

Virginia High School League  
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# VHSL FORENSICS MANUAL

Updated August 2015

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# FORENSICS MANUAL

CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS/ HIGHLIGHTED PER THIS EXAMPLE

## Virginia High School League, Inc.

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Ken Tilley, Executive Director  
Lisa Giles, Assistant Director  
Sharon Condoulis, Program Assistant

This official publication of the Virginia High School League has been prepared as an aid to high school forensic coaches, lay judges, festival/tournament directors and persons who work closely with interscholastic speech programs.

The general purpose of the League's speech program is to stimulate interest and participation in the activity among Virginia high school students. This purpose is best served when a large number of schools and students engage in the programs. Through forensic activities at the school level, young people are provided a means of furthering their cultural and educational development.

Rules and guidelines contained in this manual have been established by the VHSL Debate, Drama and Forensic Advisory Committee with approval of the League's Executive Committee. These policies are designed to ensure an equitable setting in which to conduct competitive activities and improve one's level of achievement.

Coaches, participants, judges, event administrators and observers are expected to adhere to the regulations and procedures described herein. They are also expected to apply the principles of good sportsmanship which, according to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* is defined as, "**Conduct becoming to a competitor, involving honest rivalry and graceful acceptance of results.**" VHSL sportsmanship rules as stated in the Handbook apply to academic activities just as they do to athletic activities. The procedure for addressing sportsmanship concerns is printed on the reverse.

Besides containing rules for speech events, this manual includes sample rating forms, judge's ballots and useful information so participants understand how events are administered and evaluated. Entry forms for conference and regional competitions are available under the appropriate activity on the League website ([www.vhsl.org](http://www.vhsl.org)). State entry forms are posted on the website and are also distributed by regional directors to coaches of students qualifying for that level.

Persons receiving this manual are urged to read it carefully and retain it for reference purposes. If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please contact us at the League office.

We appreciate your continued support of forensic activities, and we welcome your suggestions for its improvement.

Ken Tilley  
Executive Director

Lisa Giles  
Director of Activities

# ABOUT THE VHSL

When members of the Washington and Jefferson Literary Societies at the University of Virginia decided in the fall of 1913 to organize a debating league among the secondary schools of the state, they could not have comprehended how their small project would develop, expand and grow into what is now the Virginia High School League.

Twenty schools took part in that first state event. By the fall of 1914 one hundred schools were enrolled in the Virginia High School Literary League. Its program was expanded during 1914-15 to include a contest in oral reading. And in conjunction with the University's General Athletic Association, statewide competition began in baseball, basketball and track. Other sports and activities soon followed. Dramatic activities have been an integral part of the VHSL since the first One-Act Play competition in 1931-32.

Membership in the League increased so rapidly that the Extension Division of the University of Virginia, and later the Division of Continuing Education, had to be assigned greater responsibility for the conduct of League affairs.

By 1926, the League realized that, in the interest of democracy, the legislative responsibilities of the League should be vested in representatives of member high schools. All activities were coordinated under one organization. Control of the composite program was charged to a body of principals known as the Legislative Council, assisted by a smaller Executive Committee.

In March 1946, the League was reorganized as the first step in a significant postwar program. Its name was changed from "The Virginia High School Literary and Athletic League" to "Virginia High School League" to suggest a wider field of League interests. Finally, in 1995, legislative control was transferred from the Legislative Council to the Executive Committee.

For equalization of opportunities sponsored by the League, each school is classified according to its enrollment into a Group, 1A-6A. Each group is subdivided into two regions, each of which consists of four conferences with an average of seven schools per conference. Today the League membership consists of 315 schools, nearly all of the accredited three- and four-year public high schools in the state.

More than 150,000 students participate each year in VHSL athletic programs. The League conducts state championships in 28 different sports — 13 for boys and 14 for girls — ranging from football and field hockey to gymnastics and golf. An additional 25,000 students take part in VHSL academic programs. Besides debate, drama and forensics, these include creative writing, scholastic media, Scholastic Bowl and film festival.

Besides its sponsorship of individual and team activities for students, the League seeks to improve officiating and coaching by organizing and training more than 5,000 game officials, conducting rules clinics, providing information and materials and working closely with related organizations at the state and national levels. VHSL and the Virginia Association of Speech and Debate Coaches co-sponsor a speech, debate and theatre conference for coaches in early fall.

Through coordinated group action, the League has flourished. Thousands of men and women working with millions of boys and girls have provided wholesome, diverse activities that enhance the academic mission of schools. These activities provide valuable lessons that enrich an individual's high school experiences. They prepare students to lead more productive lives. They contribute to a unity of purpose within a team, a school, a community and the entire commonwealth. They help the League accomplish its main objective — service to Virginia's youth.

# VHSL ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES CALENDARS

The following calendars are provided to you in advance to assist in your planning your year and beyond. Please plan ahead to avoid conflicts with SATs, SOLs and other events. Keep in mind, deadline dates are just deadlines. Conference and regional tournaments may be scheduled prior to, but not after deadlines.

## **2015-16 ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES CALENDAR - ADOPTED**

ACTIVITY	CLASS	CONFERENCE DEADLINE	REGION DEADLINE	STATE FINAL	LOCATION
Theatre	1A/2A	11/7/15	11/21/15	12/8/15	Monticello High School
Theatre	3A-4A	11/7/15	11/21/15	12/7/15	Monticello High School
Theatre	5A-6A	2/6/16	2/20/16	3/5/16	Dickinson Center
Scholastic Bowl	1A-6A	1/30/16	2/13/16	2/27/16	William & Mary
Forensics	1A-6A	2/27/16	3/12/16	4/2/16	Clover Hill HS
Debate	1A-6A	3/26/16	4/9/16	4/22-23/16	Liberty University

**Note:** Thanksgiving is November 26 and Easter is March 27

## **REGIONAL POSTPONEMENT POLICY**

In case of extreme weather conditions which imperil travelers attempting to reach the regional event site, the regional director has permission to postpone the regional event, and therefore the state event entry form deadline, one day at a time until the day preceding the state event. If the regional event is delayed beyond the adopted regional deadline, the regional director is required to advise the Executive Director of the postponement and required to call in the regional results to the state event director as soon as the regional event is completed. In addition, the regional director is required to mail, deliver or fax the results to the state director and to the VHSL office.

## **2015-16 SAT TEST DATES**

October 3, 2015  
 November 7, 2015  
 December 5, 2015  
 January 23, 2016  
 March 5, 2016  
 May 7, 2016  
 June 4, 2016

## **2015-16 ACT TEST DATES**

September 12, 2015  
 October 24, 2015  
 December 12, 2015  
 February 6, 2016  
 April 9, 2016  
 June 11, 2016

# Sportsmanship – It’s all about respect!

Good sportsmanship is a top priority of the Virginia High School League. The manner in which your school is represented is far more important than whether your team wins or loses. Good sportsmanship is all about respect – respect for oneself, for teammates, opposing teams, coaches, judges, audience and for Forensics itself.

Inappropriate behavior is easy to identify. One need ask only two questions:

1. Is the observed behavior respectful of the targeted audience?
2. Does the observed behavior reflect positively on your school?

If the answer to either question is no, then the behavior is inappropriate and must not be tolerated. Respect must be a priority at all times and in all situations.

Each participating Forensics coach bears a huge responsibility for making sure that good sportsmanship is valued. Inappropriate behavior can be an embarrassment to students, coaches, judges, administrators, the community and to the VHSL.

