

Speech Adjudicator Guidelines



Before You Adjudicate:

- Familiarize yourself with specific rules and evaluation standards for categories you will evaluate.
- Make sure you're not adjudicating any students you know personally; immediately report conflicts to officials.
- Position yourself so your view and hearing for evaluation are unobstructed.
- If a student is not present, go on to the next. If the student shows, allow the student to perform last.

Common Issues:

- **Special needs** - Accommodate contestants with disabilities as noted on the ballot, without drawing undue attention. Evaluate each contestant on their own merits.
- **Time limits** - If a contestant continues presenting beyond the maximum time, the adjudicator shall stand, and the student may finish their sentence. Although there are no minimum time limits, adjudicators may reduce their rating and note as such in the second evaluation criterion, for a lack of development of content.
- **Disqualification** - If you believe a student is violating WHSFA rules, please listen to the entire presentation and evaluate the best you can, but report the matter to the contest officials, who will investigate and render a decision. Never announce disqualification, except *Demonstration Speech, Rule 5, may require disqualification prior to the student's performance.*
- **Implicit Bias** - We are all influenced by implicit bias, or the stereotypes that unconsciously affect our decisions. When judging, our implicit biases negatively impact students who are traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised. Before writing comments or making a decision, please take a moment to reflect on any biases that may impact your decision-making process.
- **Video (for virtual contests)**- Video quality of a presentation may be impacted by lighting, internet, access to equipment, and other family members' presence. To ensure a more equitable experience, be sure your decision-making process and comments are related only to the content and quality of the presentation itself.

Standards Areas: Make specific written comments apply to each of the five evaluation standards - leave no area blank, and circle a proficiency level for each (Mastery, Proficient, Developing, Emerging, Minimal). Be honest, positive, supportive and helpful with suggestions for improvement or reinforcement of effective tactics. Use specific examples of what the contestant(s) did or said in their presentation. Need assistance for what to say? See the *Descriptive Words/Phrases List for Middle Level Adjudicators* on the next page.

Overall Rating: This represents the contestant's overall achievement with their presentation; see rubric below:

	Merit Rating ★	Excellence Rating ★★
Level 1	The presentation is beginning its development, and the contestant(s) should make several improvements.	The presentation is engaging and meets expectations of proficiency or better for at least two evaluation standards.
Level 2	On balance, the presentation falls short of proficient for at least three of the evaluation standards.	Consistently meets expectations of proficiency or better for at least four of the evaluation standards, with just a few "fine tuning" comments for improvement.

Return of Forms:

- At the conclusion of each round, record the overall rating (Merit/Excellence) from signed student evaluation sheets on the ballot provided, making sure ratings on the ballot are the same as those on evaluation sheets.
- Sign the ballot and return it, along with student evaluation sheets (unless otherwise instructed by the festival host) to the festival headquarters.

Descriptive Words/Phrases List for Middle Level Adjudicators



Content

levels of meaning
stirs emotion
stirs thought
persuasive arguments
credible evidence
balanced perspective
timely source
organization
flow of ideas
ideas connect
detailed
cutting/passage
explain central idea
plot
range
clever
combination
collection
unified
convincing
accomplished
developing
mastered
insightful

Effective Presentation

effective tactic(s)
executed thoughtfully
drew me in
expressive
articulate
believable
characterized
credible performance
committed character
energetic
lively
animated
honest
genuine
realistic
authentic
natural
understated
whimsical
rhetorical
passion
spirited
determined
intimate

Developing/Improving

artificial
awkward
broad / vague
faulty
flawed
interfered with
confused
disconnected
misguided
monotonous
repetitive
absent
incomplete
lacks
rethink structure
requires
potential
pulled me out
distracted
unnecessary
lacked purpose
identify purpose
inappropriate
lacks depth

Avoid vague terms: good • great • weak • needs work • practice more
Instead, tell them: exactly what they did well; how they should improve;
specific ineffective aspects of their presentation

Training Adjudicators



After a festival ends, and students head home, the only meaningful way they will know they did well or why they did poorly is the evaluation sheet you completed. What you say - and how you say it - can help that student learn; otherwise it will leave the student with nothing to learn from; or worse, it can shatter the student's desire to try to learn to become a more skillful communicator.

