

# HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH



# HANDBOOK



2023-24

[www.whsfa.org](http://www.whsfa.org)

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## 2023-24 Rules Changes

1. **Double-entry:** adjusting rules to— “Any student may enter in up to two categories; however, a school is responsible for providing adjudicators based on total entries at each contest in which it has students (as per §7.3), including double-entries. In-person contests may limit participation by any student to one category, in which case, the student may participate in a second category virtually.” Also, any given student can only contribute to one entry counting toward school awards at the State Festival.
2. Demonstration Speech renamed to “**Informative/Demonstration Speech**” with a broadened allowance for the 1-2 student(s) to explore and develop an informative speech to offer new information and/or fresh perspectives; aligns with WFCAs, NSDA, and other states’ category of Informative.
3. Informative Speech renamed to “**Expository Speech**,” shortened to 5 minutes, and removing the allowance for visual aid to better reflect its narrow, simpler focus; restores the feel of the category to the simplicity of the former “Four-Minute Speech” so there isn’t any expectation for a visual aid (ideal for a younger student); aligns with WFCAs, NSDA, and other states’ category of Expository.
4. **Farrago:** added a requirement in the introduction (and, if used, transitions) for students to identify the genre with each selection they perform. This was always implied, but not currently written in the rules, and will make it clearer for adjudicators when appraising students’ performance.
5. Replacing the “walking” rule in **Farrago**, **Poetry**, and **Prose** with “Purposeful movement to suggest relationships, feelings, changes, ideas, moods, locales, etc, appropriate to the script is acceptable and subject to evaluation.” This discourages adjudicators from “bean counting” steps; instead, taking a more holistic approach to evaluating students’ movement as suggestive of the content performed, and still distinct from carrying out the action in a more theatrical manner (the original intention of the prohibition of walking).
6. **Impromptu:** we are adding an *optional* line for adjudicators to note how much of the full time a student spent prepping, to give some additional direction to the student and their coach.
7. **Public Address:** piloting a “Pro-Con” *option*, so as an alternative to developing one specific response to one of the annual questions, a student can develop two speeches of about 4 minutes apiece that present contrasting viewpoints/positions on the topic. Since many popular debate categories utilize opening/constructive speeches that are about 4 minutes, this is a perfect place for students to get a taste of debate! Adjudicators will consider how well each of the speeches answers the question, and how balanced the student is in their use of time within the full 8 minutes allowed.
8. **Radio News Reporting:** added a rule: “Speaker must present the radio broadcast in one newsreader voice. Multiple voices are not permitted except for the commercial(s).” This was suggested to better align the category with learning outcomes in broadcast journalism, and still allows for creativity in how a student aligns their newsreader persona to the identity of their theoretical radio station/program, as well as allowing other personas in the commercial.
9. **Storytelling:** uniformly assigning topic #1 to round 1, topic #2 to round 2, and topic #3 to round 3 for all WISDAA subdistrict and district festivals; continuing the allowance for students to select which topic they perform at State. Also, since the introduction is currently not evaluated, we have clarified the evaluation sheet, as there was some contradictory language.
10. **Updates:** (12/20/23) clarified adjudicator guidelines; slight revisions for concision (p. 9-10)  
(1/2/24) added rule §5.7 pertaining to Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI). (1/9/24) Revisions for clarity, §4.3, 4.4, 4.5.

Instructions for online registration and contest management have been moved online: <https://www.wisdaa.org/docs/speech/>

## 2023-24 Category Topics

### Moments in History:

1900-1919 and/or 1970-1979

(choose one or both time periods)

### Special Occasion:

1. A public apology
2. Address to Board of Education
3. Speech delivered to a school assembly of current students
4. Wedding toast

### Storytelling: (must have story for each topic)

1. Mystery story
2. Story of advocacy/allyship
3. Story about money/greed

### Public Address:

1. To what degree, if any, should generative artificial intelligence be regulated and by whom?
2. To what extent, if any, should schools require community service as a graduation requirement?
3. What actions, if any, should be taken by the government to ensure an individual’s right to privacy?
4. What standards and processes, if any, should be used in determining appropriate content/books/texts in classrooms and school libraries?
5. What, if anything, should the government do to address economic inequality (e.g., minimum wage, jobs programs, food/housing security)?

# High School Speech Goals & Objectives

## Association Goals

1. To provide a significant training ground for the development of students' abilities in public speaking and in the oral interpretation of literature.
2. To provide multiple opportunities for students to practice and share their skill development.

## Association Objectives

1. To create learning situations in which students develop proficiencies based on sound educational and communication theories.
2. To provide evaluators who will make judgments based on educational objectives and to offer an evaluation that will help students achieve them.

## Student Objectives

### 1. Skill Objectives

- a. Develop skill in oral language as well as voice and body expression.
- b. To critically evaluate ideas and beliefs of others and to draw logical conclusions.

- c. To learn effective organization of ideas.
- d. Develop ability to recreate the written thoughts of others through vocal delivery.

### 2. Intellectual Objectives

- a. To learn the fundamentals of research and how to use this research for drawing conclusions.
- b. To learn to organize ideas and present them clearly and concisely.
- c. To develop insights into universal human experience as well as emotion and aesthetic values.

### 3. Social Objectives

- a. Promoting school and community relations through participation in an intellectual activity.
- b. Meeting and interacting with students from other schools in the context of a social and intellectual activity.
- c. To realize the simultaneous opportunities for leadership and group participation.

The **Speech Advisory Committee** meets annually, and is composed of one coach elected from each section and is chaired by the Speech Advisor. Revision of rules/festival structure are discussed and recommended to the Board.

# Rules & Policies for High School Speech

1. **Categories** offered: Expository Speech, Extemporaneous Speech, Farrago, Group Interpretive Reading, Impromptu Speech, Informative/Demonstration Speech, Moments in History Speech, Oratory Speech, Play Acting, Poetry Reading, Prose Reading, Public Address Speech, Radio News Reporting, Solo Acting Humorous, Solo Acting Serious, Special Occasion Speech, and Storytelling.
2. **Contest participation regulations**
  - 2.1. Submitting registration obligates a school to pay WISDAA dues and contest registration fees whether or not the school actually participates.
  - 2.2. All schools are subject to [WISDAA Interscholastic Participation Rules](#), including Eligibility/Participation §2.1, §2.2, and §2.3 pertaining to supervision and youth protection ([wisdadocs.org/docs/wisdadocs/association-policies/eligibility-participation-rules/](https://www.wisdadocs.org/docs/wisdadocs/association-policies/eligibility-participation-rules/)).
  - 2.3. In all festivals participants' school identity shall not be made known to adjudicators until results are announced. Wearing emblems identifying and representing schools is prohibited. For virtual participation, coaches should avoid identifying their school in submitted videos/video channels.
  - 2.4. Member schools may participate with nonmember schools in contests other than those sponsored by the Association, but such participation will not qualify contestants for WISDAA participation certificates.
  - 2.5. **Electronic/digital recording is prohibited at any WISDAA event.** This does not apply to videos of entry presentations submitted by coaches for adjudication in virtual contests.
  - 2.6. Entries may participate at a different same-level festival from the rest of their school, however, the following requirements apply:
    - 2.6.1. Individual virtual participation requests will be granted without any permission required.
    - 2.6.2. When requesting a different *in-person* contest, the head coach must request permission of the [district chair](#) **and** inquire with the different festival manager/host if they have space.

- 2.6.3. Upon receiving permission, in SpeechWire the coach must request a different festival for the entry(ies).
- 2.6.4. The coach – or another school district employee or vetted school district volunteer – is **required** to accompany students to all contests. Contestants will NOT be allowed to perform without a school official present. Parents may not fulfill this role unless the school has vetted/background checked them as a recognized volunteer.
- 2.6.5. The coach **must** provide the required number of adjudicators for that different contest, or pay the uncovered adjudicator fee, unless expressly waived by that contest.
- 2.6.6. An entry may perform at only one contest for each level (subdistrict, district, State).
- 2.7. For any **virtual entries**, the coach must attest that they have followed their school's policies regarding video recording students (i.e., obtained parental permission/release forms). Coaches are responsible for checking each video link; incorrect links, wrong sharing settings, or inaudible videos will be considered "no shows" and will not advance to the next contest level.
3. **Contest levels:** The progressive levels of festivals shall be subdistrict, district and State.
  - 3.1. Subdistrict and district festivals shall consist of three rounds of participation. All students must participate in three rounds unless permission has been granted by the district chair/host in an emergency situation.
  - 3.2. Festival managers determine registration fees and adjudicator honoraria.
  - 3.3. **Subdistricts:** districts are subdivided into smaller groupings for the first contest level; arrangement shall consider geographic location of schools, but all schools comprising a subdistrict must be within the same district. District chairs shall inform schools which subdistrict they are in. In conducting a subdistrict, the host shall make all the necessary arrangements and divide the cost among the participating schools.
  - 3.4. Schools/students are expected to attend contests in their assigned region. Contest managers are under no obligation to make special arrangements for schools unable to attend; however, district chairs and the State Office may grant permission to attend a different region whose manager has availability.
  - 3.5. Coaches may designate individual entries to participate in the State Office-run virtual contest at any level.
  - 3.6. The State Festival shall be one round of participation for each entry; registration fees are: **\$10** per individual entry, **\$12** per two-person Demonstration entry, and **\$15** per Play Acting/Group Interpretative Reading entry.
4. **Registration:** Entries **must** be registered online beginning with subdistrict to be eligible to advance; festival managers have the right to require entering schools to honor reasonable entry deadlines.
  - 4.1. An **entry** is defined as an individual student, except for two-person Informative/Demonstration Speech entries, and **groups** of 2-5 students in Group Interpretive Reading and Play Acting.
  - 4.2. **Entry Limits:** Each school may submit any number of entries. Any **in-person** contest may limit a school to a maximum of 30 and no more than four (4) in-person entries per any category; in those cases additional entries above and beyond these limitations may participate **virtually**.
  - 4.3. **Double-entry:** Any student may enter in up to two different categories; however, a school is responsible for providing adjudicators based on total entries at each contest in which it has students (as per §5.3), including double-entries. In-person contests may limit participation by any student to one category, in which case, the student may participate in a second category virtually. At the State Festival, a student participating in more than one entry must be registered in an alternative time slot (which could be virtual).
  - 4.4. In the event member(s) of a Play Acting group, Group Interpretative Reading ensemble, and/or one of the two Demonstration speakers is/are unable to appear at a Festival, any other eligible student(s) may be substituted.
  - 4.5. At the State Festival, for double entered contestants and other extenuating circumstances, entries from a school may perform during a different time slot than the rest of the school, **however, supervision requirements (including a minimum of two responsible adults) cross-referenced in §2.2 apply** to each time slot in which a school has entries.
  - 4.6. **Accessibility requests:** when registering entries, the coach should note accommodations and other requests required by any contestants as per their school's protocols for doing so. Those will be reviewed by the state office, with specific instructions shared with each contest level. It is the coach's affirmative responsibility to specify this information when registering entries; contest officials will ensure information is kept confidential.
5. **Material:**
  - 5.1. **Source material:** Coaches **must** have a copy (photocopy) of all entries' **original source literary material**, from which cuttings were made, readily available for inspection upon request of adjudicators, festival staff and/or referee committee.
  - 5.2. **Quality literary material:** In some categories (Farrago and Solo Acting), the selection of material is a criterion for

evaluation. Where required, quality material is defined as that which "gives insight into human values, motivations, relationships, problems and understandings and is not characterized by sentimentality, violence for its own sake, unmotivated endings or stereotyped characterizations." It is recommended that such material be sought for all interpretive categories, even if there is no specific evaluation item related to selection of material.

5.3. **Changing or revision of material** is permitted for the next level.

5.4. **Copyright, permission, and royalty:** Each member school whose participants use copyrighted material is responsible for obtaining permission from the publisher to use that material. When a royalty play or cutting from a royalty play is used, the school using such material is responsible for permission to cut, and payment or obtaining a waiver of royalty.

5.5. **School and community standards:** coaches are responsible for ensuring their students represent their school and community standards in use of subject matter, language, and use of gesture.

5.6. **Reuse of material in different seasons:** A student or group may not use the same selection or original speech more than one year in any WISDAA event, whether it be in the same or another category. In Play Acting or Group Interpretive Reading a school may not use the same cutting or script in two successive years, nor may it use a cutting or scene from its production in the Theatre Festival held during the same school year. Students or groups may not reuse material they performed in Middle Level events.

#### 5.7. **Generative artificial intelligence (AI)**

5.7.1. **Speech categories:** contestants are prohibited from quoting or paraphrasing text directly from generative AI sources. Generative AI should not be cited as a source. The exception is that a student delivering a speech about the topic of AI may quote AI to illustrate their points about AI, and cite that source, accordingly. Overall, while generative AI may be used to guide students to articles – including for Extemporaneous Speech – ideas, and sources, the original source of any quoted or paraphrased evidence must be available if requested.

5.7.2. **Performance of literature categories:** where published material is required, students are prohibited from performing material created by generative AI sources. Overall, generative AI should not be used as a source of material; while generative AI may be used to guide students to articles, ideas, and material, the original source of any material that is performed must be available if requested. Students in all categories are prohibited from using generative AI to write introductions and transitions.

### 6. Presentation

6.1. **Manner of delivery:** The traditional modes of delivery in oral presentations are: impromptu (wholly spontaneous), extemporaneous (limited preparation and notes), memorized or manuscript. In certain categories manner in which a presentation – or portion of a presentation – is to be delivered is required by rule. If the manner of presentation is not required, the choice is up to the student. In any case, manner of delivery may enter into evaluation. If manner of delivery is required, the student may be evaluated on how well s/he executes the required manner. If delivery mode is student's choice, the choice itself as well as quality of its execution may enter into evaluation.

6.2. **Notes/speaking/reading stand:** For some categories, usage of notes is permitted. When allowed, the student may use one or both sides of one 4"x6" paper note card to deliver speeches or a paper manuscript to recite literary material; in those cases, contestants may provide and utilize their own speaker/reading stand. The manner in which notes are used may enter into the overall evaluation.

6.3. **Use of staging and audio/visual material:** the use of costumes, props, makeup, music, lighting and mechanical sound effects is prohibited in WISDAA categories. Obvious exceptions are those categories in which the use of chair(s), stools, desk, table, reading or speaker's stand is expressly permitted, or for a speech where a visual aid may be an object. In no category is a host school responsible for providing any equipment for participants. See allowance for vocal music in §6.4.3.

6.4. **Time limits:** Each category has a maximum time. Although there are no minimum time limits, unduly short presentations may be evaluated as insufficient responses to the burden of the category.

6.4.1. Adjudicators shall time the entirety of each presentation (including introductions in performance of literature categories), except for a statement of which prescribed topic has been selected for Special Occasion or Storytelling.

6.4.2. In all categories except Radio News Reporting, a 15-second grace period will be allowed after which one point will be deducted from the total.

6.4.3. In performance of literature categories, vocal music, if used, must be incidental and no more than thirty (30) seconds total, after which there will be a one-point deduction.

6.5. **Prompters:** Prompters are not allowed in any category at any level of participation.

6.6. **Virtual provisions**

6.6.1. **Videos of group/pair entries:** video files uploaded for adjudication may be: (i). Recording of videoconference, with students in different locations, no post-production editing other than to piece together separate video files, or to correct audio/video sync or bandwidth issues. *Simultaneous speaking does not work well in video conferences*; or (ii). Captured in-person video capture, single-take, no post-production editing.

6.6.2. **Extemporaneous, Impromptu, Radio:** the State Office will provide materials to coaches a 7-10 days before the video submission deadline. The coach will arrange three (3) times (one for each round) with each contestant (in-person, via videoconference, or via message) to share five questions, of which the contestant will select one. Each contestant presentation should be recorded and finalized with the coach within 45 minutes of receiving material (to allow time for technical considerations).

6.6.3. **Storytelling:** Coaches will record a student's presentation of each of the three stories and submit them in the order the stories are listed for the year.

7. **Adjudicators, ratings, and advancement**

7.1. One adjudicator for each section (room) is to be used for all levels of participation.

7.2. At all WISDAA contests, adjudicators are required to hold currently active (nonexpired) WISDAA certification.

7.3. Subdistrict, district, and state festivals require participating schools to supply a ratio of certified adjudicators based on number of entries. When entering multiple contests, such as for individual student scheduling conflicts (including in-person plus virtual), **the school must supply adjudicators for each separate contest in which it has entries** (e.g., a school has 2 entries at an in-person subdistrict and 2 entries in a virtual subdistrict – it must supply an adjudicator for each of those contests). At the State festival, schools must provide the ratio of adjudicators for each time slot in which it has entries (including virtual).

7.4. Adjudicators shall rate each evaluation criterion 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, according to merit, provide written comment, and total the number of points.