**Each participating school is expected to provide administrators and other chaperones to actively supervise its student body and fans during the tournament and address inappropriate behavior if or when it occurs. Individuals who are disruptive, disrespectful, fail to comply with facility and/or VHSL procedures or otherwise behave inappropriately will be escorted from the facility.**

- Forensics coaches and school administrators have primary responsibility for observing their student body and fans, and for taking corrective action when their students or fans behave inappropriately. Students will react more quickly and more positively to their own teachers and administrators than they will to an unknown security guard.
- VHSL staff is not responsible for making sure your students and fans behave. That is your responsibility.
- Watching the performances is secondary to your supervision. You are “on duty” during the tournament, and your supervision must be active. VHSL and tournament staff will assist when necessary.
- Fans will not be permitted on the stage at any time. No one will be permitted on the stage except tournament personnel and finalists and coaches when appropriate.

## **EXAMPLES OF UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR**

The following list is by no means “all inclusive,” but is provided to draw attention to behaviors occasionally witnessed at Forensics tournaments. Please review this list with your student body and coaches so that they will know what is not acceptable.

- Entering a lower-level competition and not participating in subsequent competitions (if qualified) due to schedule or other conflicts that are known beforehand is highly frowned-upon.
- Distractions of any kind
- Entering/exiting during a performance
- Seeking access to impromptu or extemporaneous topics/questions prior to participation
- Antagonizing, intimidating or abusing participants, tournament staff or others
- Challenging a judge’s comments or rankings
- Displays of temper, anger, boasting, use of profanity or arguing with tournament staff or judges
- Coaching, signaling or informing a contestant during preparation or an active presentation
- Frivolous, unfounded and/or unsubstantiated challenges or protests against other individuals/teams

Unsportsmanlike behavior must be addressed by school coaches or administrators if/when they occur. Failure to do so is a violation of The League’s Sportsmanship Rule.

**Remember, good sportsmanship is all about respect. Win with humility; lose with grace; do both with dignity.**

# Sportsmanship Violations

**27-11-11 Procedure: Academic Competition-**Unsportsmanlike action must be reported to the League by any school or tournament official. The report should include any corroborating information or testimony available. A copy of the report complete with any supporting information shall be transmitted to the principal of the school or schools involved. Each principal concerned shall report such information or answers to the report as he/she deems appropriate to the League. Upon receipt of all reports and a review of any action taken, the League shall refer copies of all documents, including a staff recommendation as to whether the school's response is sufficient, to the school or schools involved and to the chairman of the League, who may in turn refer the matter to the Academic Sportsmanship Committee to investigate and adjudicate what appears to be a violation of this rule. The Academic Sportsmanship Committee shall review at a time and place set by the League office such available evidence as it deems necessary to reach a conclusion. The League is specifically directed to pursue any items which on the surface have implications of being sportsmanship violations. A League staff member or member of the Academic Sportsmanship Committee may be assigned the responsibility of holding personal interviews with the principal parties involved. Actions such as seeking reports and holding interviews are not to be interpreted in any way as casting reflection upon a school adhering to League regulations, but as an effort to keep all parties properly informed. Penalties up to and including suspensions of member schools may be imposed by the Executive Committee and/or the Academic Sportsmanship Committee. A copy of the Academic Sportsmanship Committee's action shall be filed with the chairman of the conferences concerned.

## Protests

(3) The Virginia High School League permits the correction of clerical or scoring errors in each interscholastic activity as specified in that activity's specific rule book. In those cases in which there is no rule book for an activity or in which the rule book does not specify a definite time period for the correction of clerical or scoring errors and the results are not announced until the conclusion of the activity, clerical or scoring errors may be corrected within 60 minutes of the announced results. In debate, drama and forensics, a school which leaves the site prior to the end of the review period forfeits the right to appeal the results. No protests will be considered which are based upon the real or alleged failure of contest officials to interpret or apply game or contest rules properly, or to render correct decisions in matters of judgment. League rules provide that officials for all League athletic contests shall be mutually agreed upon by the faculty representatives of all schools concerned. When this has been done and the contest has been started, differences of opinion which arise during the progress of the contest must be considered on the spot, and the decision of the contest official shall be final. Games may not be played "under protest" for later review by a Committee; however, the Assistant Director shall render an interpretation to all parties involved as to the proper application of rules in cases of protests if complete facts are presented in writing to the League office. Such an interpretation will not change the outcome of the contest as the decision of a game official is final, unless the Assistant Director determines that the game official(s) has incorrectly permitted a contest(s) to be suspended, a tie(s) to be broken or a tie(s) to stand in contradiction to the game rules adopted by the League.

# VHSL ADVISORY COMMITTEE SERVES IMPORTANT ROLE

The Constitution of the Virginia High School League authorizes the Executive Committee to appoint advisory committees for the purpose of giving technical or other advice and assistance as may be necessary in conducting statewide activities programs for the benefit of high school students. Among these advisory committees is the Debate, Drama and Forensic Advisory Committee.

This advisory committee is composed of active high school coaches — two debate, two drama and two forensic coaches. It is chaired by a principal who also serves on the Executive Committee. It meets annually to develop the terms and conditions for administering state events as well as to make recommendations for improving administrative procedures governing speech and drama activities.

Members are appointed to provide (1) balanced geographical representation, (2) knowledge and experience in their specific activity and (3) representation for both large and small schools. The term of appointment is three years with staggered terms allowing for a combination of continuity and new ideas.

A member of the VHSL administrative staff works with the advisory committee in developing the scope of the committee's work and in presenting the committee's recommendations to coaches at area rules clinics and to the Executive Committee and Membership. In order for legislative changes (Handbook amendments) to be implemented, they must be approved by the Executive Committee at two of four annual meetings.

Obviously the strength of advisory committees is that they give the League's Executive Committee direct access to sentiment from the "grass roots" level. Committee members are encouraged to express their personal feelings and observations as well as ideas from their colleagues in the field. Many of their ideas are also addressed at required speech rules clinics held annually across the state. It is important to bear in mind that all decisions are ultimately based on what will best serve the interests of boys and girls from across the state participating in the League's interscholastic activities.

For the 2015-16 school year, members of the DDFAC include:

## **Debate, Drama and Forensic Advisory Committee**

Tina Tapp, Radford HS  
Todd Necessary, Marion Senior HS  
Carol Webster, William Byrd HS  
David Noland, Woodgrove HS  
Shelly Nowacek, Great Bridge HS  
Terri Towle, Westfield HS

<b><u>Responsibility</u></b>	<b><u>Region</u></b>	<b><u>Term</u></b>
Forensics/Theatre	1A-West	Jan. 2014 – Dec. 2016
Forensics/Theatre	2A-West	Jan. 2014 – Dec. 2016
Theatre	3A-West	Jan. 2013 – Dec. 2015
Theatre	4A-North	Jan. 2015 – Dec. 2017
Theatre	5A-South	Jan. 2014 – Dec. 2016
Forensics/Debate	6A-North	Jan. 2013 – Dec. 2015

## **Ex Officio**

Lisa Giles, VHSL Assistant Director

## **State Tournament Director**

Charlene Tiller ([ctiller@jtcc.edu](mailto:ctiller@jtcc.edu))



# Social Networking

## **FOLLOW US ON TWITTER**

The VHSL uses Twitter to communicate timely, short messages to its constituents. Follow us at: [www.twitter.com/vhsl\\_activities](http://www.twitter.com/vhsl_activities).