Before giving evaluation, either in written or oral form, ask yourself:

1. Do I understand the guidelines to be used for evaluating this performance?
2. Have I made the students in the room feel comfortable so they will be able to perform to the best of their abilities and be accepting of my evaluation?
3. Am I making comments about things the person can do something about? (Why comment on how braces make it hard to speak clearly?)
4. Am I sure I am not being critical because of prejudices or problems of my own? ("I never did like Edgar Allen Poe" or "I think girls should wear dresses when performing", etc.)
5. Am I giving support by commenting on what was good as well as what needs improvement?

How to write and speak for effective evaluation:

1. Make your statements descriptive rather than evaluative.
2. Be specific rather than general.
3. Be tentative rather than absolute.
4. Offer suggesting comments rather than directing comments.
5. Direct your comments to behavior the student can control.
6. Write only comments you can explain. It is very frustrating to read statements that aren't explained fully and to have no way of finding out afterward "what you meant."

A model for giving effective evaluation would have statements that begin with such phrases as:

- "When you" (followed by a description of the behavior)
- "I feel (think, see)....." describe how that behavior affects self and others
- "I'd like....." (describe how you think that behavior could change)
- "Because" (tell why you think that behavior should change)

A statement in response to the evaluation item that asks, "Did the participant choose a delivery style that was appropriate to the speaker, subject, audience and occasion?" might be:

When you speak so softly I can hardly hear you, I feel that perhaps you don't believe what you are saying. I'd like you to try and sound as if you care about the ideas of your speech because that will help us to believe in them, too. **or:** Your dynamic delivery style made me feel that I wanted to do something about your ideas right now! I'd like you to continue to show how much you care by working on including everyone in the room in your eye contact and not just me, because they should feel the same way I do.

Sample Evaluation Sheets

The following evaluations are samples from coaches, adjudicators and State Office staff. All categories are not included, but there are samples for both speaking and performance of literature categories. Because these are merely samples, they are provided as materials to read, to stimulate discussion and to learn from. The first example is poorly completed, while the others may serve as models, although they may be deserving of improvement as well. Finally, a sample official ballot is included, to illustrate how adjudicators should complete that form.

Poorly Completed Evaluation

The accompanying paragraph below was adapted from a letter by a concerned coach to the festival manager.

Max. Time: 8 Min.	Time: 7:16	MIDDLE LEVEL EVALUATION
Level: L1 L2	Round: 1 2 3	Solo Acting
Rating: Merit Excellence	SAMPLE	
Name/Code: D200		



For each of the five evaluation areas, circle how well the contestant met standards. Provide constructive suggestions for improvement as well as describe what the contestant did well. In the rating box above, award: **Merit** or **Excellence**.

Introduction	Mastery	Provided title and author, and set the tone and theme of the presentation. Transitions (if used) helped connect material. <i>Nice explanation of your piece</i>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Selection	Mastery	Selection was suited to the performer and audience; it was effectively cut to the required time limit, yet presented a complete story (beginning, middle, end). <i>Yes! Yes!</i>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Meaning	Mastery	Performed believable, consistent, and well-defined character(s); and conveyed meaning and emotional content of the selection. <i>Challenging piece with all your characters.</i>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Voice	Mastery	Spoke clearly and audibly, with appropriate loudness, pitch, rate, enunciation (consonant sounds), and pronunciation. <i>Yes.</i>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Body Movement	Mastery	Movement/blocking was done with purpose/intention, with actor employing facial expression, eye contact, and appropriate gestures. <i>Strong job with all your character movements.</i>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	

Adjudicator Signature: <i>E. Valuator</i>	Print Name/Code: <i>E. Valuator / CO1</i>
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This evaluation was disappointing. My student and I did not object to the rating of "Merit." Had weaknesses been pointed out and addressed, we feel this rating would have been justified; however, as written, there appears to be no justification for the proficiency levels circled in each area or the overall rating. It was difficult to rationalize the adjudicator's rating because on other critiques the adjudicator completed for our students, "Excellence" ratings were given while weaknesses were addressed. Finally, it was difficult for the student to understand the rating because at the same festival she earned two other "Excellence" ratings with similar positive comments. Again, we have no problem with "Merit," but consistency and justification are an important part of the learning process.