7.5. The main ballot is considered the adjudicator's official record; once it has been submitted, no rating on that ballot may be changed except to correct a recording error.

7.6. At subdistrict, an entry must earn **16** or more points from at least two of three adjudicators to advance to district.

7.7. At district, a student must earn **21** or more points from two of three adjudicators to advance to State.

8. **Awards**

8.1. Individual awards shall not be given at the subdistrict level.

8.2. At their discretion, district chairs may order individual medals from the state office to give to "State Qualifiers." No other individual or school awards may be given at the district festival.

8.3. Participation certificates may be ordered from the State Office. Any student who participates in a WISDAA Subdistrict, District or State Festival is eligible to receive a certificate.

8.4. **State Contest:**

8.4.1. **Individual awards** (lapel pin "medals"). Based on points earned by the entry: 25 points = Critic's Choice (gold); 23-24 points = All State (silver); 20-22 points = Finalist (bronze); 5-19 points = Achievement (small bronze).

8.4.2. **Cumulative gold:** students earning gold at four consecutive State festivals earn a Cumulative Critic's Choice medallion. For 2021, 2022, and 2023, that award will substitute for the 2020 season, advancement from subdistrict to district or a 25 at the Open Virtual Speech Festival. This process is automatic, but coaches may submit a claim for students not automatically recognized.

8.4.3. **School award** (plaque): The 25-highest performing entries, **up to one per student participating**, receive team points for awards they earn: Gold = 4 points; Silver = 3 points; Bronze = 2 points; Small Bronze = 1 point. **No ranking is published; if a school makes it to one of the thresholds below, they are recognized for excellence.**

8.4.4. Schools in the top 5% of team points are honored with *Excellence in Speech* awards.

8.4.5. Schools in the top 6-10% of team points are honored with *Distinction in Speech* awards.

8.5. Schools receiving awards, including certificates or plaques, are responsible for engraving specific information such as names and dates.

9. **Concerns/protests**

9.1. The state office shall appoint a referee committee to review complaints or appeals submitted after contests,



including the State level.

- 9.2. Each contest held should assemble a referee committee consisting of at least three people, with another as alternate. Any possible disqualifications or adjudication concerns shall be referred to this group for resolution.
- 9.3. During a contest, individuals may register protests pertaining to violation of rules, which will be investigated by the referee committee for potential action.

9.4. Adjudicator concerns

9.4.1. **Protesting adjudicator scores/comments:** coaches, on behalf of themselves and/or their students, may protest an adjudicator's application of a rule or criterion. The referee committee will review the complaint, but will not interpret adjudicators' written comments, nor reconsider point deductions.

9.4.1.1. At the contest, the referee committee will review the complaint and render a decision.

9.4.1.2. **After subdistrict or district:** coaches may complete the "Adjudicator Concern Form" on the website Speech Contests page, including scan(s) of evaluation sheet(s) in question; this will be reviewed by the State Office, and if valid, referred to the committee enumerated in §8.1.

9.4.1.3. Complaints must be received within five calendar days of the last round/time slot of any contest.

9.4.1.4. For the State contest, decisions of the committee are final and cannot be appealed to the executive director or Board of Control since this committee is already an appeal of adjudication.

9.4.2. **Remediating ineffective adjudication:** coaches may complete the form referenced in §8.4.1.2., selecting "remediation of poor adjudication" as their requested action.

9.4.3. In all cases where a referee committee and/or State Office find adjudication has been ineffective, the office will send written feedback to the adjudicator explaining the concern, and the concern will be documented in the adjudicator's certification record. Each contest shall be considered as one incident. Once a third incident is received for a particular adjudicator, certification will be revoked until such time the adjudicator completes the **Initial** certification training process. Serious infractions involving discrimination and/or violation of law will result in permanent suspension of all WISDAA adjudicator certifications.

9.4.4. For concerns determined to be invalid, the state office will share written feedback with the complainant, explaining why it is not a valid concern.

10. **Harassment & Discrimination:** The Wisconsin Interscholastic Speech & Dramatic Arts Association is committed to fostering safe and supportive learning environments for all student participants and adults at our interscholastic events. This requires mutual respect on the part of all people present. Accordingly, WISDAA prohibits all forms of harassment and discrimination by and to any person, whether written or oral, based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, citizenship, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by any applicable federal, state, or local law. Individuals found to have violated this policy will be subject to a full range of sanctions, up to and including removal from the festival premises.

# Speech Adjudicator Disposition: What to Look For

Compiled from material by Jim Berger, Dorothy Berg, Adam Jacobi, and Carol Krause, Ph.D.

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Adjudicators at a Speech contest come from diverse backgrounds. Some are active or former coaches, some are college professors, and some are college student alumni Speech participants. Others are parents and community members who may not be trained in communication, but who bring enthusiasm. All adjudicators must have a single goal: to give the fairest evaluation possible.

Model adjudicators have **enthusiasm** for Speech, and they show this in their evaluation. Model adjudicators are **confident** of their abilities, and therefore come **prepared**. An essential step in preparation is learning rules of each category. Often adjudicators have personal biases for or against particular performance techniques or certain selections. Rather than allowing biases to influence them, they should allow each category's evaluation criteria to guide them, as well as the overall impact of the performance.

**Even the most experienced adjudicators must review rules annually.** Besides having knowledge of rules, adjudicators of Speech festivals must remember they are not selecting "winners;" rather, they weigh each performance on its own merit.

Effective adjudicators establish a **friendly, cordial** atmosphere. They introduce themselves, and give encouragement to participants before the round. During the performances, adjudicators watch with interest and provide warm, affirming non-verbal feedback. Recognizing that proper dress enhances a student's performance, the model adjudicator will dress appropriately as well – often business casual. Professionalism also means not eating or drinking (except bottled water) in the performance room in which the adjudicator is a guest, and ensuring the room is kept neat for the next round.

The adjudicator's primary responsibility is **writing** a compassionate, constructive evaluation. Effective criticism refers to **specific** words or actions from a student's performance, rather than generalizations such as "good" or "poor" – two words that should never be used. Remembering student performers possess diverse talents, abilities, and backgrounds, adjudicators must refrain from writing harsh comments. Although adjudicators must always maintain standards of excellence and must expose faulty aspects of performance, they must realize that critical comments need to be stated positively. If low ratings are given, they must be combined with constructive suggestions for improvement. Even evaluations of excellent performers should contain specific comments regarding what made the performances excellent. Clear, legible handwriting is essential to every evaluation.

Sometimes time permits adjudicators to orally share general remarks at the end of the rounds. Adjudicators should use this time to commend participants for some **common qualities** in all performances or to suggest **common improvements**. Adjudicators should not use this time to expound upon their own expertise, and should never single out an individual student.

Adjudicators are responsible for establishing the proper atmosphere in the performance room. Model adjudicators are competent, confident, and caring. Their evaluations should encourage students to improve and to pursue excellence. Perhaps no adjudicator is perfect, but those who recognize their responsibilities, who maintain friendly, helpful dispositions, and who keep themselves informed of changing trends in Speech are well on their way to becoming model adjudicators.



# Speech Adjudicator Guidelines



## Before You Adjudicate:

- Familiarize yourself with specific rules and evaluation criteria of categories you will evaluate.
- Make sure you're not adjudicating any students you know personally; report problems to officials.
- Position yourself so your view and hearing for evaluation are unobstructed.

## Common Issues:

- **Double-entry** – Please allow students to leave/arrive between presentations; students are advised to *sign in* at their second room; adjudicators should remain in the room until all signed-in double-entered contestants present. To keep the round moving, you may go out of order and allow present students to perform before others arrive.
- **Accessibility requests** – Incorporate accommodations/modifications as noted on the ballot, without drawing undue attention. Evaluate each contestant on their own merits. Prompting is not allowed except when noted/requested.
- **Time limits** - In all categories except Radio News Reporting, a 15-second grace period will be allowed, after which one point will be deducted from that evaluation. Although there are no minimum time limits, adjudicators may lower scores for unduly short presentations in speech content development or characterization criteria.
- **Disqualification** - If you believe a student is violating rules, please listen to the entire presentation and evaluate the best you can, then report the matter to contest officials, who will investigate and render a decision. Never *announce* disqualification, except *Demonstration Speech, RULE 4, where illicit items may endanger safety*.
- **Source Citation** - Speeches should be well researched with sources cited orally (no printed list of works cited required).
- **Implicit Bias** - We are all influenced by implicit bias, or stereotypes that unconsciously affect our decisions. When adjudicating, our implicit biases negatively impact students who are traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised. Before writing comments or rating, reflect on any biases that may impact your decision-making process.
- **Video (virtual contests)** - Video quality may be impacted by lighting, internet, access to equipment, and other constraints. Your ratings and comments should focus only on the presentation itself and questions in evaluation criteria. Please **watch videos continuously** without pausing, rewinding/rewatching, so you are evaluating the work as if you were watching the presentation live, in person.
- **Face masks** – do not take presence nor absence of masks into account in your evaluation (in-person or videos) as you do not know circumstances by which students may need to be masked.

**Ratings:** Whenever you select a **rating less than 5**, describe how contestants did not meet your expectations. When deducting more than one point, describe *several items* for improvement, or *explain magnitude* of a single issue. If something applies under multiple evaluation items (e.g., soft volume impacted both audibility as well as emotional intensity called for), explain how your concern specifically *relates to each area* (to avoid “double jeopardy”).

Point Rubric

- 1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria
- 2 – Needs many improvements
- 3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice
- 4 – Meets expectations, needs polish
- 5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

Calculate total points, record at the bottom of the evaluation sheet; print name and sign. Strive to find areas for improvement for the subdistrict or district level, so contestants are incentivized to grow. Note scores required to advance: 16 at subdistrict; 21 at district.

**Written Comments:** Make specific written comments apply to criteria for evaluation - leave no area blank. Any *rating less than five should have justification for reduction in score, citing specific examples of what a student did or said*. Be honest, positive, supportive and helpful with suggestions for improvement.

**Oral Evaluation:** At the end of each round, you may give a **brief, generalized** oral evaluation. Avoid individualized evaluations, making sure you are evaluating the **entire** section and not just one individual.

## Return of Forms:

- At the conclusion of each section, record points from signed student evaluation sheets on the ballot provided, making sure points on the ballot are the same as those on the evaluation sheet.
- Sign the ballot and return it, along with the student evaluation sheet (unless otherwise instructed by the festival host) to the festival headquarters.

# Descriptive Words/Phrases for Adjudicators



## Content

layered meaning  
evoke emotion  
thought provoking  
persuasive arguments  
credible evidence  
balanced perspective  
timely source  
coherent  
cohesive  
nuanced  
dynamic  
cutting  
defined central narrative  
compelling plot  
range  
clever  
combination  
compilation  
unified  
convincing  
proficient  
mastered  
insightful  
wealth

## 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  
vivacious  
vigor  
intimate

## Developing/Improving

artificial  
awkward  
broad / vague  
faulty  
flawed  
hindered  
incoherent  
misguided  
monotonous  
repetitive  
scarce  
absent  
incomplete  
lacks  
reassess structure  
requires  
potential  
pulled me out  
distracted  
gimmicky  
gratuitous  
incongruous  
reevaluate motives  
identify purpose

**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

# Rules for Expository Speech



## Purpose of the Category

---

To develop skills in describing, clarifying, illustrating, or defining an object, idea, concept, or process.

## Definition of the Category

---

An expository speech provides a speech focused on informing an audience within the time allotted. The speech must present valuable and significant information, citing outside sources where appropriate. Any other purpose such as to entertain or convince must be secondary.

## Rules

---

1. The speech must be written by the participant.
2. Visuals are not permitted.
3. Maximum time: 5 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the speech is open to critique.
4. The speech may be presented from memory or extemporaneously with limited notes on one or both sides of one 4"x 6" paper note card. Students should not recite from a word-for-word manuscript.

## Criteria for Evaluation

---

1. **Topic:** How does the speaker justify the relevance of the topic? How does the speaker engage the audience in understanding the topic?
2. **Content/Organization:** Is the speech well-developed and organized in the time allotted? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions? Is information accurate, documented, and cited correctly when appropriate?
3. **Language/Style:** Is the speech well written? How does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills utilized throughout?
4. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
5. **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?



# Expository Speech Evaluation

Max: **5 Min.** (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating ↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Topic:** How does the speaker justify the relevance of the topic? How does the speaker engage the audience in understanding the topic?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Content/Organization:** Is the speech well-developed and organized in the time allotted? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions? Is information accurate, documented, and cited correctly when appropriate?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Language/Style:** Is the speech well written? How does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills utilized throughout?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:

# Rules for Extemporaneous Speech



## Purpose of the Category

To develop skills in researching and retrieving information in response to a specific question in a limited time frame. The response to the question should be delivered as a coherent and well-developed speech.

## Definition of the Category

An Extemporaneous Speech contestant must phrase a clear answer to the question and support it with evidence and reasoning. Prior to contests, contestants access and familiarize themselves with published or online books, magazines, newspapers, journals, and other periodicals, to have a functional current events literacy.

## Rules

1. Contestants may not annotate/add notes to any sources they access or bring with them, other than to document source attribution/date. Full (uncut), unannotated sources must be present to verify legitimacy. A topical index without annotation may be present.
2. One-half hour before their assigned speaking time, each contestant will draw five questions, choose one, and return the remaining four. The State Office provides questions for contests drawn from recent credible news sources; contest managers provide identical sets of questions for each section (room). A student may not speak on the same question more than once during a particular contest.
  - a. Each contestant may bring a fully-charged internet-enabled electronic retrieval device, such as a laptop, but may not use electrical outlets. Devices must remain in the prep room until the student has completed all rounds, with the exception of cell phones to be used for timing during a round.
  - b. Contestants must write their own speeches during preparation time, without consulting/using prepared speeches, outlines, notes, or parts of speeches – such as introductions, conclusions, or other prepared materials. Students may not write speeches on an electronic device and may not consult other people. Students may not access audio, video, or other multimedia.
  - c. Students using an electronic device must allow contest staff to inspect what they are accessing at any time; otherwise, they may be disqualified. Contest staff may place stickers/tape to help identify devices.
  - d. WISDAA does not assume any liability for lost, stolen, or damaged devices. Host schools may provide wireless internet access, but will not guarantee that contestants will be able to gain access when needed. Contestants choosing to use laptop computers and/or related devices accept the risk of equipment failure.
3. Before speaking, the participant must provide the adjudicator with the question actually drawn.
4. Maximum time: 7 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the speech is open to critique. Contestants may use a cell phone only as a timing device. Officials may verify usage.
5. The speech may be presented from memory or extemporaneously with limited notes on one or both sides of one 4"x 6" paper note card, uniformly provided to all contestants by the host school. Students should not recite from a word-for-word manuscript. Visuals are not permitted.
6. Contestants may remain to hear other speeches, excused when they must leave for subsequent draws.

## Criteria for Evaluation

1. **Topic:** How does the speaker directly answer the question chosen? Is the response well-defined, showing clear understanding in answering the question?
2. **Content/Organization:** Is the speech well-developed and organized? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions? Does the speaker support the response with evidence and reasoning and cite credible sources appropriately?
3. **Language/Style:** How does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills utilized throughout the speech? How does the style of delivery help the speech flow?
4. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
5. **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?



# Extemporaneous Speech Evaluation

Max: 7 Min. (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating ↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Topic:** How does the speaker directly answer the question chosen? Is the response well-defined, showing clear understanding in answering the question?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Content/Organization:** Is the speech well-developed and organized? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions? Does the speaker support the response with evidence and reasoning and cite credible sources appropriately?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Language/Style:** How does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills utilized throughout the speech? How does the style of delivery help the speech flow?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:



# Rules for Farrago



---

## Purpose of the Category

To develop skills in identifying, selecting, combining, and presenting quality literature from a variety of genres which is connected by a specific theme or emotion.

---

## Definition of the Category

The challenge of Farrago is to select material from a variety of literary genres (poetry, short stories, speeches, essays, drama, songs, novels), which address a central specific theme or emotion and to interpret material through oral presentation. **Quality material** is required – that which provides insight into human values, motivations, relationships, problems, and understandings, and is not characterized by sentimentality, violence for its own sake, unmotivated endings, or stereotyped characterizations.

---

## Rules

1. Original material is not allowed. The reader should choose material from no fewer than two different literary genres, which have a common theme or emotion. An introduction – written by the student and presented without use of notes – is required to establish unity of development of the chosen theme. The student may read a portion of a selection (teaser) from their manuscript before beginning the introduction. Each contestant may choose one of two approaches for delivering their program:
  - a. Delivering each selection/piece of source material separately, with transitions between them for coherence, which identify each selection's title, author, and genre; **or**
  - b. Including all titles, authors, and genres in the introduction and interweaving selections without formal transitions. ***Students must announce they are presenting a transitionless program.***
2. The selections are to be read from a paper manuscript. A copy of all source material must be available for inspection.
3. Costumes, props, music, or other audio-visuals may not be used.
4. Maximum time: 10 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. Vocal music, if used, must be incidental and no more than thirty (30) seconds total, after which there will be a one-point deduction. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the presentation is open to critique.
5. Purposeful platform movement appropriate for selections to suggest relationships, feelings, changes, ideas, moods, locales, etc. – as well as transitions between selections – is acceptable and subject to evaluation.