## **FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM**

[VirginiaHSLeague](https://www.instagram.com/VirginiaHSLeague)

## **VHSL ACTIVITIES HAVE FACEBOOK GROUPS**

In an effort to network and build community among the VHSL activities populations the VHSL in 2009 created Facebook groups. These groups are open to coaches, students, judges and others who are linked to the activities community and are intended to be a constructive, supportive environment where coaches/students may ask questions, share coaching tips and resources, solicit VHSL tournament officials/staff, etc. within the VHSL community. Official groups are:

- VHSL Forensics [www.facebook.com/VHSLforensics](http://www.facebook.com/VHSLforensics)
- VHSL Theatre [www.facebook.com/VHSLtheatre](http://www.facebook.com/VHSLtheatre)
- VHSL Debate [www.facebook.com/VHSLdebate](http://www.facebook.com/VHSLdebate)
- VHSL Scholastic Bowl [www.facebook.com/VHSLschobo](http://www.facebook.com/VHSLschobo)
- VHSL Publications [www.facebook.com/VHSLpubs](http://www.facebook.com/VHSLpubs)
- VHSL Creative Writing [www.facebook.com/VHSLpubs](http://www.facebook.com/VHSLpubs)
- VHSL Film Festival [www.facebook.com/VHSLfilmfestival](http://www.facebook.com/VHSLfilmfestival)

The VHSL reserves the right to remove any post or user from any group. The following are guidelines for group use:

- Obscene, abusive, insulting, hateful, racist or sexually explicit language is prohibited as are defamatory comments or personal attacks. Posts that may be construed as threatening may be deleted and made available to the proper law enforcement officials.
- Commercial solicitations and/or advertisements are prohibited.
- All posts must be in English.

## **VHSL IS ON YOUTUBE**

Subscribe to our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/theVHSL](http://www.youtube.com/theVHSL).

# SIX CLASSIFICATION AT A GLANCE

Here is a snapshot of how six classification expansion affects forensics beginning the 2013-14 school year.

1. See Final Adopted Conference Alignment Plan on following page to determine what conference your school is in, and what schools your school competes with at the conference and regional levels. For example, Colonial Heights is in Conference 25, Region 3A-East and Class 3A.
2. Unless your region has elected to maintain a district competition, competition effectively begins at the conference level.
3. The number of individuals/teams that advance from conference to region and region to state are the same.
4. Instead of three state championships, there will be six.
5. Instead of six finalists in each state championship, there will be three. State forensics meets shall consist of two preliminary rounds of competition and a final championship round. One section of no more than six competitors per event per round shall be used. At the conclusion of the two preliminary rounds, the three finalists will be announced in each event to compete in the final championship round.

# Policy on Regional/State Drops and Alternate Advancement

**Forensics competitors advancing from the conference to the regional meet and from the regional to the state meet are expected to participate at the next level except in emergency situations.** A discretionary drop, as opposed to an emergency drop, must be completed at least one week prior to the regional or state tournament, or it will be considered a sportsmanship violation and is to be addressed under Handbook rules 27-13-11 and 27-13-12 (7).

Schools are not permitted to make substitutions for competitors who are unable to advance, except for one-half of a duo interpretation team when that participant's withdrawal could not have been anticipated.

Such circumstances as illness or an unexpected family commitment may justify a substitution. A substitution will not be allowed for a duo team member who is aware of another commitment on the dates of the regional or state tournament at the time of entry into the conference tournament.

If a substitution for one member of a duo team is necessary, the principal may contact the League office in writing and explain the circumstances, giving the name of the student unable to attend the tournament and the name of that student's replacement. The decision on the substitution will be based on the information given.

If a first-, second- or third-place team or individual is unable to advance to the regional or state tournament, the fourth-place alternate in the appropriate conference or regional tournament may compete at the next level and will be inserted in the schematic pairings in the vacated spot without regard to protection provided that the alternate placement is made given four days advanced notice (or Tuesday at 12 noon for tournaments held on Saturday). No replacements beyond fourth-place teams or individuals shall be permitted.

# Suggestions and Instructions for Forensic Meet Directors -- Conference/Regional

Enclosed are the materials to assist you in the conduct of a Conference/Regional Forensic Meet. We assume that the date and time for the meet have been set, and that you have been named director of the meet. If you are not the meet director, please forward this package to the appropriate person or call the VHSL office. Included in this kit are:

1. Postal Card
2. Suggestions and Instructions for Directors
3. Competition Rules Violations and Appeals
4. Eligibility Requirements
5. VHSL Speech Scoring and Tie-breaking Procedures -- please review carefully
6. Checklist for Organizing a Forensics Tournament
7. Schematic/Postings
8. Judging Assignment Sheet (judges are not to evaluate students from their own school)
9. Tally Sheet
10. Event Ballot
11. Judging Assignments
12. Master Sweeps
13. Tournament Format
14. How to Prepare a Schematic
15. Sample Schedules for Forensic Tournaments
16. Timekeepers Guidelines
17. Guidelines for Forensics Judges
18. VHSL State Forensic Tournament Frequently Asked Questions
19. Suggestions for Judges of Speaking Contests
20. Special Suggestions for Conducting the Extemporaneous Speaking Contest and VHSL Extemporaneous Speaking Questions (for use if you desire)
21. VHSL Impromptu Speaking Topics (for use if you desire)
22. Suggestions for Oral Interpretation Contest Judges
23. Judges' Information Sheet and Rating Forms for Oral Interpretation and Speaking Contests
24. Meet Director's Report -- **Conference Director**, send your report to the Regional Director and to the VHSL; **Regional Director**, send your report to the VHSL IMMEDIATELY.
25. List of possible judges and contact persons for judges
26. Sample of Forensic Meet Entry Form
27. For **Regional Meet Directors** -- State Meet Entry Forms for Regional Winners
28. Sections 110-116 of the VHSL Handbook

Please note that conference and regional awards are the responsibility of each respective conference/region.

Also be sure to make sufficient copies of the materials above so that (1) each judge is given appropriate directions for his event in advance of the meet, (2) there are enough rating forms for each judge and (3) there are enough criticism forms for each contestant in those events.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU READ CAREFULLY ALL ENCLOSED MATERIALS, KEEP A COPY FOR YOUR PERSONAL REFERENCE, AND ESPECIALLY THE ENCLOSED COPY FROM SECTION 110-116 OF THE LEAGUE HANDBOOK AND THAT YOU FOLLOW IN GENERAL THE MEET OUTLINE BELOW. Seek to delegate responsibilities well in advance, calling upon trained and interested personnel from nearby schools and colleges as well as from the community for assistance as chairmen and judges, Tab Room personnel, etc. Many conferences and regions have found it helpful to ask each participating school to provide a fair proportion of the judges or to work with other groups, for example asking Group A coaches to judge for Group AA, if Group AA coaches judge for Group A.

## REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

**Conference Meets** -- Conference forensic meets shall be held not later than the deadline date specified in the Activities Calendar (inside front cover of the Handbook) to determine conference championships for each of the contests comprising the meet, and to qualify winners for participation in the regional meet. Tournaments should follow one of four formats detailed in the VHSL Handbook. Failure of a conference to conduct a meet on or before this deadline date shall disqualify conference winners from participation in the regional meets. **The deadline for the Conference meet this year is February 21, 2015.**

Each school is limited to two entries in each of the contests comprising the conference meet, to a maximum of 17 total entries. A duo entry counts as a single entry.

**Regional Meets** -- Regional forensic meets shall be held not later than the deadline date specified in the Activities Calendar (inside front cover of the Handbook) to qualify winners for participation in the state meet. Tournaments should follow one of four formats detailed in the VHSL Handbook. Failure of a region to conduct a meet on or before the deadline date shall disqualify regional winners from participation in the state meet.

First-, second- and third-place winners in each conference meet are eligible for the regional meet. First-, second- and third-place winners in each regional meet are eligible for the state meet. If a first-, second- or third-place team or individual is unable to advance to the regional or state tournament, the fourth-place team or individual in the appropriate conference or regional tournament may compete at the next level so long as the change is made according to policy. No replacements beyond fourth-place teams or individuals shall be permitted. The substitution will be inserted in the schematic pairings in the vacated spot without regard to protection. Drops for emergency reasons must be accepted whenever they occur; however, the tournament director and the school whose student would be the alternate must be notified of a discretionary drop, where the decision is a matter of choice, at least one week prior to the beginning of competition or it will be considered a sportsmanship violation.

