speeches are selected from a single published literary selection
- Material is typically a short story, anecdote, tale, myth, or legend
- A single chair may be used by the performer (optional)
- The material is usually focused on child-like content
- The purpose is generally to entertain the audience
- Selections often have an underlying theme/message for the audience to learn
- Speakers include funny voices and sound effects for engagement
- Speakers incorporate big facial expressions and gestures
- Memorized and delivered from memory
- A Storytelling performance is a maximum of 5 minutes

Judge Instructions for an Storytelling:

IVDL Storytelling (StTl) Rules: If you as the judge believes a rule has been violated, please confer with tabroom staff.

A. Storytelling is an interpretation event with a focus on child-like content, and a simple and complete plot.

B. The title of the selection and name of the author shall be given by the contestant during the introduction, which may be given at any point during the performance.

C. The contestant shall suggest the thoughts, emotions, the ideas and the purposes of the author.

D. As this is the first Speech tournament of the year for IVDL, the competitor may use notes or a manuscript. There is no specific penalty, but the judge may consider impacts on delivery when deciding ranks.

E. The optional use of a chair is allowed by the contestant. Contestants may not fully stand on the chair. No other props (the use of something extraneous to the body) or costumes shall be permitted.

F. The performance must begin and end from the center stage area. Contestants must remain in the staging area throughout the performance.

G. The speech shall be no longer than 5 minutes including introductory and transitional materials. There is no minimum time. Please note in your comments if the competitor exceeds this time limit by more than 30 seconds but do not otherwise penalize them. If the competitor requests, the judge may provide time signals at their discretion.

Guidelines for Judging: These are guidelines only, not rules; they should be used only when appropriate to the speech. Keep in mind that there is no requirement that a contestant must use a particular style of delivery. Please use the following to help you evaluate each contestant and rank the round.

Purpose: The primary purpose of Storytelling is to entertainment in a fun and creative way through the use of childhood stories brought to life.

Selected Literature: The material selected is often fun, lovable, and entertaining pieces enjoyed by all ages, taken from children's picture books, folk tales, and classic fables. Judges consider if the selection was effectively edited and easy to follow with transitions in time, character, mood and emotion clearly evident?

Delivery: Did the speaker use effective oral presentation skills (volume, diction, speed of delivery)? Did the speaker demonstrate mastery of performance details (voice, facial expression, body language, and movement) to achieve clarity, force and aesthetic effect in recreating the character(s) and situations? Did the speaker convey an understanding of the mood and emotion of the character(s)? Did the speaker consistently portray the character(s)?

Inland Valley Debate League
Tournament Schedule 12/5/2026

12/5 IVDL TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE
7:45-8:15am: Registration: Coaches check in and register any drops/changes
8:15am: All Competitors/Coaches/Judges: General Announcements
8:40am: ROUND 1 Topic Announcement (Round begins 9:00am)
9:00-10:00am: New Judges training DURING round 1
10:30am: ROUND 2 Topic Announcement (Round begins 10:50am)
11:35am: 12:20pm – LUNCH
12:30-1:20pm: SPEECH (Impromptu)
1:30pm: ROUND 3 Topic Announcement (Round begins 1:50pm)
1:50 pm: Coaches Meeting DURING round 3
3:00pm: ROUND 4 Topic Announcement (Round begins 3:30pm)
4:30pm: Awards Ceremony