---

## Criteria for Evaluation

1. **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the speaker deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that include titles, authors, and genres? How does the speaker connect the material to their selected theme?
2. **Quality Material:** How does the chosen material provide insight into human values, motivations, relationships, problems, and understandings without sentimentality, violence for its own sake, unmotivated endings or stereotyped characterizations? (Original material is not allowed.)
3. **Conveying Meaning:** Does the speaker understand the material? How does the speaker portray the meaning to the audience through the presentation? Are the intellectual, emotional, and sensory experiences of the material made vivid by the speaker's engagement with the materials chosen?
4. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
5. **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and physical presence enhance the presentation? Does the speaker use appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?



# Farrago Evaluation

Max: **10 Min.** (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating ↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the speaker deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that include titles, authors, and genres? How does the speaker connect the material to their selected theme?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Quality Material:** How does the chosen material provide insight into human values, motivations, relationships, problems, and understandings without sentimentality, violence for its own sake, unmotivated endings or stereotyped characterizations? (Original material is not allowed.)

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Conveying Meaning:** Does the speaker understand the material? How does the speaker portray the meaning to the audience through the presentation? Are the intellectual, emotional, and sensory experiences of the material made vivid by the speaker's engagement with the materials chosen?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and physical presence enhance the presentation? Does the speaker use appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Vocal Music Penalty (-1):

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:

# Rules for Group Interpretive Reading



## Purpose of the Category

To develop skills related to the ensemble interpretive reading of a literary script.

## Definition of the Category

Contrary to dramatic performance, the challenge of this category is to compile and present a literary script in such manner that the audience imagines action being described rather than witnessing it being performed. Symbolic characterization and vocal and physical action, rather than a literal dramatization or pantomime, is required. Ideas are imagined through oral reading and not through acting; therefore, the ensemble of oral readers act as a medium of expression for the audience. Group Interpretive Reading is an ensemble presentation by **2-5 readers**.

## Rules

1. Original material is allowed, but is open to critique.
2. The script may be a cutting, a complete work, or a script compiled from a variety of sources, including prose, poetry, or essay – or a combination of these forms – but drama (play for theatre, screen, or radio) as source material is prohibited. A copy of all source material must be available for inspection.
3. An introduction – written by the group and presented without use of notes – is required. The group may read a portion of a selection (teaser) from their manuscript before beginning the introduction. The group may choose one of two approaches for delivering their program:
  - a. Delivering each selection/piece of source material separately, with transitions between them for coherence, which identify each selection's title, author, and genre; or
  - b. Including all titles, authors, and genres in the introduction and interweaving selections without formal transitions. *Students must announce they are presenting a transitionless program.*
4. Each participant is required to read from the printed page of a paper manuscript or book with optional use of chairs or stools and reading stands provided by students, but not used as props. Costumes and props (including using the script as a prop rather than a script), are not allowed. Merely dressing alike or coordinated outfits is **not** considered costuming.
5. Movement to suggest relationships, feelings, changes, ideas, moods, locales, etc., consistent with the offstage focus of the presentation and appropriate to the script is acceptable and subject to evaluation. Onstage focus (direct eye contact) and physical contact (touching) between participants is prohibited. No mechanically produced sound effects are permitted.
6. Maximum time: 12 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. Vocal music, if used, must be incidental and no more than thirty (30) seconds total, after which there will be a one-point deduction. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the presentation is open to critique.

## Criteria for Evaluation

1. **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the group deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that include title(s) and author(s)? How well does the group set theme, tone, and mood for the material?
2. **Conveying Meaning:** How does the group portray its understanding of the literature and intended meaning to the audience? How effectively do the speakers express the intellectual (what is happening), emotional (how it feels), and sensory experiences of the material?
3. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the group utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct? Do the group members' voices blend together in unison when appropriate?
4. **Physical Delivery:** How does the group utilize appropriate physical techniques and gestures to enhance the presentation? Do the speakers use appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience, while maintaining off-stage focus? Are scripts handled as scripts rather than props?
5. **Overall Effect:** Is the performance well-paced and unified? How does each group member contribute to the total effect?



# Group Interpretive Reading Evaluation

Max: 12 Min. (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating ↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the group deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that include title(s) and author(s)? How well does the group set theme, tone, and mood for the material?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Conveying Meaning:** How does the group portray its understanding of the literature and intended meaning to the audience? How effectively do the speakers express the intellectual (what is happening), emotional (how it feels), and sensory experiences of the material?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the group utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct? Do the group members' voices blend together in unison when appropriate?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Physical Delivery:** How does the group utilize appropriate physical techniques and gestures to enhance the presentation? Do the speakers use appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience, while maintaining off-stage focus? Are scripts handled as scripts rather than props?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Overall Effect:** Is the performance well-paced and unified? How does each group member contribute to the total effect?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Vocal Music Penalty (-1):

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:

# Rules for Impromptu Speech



## Purpose of the Category

---

To develop skills in developing a spontaneous response to a specific prompt in a limited time frame.

## Definition of the Category

---

The Impromptu Speech should provide a direct response to the prompt drawn with an original, well-organized and imaginative interpretation, supported by examples. The challenge to the speaker is to phrase pertinent information sufficient to support the central thought of the topic and organized according to some logical plan to produce a complete speech within the time allowed.

## Rules

---

1. The State Office will share topic prompts with festival managers, devising these from proverbs, objects, abstract words, events, quotations, hypothetical questions, and famous people. Each round, the festival will provide the adjudicator for each section with envelope of a uniform set of topics.
2. The adjudicator will call one contestant at a time to draw three topics, select one, and return the other two to the envelope. Once that is done, the adjudicator will begin timing; the student has a total of 5 minutes to prepare and speak, and may not receive advice, information, or suggestions from anyone. Use of preparation versus speaking time is at the student's discretion, but subject to critique by the adjudicator. When the student is ready to speak, the adjudicator must be ready to listen and evaluate. Students should remain in the room for the entire round to listen to other speakers.
3. Props or visuals are not permitted.
4. Maximum time: 5 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the speech is open to critique.
5. Students may not bring materials – including prepared speeches, outlines, notes, or parts of speeches (introductions, conclusions, etc.) – into contest rooms; they must rely on background knowledge and memory of personal experiences. The speech must be created during the round, optionally using one uniform 4" x 6" note card provided by the contest, for limited notes.
6. Speakers may use a cell phone only as a timing device. Adjudicators may request to verify usage. *Adjudicators may note prep time on the evaluation form as a portion of the overall time.*

## Criteria for Evaluation

---

1. **Topic:** How does the speaker directly answer the prompt chosen? Is the response well-defined, showing clear understanding in responding to the prompt?
2. **Content/Organization:** Is the speech well-developed and organized? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions? Does the speaker support the response with relevant personal insight, examples, reasoning, and utilize examples to their best knowledge?
3. **Language/Style:** How does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills utilized throughout the speech? How does the style of delivery help the speech flow?
4. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
5. **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?



# Impromptu Speech Evaluation

Max: <b>5 Min.</b> (15-sec. grace period)	Round:
Prep Time:	Total Time:

Name/ Code:	Topic/ Title:
Circle <b>and</b> explain a rating for <u>each</u> area, <b>reinforcing strengths</b> and <b>providing suggestions</b> for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.	
Rating ↓	1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria 2 – Needs many improvements 3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice 4 – Meets expectations, needs polish 5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Topic:** How does the speaker directly answer the prompt chosen? Is the response well-defined, showing clear understanding in responding to the prompt? 1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Content/Organization:** Is the speech well-developed and organized? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions? Does the speaker support the response with relevant personal insight, examples, reasoning, and utilize examples to their best knowledge? 1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Language/Style:** How does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills utilized throughout the speech? How does the style of delivery help the speech flow? 1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct? 1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience? 1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Penalty (-1):		
Adjudicator Signature:	Print Name/Code:	Total Points:



# Rules for Informative/Demonstration Speech



## Purpose of the Category

---

To develop skills in explaining, defining, describing, illustrating, and/or exhibiting a process.

## Definition of the Category

---

An informative speaker offers new information, fresh perspective, and/or instruction to allow an audience to gain knowledge and understanding of a topic and/or process. Visual aids (charts, graphs, diagrams, maps, images, objects, etc.) are optional. The speech must be instructive and present valuable and significant information, citing outside sources where appropriate. Any other purpose such as to entertain or convince must be secondary.

## Rules

---

1. There may be one or two speakers.
2. The speech must be written by the participant(s).
3. Audio/visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Appropriate uniform/clothing may be worn to facilitate demonstration of processes. All visuals, props, and equipment are to be supplied by the speaker(s); however, the use of digital presentations, videos, and other projection is not allowed. Props or equipment that would endanger any participant, or violate local (including host school) or state laws are prohibited. This includes but is not limited to: weapons of any kind, sharp knives, dangerous chemicals, and animals.
4. Contestants may arrange volunteers from the audience in their room before the round starts, but should be prepared to present without a volunteer.
5. Maximum time: 10 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted (setup/strike-down is no longer part of timing, but students should be respectful of time). There is no minimum time requirement but development of the speech is open to critique.
6. The speech may be presented from memory or extemporaneously with limited notes on one or both sides of one (per speaker) 4"x 6" paper note card. Students should not recite from a word-for-word manuscript.

## Criteria for Evaluation

---

1. **Topic:** How does the speaker justify the relevance of the topic? How does the speaker engage the audience in understanding the topic?
2. **Content/Organization:** Is the speech well-developed and organized? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion? Is information accurate, documented, and cited correctly when appropriate?
3. **Language/Style:** How does the entry utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills used throughout? How does the style of delivery help the flow of the speech? If two speakers, do they work well together?
4. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the entry utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
5. **Physical Delivery:** How does the entry utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the entry utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience? If used, how did visual(s) aid in understanding the speech, or were they unnecessary for that purpose, or distracting?



# Informative/Demonstration Speech Evaluation

Max: 10 Min. (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating ↓

- 1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria
- 2 – Needs many improvements
- 3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice
- 4 – Meets expectations, needs polish
- 5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Topic:** How does the speaker justify the relevance of the topic and commitment to developing the speech? How does the speaker engage the audience in understanding the topic?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Content/Organization:** Is the speech well-developed and organized? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion? Is information accurate, documented, and cited correctly when appropriate?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Language/Style:** How does the entry utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills used throughout? How does the style of delivery help the flow of the speech? If two speakers, do they work well together?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the entry utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Physical Delivery:** How does the entry utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the entry utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience? If used, how did visual(s) aid in understanding the speech, or were they unnecessary for that purpose, or distracting?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:

# Rules for Moments in History Speech



## Purpose of the Category

To develop the skills in research and speaking related to an historical focus.

## Definition of the Category

The challenge to the speaker is to select an historical topic within the limits presented each year by WISDAA. The topic need not have been well-publicized. The general focus for a speech in this category is an exploration of history. Students may consider (but are not limited to) using the following areas of research: archival records, diaries, personal interviews, letters, newspapers, etc. The speaker is to use this researched information to compose and present a well-organized, informative speech. Speakers may use visual materials, but such materials must support, not dominate, the presentation. This category calls for a speech, not a visual media show nor an acting performance.

## Rules

1. The speech must be written by the participant.
2. Visuals are optional, but may not be worn. Mechanical sound and lighting are not allowed. The use of digital presentations, videos, and other projection is not allowed.
3. Maximum time: 6 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the speech is open to critique.
4. The speech may be presented from memory or extemporaneously with limited notes on one or both sides of one 4"x 6" paper note card. Students should not recite from a word-for-word manuscript.
5. Research from outside sources should be cited orally within the speech, adjudicators will consider this in their evaluation of the "content" criterion; WISDAA is no longer requiring a printed list of works cited.

## Criteria for Evaluation

1. **Topic:** How does the speaker demonstrate a commitment to and understanding of the topic by justifying its relevance within the given time period? How engaged is the speaker with the chosen topic?
2. **Content/Organization:** Is the speech organized and well-developed in the time allotted? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions? Is information accurate, documented, and cited correctly when appropriate?
3. **Language/Style:** How does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills used throughout? How does the style of delivery help the flow of the speech?
4. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
5. **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience? If used, how did visual(s) aid in understanding the speech, or were they unnecessary for that purpose, or distracting?

## 2023-24 Time Period (either time period or a combination of both)

1900-1919 and/or 1970-1979

Students may consider, but are not limited to these topic areas:  
Politics or Military Action  
Ethnology/Legends/Folklore  
Fashion and Fads  
Historical Sites/Monuments  
Science/Inventions/Medicine  
Heroes or Villains

Significant Speech  
Natural Disasters  
Arts and Entertainment  
Personalities

Geography  
Sports  
Religion  
Transportation



# Moments in History Speech Evaluation

Max: 6 Min. (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating ↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Topic:** How does the speaker demonstrate a commitment to and understanding of the topic by justifying its relevance within the given time period? How engaged is the speaker with the chosen topic?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Content/Organization:** Is the speech organized and well-developed in the time allotted? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions? Is information accurate, documented, and cited correctly when appropriate?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Language/Style:** How does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills used throughout? How does the style of delivery help the flow of the speech?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience? If used, how did visual(s) aid in understanding the speech, or were they unnecessary for that purpose, or distracting?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:

# Rules for Oratory Speech



## Purpose of the Category

---

To develop skills in composing and presenting a persuasive formal speech on a significant topic of the speaker's choosing. The presentation should be delivered as a coherent and well-developed speech.

## Definition of the Category

---

The oration is expected to be a thoroughly prepared, well-composed, and well-expressed speech of persuasion on a significant topic. As such, the oration must be unequivocally persuasive in its purpose. It may fulfill its persuasive challenge in one of three ways: 1) by urging the audience to shift or affirm their attitudes on a particular issue; 2) by affirming existence of a problem and urging personal action by the audience; or 3) by affirming existence of a problem and urging adoption of a policy. While the topic of the oration should be of significance to general society, it should be adapted to an audience composed of the speaker's peers. An effective oration is characterized by clear, vivid, and forceful language and appropriate stylistic devices such as metaphor, comparison/contrast, irony, allusion, analogy, etc. Quality supporting materials are a necessary part of the oration.

## Rules

---

1. The speech is to be written by the participant.
2. Visuals are not permitted.
3. Maximum time: 10 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the speech is open to critique.
4. The speech may be presented from memory or extemporaneously with limited notes on one or both sides of one 4"x 6" paper note card. Students should not recite from a word-for-word manuscript.
5. Research from outside sources should be cited orally within the speech, adjudicators will consider this in their evaluation of the "content" criterion; WISDAA is no longer requiring a printed list of works cited.

## Criteria for Evaluation

---

1. **Topic:** Does the speaker present a formal speech on a significant topic? How does the speaker fulfill the persuasive challenge? How does the speaker appear engaged with the chosen topic?
2. **Content/Organization:** Is the speech well-developed and organized? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions? Is information accurate, documented, and cited correctly when appropriate?
3. **Language/Style:** Does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills utilized throughout to send a persuasive message? Are stylistic devices used appropriately? How does the style of delivery help the speech flow?
4. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
5. **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?



# Oratory Speech Evaluation

Max: **10 Min.** (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating  
↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Topic:** Does the speaker present a formal speech on a significant topic? How does the speaker fulfill the persuasive challenge? How does the speaker appear engaged with the chosen topic?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Content/Organization:** Is the speech well-developed and organized? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions? Is information accurate, documented, and cited correctly when appropriate?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Language/Style:** Does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills utilized throughout to send a persuasive message? Are stylistic devices used appropriately? How does the style of delivery help the speech flow?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:



# Rules for Play Acting



## Purpose of the Category

---

To develop skills in an ensemble dramatic presentation of a scene or cutting from a play.

## Definition of the Category

---

Participants perform a scene or cutting from a play with emphasis on character development and appropriate physical movement. Participants may play more than one character; however, extreme fragmentation of actors into multiple roles may have a severely adverse impact on the ability to develop a believable character portrayal during the limited time available. Play Acting is an ensemble presentation by **2-5 actors**.