Effective Evaluations

The following pages include evaluations that model constructive criticism and justification for scores and ratings. All names have been replaced with common names from different cultures.

Notice when adjudicators use specific examples of what contestants did or said – it helps students and their coaches contextualize what they need to improve, or to reinforce exactly what they should keep doing.

Note how points circled for each standard related to the comments, which indicate how well the contestant has met those standards. The overall rating at the top (Merit or Excellence) indicates the student’s overall performance. There is no magic number of points

The first example, from a Readers Theatre evaluation, could use more descriptive words (see p. 10).

Max. Time: 10 Min.	Time: 10:10
Level: L1 L2	Round: 1 2 3
Rating: Merit Excellence	
Name/Code: Ananya Patel/C18	Topic/Title: Spoon River Anthology

MIDDLE LEVEL EVALUATION

Readers Theatre



For each of the five evaluation areas, circle how well the contestant met standards. Provide constructive suggestions for improvement as well as describe what the contestant did well. In the rating box above, award: **Merit** or **Excellence**.

Introduction	Mastery	<p>Provided title(s) and author(s), and set the tone and theme of the presentation, explaining how each selection related to the overall program of performance. Transitions (if used) helped connect material.</p> <p>Develop further. Tell us more about Edgar Lee Masters and his purpose. Relax, smile, and warm up to audience at outset.</p>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Material	Mastery	<p>Selection was suited to the performer and audience; it was effectively cut to the required time limit, yet presented a complete story or thematic concept.</p> <p>Great choice of material. Cutting incorporates scenes of character interaction, which makes selection read like a story. Good feeling for the material.</p>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Meaning	Mastery	<p>Employed effective group oral reading techniques to cohesively present the selection with appropriate pacing. Conveyed meaning and emotional content of the selection.</p> <p>Character differentiations clearly suggested. Voices helped create moods. Choral speaking and sound effects enhanced the performance. You clearly had fun!</p>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Voice	Mastery	<p>Spoke clearly and audibly, with appropriate loudness, pitch, rate, enunciation (consonant sounds), and pronunciation.</p> <p>Clearly audible. Pleasant voice qualities and pitch. Occasionally rushed, especially in dramatic passages - there you lose sincerity. Vocal variety helps to suggest age differences of characters.</p>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Body Movement	Mastery	<p>Movement emphasized the message by employing facial expression, eye contact, appropriate gestures, and handling of manuscripts.</p> <p>Readers handled scripts well, allowing them to use appropriate gestures. Good sense of timing. Movement was efficiently executed, had specific meaning, and was not distracting. Good coordination of voice, face and body, making the reading sensitive and believable.</p>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	

Adjudicator Signature: I.M. Fan	Print Name/Code: I.M. Fan / L4
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Max. Time: 8 Min.	Time: 6:05
Level: L1 L2	Round: 1 2 3
Rating: Merit Excellence	
Name/Code: Xao Chen/G4	Topic/Title: The Snowman Lives

MIDDLE LEVEL EVALUATION

Persuasive Speech



SAMPLE

For each of the five evaluation areas, circle how well the contestant met standards. Provide constructive suggestions for improvement as well as describe what the contestant did well. In the rating box above, award: **Merit** or **Excellence**.