**Meet Regulations and Procedures** -- A meet shall consist of 10 separate contests as follows: Extemporaneous Speaking, Original Oratory, Impromptu Speaking, Storytelling, Prose Interpretation, Poetry Interpretation, Serious Dramatic Interpretation, Humorous Dramatic Interpretation, Serious Duo Interpretation and Humorous Duo Interpretation.

No student shall represent his school in more than one contest.

Only entries that are submitted on the official entry form (under forensics on the VHSL website) properly certified by the school principal, and **received by** the deadline date for entry, shall be accepted.

All expenses of travel, board and lodging shall be defrayed by the competing schools or their contestants.

Judges -- Judges should be secured well in advance. When you contact them, let them know whether they will be paid (determined by appropriate conference or region); the date, time and location of the meet; and the date, time and location of the briefing session for judges. The briefing is essential and should be held a few days before the meet. At that session instruct them in meet procedures, go over the rating forms and critique sheets in detail and discuss the nature of the events. A thorough and well-run briefing session is your best avenue for avoiding misunderstandings at the meet because of lack of knowledge on the part of the judges. If you need further assistance in preparing for this briefing session, call the League staff at 434-977-8475.

The tournament director is responsible for securing judges, but many conferences and regions ask each participating school to provide a fair share of the judges. This spreads the work and helps avoid situations where judges are perceived as favoring the host school. College students concentrating in speech communication or related areas and teachers of the speech arts generally make excellent judges. Contact area colleges, junior and senior high schools (not in your Group) and elementary schools for assistance in securing judges. Area citizens with backgrounds in the speech arts can also be very helpful. Under no circumstances should high school students be used to judge VHSL tournaments. A short list of judges and contact persons is enclosed.

**No matter how experienced the judges are, do not neglect the briefing session.**

Tournament directors may wish to appoint a rules committee of three diverse, knowledgeable coaches, plus alternates in the event there is a conflict of interest, to assist in the review of any dispute over rules violations (other than tabulations and time violations) prior to distribution of awards.

Judges may consider appropriateness of content in forensics selections, as noted on each ballot. A director MAY NOT disqualify a student for content approved by the school principal. See Handbook 111-8-2.

As a means of standardizing competition conditions, **students should not be permitted to use a lectern or podium even if it is available in the competition room**. While students participating in extemporaneous speaking may have acquired background information via the Internet and included it in their files, they may not use computers (school, personal or laptops) once a conference, regional or state forensics tournament has begun.

**A student may be disqualified by the tournament director for a violation of a Handbook rule.** However, the violation must be clear.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. **Conference Directors:** Notify the schools in your conference well in advance of the date, location and time of the meet. Give them the entry deadline date (no later than one week before the meet - preferably two weeks). Explain that entry forms are available under forensics on the VHSL website ([www.vhsl.org](http://www.vhsl.org)).

**Announce the date and site of the regional meet and remind qualifiers to submit Regional Meet Entry Forms immediately to the Regional Director.** Explain that Regional Meet Entry Forms are also available under forensics on the VHSL website ([www.vhsl.org](http://www.vhsl.org)).

2. **Regional Directors:** Conference directors will send to you a copy of their conference meet results. Notify schools with first-, second- and third-place winners of the location, date and time of the regional meet and the entry deadline date (no later than one week before the meet; preferably two weeks).

**NOTE:** Subject to conference committee or region council approval, a tournament director may establish a drop-dead deadline and refuse to accept additional entries. To impose the drop-dead deadline, the director must inform the school principal or forensics coach by telephone or fax at least 24 hours in advance of the deadline that additional entries will not be permitted after the deadline.

**Announce the State Meet date. Distribute the State Meet Entry Forms to schools with first-, second- and third-place winners. Remind sponsors that the state entry forms must be sent to the VHSL immediately.**

3. Enlist students and/or fellow teachers to assist at registration and to serve as guides on the day of the meet.
4. Plan an awards assembly in which winners will be announced. You should allow at least one hour between the end of the meet and the beginning of the awards assembly.
5. **Reviewing Results** -- After results are announced, give each school a copy of all judges' critiques and tabulation results. Schools must have an opportunity to check the accuracy of the results. All clerical errors must be corrected within 60 minutes of the announced results. A school that leaves the competition site before the review period is complete forfeits the right to appeal or correct results. Only one person from a school is required to stay for the review period, but that person must retain possession of any awards in the event that an error is discovered and awards have to be redistributed.

**TABULATIONS:** All directions in this kit are for traditional tournament management and tabulations by paper and pencil.

**FORFEITS:** Once the tournament is underway, the discretionary decision by any student or duo team not to participate in any round of scheduled competition constitutes a sportsmanship violation, a forfeit and immediate elimination of that student or duo team from the competition.

**PUBLISHED MATERIAL:** Oral interpretation events require the use of published work. Selections used shall be cuttings from published printed material, the approved list of online sources, or e-books that also exist in published printed format. Recorded material not printed and published is prohibited. If a selection is challenged, a school representative must be able to identify the printed source or e-book on the spot and will be asked to produce an original or copy of an original to verify publication. For online sources, a school representative must provide a printed copy of the complete, original text with cuts denoted, in addition to a digital copy loaded from the original source link. If publication cannot be verified to the satisfaction of the tournament director, the student will be disqualified. All disputes will be settled at the conference, regional or state level where the challenge was made.

**DISQUALIFICATION:** The VHSL Handbook states specific penalties for the violation of some rules (e.g. A violation of the 30-second grace period following the time limit for an event means that a student may not be ranked first or scored highest for that round). The Handbook also states that the penalty is disqualification for violation of other rules. However, to earn disqualification, the violation must be clear and absolute (e.g. A student using the same selection as was used in last year's competition). Many violations are not absolute but are a matter of interpretation (e.g. Did the speaker move more than is permitted or use clothing as a prop?). If a judge questions whether or not a rules violation took place, he/she should evaluate the presentation without prejudice, and share his/her concern with the tournament director, who shall make a ruling on whether or not a disqualification is in order based on the evidence presented. The judge is the arbiter of the presentation and what did or what did not happen in the room. The tournament director makes the final call on disqualifications.

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** The VHSL is committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities at its academic tournaments. Any competing student requesting special accommodations must submit comprehensive, written information at least two weeks in advance of conference tournament to VHSL Assistant Director. This information should include (1) specific nature of disability as diagnosed by a qualified professional, (2) specific functional limitations of student and (3) accommodation requested as recommended by diagnosing professional. VHSL may provide the accommodation recommended, or such other accommodation as it deems reasonable to address the identified functional limitation. Any accommodations provided will be with the intent to provide an equal but not advantageous opportunity for student to compete and is not intended to alter the fundamental nature of the activity.

# Tournament Format

Conference and Regional meets may follow any of the four optional formats, keeping in mind that the more performances a student gives, the more evaluations the student receives, the more the student learns.

(1) Option A: Conference forensics meets shall consist of three preliminary rounds of competition followed by a final championship round. Multiple sections of no more than six competitors per event per round shall be used. At the conclusion of the three preliminary rounds, the six finalists will be announced in each event. The final round will immediately follow the posting. One judge shall be used for each preliminary round and three judges shall be used for each final championship round. Judges shall not see the same event more than once per tournament.

(2) Option B: Conference forensics meets shall consist of three rounds of competition. This could be three consecutive rounds of competition or two preliminary rounds followed by a final round of six competitors. Multiple sections of no more than six competitors per event per round shall be used. If there are three consecutive rounds, two judges shall be used for each round. If there are two preliminary rounds followed by a final round, two judges shall be used in the preliminaries and three judges shall be used in the final round. One judge shall not see the same event more than once per tournament.