## Rules

---

1. Original material is allowed, but must conform to character and plot development and is subject to critique.
2. The script may be a **cutting from or a complete work of one drama (play for theatre, screen, or radio)**. Non-original scripts must be published. A copy of the play script must be available for inspection.
3. Participants must memorize lines from a play script.
4. Introductions and any necessary transitions are to be written by the group and presented without the use of notes. The group may perform a portion of play (teaser) before beginning the introduction.
5. Participants should move as they would in a fully produced play, but without costumes, makeup, lights, or props. Merely dressing alike or coordinated outfits is **not** considered costuming. Available table, desk, and/or chairs are permitted; any other hand props and set pieces are not permitted. Physical actions other than stage movement will need to be pantomimed; however, actors may physically touch each other during the performance. Mechanical or electronic sound effects are also prohibited.
6. Maximum time: 12 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. Vocal music, if used, must be incidental and no more than thirty (30) seconds total, after which there will be a one-point deduction. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the performance is open to critique.

## Criteria for Evaluation

---

1. **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the group deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that includes title and author(s)? How well does the group set theme, tone and mood for the play?
2. **Conveying Meaning:** How do the speakers project the motivations, emotions, and interrelationships of the characters to the audience? Are the characters believable? Does the scene build to a climax?
3. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the group utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct? Are characters vocally portrayed realistically and consistently?
4. **Physical Delivery:** Is the group consistent in blocking, miming actions, and maintaining an on-stage focus? How are the characters physically portrayed in a physically realistic and consistent manner?
5. **Overall Effect:** Is the performance a well-paced, unified presentation? How does each member of the group contribute to the total effect?



# Play Acting Evaluation

Max: **12 Min.** (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating  
↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the group deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that includes title and author(s)? How well does the group set theme, tone and mood for the play?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Conveying Meaning:** How do the speakers project the motivations, emotions, and interrelationships of the characters to the audience? Are the characters believable? Does the scene build to a climax?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the group utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct? Are characters vocally portrayed realistically and consistently?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Physical Delivery:** Is the group consistent in blocking, miming actions, and maintaining an on-stage focus? How are the characters physically portrayed in a physically realistic and consistent manner?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Overall Effect:** Is the performance a well-paced, unified presentation? How does each member of the group contribute to the total effect?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Vocal Music Penalty (-1):

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:

# Rules for Poetry Reading



## Purpose of the Category

---

To develop skills in conveying an understanding of poetry through use of body and voice.

## Definition of the Category

---

The participant should select one or more poems centering on a specific theme or emotion. The presentation is read from a manuscript.

## Rules

---

1. Original material is allowed, but is open to critique.
2. An introduction – written by the student and presented without use of notes – is required to establish unity of development of the chosen theme. The student may read a portion of a selection (teaser) from their manuscript before beginning the introduction. Each contestant may choose one of two approaches for delivering their program:
  - a. Delivering each selection/piece of source material separately, with transitions between them for coherence, which identify each selection's title, author, and genre; **or**
  - b. Including all titles, authors, and genres in the introduction and interweaving selections without formal transitions. *Students must announce they are presenting a transitionless program.*
3. Material is to be read from a paper manuscript.
4. Costumes and props may not be used.
5. Maximum time: 8 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. Vocal music, if used, must be incidental and no more than thirty (30) seconds total, after which there will be a one-point deduction. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the presentation is open to critique.
6. Purposeful platform movement appropriate for selections to suggest relationships, feelings, changes, ideas, moods, locales, etc. – as well as transitions between selections – is acceptable and subject to evaluation.

## Criteria for Evaluation

---

1. **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the speaker deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that include titles and authors? How well does the speaker establish theme, tone, and mood for the material?
2. **Conveying Meaning:** How does the speaker portray the meaning to the audience through the presentation? Are intellectual (what is happening), emotional (how it feels), and sensory experiences of the material made vivid by the speaker's presentation of the poem(s) chosen?
3. **Poetic Style:** How does the speaker recognize and appropriately use special effects of poetry such as rhythm, cadence, alliteration, and assonance? How does the style of delivery move the selection(s) along?
4. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
5. **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and physical presence enhance the presentation? Does the speaker use appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?



# Poetry Reading Evaluation

Max: **8 Min.** (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating ↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the speaker deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that include titles and authors? How well does the speaker establish theme, tone, and mood for the material?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Conveying Meaning:** How does the speaker portray the meaning to the audience through the presentation? Are intellectual (what is happening), emotional (how it feels), and sensory experiences of the material made vivid by the speaker's presentation of the poem(s) chosen?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Poetic Style:** How does the speaker recognize and appropriately use special effects of poetry such as rhythm, cadence, alliteration, and assonance? How does the style of delivery move the selection(s) along?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and physical presence enhance the presentation? Does the speaker use appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Vocal Music Penalty (-1):

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:

# Rules for Prose Reading



---

## Purpose of the Category

To develop skills in conveying an understanding of prose literature through use of body and voice.

---

## Definition of the Category

The participant should select one or more works of prose literature, including short stories, cutting from novels, drama, essays, or other non-fiction work, centering on a specific theme or emotion. The presentation is read from a manuscript.

---

## Rules

1. Original material is allowed, but is open to critique.
2. An introduction – written by the student and presented without use of notes – is required to establish unity of development of the chosen theme. The student may read a portion of a selection (teaser) from their manuscript before beginning the introduction. Each contestant may choose one of two approaches for delivering their program:
  - a. Delivering each selection/piece of source material separately, with transitions between them for coherence, which identify each selection's title, author, and genre; **or**
  - b. Including all titles, authors, and genres in the introduction and interweaving selections without formal transitions. *Students must announce they are presenting a transitionless program.*
3. Material is to be read from a paper manuscript.
4. Costumes and props may not be used.
5. Maximum time: 8 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. Vocal music, if used, must be incidental and no more than thirty (30) seconds total, after which there will be a one-point deduction. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the presentation is open to critique.
6. Purposeful platform movement appropriate for selections to suggest relationships, feelings, changes, ideas, moods, locales, etc. – as well as transitions between selections – is acceptable and subject to evaluation.

---

## Criteria for Evaluation

1. **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the speaker deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that include titles and authors? How well does the speaker establish theme, tone, and mood for the material?
2. **Conveying Meaning:** How does the speaker portray the meaning to the audience through the presentation? Are intellectual (what is happening), emotional (how it feels), and sensory experiences of the material made vivid by the speaker's presentation of the material chosen?
3. **Narrative Style:** How does the speaker use a style of reading that is appropriate to the material? How does the speaker draw the audience in through their delivery? How does use of inflection, force, and timing enhance the performance?
4. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
5. **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize physical techniques? How do gestures and physical presence enhance the presentation? Does the speaker use appropriate eye contact and facial expression to engage the audience?



# Prose Reading Evaluation

Max: **8 Min.** (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating ↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the speaker deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that include titles and authors? How well does the speaker establish theme, tone, and mood for the material?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Conveying Meaning:** How does the speaker portray the meaning to the audience through the presentation? Are intellectual (what is happening), emotional (how it feels), and sensory experiences of the material made vivid by the speaker's presentation of the material chosen?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Narrative Style:** How does the speaker use a style of reading that is appropriate to the material? How does the speaker draw the audience in through their delivery? How does use of inflection, force, and timing enhance the performance?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize physical techniques? How do gestures and physical presence enhance the presentation? Does the speaker use appropriate eye contact and facial expression to engage the audience?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Vocal Music Penalty (-1):

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:



# Rules for Public Address Speech



## Purpose of the Category

---

To develop the skill of providing a direct response to a current issue. The response to the question should be delivered as a coherent and well-developed speech or two speeches ("Pro-Con") of opposing advocacy.

## Definition of the Category

---

The challenge to the speaker is to contribute to the public dialog on a contemporary issue by presenting a well-informed speech – or two contrasting pro/con speeches – directly responding to a question about that issue, selected from a list provided annually by WISDAA. The speaker is to be knowledgeable and is to use quality supporting material to substantiate their position. Public Address speeches should be well-organized, clear, and effectively presented.

## Rules

---

1. The speech(es) must be written by the participant. Each contestant may choose one of two approaches:
  - 1.1. Delivering a single speech that takes a specific position in answering the question; **or**
  - 1.2. Presenting two back-to-back speeches, about equal in length, that present opposing perspectives in response to the question. *Students must announce they are presenting **Pro-Con speeches**.*
2. Visuals are not permitted.
3. Maximum time: 8 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the speech(es) is open to critique.
4. The speech(es) may be presented from memory or extemporaneously with limited notes on one or both sides of one 4"x 6" paper note card. Students should not recite from a word-for-word manuscript.
5. Research from outside sources should be cited orally within the speech(es); adjudicators will consider this in their evaluation of the "content" criterion; WISDAA is no longer requiring a printed list of works cited.

## Criteria for Evaluation

---

1. **Topic:** How direct and defined is(are) the speaker's response(s) to – and analysis of – the question selected?
2. **Content/Organization:** Is(are) the speech(es) organized and well-developed, with clear introduction, body, and conclusion and effective transitions? Is information accurate, documented, and cited correctly when appropriate?
3. **Language/Style:** Does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills utilized throughout to send a persuasive message? Are stylistic devices used appropriately? How does the style of delivery help the flow of ideas?
4. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
5. **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?

## 2023-24 Topic Questions (choose one)

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1. To what degree, if any, should generative artificial intelligence be regulated and by whom?
2. To what extent, if any, should schools require community service as a graduation requirement?
3. What actions, if any, should be taken by the government to ensure an individual's right to privacy?
4. What standards and processes, if any, should be used in determining appropriate content/books/texts in classrooms and school libraries?
5. What, if anything, should the government do to address economic inequality (e.g., minimum wage, jobs programs, food/housing security)?



# Public Address Speech Evaluation

✓ if Pro-Con	Max: <b>8 Min.</b> (15-sec. grace period)	
	Round:	Time:

Name/ Code:	Topic/ Title:		
Circle <b>and</b> explain a rating for <u>each</u> area, <b>reinforcing strengths</b> and <b>providing suggestions</b> for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.	<table><tr><td>Rating ↓</td><td>1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria 2 – Needs many improvements 3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice 4 – Meets expectations, needs polish 5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations</td></tr></table>	Rating ↓	1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria 2 – Needs many improvements 3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice 4 – Meets expectations, needs polish 5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations
Rating ↓	1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria 2 – Needs many improvements 3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice 4 – Meets expectations, needs polish 5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations		

(1). **Topic:** How direct and defined is(are) the speaker's response(s) to – and analysis of – the question selected?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(2). **Content/Organization:** Is(are) the speech(es) organized and well-developed, with clear introduction, body, and conclusion and effective transitions? Is information accurate, documented, and cited correctly when appropriate?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(3). **Language/Style:** Does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills utilized throughout to send a persuasive message? Are stylistic devices used appropriately? How does the style of delivery help the flow of ideas?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(4). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(5). **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Overtime Penalty (-1):		
Adjudicator Signature:	Print Name/Code:	Total Points:

# Rules for Radio News Reporting



## Purpose of the Category

To develop the skills in selecting, editing, and organizing news items for vocal presentation.

## Definition of the Category

The challenge to the speaker is to present a well-organized, clearly communicated newscast. Source material provided by the state office of approximately 15-20 minutes in length is to be cut and edited with special efforts made to end at 5 minutes. Host schools should provide adjudicators with a copy of the material given to speakers.

## Rules

1. The speaker may delete or edit any parts of items from the provided material; however, no new articles may be added except transition sentences, introductions, and conclusions. Different material of 15 to 20 minutes in length will be provided for each round.
2. One-half hour before speaking, the participant will receive source material. Identical material will be provided for each participant at scheduled intervals each round, with enough printed copies for every contestant.
  - a. Some in-person contests may offer contestants the ability to connect to their WIFI network to receive and edit their packet digitally. Contestants wishing to do so must bring a fully-charged internet-enabled electronic device, such as a laptop, but may not use electrical outlets. Students must only use the material provided and may not use the internet connection for any other purpose.
  - b. Students using an electronic device must allow contest staff to inspect what they are accessing at any time; otherwise, they may be disqualified. Contest staff may place stickers/tape to help identify devices.
  - c. WISDAA does not assume any liability for lost, stolen, or damaged devices. Host schools may provide wireless internet access, but will not guarantee that contestants will be able to gain access when needed. Contestants choosing to use laptop computers and/or related devices accept the risk of equipment failure.
3. The newscast will include WISDAA-supplied news, weather, sports and one or more commercials advertising some product or service. Commercials will be supplied, which the student may use as written or may be edited/embellished to further enhance the product or service, but no material may be added. The commercial(s) may be inserted at any point but must be included within time limits. The contestant must present in one newsreader voice. Multiple voices are not permitted except for the commercial(s).
4. Any use of audio/visuals is not permitted. The speaker is to be seated in profile position to the adjudicator, who should critique vocal presentation only. Students are welcome to remain in the room to hear other contestants; they may ask to be excused when they must report to draw for a subsequent round.
5. The speaker must supply their own stopwatch (cell phone acceptable) and equipment for cutting, editing, and reading the newscast. The contestant may edit and read from a digital device as well as paper.
6. The speaker is expected to finish "on the nose;" within 10 seconds of the 5-minute time limit; however, beyond those limits one (1) point will be subtracted for each ten seconds away from 4 minutes 50 seconds or 5 minutes 10 seconds; see chart below for guidance on the first ranges for point deductions; further groupings of time result in additional points deducted. After 6 minutes has passed, the adjudicator should stop the presentation.

0 pts.	- 1 pt.	- 2 pts.	- 3 pts.	- 4 pts.	- 5 pts.	etc. →
4:50-5:00	4:40-4:49	4:30-4:39	4:20-4:29	4:10-4:19	4:00-4:09	Continue deductions...
5:00-5:10	5:11-5:20	5:21-5:30	5:31-5:40	5:41-5:50	5:51-6:00	Stop contestant.

## Criteria for Evaluation

1. **Newscast:** Does the speaker provide a clear and logical organization of the script? Are elements of international, national, and state news, weather, sports, and commercial(s) presented in a balanced manner?
2. **Broadcast Style:** How does the speaker use effective and engaging language skills, including introductions, smooth transitions, and conclusions? How does style of delivery create a professional sounding broadcast?
3. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct? Does the voice sound confident, clear, and pleasant?
4. **Commercial:** How is the commercial presented as an important element to the newscast without overshadowing other news elements? How well does the speaker "sell" the product or service?
5. **Overall Effect:** Is the newscast delivered without unnatural speeding up or slowing down? How authentic does the speaker make the newscast sound, including utilizing one, professional voice?



# Radio News Reporting Evaluation

Max: **5 Min.** (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating  
↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Newscast:** Does the speaker provide a clear and logical organization of the script? Are elements of international, national, and state news, weather, sports, and commercial(s) presented in a balanced manner?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Broadcast Style:** How does the speaker use effective and engaging language skills, including introductions, smooth transitions, and conclusions? How does style of delivery create a professional sounding broadcast?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct? Does the voice sound confident, clear, and pleasant?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Commercial:** How is the commercial presented as an important element to the newscast without overshadowing other news elements? How well does the speaker “sell” the product or service?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Overall Effect:** Is the newscast delivered without unnatural speeding up or slowing down? How authentic does the speaker make the newscast sound, including utilizing one, professional voice?

1 2 3 4 5

**Time Penalty** –1 for each increment of 10 seconds, or ***fraction thereof***, over/under:

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

**Total  
Points:**

# Rules for Solo Acting Humorous / Serious



## Purpose of the Category

---

To develop skills in the presentation of dramatic literature.

## Definition of the Category

---

The material shall be a cutting from serious or humorous drama or other literature adapted to the dramatic format with brief narrative transitions allowed that includes any number of characters. By using the self as a medium between the selection and the audience, the student shall create the character(s) and shall utilize action appropriate to the characterization(s) within the control of the setting. **Quality material** is required: that which provides insight into human values, motivations, relationships, problems, and understandings, and is not characterized by sentimentality, violence for its own sake, unmotivated endings, or stereotyped characterizations.

## Rules

---

1. Original material may not be used. The source material must be published.
2. A copy of original source material must be available for inspection.
3. The presentation must be memorized.
4. An introduction, written by the student, is required and, along with any transitions, must be presented without use of notes. The student may perform a portion of selection (teaser) before beginning the introduction.
5. A **single, stationary chair** is permitted; costumes, props (including additional chairs), sound, lighting, and make-up are not permitted. Physical actions other than stage movement will need to be pantomimed.
6. Maximum time: 10 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. Vocal music, if used, must be incidental and consist of no more than thirty (30) seconds total, after which there will be a one-point deduction. There is no minimum time requirement but development of characterization(s) is open to critique.

## Criteria for Evaluation

---

1. **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the speaker deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that include title and author(s)? How well does the speaker establish theme, tone, and mood for the material?
2. **Quality Material:** How does the chosen material provide insight into human values, motivations, relationships, problems, and understandings without sentimentality, violence for its own sake, unmotivated endings or stereotyped characterizations? (Original material is not allowed.)
3. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning and convey motivations and emotions? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
4. **Physical Delivery:** Is the speaker consistent in blocking, miming actions, and maintaining focal points for dialogue? How is/are character(s) physically portrayed in a realistic and consistent manner?
5. **Overall Effect:** How is the performance a strong example of a well-paced, unified presentation? Does the presentation build to a climax?