Topic/Introduction	Mastery	Chose a suitable topic, introducing it clearly and in a way that made the audience take interest.
	Proficient	<p><i>You clearly and cleverly let us know that you were going to convince us that the abominable snowman does exist. You grabbed my attention from the very start, when you painted such a vivid picture of the cold, dark days of the arctic winter.</i></p>
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Organization/Sources	Mastery	Speech was organized and easy to follow, using accurate and up-to-date information and quoting from a variety of factual sources to explain importance of the topic as well as details such as who, what, when, and where.
	Proficient	<p><i>Your best source was the Mountain County Sheriff's ledger. Be sure to cite where your other information comes from – this would add to your credibility. Your use of proven sightings and testimony was helpful.</i></p>
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Conveying Meaning	Mastery	Speech used vocabulary and grammar that were clear, understandable, and appropriate. The speech was persuasive by urging action or change in attitude. If visual aids were used, the speaker actively used them to illustrate concepts.
	Proficient	<p><i>It seems that your use of slang terms such as "guys," "like," and "kid" detracts from the serious purpose of your speech. Use more mature, descriptive words.</i></p>
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Voice	Mastery	Spoke clearly and audibly, with appropriate loudness, pitch, rate, enunciation (consonant sounds), and pronunciation.
	Proficient	<p><i>You could slow down the rate of your speech, because some ideas are lost when you rush-through. Since you used only six minutes, you have time. Pause occasionally, to allow us to reflect on what you're saying.</i></p>
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Body Movement	Mastery	Directed presentation to the audience with poise. Movement emphasized message, including facial expression, eye contact, body movement, and appropriate gestures. If notes were used, they were handled effectively.
	Proficient	<p><i>Your eyes sparkled as if you experienced a sighting, which helped me believe you more. Use more natural gestures so they work <u>with</u> you. Using the podium creates a barrier between you and the audience, but when you moved away, your delivery was more relaxed!</i></p>
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Adjudicator Signature: <i>Ima Critic</i>		Print Name/Code: <i>Ima Critic / C05</i>

Max. Time: 4 Min.	Time: 3:49
Level: L1 L2	Round: 1 2 3
Rating: Merit Excellence	
Name/Code: Ahmed Hassaw/D7	Topic/Title: Save the Seals

MIDDLE LEVEL EVALUATION

Informative Speech



SAMPLE

For each of the five evaluation areas, circle how well the contestant met standards. Provide constructive suggestions for improvement as well as describe what the contestant did well. In the rating box above, award: **Merit** or **Excellence**.

Topic/Introduction	Mastery	Chose a suitable topic, introducing it clearly and in a way that made the audience take interest.
	Proficient	The Save the Seals campaign was a meaningful topic choice, and you drew me in, immediately, by explaining your personal connection. Perhaps you should expand your research and do a Persuasive Speech because you seem to be so involved in the topic.
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Organization/Sources	Mastery	Speech was organized and easy to follow, using accurate and up-to-date information and quoting from a variety of factual sources to explain importance of the topic as well as details such as who, what, when, and where.
	Proficient	You organized your speech well. The opening statement was clearly explained by your three main points. Your own experiences showed you understood the campaign. Include more facts about the "whip" of the group. Give sources for your statistics, so we know they're valid.
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Conveying Meaning	Mastery	Speech used vocabulary and grammar that were clear, understandable, and appropriate. If visual aids were used, the speaker actively used them to illustrate concepts.
	Proficient	For an informative speech, avoid "loaded" words, such as "slaughter," "ruthless," and "greed," because they are emotional rather than factual and might be more appropriate for persuasion.
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Voice	Mastery	Spoke clearly and audibly, with appropriate loudness, pitch, rate, enunciation (consonant sounds), and pronunciation.
	Proficient	Say word endings more clearly: "ed," "ing," because this makes a speech sound more formal than just a conversation.
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Body Movement	Mastery	Directed presentation to the audience with poise. Movement emphasized message, including facial expression, eye contact, body movement, and appropriate gestures. If notes were used, they were handled effectively.
	Proficient	You allowed your face to tell us what you were feeling, and helped us feel more involved. You looked at everyone, making the entire room feel included because you didn't read much from your note card, which helped the audience respond better to your ideas.
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Adjudicator Signature: Emily Prove		Print Name/Code: Em Prove

Max. Time: 8 Min.	3:49
Level: L1 L2	Round: 1 2 3
Rating: Merit Excellence	
Name/Code: Lupe Sanchez/E3	Topic/Title: Perry the Winkler

MIDDLE LEVEL EVALUATION

Poetry Reading



For each of the five evaluation areas, circle how well the contestant met standards. Provide constructive suggestions for improvement as well as describe what the contestant did well. In the rating box above, award: **Merit** or **Excellence**.