(3) Option C: A two-round forensics tournament shall be used at the conference level. Multiple sections of no more than six competitors per event per round shall be used. At least two judges should evaluate each round with no judge judging the same event more than once in a tournament.

(4) Option D: If fewer than eight competitors participate in each event of the conference forensics tournament, a one-round tournament may be used at the conference level. If a one-round format is used, three judges shall be used.



# Preparing Tournament Schematics

In order to ensure as fair as possible a distribution of forensics competitors between sections and over different positions in the speaking order, VHSL has for a number of years provided tournament directors with a model schematic. The directions are as follows:

The first round of competition is predetermined by lot, drawn by the tournament director. (To avoid questions, you may wish to draw for speaking order in the presence of an administrator.) To do this, write each contestant's name and code on a slip of paper or index card and put them into a "hat" and pull them out one at a time. No school's contestants may meet each other in the first round where there are two or more sections in the same event. As the name and codes are drawn, they are listed in that speaking order.

All contestants for section one are drawn first, then section two and so on. Remember, if two contestants from the same school are drawn for the same section in the first round, simply move the second one drawn to the next available section. List these students for round one in the proper section on the schematic sheet provided.

Then, using the chart below simply move the person in each position in round one to the position indicated by the same number in round two and, if appropriate, round 3.

Round One		Round Two		Round Three	
Sec. 1	Sec. 2	Sec. 1	Sec. 2	Sec. 1	Sec. 2
Speaker 1	7	5	10	3	11
Speaker 2	8	12	4	9	10
Speaker 3	9	6	2	5	12
Speaker 4	10	11	7	1	8
Speaker 5	11	3	1	7	6
Speaker 6	12	9	8	2	4

**NOTE:** This is a model only. Tournament directors are permitted to use a number of random methods of preparing schematics so long as competitors from the same school are protected against meeting each other in the first round when there is more than one section (but they may meet in the second and/or third round).

## Judging Schematics

To ensure the most fair and impartial results, judges are not to evaluate students from their own school. When procuring judges, conference/regional tournament directors may wish to use a form similar to the State Judge Response Form (<http://www.vhsl.org/doc/upload/for-state-judge-form2.pdf>) to help them determine and avoid potential conflicts of interest when setting up judging schematics.

# Special Suggestions for Conducting the Extemporaneous Speaking Contest

1. Choice of Topics -- Topics are to be chosen from articles appearing in the issues of national newsmagazines such as *Newsweek*, *Time* and *U.S. News and World Report* or from mainstream newspapers with national circulations. Topics may relate to either domestic or foreign affairs and will be released at least 30 days before each tournament. The VHSL will provide directors with a set of questions for their tournament that pertain to these topic areas at least two weeks in advance of their event. We strongly suggest that you use these, although you should drop questions that become outdated between the time the questions are written and the date of the tournament, and supplement them with additional questions of your own if necessary. Under no circumstances should the questions be made known to the contestants before the event. A different topic area will be used for each round.

Sample topic areas:

Round 1 – U.S. Economics
Round 2 – Iraq
Round 3 – U.S. Healthcare
Round 4 – Terrorism

Providing the topic areas in advance will help students focus their preparation.

2. Drawing -- Each contestant, in order, will draw three topics, choose one and return the other two. He/she then retires to the preparation room to prepare his/her speech. The other contestants will then draw topics at ten-minute intervals. All students in each section will draw from the same list of questions. Each contestant is allowed 30 minutes for preparation time and it is his/her responsibility to report to the speaking room at the end of 30 minutes.

Contestants should confine their remarks to only one phase of the subject that can be properly organized and adequately handled in the seven minutes allowed for the speech.

3. Please see the Handbook which stipulates a director's options in organizing rounds.
4. Rules and Regulations -- Study the VHSL Handbook for contest rules and regulations.
5. Preparation Room -- Supply a room for contestants to prepare their speeches. You may wish to supply a file of the stated magazines and other current events materials as well as dictionaries and other standard reference works.

NOTE: Students may take a simple bibliography with them to the preparation room. It must NOT be an annotated bibliography. It may contain authors, titles, publications and dates. It may be arranged in broad, general categories (all articles on the Middle East, for example, may be listed together). Students may also have their own resource file containing articles or clippings, but prepared and annotated notes are not allowed. This includes notes or markings (other than one color highlighting) in the publications themselves. While students may have acquired background information via the Internet and included it in their files, they may not use computers (school, personal or laptops) once a VHSL conference, regional or state tournament has begun.

6. Results -- Get from the judges the Chairman's Report Forms and the critique forms for individual speakers. Check to make sure that results are determined based on lowest cumulative ranking as the first criterion and that cumulative numerical scores were used only to break ties in cumulative rankings. After the results are announced, distribute the critique forms to the speakers.

# Speech Scoring and Tie-breaking Procedures

**Principals and Coaches:** Handbook references for debate, drama and forensics events (101-5-1, 110-6-2, 117-7-1, 117-8-2, 117-9-2) specify that no first-, second- or third-place ties shall exist in VHSL competition and we urge you to become familiar with these sections as well as other regulations governing your activity.

**Special Note:** Conferences and regions are expected to establish additional tie-breaking methods to be employed if a tie still exists even after the procedures below are followed. Such additional methods could include, but are not limited to (1) a coach's ballot, (2) restage head-to-head competition and (3) coin flip or draw.

## FORENSICS

Independently and without conferring, judges shall rank each individual performer 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., assigning Rank 1 to the best overall performer, Rank 2 to the next best performer, and so on, being careful to avoid any ties in ranking. They shall also assign each performer a numerical score from 70-100. If there is a violation of the time limit, there is no scoring penalty, but no judge may rank or score that performer first in the round. The tournament director will tabulate the results and prepare a cumulative score sheet. **If a final-round format is used, ranks/scores for the final round should be added to ranks/scores for preliminary rounds to determine final placement.** The first criterion for determining the order of finish is each performer's cumulative ranking. The performer with the lowest overall ranking is the first-place finisher, the next lowest ranking is second, etc. In the event of a tie in total ranking, the cumulative numerical scores of the tied performers will be compared, with the greatest score being the highest finisher and so on. If the tied performers' numerical scores are also identical, the tie should be broken first by reinserting any dropped ranks, second by reinserting any dropped scores, and then by counting the number of first place ranks each performer received, the number of second place ranks, etc. until the tie is broken.

When an odd number of entries or last-minute drops prevent balanced sections of an event, the Tab Room needs to adjust ranks to avoid penalizing lower finishers in the larger section. No competitor in either section should be ranked lower than the lowest rank in the smaller section. (For example, four competitors in one section would be ranked 1, 2, 3, 4 and six competitors in the other section ranked 1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 4.) No adjustment would be made in the scores.

The following scoring system is used at the State Forensics Championships and may be used by conferences and regions if they so desire. It is particularly appropriate when multiple rounds/judges are employed.

Each judge assigns a rank (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) and a numerical score (70-100) to each contestant's performance. With two judges for each of three preliminary rounds, there will be six evaluations for all entries. Those entries qualifying for the finals will be evaluated by three additional judges for a total of nine scores.

To eliminate extreme disparities, the worst of the six rankings in preliminary rounds will be dropped and reinstated only when necessary to break a tie. The five remaining judges' ranking of each entry are totaled for a cumulative rank. For example, John receives three 1st-place ranks, one 2nd-place, one 3rd-place and one 6th-place from the judges; the tab room drops the lowest (the 6th-place), totals the remaining ranks, and assigns an overall rank of 8. The six entries earning the highest ranking would advance to the finals. If there is a tie for the last spot, the five numerical scores (excluding the score given by the judge who gave the lowest ranking) would be added for each of the entries involved in the tie, and the entry with the highest score would advance.