# Solo Acting Humorous/Serious Evaluation

Max: 10 Min. (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating ↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Introduction/Transitions:** Does the speaker deliver – without notes – clear introduction/transitions that include title and author(s)? How well does the speaker establish theme, tone, and mood for the material?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Quality Material:** How does the chosen material provide insight into human values, motivations, relationships, problems, and understandings without sentimentality, violence for its own sake, unmotivated endings or stereotyped characterizations? (Original material is not allowed.)

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning and convey motivations and emotions? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Physical Delivery:** Is the speaker consistent in blocking, miming actions, and maintaining focal points for dialogue? How is/are character(s) physically portrayed in a realistic and consistent manner?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Overall Effect:** How is the performance a strong example of a well-paced, unified presentation? Does the presentation build to a climax?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Vocal Music Penalty (-1):

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:

# Rules for Special Occasion Speech



## Purpose of the Category

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To develop skills related to writing and delivering a speech appropriate for a specific occasion.

## Definition of the Category

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The challenge to the speaker is to write a speech appropriate to a specific occasion and its probable audience. It is possible that a speech may pursue more than one of the standard general purposes of informing, persuading, or entertaining. Speakers may use visual materials but such materials must support – not dominate – the presentation. This category calls for a speech, not a visual media show. The situations from which the student selects are determined each year by WISDAA.

## Rules

---

1. The speech must be written by the participant.
2. Prior to the presentation, the participant is to announce which of the situations has been chosen. This announcement must be brief and is not considered part of the speech on which the student will be timed and evaluated.
3. Visuals are optional, but may not be worn. Mechanical sound and lighting are not allowed. The use of digital presentations, videos and other projection is not allowed.
4. Maximum time: 6 minutes with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the speech is open to critique.
5. The speech may be presented from memory or extemporaneously with limited notes on one or both sides of one 4"x 6" paper note card. Students should not recite from a word-for-word manuscript.

## Criteria for Evaluation

---

1. **Topic:** Does the speaker give a specific speech appropriate to the occasion selected? How does the speaker appear engaged with the chosen occasion? Is the purpose of the speech fulfilled for the occasion?
2. **Content/Organization:** Is the speech organized and well-developed in the time allotted? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions?
3. **Language/Style:** How does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills used throughout? How does the style of delivery help the flow of the speech?
4. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
5. **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience? If used, how did visual(s) aid in understanding the speech, or were they unnecessary for that purpose, or distracting?

## 2023-24 Situation Topics (choose one)

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1. A public apology
2. Address to Board of Education
3. Speech delivered to a school assembly of current students
4. Wedding toast



# Special Occasion Speech Evaluation

Max: **6 Min.** (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating ↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Topic:** Does the speaker give a specific speech appropriate to the occasion selected? How does the speaker appear engaged with the chosen occasion? Is the purpose of the speech fulfilled for the occasion?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Content/Organization:** Is the speech organized and well-developed in the time allotted? Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Language/Style:** How does the speaker utilize quality word choices? How are effective language skills used throughout? How does the style of delivery help the flow of the speech?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Physical Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize appropriate physical techniques? How do gestures and movement enhance the presentation? Does the speaker utilize appropriate eye contact and facial expressions to engage the audience? If used, how did visual(s) aid in understanding the speech, or were they unnecessary for that purpose, or distracting?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:





# Rules for Storytelling

## Purpose of the Category

---

To develop skills in presenting a story in an imaginative way.

## Definition of the Category

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Storytellers chronicle events in a coherent, unified, clear, and interesting manner. While seated, the storyteller utilizes vocal variation and physical movement to suggest different characters and character relationships to make a story more engaging. The emphasis of the storyteller's art is on the teller as an *intermediary or narrator*. The student is expected to demonstrate a sense of audience, that is, tell the chosen story in a manner suitable for the intended audience, be it young children, teenagers, or adults.

## Rules

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1. Original material is allowed, but subject to critique.
2. Students select and rehearse a different story for each of the topic areas set by the WISDAA each year. For three-round festivals, the first listed story topic is assigned to the first round; the second topic is assigned to the second round; the third topic is assigned to the third round. For the State Festival, each contestant may select their favorite story topic area, and must announce this prior to their presentation (as an untimed preface).
3. The student may optionally include an introduction identifying author, title, and intended audience, and may perform a portion of the material (teaser) before the introduction; however, this is currently not evaluated.
4. The presentation is to be given without the use of notes, and in the style of spontaneity.
5. **The participant must sit in a chair.** No costumes, props, or visuals may be used.
6. Maximum time: 8 minutes, with a 15 second grace period, after which one point will be deducted. Vocal music, if used, must be incidental and consist of no more than thirty (30) seconds total, after which there will be a one-point deduction. There is no minimum time requirement but development of the presentation is open to critique.

## Criteria for Evaluation

---

1. **Story Choice:** Does the speaker tell the story in a coherent, spontaneous, and unified manner? How well does the story relate to the chosen topic?
2. **Sense of Audience:** How does the speaker use language and imagery appropriate to the story and an intended audience?
3. **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?
4. **Physical Delivery:** Is the speaker consistent in maintaining a seated position while using gestures and facial expressions to enhance the story? How does the speaker engage the audience while maintaining offstage focus?
5. **Overall Effect:** How does suggestion of characters and relationships recreate the story chosen? Does the speaker balance the role of storyteller while playing characterizations with offstage focus?

## 2023-24 Story Topics (must have a story for each of the topics)

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1. Mystery story
2. Story of advocacy/allyship
3. Story about money/greed



# Storytelling Evaluation

Max: **8 Min.** (15-sec. grace period)

Round:

Time:

Name/  
Code:

Topic/  
Title:

Circle **and** explain a rating for each area, **reinforcing strengths** and **providing suggestions** for improvement with specific, constructive references to what the contestant(s) said and did.

Rating ↓

1 – Missing elements, refer to evaluation criteria  
2 – Needs many improvements  
3 – Developing, needs additional coaching/practice  
4 – Meets expectations, needs polish  
5 – Mastery, exceeds expectations

(1). **Story Choice:** Does the speaker tell the story in a coherent, spontaneous, and unified manner? How well does the story relate to the chosen topic?

1 2 3 4 5

(2). **Sense of Audience:** How does the speaker use language and imagery appropriate to the story and an intended audience?

1 2 3 4 5

(3). **Vocal Delivery:** How does the speaker utilize effective vocal techniques to enhance meaning? Are pitch, volume, and rate appropriate? Are articulation and pronunciation clear and correct?

1 2 3 4 5

(4). **Physical Delivery:** Is the speaker consistent in maintaining a seated position while using gestures and facial expressions to enhance the story? How does the speaker engage the audience while maintaining offstage focus?

1 2 3 4 5

(5). **Overall Effect:** How does suggestion of characters and relationships recreate the story chosen? Does the speaker balance the role of storyteller while playing characterizations with offstage focus?

1 2 3 4 5

Overtime Vocal Music Penalty (-1):

Overtime Penalty (-1):

Adjudicator  
Signature:

Print  
Name/Code:

Total  
Points:

# Develop Communication Skills Through Speech

By Martha Kaump

Although the WISDAA has experienced many changes during its rich history since 1895, emphasis on providing students with opportunities to develop lifetime skills in communication has remained constant. In some cases, Speech activities provide the major opportunity of students to learn, develop and practice using these skills. In other situations Speech activities provide an opportunity for students to expand the use of skills learned in the classroom. The intent of WISDAA programs is to interact with classroom activities in Debate, Speech and Theatre, to assist schools in providing as complete an experience with communication skill development opportunities as possible. Since the mid-seventies, WISDAA has used the five communication functions described herein and spelled out in the current DPI English and Language Arts Curriculum Guide, as the basis of the skills development objective for each speech category. Below are outlines the five functions of communication. \*

## Informing (Informative Communication)

- ❖ The primary purpose of information communication is to give and receive information.
- ❖ Common forms of informative messages are lectures, news stories, news programs, informative essays, documentaries, educational films and interpersonal exchanges.
- ❖ The categories which serve this function are Informative, Moments in History, Radio New Reporting and Demonstration Speech.

## Expressing Feeling (Affective Communication)

- ❖ The primary purpose of affective communication is to share feelings. The feelings expressed may be positive or negative.
- ❖ When readers or listeners effectively process affective messages, they demonstrate empathic skills.
- ❖ Common forms of affective messages are interpersonal exchanges, love letters, hate mail, greeting cards, poems, glares, raised eyebrows and prayers.
- ❖ The categories which serve this function are Prose Reading, Poetry Reading and Farrago.

## Imagining (Imaginative Communication)

- ❖ The primary purpose of imaginative communication is to experience the joy of creating new situations and ideas.
- ❖ Appreciative readers and listeners enjoy the imaginative efforts of others whether that creativity be revealed through literature, film television, stage or face-to-face encounter.
- ❖ Common forms of imaginative messages include puns, limericks, fantasies, stories, plays, poems and language play. The categories which serve this function are Solo Acting, Group Interpretive Reading and Play Acting.

## Ritualizing (Ritualistic Communication)

- ❖ The primary purpose of ritualistic communication is to meet social expectations.
- ❖ Ritualistic communication includes such ordinary speech acts as greeting, leave taking, teasing, introducing, commenting on the weather and demonstrating social amenities.
- ❖ Rituals are practiced in conversations, interviews, small group discussions, parliamentary debates, ceremonial speeches, letter, diary entries, thank you notes and prayers.
- ❖ The categories which serve this function are Special Occasion Speeches and Storytelling.

## Controlling (Persuasive Communication)

- ❖ The primary purpose of controlling is to influence beliefs or actions.
- ❖ Attempts to control may employ such diverse strategies as commands, promises, threats, arguments, psychological appeals and entreaties.
- ❖ Common forms of messages designed to control include television commercials, printed advertisements, legal briefs, editorials, speeches, deliberative speeches, election posters and school yard squabbles.
- ❖ The category which fully serves this function is Oratory. Persuasive elements may also be present in Informative Speech.

\* Wells (1973) and Halliday (1973); and National Project on Speech Communication Competencies.

# Getting and Keeping a Program

By Roxi Wakeen

Just like a booming business or a winning sports team, a successful Speech team will create excitement! In reality, that's only partly the case. It is the joint efforts of an organized coach, supportive administration and enthusiastic students that help maintain a high quality Speech team.

Successful teams rely on an involved coach. After polling several experienced coaches, I concluded every team needs an informed coach who does regular recruiting, gives consistent attention, gains financial support and provides public praise in order to maintain a high level of student participation.

First, coaches must have a feel for Speech. If you are a new coach, find someone in the area who has coached and seek advice. Some districts have yearly meetings early in the season – attend! The WISDAA adjudication training program provides information as well as a network of other people from which to seek support. The state office can help you find a mentor.

Quality programs recruit methodically. Although methods vary, one point seems to remain: recruiting is ongoing. Fellow teachers can be on the lookout for leads. It becomes more than a one person show. The guidance counselor and secretary should not be overlooked as a source of names of articulate and cooperative students.

School announcements of meetings alert students to the beginning of the season, but having each English or speech teacher explain the program (I give specific handouts to be used in class) touches each student in the high school. Actually, having former Speech students make presentations in teams (I use one interp student and one public address student per room) yields better results.

At the first meeting, many coaches have a prepared handout of categories, festival dates and rules. Several schools actually have a code of conduct for Speech students. This works well because students are sometimes overwhelmed by the quantity of information and a handout is lasting. Also if students don't attend the meeting, the coach has something to give them in the hallway.

Middle level coaches can provide lists of all eighth grade participants so that students can personally invite them to participate their freshman year. Older students should be encouraged to bring a new face to the first meeting. Some schools offer points for recruiting which can be used to earn trips to Speech workshops and institutes.

A Speech newsletter is easy to generate and can be circulated in the library. This constant attention allows

kids the enjoyment of seeing their names in print. It also can be a way of communicating with the team about departure times and any other necessary items.

Some coaches encourage kids to try a variety of categories in early festivals. Coaches who do not go out on the tournament circuit frequently team up with other area schools for a mini-workshop or fun-fest.

Finding out what classes are doing poetry units or might possibly be willing to listen to public address/oratory topics or having speakers travel to junior high are all ways of getting hands on experience for your speakers. This attention broadens your program (constant recruiting) and gives students other evaluators.

Many schools work on tight budgets, but frequently money is made available to Speech coaches who care to take their students to festivals. Allowing students to go beyond Subdistrict, District and State festivals makes students more aware of other programs.

Coaches who have State Nights, banquets or picnics find that the parents, administration, other students and adjudicators like to participate. Planning awards for various accomplishments is time-consuming but can definitely be a fulfillment of the team commitment. My students like silly awards too. In fact, my extemp and storytellers who force us to be early for festivals usually end up with a clever award.

Remember, Speech occurs during the cold and flu season. Illness, other arts programs, tournaments and spring breaks seem to threaten every Speech program. If you and a coach become disheartened, much of your aggressive enthusiasm leaves. A program needs YOU to survive. Take care of yourself and provide a list of cold remedies to your team. Write newspaper articles to not only reward successes, but list participation and growth. The many hours you spend with these sincere, talented students will keep you recruiting and fighting for their participation. Happy smiles and hugs are rewarding!

## Coaching from the Outside

By Mary Knutson

As the number of students interested in Speech increases, so may the need for coaches and/or assistant coaches who are not part of the high school teaching staff. The growing numbers of coaches in this situation pose some unique and challenging questions. Many points mentioned are common to any new coaching situation while others are especially important to the "outside" coach.

### Assess the Current Program

*With your principal find out about the following:*

- Can you reach out to your predecessor?

- Who else, if anyone, will be coaching with you?
- Are there any teachers on staff who might be willing resources of materials, and potential recruits?
- What's the budget? How many meets can your team afford? What does your school pay for adjudicators?
- What forms do you need to fill out for transportation requests, entry fees and adjudicator payments?
- Is there a specific room or two where you can meet with student after school or evenings on a regular basis?

- Can you meet with students in the evening? Is the building open? What about keys?
- Get a mail slot at the high school.
- What forms of recognition does your school offer?
- Announcements? News Articles? End of season banquets or awards?
- Assemblies for state qualifiers? Can a student earn a "letter" in Speech at your school?
- Is there a speech or rhetoric class? Who is the teacher?

***With your predecessor ask the following:***

- Is there a resource file? Does the school have copies of selections in prose, poetry, play acting that have been or could be used?
- Who are last years active squad members or captains who are still in the high school?
- What format did they use for general team meetings and individual practice sessions?
- What are the names and phone numbers of qualified persons used in the past as adjudicators?

**Establish your program**

In order to be effective, especially since you do not have the advantages of being a teacher in the building, you will need to create your own identity. The easiest way to do this is in three phases.

**Preseason:** Organizing as early as October

- Set up a schedule. Decide when, where and what times you will hold team meetings. Find out what events will be available beginning in January. Decide which ones you will definitely be attending (conference, subdistrict, district, etc.) and which tentative invitational dates you're considering. Type that schedule for students and parents.
- Decide on your team requirements. How often should they show up?
- How often must they practice to participate? Do you decide which categories they try or do they? Is there a "no show" penalty?
- Run copies of category rules and descriptions. Get to know them yourself.
- Meet with team captains or a few of last years active students.
- Do some general recruiting.

**In-season**

- Introduce yourself; background. Inform students of how the program is going to work.
- Get students names and contact info. Keep them in a folder at school and at home. You'll need them!
- Let students know when you're available for individual practice and/or research sessions. Make sure they sign up for times so you don't waste yours. Early sessions will be 30-45 minutes per student and 1-1 1/2 hours for groups. Depending on your schedule and how over committed your students are, you will probably need some after school and evening time for various practices.
- You will need to know how many students are in which categories approximately 3 weeks before each event.
- Involve students as much as possible: writing up announcements, news articles with results, performing at team meetings, "good luck" signs on lockers before festivals, etc.
- An early or mid-season "social" meeting helps.
- Tap into a teacher or two who will help direct students to school resources or refer talent to you.
- Hosting a "Parent's Night" is always good P.R. and helps recruit too.

**End of season**

- Choose a captain and have students vote on one or two more for the next year. Attitude and attendance are prime factors. Ability is helpful.
- Recognize accomplishments. Seriously or humorously try to note all of the team. A social or actual awards meeting, pot luck or banquet is best.
- Encourage student to be looking for their selections for next year.
- Encourage learning and variety. If a student excels in something, have them try something even more challenging. Another category or a more difficult piece or topic should be strongly considered.