Introduction/Transition	Mastery	<p>Provided title(s) and author(s), and set the tone and theme of the presentation, explaining how each selection related to the overall program of performance. Transitions (if used) helped connect material.</p> <p>Your story about how important magic is to small children really set the mood for this poem. Tell me more about the author, too, and why he wrote this type of poem.</p>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Selection/Material	Mastery	<p>Selection was suited to the performer and audience; it was effectively cut to the required time limit, yet presented a cohesive and connected program of performance.</p> <p>You might wish to find another poem to go with this one, since it is quite short, or expand your introduction. This will give evaluators more to consider. You had fun with this performance, so I did, too! 😊 Thank you!</p>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Conveying Meaning	Mastery	<p>Performance highlighted the artistry of language with such tactics as rhythm and pause; and conveyed meaning and emotional content of the selection.</p> <p>Built intensity to climax "Be off!" showed you understood poem. Voices of characters were done as the author described, "gently said," "laughed," and that made me relate to how the characters were feeling. Avoid sing-songy rhythm, especially at the end.</p>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Voice	Mastery	<p>Spoke clearly and audibly, with appropriate loudness, pitch, rate, enunciation (consonant sounds), and pronunciation.</p> <p>You varied loudness and softness -and rate changes that created an understanding of the poetry. Be careful with articulation of words like "and," "looked," "wept," and "crept." You used repetition well for emphasis.</p>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	
Body Movement	Mastery	<p>Movement emphasized the message by employing facial expression, eye contact, appropriate gestures, and handling of manuscript.</p> <p>When your face got involved, I became involved as your audience. Do this throughout the poem. Make gestures smoother and more gentle so they do not distract from your delivery - improving that will keep us engaged in your performance through the end.</p>
	Proficient	
	Developing	
	Emerging	
	Minimal	

Adjudicator Signature: Perry the Winkler	Print Name/Code: Perry the Winkler
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Venue	<i>Madison – Jefferson</i>	Ballot 	Category	<i>Prose</i>
Date	<i>March 6, 2014</i>		Round	1 2 3
Level	L1 L2		Sect./Room	<i>A / B103</i>

	Participant	Code	Title of Selection	Rating
1	<i>Ean Terpreter</i>	<i>B7</i>	<i>Dobby Goes Home</i>	<i>Merit</i>
2	<i>Reed Ingman</i>	<i>G14</i>	<i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i>	<i>Excellence</i>
3	<i>Emmy</i>	<i>L21</i>	<i>The Lion & the Wardrobe</i>	<i>Merit</i>
4	<i>Connie Pelling</i>	<i>H3</i>	<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i>	<i>Excellence</i>
5	<i>Dyanne Ampac</i>	<i>M2</i>	<i>The Outsiders</i>	<i>Merit</i>
6	<i>Harris Pression</i>	<i>R16</i>	<i>Black Beauty</i>	<i>Merit</i>
7				
8				

SAMPLE

Adjudicator Signature: <i>Elli Valuator</i>	Print Name/Code: <i>Elli Valuator / C10</i>
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Sample completed ballot from SpeechWire contest management software:

FOUR

WHSFA Middle Level 2 (Madison Middle School) ballot
Round 1, Section A, Room 43 (4:30 PM)
 Adjudicator: B1 Judy Sheindlin (Madison Lutheran School)

B1

#	Code	Name	Rating
1	F2	Andrew Schmidt (FOUR)	<i>Merit</i>
2	C2	Samir Asad (FOUR)	<i>Excellence</i>
3	G2	Maya Johnson (FOUR)	<i>Excellence</i>
4	F1	Jennifer Sanchez (DEMO)	<i>Merit</i>
5	C1	May Zhang (FOUR)	<i>Excellence</i>
6	G1	Aditya Kaleka (FOUR)	<i>Excellence</i>
7	G4	Paul Hansen (FOUR)	<i>Merit</i>

Adjudicator's signature: *Judy Sheindlin (B1)*

SAMPLE