Following the final round, the three additional ranks will be added to the five best preliminary ranks to determine the final overall rank for each entry, with the lowest rank total placing 1st, second lowest 2nd, etc. In the event of a tie, the three numerical scores earned in the finals would be added to the five preliminary scores (excluding the score given by the judge who gave the lowest ranking) for those students tied to determine their final placing, with the higher numerical total placing ahead of a lower total. If both total rank and total numerical scores are tied, then the lowest ranks are reinstated; if still tied, the lowest numerical scores are reinstated; if still tied, a progressive comparison of the total number of 1-place ranks is made, then 2nd, 3rd, etc.

Because of recurring problems with tabulation errors following preliminary rounds when a final-round format is used, the Debate, Drama and Forensic Advisory Committee has mandated an audit to ensure that all students who qualify for the finals are permitted to participate. A comparison of computer tabulations and hand tabulations (if both systems are used) will be considered an audit. Otherwise, the following system will be used:

An audit of preliminary results is required after the final round begins by a team of coaches not involved in the original tabulations. Students who did not advance are not to leave until the audit confirms the posted results. If a mistake is

found, the entry incorrectly eliminated is to be taken immediately to the final round. That will result in seven finalists, with the top six medaling at the state level.

At the state level, the audit will be done by asking each tab room staff to audit the results from a different tab room. For example, the Class 1A tab staff might audit 2A, Class 2A audit 3A and 3A audit 1A. At conference or regional competition, where there is only one tab room, the director will appoint a team of auditors who are not part of the tab room staff.

If a student who should have qualified leaves the tournament before the audit finds the error, he/she forfeits the right to advance. If the audit does not uncover the error, the results stand, but the student unfairly eliminated will share last place among the finalists.

Obviously, in those conferences and regions that do not use the preliminary/final round format, where every student competes in all rounds and all results are announced after the competition is completed, this is not an issue.

See **Special Note** above.

### **TEAM SCORING**

This is based on 7-5-3-1 format for finalists in each event. A first place individual earns 7 points, a second place individual earns 5 points, a third place individual earns 3 points, and all other individuals in the finals receive 1 point. If the format selected for all events does not include a round for finalists and all entrants compete in each round, scoring in all events should be based on 5 points for first, 3 points for second and 1 point for third, with no points given to other contestants. The sum of all its individuals' points represents a school's team score. If there is a tie for either first or second place in the school sweepstakes, the tie should be broken by counting the number of firsts, the number of seconds, etc. earned by each school until the tie is broken. A sweepstakes tie below second place will not be broken.

**\*Scoring at conference and regional levels should follow the same cumulative methods for both individuals and team standings.**

**\*\*The number of evaluations and scores may be different for individuals at the conference and regional levels depending upon the option that best suits the size of your local tournament.**

# Checklist for Organizing a Forensics Tournament

## BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT

### **I. At least six weeks before the tournament:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. Prepare and mail letters of invitation announcing the date, time, location and a VHSL entry form to all schools in your conference or region. A copy of the entry form is on the VHSL website at [www.vhsl.org/activities/forensics](http://www.vhsl.org/activities/forensics).
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. Begin to contact the judges for the tournament. Consult the VHSL Judging List. Once your judging pool is set, follow-up with a letter offering again the date, time, location, as well as judging rules and information. Ask judges to bring a stopwatch if possible.

### **II. At least one month before the tournament:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. Check with your principal and/or athletic/activities director about awards and discuss your budget. Check with your accountant about money for judges which will be reimbursed by the conference or region.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. Begin copying critique sheets, ballots, facility maps, instructions for judges and coaches, judge's assignment sheets and tab room forms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. Plan, type and copy your schedule. Allow plenty of flexibility in the schedule, especially between the last preliminary round and finals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D. Have critique sheets stapled or clipped together in packets of eight with a ballot on top. Eight will allow for an extra, but the judge may need it. Circle the appropriate event on the ballot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ E. Arrange for a custodian to be present on tournament day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ F. Arrange for tab room personnel. You may wish to use coaches who cannot judge in the Tab Room. Have a least six people to work the Tab Room.
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. Make food arrangements for tournament day. A parent committee can help in this area. Be sure to notify the schools that food will be available and its costs, if any. (Possible fund-raiser)
- \_\_\_\_\_ H. Arrange for several additional back-up judges.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I. Invite an administrator to welcome tournament participants and/or to assist with the presentation of awards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ J. Arrangement for a hospitality lounge for judges and coaches. Parents can help here.

### **III. Within two weeks of the tournament:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. Arrange for media coverage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. Gather supplies and have them ready.
  - 1. Folders for schools and for judges
  - 2. Business envelopes
  - 3. Large manila envelopes -- one for each school
  - 4. Posters for announcing finals
  - 5. Markers
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. Up-date yourself on the progress of food committee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D. Notify faculty and staff of rooms to be used on tournament day.

- \_\_\_\_\_ E. Keep up with school entries as they begin to arrive.
  1. Label a folder for each participating school. Include in the folder instructions to the coach, the appropriate number of maps and schedules of the day and the schematic sheets for each student once ready.
  2. Make a judge's folder for each judge. Include guidelines for judges, rules for each event he/she is expected to judge, a map and a schedule of the day. A judge is not to evaluate students from his/her own school.
  3. Complete the Master Entry Form.
  4. Mark the school name on a manila envelope for critique forms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ F. Assign some volunteers to be timekeepers and locate as many stopwatches as possible. The judge may keep time or ask someone in the room to volunteer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. Assign a team of auditors to check preliminary results, if you are using a format that calls for a final round.
- \_\_\_\_\_ H. Arrange to use a copy machine on tournament day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I. Pick up awards from principal or athletic director.
- \_\_\_\_\_ J. Make a list of available rooms to be used in the building. You'll need this for scheduling and for unlocking doors on tournament day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ K. Assign a code letter to each school and a number of each contestant, e.g. A-3. (Do this just before you prepare your schematics so that they will be as accurate as possible.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ L. Prepare your schematics for each event. (See sample guidelines in Director's Packet)
- \_\_\_\_\_ M. Duplicate enough copies of each schematic so that every contestant in that event has one. Put them in the school folder for the coach to hand out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ N. Complete the judges' folders.
  1. Include a judging packet (critique sheets and ballot) for each round.
  2. Insert a completed judging assignment form or you can write this in pencil on the front of the folder along with the round number, room number and time.
  3. Include a schematic for each event to be judged.
  4. Put judging packets and schematics in the folder in the order that they are to be judged.
- \_\_\_\_\_ O. Complete school folders.
- \_\_\_\_\_ P. Check on food committee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Q. Double check supplies list: pens, pencils, posters for announcing finals, magic markers, masking tape, white out, calculators, stopwatches, paper clips, scissors, stapler, staples, scratch pads, Xerox paper, tab room forms (tally sheets and sweepstakes, etc.), manila envelopes with school names on them and a clock/watch.
- \_\_\_\_\_ R. Arrange to have a P.A. system set up for the general meeting and awards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ S. Go to the accountant about the stipend for judges (checks).
- \_\_\_\_\_ T. Select a committee of three people to adjudicate any challenges over published material where required.

**IV. Day before the tournament:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. If there have been any drops or additions to the tournament, make a note on the proper schematic, both your copy and the school copy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. Prepare a cash box for concessions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. Have checks ready for judges and tab room personnel.