Remember your enthusiasm, your image and identity, and your knowledge of Speech - more specifically of your Speech team, are what will make the program work for you. Help your students learn and they'll teach you even more. Good Luck!!

## Speech Ethics

By Chris Verges

Ethics is system of moral values that has prompted the withdrawal of presidential candidates, has toppled religious dynasties and has eliminated amateur athletes from participating in collegiate sports. Ethics is also a system by which the WISDAA operates in that ethical behavior exemplifies the organization's educational goals of promoting, stimulating, improving and

providing for the process of communicating. A discussion of ethical behavior promotes these educational goals and relates them to the coach, the adjudicator and the participant. Ethics then, is an attitude or behavior that a person brings to one's coaching and judging that directly effects and influences their students and represents the activity, as

well as an attitude or behavior learned and demonstrated by the participating student.

**The Coach:** The Speech coach should promote ethical behavior and attitudes while acting as coach and adjudicator. While coaching one should serve as a role model by being professional toward this responsibility and tolerant of other students, programs and activities. Also, one should treat all students fairly and equally, emphasizing learning rather than winning while teaching how to win and lose, or, succeed and fail graciously. Additionally, one should supplement rather than be a substitute for student efforts since ghost writing does not further any educational goal. The coach should also regulate the content of student speeches by verifying sources and credibility as well as teaching the student ethical Speech etiquette and upholding it.

**The Adjudicator:** An ethical attitude is also demonstrated through the adjudicator by their striving for impartiality and consistency, promoting intellectual growth and creativity, and avoiding prejudice and personal preference as well as recognizing the acceptability of diverse interpretations of literary material. Furthermore, when writing evaluations, the adjudicator should explain evaluations according to rules, and address the given criteria of the category.

Finally, they should exemplify professionalism in their punctuality, efficiency, etiquette and appearance. In summary, Speech ethics are fostered through attitudes and behaviors when fulfilling their judging responsibilities.

**The Student:** The student should learn and demonstrate ethical attitudes and behaviors as they pertain to the educational goals of this activity. The student should not belittle, degrade or demean others and should recognize the rights of others. They should also observe schedules and regulations rather than misuse them for personal advantage. And finally, one should follow the rules of reasoned discourse and not invent definitions, statistics or facts or misrepresent evidence, as well as respect the integrity of literature and not rewrite portions of an author's work without noting the changes. In other words, they should participate honestly, fairly, and avoid being deceptive, misleading or dishonest while following festival rules.

Thus, it is an attitude and behavior aptly called Speech ethics that a coach brings to, and uses in, their coaching and his judging of communication which promotes, stimulates, improves and provides ethical behavior in the student participant.

## "Performance Plagiarism"

By Adam Jacobi

*Adapted from Rostrum magazine, National Speech & Debate Association, 84:7, March 2010.*

We normally associate plagiarism with words or ideas copied without attributing the original source. Does a concept of academic honesty extend to qualities of performance? With videos of other contest performances (not to mention films), familiarity with particular performances has become more widespread than just those who witnessed them live. What's more, students can study finer details of such performances in-depth and repetitively. Hence, performances have arisen that mimic several aspects of physical action and vocal technique, as well as duplicating the exact cuttings of scripts, almost verbatim.

When the International Baccalaureate revised its Theatre curriculum in 2007, advice within its professional development workshop materials included a paper by Nick Connolly, then director of studies at Worth School in England and a former IB deputy chief examiner. Connolly cites three words as central to exploring academic honesty in performance: **imitation**, **influence**, and **inspiration** (Connolly 4). These three descriptors provide a basis by which to understand where students derive ideas and the extent to which that affects their ultimate performance.

So where does one draw the line between these three concepts, and how can mimicry be proven? In the greater scheme of Speech—and academia—there is an

Note: When transcribing text from online videos, such as from YouTube, students always should research the source of the material to determine its genre. For example, a performance of a story could be prose, and not dramatic literature (play), so if a group performed it, it should be done in Group Interpretive Reading, and not Play Acting.

understanding that work must be original, or there are consequences. The answers lie, perhaps, in investigating each component.

Guidelines for literary interpretation events often speak to the fidelity of cutting, ensuring adaptations are made for the purposes of continuity, and that authorial intent is upheld. So, is there an intellectual protection of the cutting itself? The creative process that goes into cutting certainly would seem to justify that mindset. Each reader brings different experiences and perspectives to the literature they encounter, so one person's attempt at cutting may hone in on different plot moments, character, etc., than another person's.

While adjudicators are offered some general guidance in terms of expected standards, much of style and substance is left to subjectivity, particularly in interpretive events. Of course, there are unwritten norms and expectations that pervade the Speech



community, including that performance must have some degree of original interpretation to it (hence the use of the term in the title of such Speech categories/events). That is why students today may avoid popular stage plays or screenplays as well as classic works too well known within the canon of literary studies. They tire of reading comments from adjudicators asserting their performance is too similar to a famous actor or does not explore the character in the way the adjudicator imagined it when reading that work. Within Connolly's framework, adjudicators are hesitant toward influence and inspiration that might inform the student's interpretation, and will rate those contestants accordingly.

Then there's the whole notion of mimicking performance by other Speech contestants. Several adjudicators may not have seen videos of performances that have been mimicked, so it is difficult for them to

weigh that in their rank decision. Therefore, contestants imitating others' cuttings, blocking, and other mannerisms may go an entire tournament and earn success by standing on the shoulders of other students' creative efforts. Assuming most coaches would agree this is unethical and a brand of academic dishonesty, it begs the question of what penalty should befall a student who mimics another's performance.

Some proactive discussion among coaches regarding performance plagiarism may help raise awareness of this problem and encourage students and adjudicators alike to be cognizant of mimicry and avoid it in developing original interpretations.

#### References

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## Where's the Beef? Selecting Literature

By Michael Knoedler

As more high school students choose to participate in the interpretive categories, students, coaches, and adjudicators need to become more reflective about the quality of the literature chosen. We need to acknowledge that the quality of the literature selected for the interpretive categories is as important as the performance itself.

As a coach and adjudicator, I understand that the selection process may evolve in several ways: the coach may discover an interesting piece; the student may have an idea or an author in mind, then the coach and student conduct a mutual search; in increasingly rare situations, the student steps forward with a quality piece in hand; or, as time lines approach, the coach may dip into the file of chestnuts gathered over the years. This initial stage--the selection moment--serves several important purposes. It involves research into an author's life and work enhancing the investigatory skills of the student. More importantly, it is the stage when the student and coach lock into a piece of writing that they will live with for the next several months of performing and, potentially, reflect back to for the rest of their lives.

Unfortunately, I don't think students and coaches take this selection moment seriously enough. The end result is the proliferation of performances of writings that are not of substance, that are deficient in rich language and powerful life experiences, that fail to deliver one of the most important purposes of choosing to perform in the interpretive categories: developing an appreciation for a significant piece of literature, allowing a student and a coach to taste and chew on an author's insights into the human condition. The selection of the piece of literature is the foundation of the Speech experience in

the interpretive categories. It is an extension and an enrichment of the literature classroom and should be seen as such.

As literature teachers, many of us frequently ask ourselves if the stories, poetry, drama, and essays we offer to our classes are "good stuff". We discover quickly, after teaching the same pieces to several groups, whether or not the literature selected enables the students to learn something significant about themselves and their place in the world. We are able to discern, after multiple readings and analyses and discussions, if the piece is "good stuff". If we like the piece after multiple encounters, we keep it in; if not, we get rid of it. Our searching for new material is active and relentless. The works in the traditional canon are only one source. We scour the full range of print material looking for those special pieces that connect with students and still maintain a high level of literary merit. When we find something, one of the key questions we ask ourselves is this: will it hold up after multiple readings?

The selection moment for interpretive categories ought to focus on this same question. When a piece is selected, students need to understand that months of reading, analyzing, discussing, and presenting this piece will follow. As teachers and coaches we need to guide students into selecting pieces that are multilayered, that will reveal complexity rather than limitations as the practices and performances unfold. This is the great legacy of living with pieces of literature in the interpretive categories: we come to see the richness of the pieces through repeated encounters, much as the authors have when they created them. In the end, the

Speech events will fade from memory. The true legacy is living with the richness of the literature.

Let's encourage the search for the "good stuff" and give our students opportunities to live and breathe the quality literature that exists in such abundance. Let's not take the easy and convenient way out by

encouraging or allowing students to select the "cute" pieces. As coaches, let's be tough-minded about maintaining high standards. As adjudicators, let's make written comments regarding the quality of the material we have heard. Let's make the initial decision about the material selected as important a criterion as any other in judging the quality of interpretive performances.

## Tastes Good: But is it Good Taste?

By William Davis

Is that selection in good taste? Is all of that profanity necessary? Is that an appropriate subject for public discussion? What happened to the good, clean material that kids used to find?

Sound familiar? Over the past few years these and related questions have been asked time and again by coaches, adjudicators, parents, colleagues and members of the WISDAA Board of Control. These concerns have been articulated often enough that we need to be prepared to defend our coaching practices as reasonable and educationally sound.

Good taste is a legitimate concern. Many of the WISDAA categories specifically mention the selection of quality material. Most of us agree that if a selection is outside of the bounds of good taste, there will be a negative response on the part of the audience. A person's performance includes not only his right to self-expression, but also the audience's right to be offended and to express their unhappiness. To offend without some overwhelming and compelling reason is, at best, unwise. Since an adjudicator is a part of the audience, a participant who uses material that may be questionable risks an adverse response from the adjudicator.

Profanity exists in our literature and culture. Profanity can be a powerful communications tool that enables us to communicate clearly and colorfully. One cannot truly portray a character like George Patton and have them saying things like "son-of-a-gun", "pshaw", and

"shucky-darn". On the other hand, much of the profanity in contemporary literature is gratuitous and can be left out without damaging the integrity of the selection. Recently, one of our students performed a cutting from a play that dealt with the relationship between a young homosexual and his heterosexual brother. The original script contained a number of direct, vulgar references to homosexual activities. Since our emphasis was the relationship between the two brothers, not specific homosexual activities, we edited out the language that would likely be offensive. We knew that for many in our audience the conflict between a homosexual and his heterosexual brother would be quite enough to handle without letting the language unnecessarily complicate matters.

The media freely discuss just about everything, so it appears that the old taboos about talking about certain subjects in public have disappeared; however, one should remember that the media consists of thousands of different magazines, newspapers, TV shows, etc. that treat subject matter in different ways depending upon the intended audience. Time and Hustler would not deal with sex in marriage in identical ways. We must teach our students to adapt appropriately to the occasion and audience.

Good taste and civility are attributes of an educated person, and we are operating educational programs.

## Tackling the Teaser

By Shauna Wessely

"My eccentric Speech coach sweeps about the room, humming loudly, while checking my teammates' progress. I glance from the corner of my eye at my Play Acting partner, and sense that they are just as nervous to see Coach approaching as I am. If only we'd listened when she told us we needed more practice..."

Of course, the aforementioned scene captured through the eyes of a student may be a little too familiar. Even as a coach, it seems that the Speech season has this way of creeping up before I'm fully ready to help students choose pieces, practice, or compete at their first contest. While this season will likely find me in the same

predicament, I did not write the previous paragraph to launch into a discussion about my inclinations toward procrastination.

Instead, I wrote the first paragraph to serve as an example of what is often referred to in interpretive speech events as a "teaser." A teaser is like a narrative hook in formal essays, in that it is used to grab the attention of the audience. It introduces a taste of what is to come and then leaves you hanging, wanting more. Customarily, a student performs a short excerpt, usually no more than one minute in length, of an interpretive selection (ie. prose, poetry, etc.) before delivering their



introduction. A typical introduction including theme, author, and title of the work(s) being performed is then delivered, after which the performer continues with their remainder of their presentation.

Many contestants enjoy implementing the teaser in performances, as it allows them to be in-character from the moment they indicate they are ready for the adjudicator. It remains the responsibility of the contestant to have a coherent presentation in which the teaser leads into an introduction that effectively recognizes the author of the chosen selection and then transitions us into the rest of the performance. In my experience, delivery is more natural when students use teasers: they are better able to establish where their character's persona begins and ends. Furthermore, the tone established for the audience tends to be more

exciting when using a teaser because there is a degree of intrigue in how the initial excerpt will pertain to the remainder of the selection.

Finally, the reason I address the use of the teaser is that it is an integral part of performing interpretive events both on the collegiate forensics circuit and in other high school organizations, such as the National Speech & Debate Association. As the teaser has been embraced by many performers across the country, Wisconsin high school Speech contestants, coaches and judges are likely to see this convention utilized at festivals and tournaments. Critique the efficiency of its employment, advise students in the type of material that works for teasers, and make those first few seconds work for you to garner the intrigue you crave!

## Approaching Oral Interpretation

By Charles Haas

*While Oral Interpretation is the art of communicating to an audience a work of literary art in its intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic entirety. – Charlotte Lee*

### PREPARATION

As one can see in the above definition of oral interpretation by Charlotte Lee, interpretation includes the communicating of the intellectual aspect of literature as well as the performing aspect. In effect, oral interpretation is as much the study of literature as it is the oral presentation of that literature. In order to communicate the intellectual aspect of the literature, the reader must understand what the author is saying and how it is being said. Therefore, the first step in preparing for any interpretive event, whether it be Poetry or Prose Reading or Farrago, is a thorough analysis of the literature. Why the analysis step is so important is that it forms the determining factor by which readers decide how the literature is to be presented to the listeners.

A good place to start the analysis of the literature is to know as much as possible about the authors: who are they? what else did they write? when and where did they live? what happened in their lives that is expressed in their literature? did they belong to a specific school of thought, or follow a literary trend such as naturalism, realism, romanticism, local color?

When the investigation of the author is complete, students should repeatedly read the literature aloud, keeping in mind what the study of the author revealed and how the author's background is reflected in the literature. Not only should readers note what the author is saying and how they say it by considering the syntactical structure and arrangement of sentences, but also the choice and arrangement of words and phrases. A dictionary should be close at hand not only to check the meaning of words but also the pronunciation.

Readers should also pay close attention to punctuation. In poetry, for example, the end of a line often is not the end of the sentence. The images and ideas may be developed in several succeeding sentences.

Paraphrasing a line, a verse, or the whole poem may help the readers to understand what the poet is saying. It also may help the readers to reconstruct the poem so that related words, phrases and sentences are gathered together into a prose-style arrangement of image and idea units. Deconstruction of a poem will not spoil it; the rhythmic structure is so ingrained that it will prevail when it is read aloud, and the research that the readers have done will enhance the "intellectual, emotional and aesthetic" components of the literature.

### PERFORMANCE

Once the preliminary work of analyzing the literature and researching the lives of the authors is completed, readers are now ready to consider how voice, gesture, movement and facial expression are to be used in communicating the "work of literary art" to the audience. A cardinal principle for considering enhancement of the literature is to remember that all responses, both vocal and physical, are to be motivated by the literature; whatever is added should enhance the interpretation of the literature and not detract from the author's intent. This principle is valid regardless of whether the category is Poetry or Prose Reading or Farrago. However, each category has distinguishing features that must be considered when preparing for performance.

Reading techniques for each of these categories are basically the same. In all three categories, readers need to understand clearly what the authors are saying. To achieve this, readers will find it helpful to identify the basic elements in each sentence. Readers must be

careful that they do not fragment the images and ideas while reading by pausing at the end of each line and dropping pitch before the image or idea is completed. Voice, movement and expression should be motivated by the literature. Consequently, some literature may present more opportunities for enhancement than others. In the instance of Poetry Reading, readers may find it helpful to understand the poetry better by restructuring the poem in prose style by which all words, phrases, and sentences contributing to an image or idea are brought together into a paragraph format. Using this technique, readers can concentrate on projecting the images and ideas more easily to the audience.

The major task in the performance of Farrago is to establish and maintain the central theme that holds the performance together. Transitions should make a clear statement of the central theme. If this is not done with constant and careful attention, readers may lose a listener to whom a poem or prose unit may trigger a personal memory not related to the readers' theme, and unless the listener's attention is brought back to the central theme by a transition, the listener may never return to the intended theme for the rest of the performance.

Readers in any of the interpretive categories should assume that their performance starts as soon as they move to the performance area and does not end until they are back in their chairs. Therefore, they should be careful to do nothing which might detract from the intended mood of the presentation.

According to the rules, introductory comments are to be delivered extemporaneously (however, it may add to the readers' confidence if the written comments are at hand in case of a memory lapse). It is also helpful if readers pause between the introduction and the opening lines of the literature. This gives the audience time to consider what the readers have said before attention is drawn to the literature. It also gives readers time to prepare themselves psychologically before beginning their reading. At the conclusion of the performance, readers should wait a few seconds to give the audience a chance to reflect on the performance before their attention is broken by the readers' movement back to their chairs.

Oral interpretation is not a discipline in itself, but rather is an instrument by which readers give the words life. Interpretive reading helps readers communicate a message in a more effective manner, whether that message is contained in a work of literature, or an oration, a radio newscast, or any form of oral communication. However, not all the emphasis should be placed on the performance; the preparation is vitally important if the speakers' performance is to achieve the desired degree of effectiveness. Thus, Speech is an opportunity for students to conduct research, interpret the findings, and ultimately share the oral/aural communication with an appreciative audience.

## Expository Speech

By William Davis

One of the enjoyable and frustrating parts of coaching Speech events is the fact that two competent coaches can look at the same event in quite different ways. Some coaches look at Expository Speech as a wonderful place to put beginning speakers. After students have gained some competence in this category, we can move them along to more advanced categories like Oratory, Public Address or Special Occasion. Some coaches look at Expository Speech as one of the most difficult categories. I remember taking a course in which I had to write a ten-page term paper, but I had to turn in a 14-page paper because I didn't have time to write just ten pages. By now you perhaps realize that I take a position with one foot firmly in each camp.

Expository Speech is a wonderful event for beginning speakers. A good Expository Speech can be about five hundred words long, and even a beginning student, no matter what grade level, can find enough information to fill that requirement without suffering from sleepless nights or "brain cramps". Five minutes sounds like such a short time that everyone knows that the time can be filled. A person can cover quite a bit of territory in the

time allowed and can survive in spite of fears that (1) the brain will be stuck in neutral, (2) I'll **DIE** with all of those people looking at me, (3) I'll sound stupid, and/or (4) why did I let **THEM** talk me into this. Yes, beginners can get their feet wet and succeed.

Expository Speech can also be a very difficult category. Getting enough ideas and words to fill the time is not a difficult task for a well-read, sophisticated student. The real problem is to deal with a significant issue in a sincere, thoughtful, complete way in the time allowed. Sit a monkey down at a computer for a long enough time and the "Gettysburg Address" will appear. Those of us who function in the real world know that none of our students has that sort of time now, and they won't have that time later. We must teach them to organize, to simplify, to cover the material, to get to the bottom line. "Brevity is the soul of wit", and it's terribly difficult to be witty.

Where does this leave us in coaching Expository Speech? We should use this category for beginning speakers, but we should not exclude those students

who wish to take on the challenge of truly excelling in this category. Let's not coach on the basis of the

awards that a student might win, but let's coach students to do what will best serve their needs.

## Extemporaneous Speaking

By David Winkler

Extemporaneous Speaking has long been regarded as one of the "Cadillac categories" in the world of Speech. As such, coaches and performers should consider a variety of factors when selecting it.

### Who should choose Extemporaneous Speaking?

A successful extemporaneous speaker should be passionate about current events since topics are "drawn from credible news sources published during the previous three months." Therefore, students who excel in history/social studies are often excellent candidates for this category.

Passion alone, however, should not be the only consideration when choosing Extemporaneous Speaking. The organization and poise required may be developed first by participating in another speech category such as Four-Minute, Moments in History, Oratory, Public Address, or Storytelling. Therefore, successful extemporaneous speakers often build up to face the unique challenges of the category.

### Information Gathering

Information gathering in the weeks and months prior to performance is critical in Extemporaneous Speaking. This is primarily accomplished through a daily routine of reading and analyzing news articles. Coaches and performers should set goals for how much time is dedicated to this routine every day/week.

Consideration should also be given to the specific news sources used. Immediate wire services such as Reuters or AP are fine for citing statistics but provide little or no analysis of the news, and overtly partisan sources such as Fox and MSNBC should also be avoided. Conversely, books and reputable think tanks like the Cato Institute can provide excellent analysis to support an extemporaneous speech. Ultimately, reading a variety of news sources is helpful, and discussing current events with others will help extemporaneous speakers process information more effectively.

### Structure

While structure may vary by individual, the following intro-body-conclusion format provides a general framework:

- I. Introduction
  - a. Attention grabbing device (AGD)
  - b. Link AGD to question/prompt
  - c. Use source to give context to topic or show urgency
  - d. State the question
  - e. Thesis
  - f. Support points
- II. Body
  - a. 3x2: 3 main points, each supported by 2 sources
- III. Conclusion
  - a. Review/restate question/prompt
  - b. Review main points

### Day of Performance

While individual success is predicated on a variety of factors, the following general guidelines may prove helpful to beginning Extemporaneous Speakers:

1. Reread questions to ensure accuracy.
2. Determine main points before consulting sources.
3. Novice rule of thumb: 15 minutes prep and 15 minutes practice.
4. Smile and show personality! Research shows that speakers who smile are more successful.
5. Go to the bathroom after each round. Check to make sure everything is in order. Consider bringing a "panic box" with extra clothes, panty hose, notecards, etc.

Ultimately, Extemporaneous Speaking is the delivery of ideas, not words. As such, a successful extemporaneous speech is conversational, not preachy, and it engages the audience. While this category is intimidating to some, a careful understanding of how to study, prepare, and deliver an Extemporaneous Speech can be exceptionally satisfying and useful.

## Farrago

By Terri Grippen

"What is Farrago?" Students ask this question every year. The title, Farrago, doesn't offer a ready explanation of itself as do the titles of the other interpretive events. How does the coach explain Farrago?

As a student reads and compares different types of literature from various authors and time frames, he notices an idea or an image that reappears in these readings. After the student sees this idea or image, perhaps first in a poem and then again in the dialogue of a play or in the conflict of a short story, he understands something about himself and about all of

us. That is what he needs to tell his audience. What have the images and ideas in literature taught them? What should they teach us?

Now that the student has found an idea or an image, he faces the first challenge in Farrago: the script. Key phrases in Farrago's definition and rules are "quality material" and "literary merit". When considering which literature to use, the student and coach should focus on the word "quality". Quality materials excites the mind and not only the senses. Quality material explains motives and reasons for actions, and not a description of the outcome. Quality material explains and convinces; it does not serve only to titillate and to shock. Quality material has stood and can stand the test of time because it draws a response from all generations. When cutting literature for use in the script, the student and coach must also be careful to keep intact the author's ideas, images and intent.

To recreate for the audience the images and ideas grasped, the student must write an introduction that will not only capture the audience's attention, but also explain what has been learned, what can be learned and why they should listen. The student also needs to write transitions between his reading selections that will develop his ideas and guide his audience to a conclusion. Introductions and transitions which follow a pattern, or use a stylistic device such as a metaphor or

an allusion, can more effectively explain and guide the audience through the script.

The second challenge of Farrago is the student's delivery. Because Farrago requires that different types of literature be used, the student must be skilled enough to leap from prose to poetry, and then recreate the dialogue from a dramatic cutting. The time frame of the chosen literature will also place demands on performance. Shakespeare's language requires a very different delivery than does Eugene O'Neill's. While performing, the student must keep in mind that his voice and movement are only vehicles for the author's ideas. The audience should respond to what is said and not only to how it is said. The student must not rely on delivery to make up for a poor script.

Farrago is not a beginning event for a student interested in the interpretive events. Students need to sharpen skills in prose and poetry reading first. Farrago requires time, thought and effort, but no one should be daunted. There are thousands of pieces of literature with thousands of ideas and images just waiting for a fresh pair of eyes to enjoy them. The possibilities in Farrago are endless.

NOTE: Outside of Wisconsin, this category is referred to as "Program Oral Interpretation," and coaches may find additional resources by searching for that name.

## Group Interpretive Reading

By Jill Prushiek, Ph.D.

The definition of the category is fairly straightforward. Students compile and present a literary script in such a way that the audience imagines action being described rather than witnessing it being performed. Symbolic characterization and vocal and physical action, rather than a literal dramatization or pantomime, is required. Ideas are imagined through oral reading and not through acting; therefore, the ensemble of readers act as a medium of expression for the audience. Moreover, this category involves no memorizing of scripts, no props, no costumes, no sets, no mechanical sound effects, and no lighting. The question that remains is often, "Then, what is Group Interpretative Reading? And how do I coach it?"

First things first. Group Interpretative Reading allows you and your students to be creative, imaginative, and magical. Yes, magical! All of you get to compile a script using a variety of sources except drama and create a magical experience for the audience. Here are some important considerations when coaching "Group Interp."

### Finding a Script

I labeled this section the way I did to throw you off when coaching this category. Very few scripts are available for Group Interpretative Reading as we define it in WISDAA. Often you and your students will need to think of a "topic" or "theme" or "story" and create your own script. Remember, you can't use drama as a source. Once you have a topic or theme, do a literature search of some sort to see what literary works are out there and could be used as part of the "script." Several years ago, a group of students wanted to create a presentation around the topic of different kinds of bells. I guess because they were always moving to a school bell they wanted to explore this topic. We brainstormed about different types of bells and what literature we had read. One student mentioned Edgar Allen Poe's "The Bells" and another student was singing "Carol of the Bells" in choir. Right away we had two pieces, although I reminded them that they could not sing more than thirty seconds total in their performance. We found a couple of other stories and poems and creatively weaved them together for a script. You will also want to consider your readers/performers when selecting your literature. The

key here is that your students need to thoroughly understand what they are reading to convey the meaning to the audience. Tailor the selection of pieces to your students, if you can.

A story can also be adapted to meet the requirements of Group Interpretative Reading. You and your students can choose a story that they all enjoy and would love to present to an audience. The story will most likely need to be cut to meet the maximum time limit, but students can dive into the story, figure out the plot, the theme, and determine what needs to be kept and what can be cut. Authors often use lengthy character descriptions and long passages to create the setting. These are often places where cuts can be made. Remember, the ensemble is functioning as a medium through which the story is recreated for the audience. Long descriptions can be whittled down to a sentence and perhaps a movement!

Speaking of adapting literary pieces to be appropriate for Group Interpretative Reading, you and your students need to think about reading individually and as an ensemble in terms of vocal delivery. This means that students should carefully read through their piece(s) and find places where they could speak in unison to enhance the meaning or emphasize words, phrases, or feelings. Again, let students be creative.

### **To Move or Not to Move: That is the Question**

As the rules specify, movement should suggest relationships, feelings, changes, ideas, moods, locales, etc. consistent with the offstage focus. This concept has always been difficult to explain to students because they want to “act out” the gestures and movements. I explain that this category is oral “reading” rather than “acting.” Big difference. Therefore, your students will need to know their script well and think about where they will start and where they will go to convey the meaning of the script.

After the well-written and memorized introduction that includes the title, author and sufficient information to set the mood and tone for the presentation, your students may want to start in a line facing the audience. Maybe there is a narrator who begins first and takes a step forward to begin the piece. The other readers can have their heads down to “show” they are not talking or they can have their backs toward the audience while the narrator speaks and turn around when it is their turn to speak. Not too creative yet. What about having students stand behind each other and then lean to one side or the other when speaking? Movement can suggest time passing quickly, a change in scene or locale, or a change of mood. Freezing in place can suggest a scene change or something dramatic that the audience needs to pay attention to in the script. Students standing back to back without touching can symbolize a conflict.

Whatever the case, allow your students to be creative and experiment with different movements that may come naturally from reading the script over and over. Remember, movement should “suggest” rather than be pantomimed. And, don’t move for movement’s sake. Movement should enhance the meaning of the literature being performed.

Facial expression and gestures convey meaning to the audience as well. Make sure your students really understand the poem that they are reading or the story character they are portraying. What expressions and/or gestures can help an audience imagine what is happening with a character or event in the performance? Don’t allow movement, facial expression, and gestures to clutter the presentation for your students. They are interpreting their piece for the audience, allowing the audience to gain a better understanding of the piece through sight and sound.

### **Let Your Voice Be Heard**

The most important tool your students need to use effectively in Group Interpretative Reading is their voices. They need to think about their vocal delivery and how it enhances the overall performance. They should experiment with volume and look for cues in the literature. Speaking loudly can add energy, excitement, and authority, while speaking softly can increase intimacy, suspense, and drama. The tone of voice adds emotion to words. Have your students start experimenting with tone by saying a common phrase three different ways such as saying something with sincerity, with sarcasm, or with joy. Once they understand the concept of tone they can carefully align the words of the script with the tone of their voices to convey meaning.

One of the most under-utilized vocal techniques is silence. Yes, the “sounds” of silence. Well-timed pauses can add a sense of drama by allowing the audience to imagine something that the ensemble is building toward in their performance. Silence can be a transition to another part of a story or another selection if the ensemble is using a variety of sources. Think about this important technique.

### **Final Thoughts**

This is a tough category to coach and yet one of the most rewarding! In Group Interpretative Reading your students are enabling the audience to see the scenes for themselves and feel the emotions in the literary pieces. As a group, they need to portray a deep understanding of the literature they are reading and express the intellectual, emotional, and sensory experience of the material. They need to internalize the piece and convey the author’s meaning and mood, using pitch, rate, pausing, and movement to actualize the mood intended by the writer. Finally, they need to use facial expression, gestures, and movement to help the audience imagine action. They are creating magic!



To give an impromptu speech is to be truly spontaneous. Cultivating this skill prepares students for real life situations thrust upon us all. While Speech students receive prompts at contests, careful preparation and repeated practice ahead of time can yield greater success. Following are some strategies.

**Planning:** Each student should catalog knowledge and experiences in a *commonplace book* or a journal they can review/flip through just before/at a contest before presenting in rounds. *Commonplace books* can be a physical notebook, computer document, or a journaling app on a mobile device. Indexing entries to classifications of knowledge can help students balance types of supporting examples in speeches. Examples of classifications include: history, politics, literature, art, music, philosophies, science/technology concepts, film/television, people/leaders, places, and inspirations/influencers. **Students are not allowed to consult material during a round, but they may consult/refamiliarize themselves with such material before they enter the contest room.**

**Preparation:** The five minutes available to prepare and speak are the student's to divide how they see fit. This could involve brainstorming and outlining ideas for two minutes, then speaking for three; or brainstorming and outlining for one minute and speaking for four minutes. There is no minimum time required for brainstorming and no minimum time for speaking. Therefore, the student should work to develop the best possible structure and reasoning in as short amount of time as possible. Sometimes contestants think it's more impressive to speak longer, but if the ideas aren't clear or well developed, it can diminish overall performance. On the other hand, an over-prepared yet short speech denies a student adequate time to present all of their ideas.

An Impromptu speech follows a basic structure in which a student presents an introduction, body, and conclusion. Similar to other public speaking events, the introduction should provide adequate context for what is to come in the speech. If a student has illustrated an example, recited the chosen prompt, and provided a thesis statement, s/he has given a solid introduction. The most common approach to the body of a speech is to explore two or three topic areas in greater depth. For

example, if a student's thesis focuses on overcoming obstacles, s/he would likely introduce two effective ways to do so and use examples to illustrate these. The student will conclude by reiterating the prompt, thesis, and summarizing the points.

The most effective Impromptu speeches are well organized, and draw on a number of types of examples (from literature, history, current events, entertainment, pop culture, etc.) to engage the adjudicator and/or audience in a meaningful way.

Considering the limited amount of time during a round in which to prepare a response and to speak, careful consideration must be given to time management: to brainstorm, organize thoughts, and develop a thoughtful response to the prompt selected. Here are some strategies for preparation:

- Break the prompt into elements (key words - nouns and verbs)
- Assess the situation/meaning inherent in the prompt (big picture)
- Think of causes
- Align causes with consequences
- For elements (#1), consider differences, similarities, and relationships
- Determine a means of differentiating main points (cause-effect, past-present, present-future, internal-external, economic-social, etc.)

**Organization:** Consider the *Toastmaster* approach:

P: Point—State your point to the question.

R: Reason—State a reason why you raised your point.

E: Example—Give an illustration which supports your above-mentioned case.

P: Prep—Which leads us to the next point.

**Time Management:** just one example of an approach:

Prep = 1.5-2 min.

Attention-getting intro → beginning 1st pt. = 30-45 sec.

Main Point 1 = 1-1.5 min.

Main Point 2 = 2-1.5 min.

Conclusion (tie back to intro theme) = 15-30 sec.

**Example Prompts:**

See the **Speech > Coaching Resources** page on the WISDAA website.

# Informative/Demonstration Speaking

By David Winkler

While every speaker has his or her own reasons for choosing a particular category, the benefits of Informative/Demonstration Speech are numerous, including the development of organization and descriptive language skills while projecting a verbal and nonverbal style that effectively engages an audience.

In general, participants in Informative/Demonstration Speech have the opportunity to refine their communication skills while providing practical instruction to others on a topic of personal interest, though careful consideration should also be given to the audience's engagement of the chosen topic. Is it relevant? Why should the audience care? While a speech may be well-presented, its effectiveness is lessened if the audience is not interested in the topic.

Additionally, one should be careful to choose a topic that is not overly broad or narrow for the ten-minute category time limit. A well-balanced intro-body-conclusion structure should be present with clear, discernable steps that explain and show a process or raise awareness of a new or relatively unknown concept.