- \_\_\_\_\_ D. Make sure the heat or air conditioning will be on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ E. Make sure restrooms will be open, clean and supplied.
- \_\_\_\_\_ F. Arrange to have bells turned off for tournament day. No all-call announcements over school public address system once rounds have begun.
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. Set up as much as possible for the next day.
  1. Set up registration table and chairs.
  2. Check on public address system, podium and table for awards.
  3. Invite your parent food committee to set up whatever is needed.
  4. Put signs on doors in the hall for directions.
  5. Set up tab room with table, chairs, supplies, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ H. Secure master keys as necessary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I. Remind teachers to secure personal items as rooms will be used for the tournament.
- \_\_\_\_\_ J. Arrange to have walkie-talkie communication between director and custodian (if possible).
- \_\_\_\_\_ K. Double check school folders.
- \_\_\_\_\_ L. Double check judges' folders.
- \_\_\_\_\_ M. Remind registration staff, custodian, etc. of time of arrival for tournament day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ N. Make notes of last minute announcements and changes for the general meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ O. List the code and contestant's name on the tally sheet. If you wish, this can be done while round one is going on, but sometimes it is better to have this done. If there is a change, just drop the student by drawing a line through or add the student's name to the bottom of the list.

### **FORENSICS TOURNAMENT DAY CHECK LIST**

#### **BEFORE AND DURING TOURNAMENT**

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. Arrive early.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. Meet the custodian and set up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. Meet parent food committee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D. Set up refreshments for tab room.
- \_\_\_\_\_ E. Cut on the copy machine -- it has to warm up!
- \_\_\_\_\_ F. Set up registration materials.
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. Make sure support staff understands their assignments and are in place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ H. Assign a person to answer the phone in case of emergency.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I. Wait for schools and judges to arrive and check in.
- \_\_\_\_\_ J. Meet with your judges to review all rules and answer questions. This meeting should take place at least 30 minutes prior to the opening assembly (during registration).
- \_\_\_\_\_ K. Get started on time with the general meeting and rounds.

- \_\_\_\_\_ L. Get your tab room personnel organized after the first round has started.
- \_\_\_\_\_ M. Post all final events at one time. One may need to post extemp as early as possible in order to do the extemp draw early. Be very careful about double checking lists of qualifiers for event finals. Unless tabulations are posted there is no opportunity for schools to check results until competition is over, and then it would be too late for qualifiers omitted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ N. When a final round format is used, assign a team of auditors to check preliminary tabulations after the final round has started.
- \_\_\_\_\_ O. Before announcing awards, copy all completed tally forms and sweepstakes forms and put one copy in each school envelope. Close up the envelopes and hold them until after all awards are given out. Coaches may pick them up immediately following awards, and **must be told that they have one hour to check the results and notify the director of any mistakes.** A school which leaves the tournament site prior to the end of the review period forfeits the right to contest or correct results.

#### **AFTER THE TOURNAMENT**

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. Reconcile finances and give copies to principal, athletic/activities director and accountant for conference or regional reimbursement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. Deposit concessions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. Write thank you notes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D. Arrange for publicity to local newspaper announcing winners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ E. Send copy of tournament results to schools that left early.
- \_\_\_\_\_ F. Pack up for possible use in the future.
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. Immediately send the conference report to the appropriate school and director of the regional tournament and the regional report to the VHSL office. **Be sure to keep a copy on file.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ H. Report sportsmanship violations to administration of offending school and copy to VHSL Assistant Director Tom Dolan.



# Guidelines for Forensics Judges

1. Do not allow anyone to enter or leave the room during a student's performance. Make clear at the beginning of the round that those who are in the room should remain so until the end of the round.
2. Try to make each competitor feel comfortable and relaxed.
3. "Be thou familiar but by no means vulgar," as Polonius advises. Be friendly but refrain from using any language unsuitable for high school students. On the other hand, don't be too familiar. Don't single out any particular competitor for friendly overtures.
4. Make eye contact with competitors when they perform. They have worked long and hard and want you to see the total package of their performance, not just hear it. They will know you are paying close attention if you are watching them.
5. Do not try to keep time using an analog watch or clock since this is an event in which seconds matter. No student should be penalized for time if an accurate stopwatch is not in use. Give time signals to extemporaneous and impromptu speakers – 5 minutes on down.
6. Alert performers that you will be writing on your ballots while they perform, but they should not assume that what you write is criticism. It may be a compliment!
7. Be on time to rounds.
8. Write all critiques in a positive manner. All suggestions for improvement should be stated in an inoffensive way.
9. Put a rank and score on every critique sheet and sign your name at the bottom. Students avidly read these sheets, which constitute their only means for checking the accuracy of competition results.
10. Try to be as objective as possible about the performance of each student. Try not to base judgments on dress and appearance unless the choice of apparel or hairstyle detracts from the performance. For example, one judge wrote on a ballot, "You shouldn't wear glasses; we can't see your eyes." Please be sensitive to the fact that many students have no blazer or a dress suit. The VHSL does not have a dress code requirement for forensics competition. However, if the dress or apparel or hairstyle detracts from the performance, the student may lose points. For example, if the competitor must continually push hair out of his or her face or if his clothing is too unkempt or too revealing, those instances would constitute distractions. Certainly no qualified judge would lower a rating based solely on what a contestant is wearing. That being said, you must remember that forensics is a competition. It's very much like going for a job interview in which the applicants are judged on a number of qualifications. All things being equal, the interviewer also takes note of the applicants' appearance and how they present themselves. That's part of forensics, too. When going to a job interview, you want to dress for success. The same is true for a forensic tournament. If you want to BE a winner, you need to LOOK like a winner! It's just all part of the "forensic package" and how a contestant presents himself. If he/she wants to be taken seriously as a competitor, then one's visual image must be considered.
11. Be a responsible judge. Make sure you know all the rules and guidelines for each event. If you aren't sure about any aspect of judging criteria, ask someone who knows.
12. Return ballots as promptly as possible, after making sure the critique sheet ranks and scores match the summary sheet. Make sure there are no ties in rank or quality points.
13. Do not discuss student performance with the students. Do not reveal your rank or scores to anyone other than tab room personnel or the tournament director.
14. Do not discuss your assessments of performance with any other judge.
15. Follow the speaking order on your ballot. The speaking order has been pre-set in a fair manner.
16. Try not to be influenced by a large following of one student who may laugh loudly or applaud vigorously for his or her performance. It's easy to be carried away by crowd appeal, but judges must bear in mind that some crowds are biased.

17. Attempt to prevent distractions from occurring. You should insist that anyone in the room interfering with the competition or performers leave immediately. Don't be afraid to ask competitors to clear a hallway if they are finished with a round while you still have performances to judge. The noise in the hallway can be distracting to both performers and judges.
18. Please remember that this is a voluntary activity. Above all, be charitable in your scores. We don't want to prescribe a range of scores, but low scores (70s) do seem insulting to students who have worked hard.



# Timing Forensics Events

All contests in the VHSL Forensics Tournaments are to be timed.

## EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING AND IMPROMPTU

The time limit for extemporaneous speaking and impromptu speaking is 7 minutes.

Timing is particularly important in extemporaneous speaking where participants are preparing speeches on the spot and have not had time to prepare timed material in advance.

For hand signals, hold up one, two, three, four, five and/or six fingers to indicate the same number of minutes that have elapsed since the student has begun speaking, a curved hand at 6:30 and a closed fist at seven minutes.

## ALL OTHER EVENTS

The time limit for all other events is 10 minutes.

Time signals in events other than extemporaneous speaking and impromptu are prohibited, as is contestant timing him/herself.

## ALL EVENTS

All timing **MUST be done by a stopwatch**. If the lead judge does not have one of his/her own, stopwatches should be available for checkout from tournament administrators. Analog timing devices must NOT be used.