Finally, Informative/Demonstration Speech is the only speech category to allow two participants, so reluctant speakers may feel more inclined to participate with the option to perform with a partner. Just let your students know that both will receive the same score – one score. Both speakers should feel comfortable working together.

## Demonstrating?

Coaches and students interested in the demonstration allowance of the category should consider the approach of "exhibiting a process." A process is defined as "a series of actions or operations conducting to an end." In these cases the speaker must create a clear verbal and visual sense of the steps necessary to accomplish an objective and to demonstrate how steps are accomplished so that the audience can see and understand that process.

Ultimately, a successful Informative/Demonstration Speech carefully balances both verbal and visual content.

# Moments in History Speech

By Toni Johnson

Moments in History is designed to be an informative speech with some topic limitations within a focus area. "Moments in History" may be interpreted by some as a great moment or event; others may look for an interesting sidelight of the focus area. In tackling this category, students will broaden their knowledge of history; they may wish to see what primary source material can add to their research. Some may want to consider some aspect of regional or local history.

There is interest in history on the part of many students. Not every student and not necessarily an interest in textbook history, but for some students looking into people, events, fads and the "the way it was" holds a certain fascination. "Moments in History" can be the Speech vehicle for those students who are history buffs and for those students who are searching for a category - - not of the sophistication of Oratory, not of the call to action of Public Address and not Informative. Perhaps someone who would do Informative "but just can't find a topic" will consider this category because some topic surveying is being presented for them.

Moments in History can provide interesting challenges for students. It gives them the opportunity to explore an area of history, topics often lost in the hurried world of daily events. Students may choose the bit of history they wish to research within the WISDAA focus.

In testing the waters of this category, it is important for students to put on waders. Allow students the opportunity to consider different angles. The challenge is not to present six minutes (maximum) on why this is the most historic, significant and compelling topic within the entire focus area. Yes, a student may choose a headlining topic, but, then again, s/he may go for a lesser-known event. History is headliners, but it is also everyday people. The student is informing the audience about the in's and out's of the topic; s/he is not justifying that topic's greatness nor why s/he chose that topic.

Invite/encourage your students, those who gobble up history and those who may reluctantly nibble at it, to explore the possibilities, to consider a fresh informative approach, to capture a Moment in History.

# Oratory Speech

By Mary Torgeson

This category provides the student with an opportunity to give a clearly organized, well developed, eloquently stated and skillfully presented speech on a topic which is significant to the individual and the intended audience. In WISDAA participation, there is the added burden of ensuring that this persuasive speech does one of three things: (1) alerts the audience to the existence of a problem; (2) affirms the existence of a problem and offers a solution; (3) urges the adoption of a policy. Oratory represents a sophisticated challenge to the student who chooses to prepare and present such a speech.

Because the student will develop, refine, revise and try to perfect the oration over a period of months, a topic should be chosen that is of personal concern and the topic needs to be researched in depth from a variety of points of view for the student to be able to state and support a position. A specific purpose statement, a thesis or proposal then needs to be drafted. This provides the direction necessary for the student to determine which ideas will be the most appropriate main points. Once the main ideas are in place, the

selection of quality supporting materials will enable the speaker to fully develop the ideas.

When the basic message is outlined, the special skill challenges begin for the orator; the use of language and style which create the eloquence we have come to expect from an orator. This is why the research of topic and the organization of the speech comes before the artistic work of giving it language. This involves carefully selecting words and phrases, using figures of speech, using language to accent the structure of the speech, to create vivid images, to give a sense of rhythm to the sound of the speech.

This leads us to that final step, dynamic delivery. For the orator, who hopefully has had experience in other areas of speaking, the key to good delivery is spontaneity, a spontaneity that is a result of realization of the ideas of the speech, a full understanding of what is being said. Perhaps **"the greatest occupational hazard of an orator is to say nothing beautifully."** If the proper preparation has been done, this hazard will not exist.

# Play Acting

By Clare McCain and Dorothy Berg

Play Acting is a larger than life **"re-creation"** of any real or imaginary happening in a person's life. Plays demand INTERACTION with fellow performers - not only through dialogue, but more importantly through eye contact, physical touch and through the exchange of feelings and emotions.

ON-STAGE FOCUS - where actors look at and react to each other. The fourth wall calls for the performer to imagine a separation between the acting area and the audience. This imaginary wall does not allow direct eye contact with audience members. Facial expression and the voices of actors are important, but acting uses the entire body with full movement. Physical movements/actions are not merely suggested, as in group interpretive reading, but participants are expected to move/pantomime. All material must be memorized.

Essential to good play acting are:

1. Knowledge of the mental and physical makeup of the character.
2. Motivated blocking or movement that enhances the mental and/or physical needs of the character.

3. Clear demonstration of feelings and interrelationships among characters.

The selection should reflect depth of theme and characterization in this category. Numerous rehearsals allow actors to go beyond rote line memorization and into creating new insights for motivating believable action and in-depth character understanding.

To keep the selection vital throughout the rehearsal period, try:

1. Inviting a small audience.
2. Switching parts.
3. Adding spontaneous action.
4. Saying aloud what the character feels instead of the given dialogue.

Willingness to practice and to perfect will aid students who choose this category.

Suggested sources for play acting materials – see the "Directing Resources" under the Theatre menu on the WISFAA website, and limit the list of vendors by publishers.



Students sometimes perceive poetry and prose are easier because one has a manuscript to "hold on to" (like a security blanket). Perhaps that's true if it were just a matter of "oral reading," but true oral interpretation is another matter!

The interpreter's challenge is to give life to what is written, to create or recreate an experience for the listener. So here are some very brief suggestions related to how one helps a student **interpret poetry** orally. Help them choose poetry worthy of public presentation, (remembering that our standards at 30 or 50 may vary from those of one who is 15 or 17), which uses language as an art form, which "says something" to the listener which goes beyond this time and this place. Help the student examine the selection (or series of selections) to discover what the poetry is "saying". What verbal picture does the material create when we hear it (rather than simply read it to ourselves)? If the student selects a series of shorter works, it is important to help the student think through how these selections are related to one another. The introduction and transitional material between selections will help clarify the relationship.

Help the student work with the rhyme and rhythm so that it adds to the pleasure of the experience rather than dominate or distract. Sometimes having the student write the manuscript in sentences or thought groups, rather than in stanzas as it appears in print, may help the student deal with rhyme. The student's manuscript is the "how to" sheet. "How do I pronounce this word? Which words do I emphasize? Elongate? When do I speak slowly? Where do I pause? Do I smile here or look serious?" With this in mind, it makes sense to spend some time marking the manuscript in practice sessions; making notations in pencil, reading aloud, hearing and revising until you and the student are satisfied that a worthwhile oral interpretation experience has been created for the audience.

The starting point in working with students who wish to interpret **prose** is the selection of materials. There are several questions: Does this material have universal appeal? Does this material have vivid verbal images created by skillful use of language on the part of the author? Is there action which will create interest on the part of the listeners? Can this material be edited to conform to time limitations without damaging the integrity of the material? Does the student who is going

to interpret this material like the material, and identify with what is happening and how it "feels"? With a selection you and the student consider worthy of public presentation, let's begin the process of editing. If the selection is part of a longer work, it is essential that the student become familiar with the entire work, if this experience is going to be a complete one that make any educational sense at all. Again, the student needs to know what is happening and how it "feels". What happened before this moment in time, what happens after this moment, who are the characters, what is their relationship to each other and to the "story"?

What are the images produced by the language? When the student has done a careful study, then the student is ready to make appropriate cuttings for the presentation. The idea is to come up with a self contained portion of literature with a "beginning, middle and end", so the listeners will not be lost from the beginning or left hanging at the end. An appropriate introduction and transitions can assist the interpreter. It is possible to give the audience needed background, introduce characters, describe the setting . . . whatever is needed so that the material can make sense to the listeners. Remember to be aware of what it "sounds like" when editing material for oral interpretation. Simply reading to oneself silently will not reveal what it sounds like, so it will be necessary to read aloud after one edits. With an edited copy of the manuscript and a pencil in hand, you and the student are ready to work on delivery. Because the student is familiar with what is happening and how it feels to the characters, this process of refining ways to convey that to the listener is clearer. Variations in rate of speech, for example, have a direct relationship to the pace of the action in the selection. Variations of pitch and loudness have a direct relationship to the intensity of the action, the feelings of the characters and the relationships revealed among characters. Facial expression and gestures which fit, which match what is happening and how it feels help communicate what the student has discovered while studying the selection for emotional and intellectual meaning.

It may be helpful for the student to videotape the presentation to listen and see their presentation. The listener should be engaged by the interpreter's communication of the events and the emotional content of the selection. That piece of literature should "come alive" for those who hear it interpreted skillfully.

# Public Address Speech

By Chris Verges

Coaching Public Address is similar to coaching Oratory, but with one special requirement. The participant must answer and support a designated question on a contemporary issue. It is this answer and support that requires special attention. Within the introduction the speaker expresses an explicit and direct answer to the question which functions as the thesis of the speech; however, it does not suffice to state it only once. It now becomes the speaker's challenge to restate the thesis throughout the speech perhaps also as transitional statements so that when the speech has been concluded, the listeners can ask themselves the given question and the speaker's answer will come to mind.

Not only is the answer to be very obviously stated, but it is quite common to hear a speaker "preview" his method of support to the audience before beginning the body-support of the answer. For example, if the question is "To what extent, if any, are professional sports overemphasized in our society?" And, the speaker may "preview" by stating, "Let's examine this problem of overemphasized professional football by first examining the sport itself, then its tremendous

consumption of time in both the family and work place and finally, its outrageously high salaries".

Thus, Public Address is a good intermediate category in that the designated topics give the student direction and take away some of the anxiety of finding that special topic. It does demand, however that the student follow the steps of good speech writing and produce a polished delivery.

**Pro-Con Option** *Addendum by Adam Jacobi*  
Public Address was originally created as a category that modeled an eight-minute constructive speech in Policy Debate. The activity of debate has evolved to include more categories, including shorter formats where students have the burden of selecting the most important, salient arguments about an issue, and distilling them in a shorter timeframe (a unique educational challenge in its own right). This exciting new option to present two opposing positions forces a student to investigate and appreciate multiple perspectives as debate does.

# Radio News Reporting

By Judine Brey

I have a student who wants to do Radio! Now what?

1. Breathe. It will be OK. I promise.
2. Compile a practice packet, or use practice packets on the WISDAA website. Make sure you have all of these:
  - a. International: 3-4 stories, e.g., Associated Press (AP) - [apnews.com](http://apnews.com).
  - b. National: 3-4 stories (AP)
  - c. State: 3-4 stories ([apnews.com /tag/Wisconsin](http://apnews.com/tag/Wisconsin); Milwaukee Journal Sentinel).
  - d. Sports: 1-2 stories/scores (AP).
  - e. Weather: local news channel; five-day forecast, so information can be flexible.
  - f. Commercial – see samples on WISDAA website, PSAs online, etc.
3. Give the student instructions. The first time I coached Radio, I forgot what the students didn't know that I did. It was a train wreck. So here's a thumbnail sketch of what a prepared Radio report should look like:
  - a. Introduction: Includes the reporter's name, the radio station call letters, and (possibly) a preview of the upcoming stories (5-10 seconds).
  - b. International News: 1-2 stories from the international section (I forgot to tell a

- student he could cut whole stories, and he had no clue how to include everything in five minutes. Lesson learned). (1:00-1:10)
  - c. National News: 1-2 stories from the national section (1:00-1:10).
  - d. State News: 1-2 stories from the state section (1:00-1:10).
  - e. Commercial: Technically the commercial can come anywhere in the broadcast; I have my students place it here in order to break up the "serious" news from the "lighter" fare (25-35 seconds).
  - f. Sports: 1-2 stories or sports scores (35-45 seconds).
  - g. Weather: 2-3 days forecast (10-20 seconds).
  - h. Conclusion – Basically the same as the introduction (5-10 seconds).
4. Practice sessions. The only way to really teach a student Radio is to have them practice. My students draw their packets 30 minutes before their practice time and then prepare in another room (so I can keep coaching in my room). Expect the first few go-rounds to be a little rough. It takes a while for kids to get the hang of it.
  5. Other things to be aware of:
    - a. Students may time themselves. I have always provided my Radio speakers with

stopwatches, but if the kids want to use their cell phones as timing devices, that is permissible.

- b. They should bring cutting materials. Even if the competition site provides them, I have the kids bring their own packet, including:
  - i. Binder – it looks more professional to read from, and gives them a storage space for the other materials.
  - ii. Highlighters/pens – to mark the passages they want to read and make notes.

- iii. Hole punched copy paper/stapler – they can attach the parts of the scripts they want to read to the paper.
- iv. Scissors – see above.
- v. Transitional phrases – One of my students used a page of her binder to write down potential introductory and transitional phrases. That way they could ensure they were varying their word choice appropriately.

- 6. Last, remember that these are suggestions based on my experience. You will find techniques that work better for you and your students.

## Solo Acting

By Clare McCain

Solo Acting consists of the ability to portray one or more characters in a convincing and creative way. Besides the intellectual understanding of the chosen selection, an actor's only tools are the voice and body. Physical characterization include a walk, a stance, a stare, a glare or even a bad habit. Even though space is limited:

- 1. Height differences - can suggest sitting, climbing or leaning.
- 2. Facial expression - can alter emotional responses.
- 3. Meaningful gestures - can enhance personality traits.

Single character portrayal demands the same versatility as multiple portrayal. In both, the ability to believably convey the character's life experiences rest on real life observations, careful script analysis and experimentation.

Vocal variation can be achieved through changes in pitch, accent, pacing and quality. Character distinction can be achieved effectively by using different focal points in the room. A challenge often overlooked in multiple character portrayal is the importance of "responding to yourself". Physical posture and facial expression are the keys to this challenge. Working for quick, smooth and natural looking transitions between character dialogue also makes a solo actor look polished.

Finally, the most crucial aspect of solo acting is choosing the right selection. Since selections can be from more than plays (i.e. novels, short stories, essays, magazine articles) sources are innumerable. If adapted to the dramatic format, all choices are appropriate.

## Special Occasion Speech

By Chris Verges

A Special Occasion speaker has a public speaking challenge very different from that of informing or persuading; being a ceremonial speech, its challenge is to inspire a recommitment to commonly held social values. Since in this situation the speaker and audience share the same beliefs and feelings, it is the speaker's job to put these beliefs and feelings into appropriate and memorable words and to satisfy the ceremonial expectations of the audience. To accomplish this end, one must first realize the purpose of the speech and then create a structure, research the information and finally find the appropriate language to accomplish this task. At this point, it is organizing and creating

appropriate and expected wording and phrasing of the speech with special emphasis on clear illustrations, direct ideas and vivid language which makes the speech successful.

After careful analysis, planning and preparing, the final element of a successful Special Occasion speech is a natural and spontaneous delivery that is emotionally and ceremonially appropriate to the situation. Thus, the speaker must make the Special Occasion speech appropriate to the audience and situation and fulfill the audience's expectations while making it memorable!

Once upon a time there was a creative high school student. His teacher saw the potential in them and suggested he try Storytelling. The astute coach replied, "Yes, you're good at it. You like to act. You love to invent characters and you think it's fun to create different voices. Storytelling is the category for you." The student was somewhat taken aback. He was expecting the teacher to suggest Solo Acting, or even Play Acting, which often enjoy a greater spotlight in the scheme of Speech categories.

The first step in becoming a successful storyteller is to identify topic areas established by WISDAA for the current year, released in early October. Stories may come from a variety of sources: children's literature, folklore, tall tales, as well as cultural legends, and more. Stories do not need to be aimed for children, rather, they may be appropriate for young adults or for all ages. It is fun for students to think about their favorite childhood stories, but learning new stories as a result of annually changing topic areas can be even more rewarding.

Asking a student to tell a favorite story from their childhood is helpful for getting a sense of their skill and personality. Be sure to remind the student to identify

the type of audience (e.g., age level) the story is intended for, as they begin their performance.

Once students select stories they will be using, the fun begins. It's important to become familiar with the story and the sequence of the story to be able to keep it moving. The next step is to create voices and physical mannerisms to represent personas for each of the characters. No matter how physically explosive and carried away with the drama of the story students may get, they must remain seated (attached) to their chair, which helps delineate Storytelling from acting. The successful storyteller 1) identifies an appropriate story for each topic area; 2) brings characters to life physically and vocally; 3) uses a variety of voices without duplication; 4) maintains the story's sequence; and 5) entices the audience to listen.

Ingredients for successful storytelling share many of the same qualities of successful acting. In fact, one of the founders of Western acting technique is Thespis the storyteller of ancient Greece, for whom we get the term "thespian" from when referring to actors. Definitely tap actors for this category, and perhaps even discover budding actors as a result of their interest in Storytelling.