**DO NOT interrupt any speaker who goes over time. There is a 30-second grace period beyond the time limit before any penalty is assessed.**

The timekeeper must inform the judges of the time for each speech and be sure that the judges are aware of the fact when a speaker has violated the time limit and by how much. The time for each speech will be recorded on the judge's ballot.

If a student violates the time limit by more than 30 seconds, he/she may not be ranked first or scored highest in the round.

If there are any questions, contact the tab room or the tournament director.

# Information for Speech Contest Judges

Judges of original oratory, impromptu and extemporaneous speaking should consider each presentation based on the following areas:

## 1. CONTENT

- A. Is the subject of interest, significance; properly narrowed; adapted to the speaker, audience and occasion?
- B. Are the ideas clear, sound, original; the analysis complete and valid?
- C. Are the supporting materials valid, relevant, sufficient in number and properly distributed?
- D. Is the language clear, vivid, appropriate, correct and in the conversational mode?
- E. Is the organization clear, unified, coherent, properly proportioned; does it include a thesis statement, an introduction and conclusion?
- F. Is the speech adapted to this audience on this occasion?

## 2. DELIVERY

- A. In bodily action, is the speaker animated, does action contribute to the expression of ideas and help to hold interest?
- B. In vocal delivery does the speaker have a good quality; is articulation clear and correct; pronunciation according to accepted standards?
- C. In fluency, is the speaker extemporaneous; is he direct; does the speech keep moving?
- D. In platform personality, does the speaker “get over the footlights,” sell himself to the audience?

**A judge may not disqualify a contestant. Judges who feel violations of rules have occurred must notify tournament director.**

# Information for Oral Interpretation Contest Judges

## INTRODUCTION

What follows are broad but basic guidelines to the League's individual oral interpretation events -- prose, poetry, storytelling, serious dramatic interpretation, humorous dramatic interpretation, serious duo interpretation and humorous duo interpretation. While there are a number of similarities among these events, there are also distinct differences. An obvious distinction is the choice of material. Another difference is that the prose and poetry events are readings -- the use of a manuscript is required -- while the use of a manuscript is prohibited in serious dramatic, humorous dramatic, serious duo and humorous duo interpretations. A third distinction is to consider presentations on three levels: Level One includes prose and poetry, Level Two includes storytelling, serious/humorous dramatic interpretation and serious/humorous duo interpretation, and Level Three is acting -- with each level representing a step higher in terms of animation. It is important also to note a common quality of a good performance in any interpretative event -- the presentation should not be overly distracting but should allow the reader to be moved by the author's work.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The student's aim in presenting a selection is to communicate as fully as possible the author's ideas, feeling and imagery. The presentation should reflect careful and thorough analysis of the selection in terms of language, structure, style and meaning, and should demonstrate the student's understanding, appreciation and emotional response to the material. It should be delivered in a lively and expressive conversational manner with clear enunciation and pronunciation, adequate vocal projection, spontaneity, fluency and a strong desire to share the material with the audience. The student should be intellectually, emotionally and physically involved with the material.

The presentation should keep the audience's attention focused on the material, not the presenter. Facial expression, body movement and gesture are important aspects of the presentation, but they must grow from the material, be natural, spontaneous and expressive, and must not seem imposed or "practiced."

The selection should not seem memorized. Although it is almost impossible not to memorize a short selection after hours of preparation, the student, when using a manuscript, should refer to the manuscript frequently if for no other reason than to remind the audience that the reader is the channel for the author's work. Eye contact with the audience will depend on the nature of the material. Expository prose, for example, will usually call for direct eye-to-eye contact while lyrical poetry of a personal nature will require less direct contact -- perhaps focusing just above the heads of the audience.

The selection should leave the audience with a clearer understanding, deeper appreciation and stronger emotional involvement with the material than would be possible from a silent reading of the same material. They should be able to see the sights, hear the sounds, feel the pain, sorrow, outrage, joy, calm, or any other emotion inherent in the author's work. This will occur only when the student has applied mind, voice, body and spirit to the presentation.

## INTERPRETATION VS. ACTING

One of the most frequent questions with regard to interpretative events is, "What is the difference between acting and oral interpretation?" It arises, no doubt, from the frequent contest criticism that a student "acted" rather than "read" or "presented" his selection. While certain elements are common to both arts, the distinctions between them are clear.

Acting requires that the performer become the character he is portraying. While on the stage, the actor is Hamlet. He wears Hamlet's clothing, thinks Hamlet's thoughts, performs Hamlet's movements. The audience sees the actor, here and now, as the young prince. He is surrounded by his friends and family -- he is living in time and space, a tangible being.

Oral interpretation, on the other hand, requires that the performer suggest the character or characters he/she is interpreting. If he/she is interpreting Hamlet, he/she suggests Hamlet's appearance, surroundings and manner. Hamlet and his surroundings exist only in the imagination of the reader and the audience.

The actor is surrounded by other actors, scenery and properties. An actual environment has been created for him/her from paint, light, canvas and furniture. Everyone watching the performance sees the same characters and setting.

The reader or interpreter is generally in a well lighted room with the audience -- he/she sees them and talks to them. He/she tells them about what is happening and about the surroundings. Each member of the audience will have a mental picture of his own and will see the play, story or poem in the mind's eye.

**The actual physical nature of the interpretive situation (and prohibition of props and costumes), then, provides the basic distinction between acting and interpretation.** There are others. The actor portrays one character, whereas the interpreter may suggest many. The difference between the literal action (bodily and vocal) of the actor and the suggestive action of the interpreter provide other distinctions.

The actor, playing one person, takes on the basic voice and bodily action of the character. The interpreter, particularly in reading a piece, can only give hints as to what a number of characters are like. He/she cannot move around the platform as freely or take on the vocal characteristics of a number of people. Attempting this would provide a highly disorganized spectacle. A shrug of the shoulder or a raising of an eyebrow, a slower rate of speaking or a lower pitch will suggest age, sex, physical infirmity or attitude.

The actor can improve by mastering the art of oral interpretation, and the techniques of acting can assist the interpreter. Both arts require a flexible and expressive voice and a well controlled body; however, the interpreter must never attempt to substitute literal action for suggestive action. He/she must feel, he/she must imagine deeply so that through voice and body he/she can create mental images for the audience.

In interpretation categories, reasonable movement within a hula hoop area is permitted. A contestant may take a step or even do some dance steps within that hula hoop area. He/she may not move about the room. The most important point to remember is that interpretation is not acting. The interpreter does not need to "be" a character, but merely to create that character in the minds of the listeners. He uses voice, focal points and postures to allow his listeners to visualize a character, his situation and actions. While there is no specific rule against getting down on one knee, generally speaking, it would not be needed or even appropriate. For a good interpreter, just pretending to lower oneself to one knee is all that is necessary. Allow the listeners' imagination to take over and visualize the scene.

A clear example of how a student can "go too far" toward acting occurred in the state girls prose reading contest a few years ago. A charming young lady read a selection which described an older woman falling to her knees and weeping at the end of the piece. Rather than lowering her eyes or suggesting a vocal crack, she literally went to her knees and feigned weeping. Had it not been so embarrassing it would have been laughable. Up to that point she had read well -- she understood the author and character and expressed the meaning, mood and attitude well. But she substituted literal action for suggestion. It is in this area that most of the criticism of "acting" arises.

Many students in interp events where use of a manuscript is required have found ways to effectively choreograph use of the book into the presentation, particularly to separate the introductory statement from the reading itself or to mark the end. That is permitted, but in those events where props are disallowed, the book may not be used as a physical representation related to the content of the piece. Similarly, a participant's clothes may not be used as costuming.

The greater the student's imagination, the more thoroughly he/she succeeds in creating images for the audience. Often the interpretation may be more rewarding for the audience than an acting performance because the only limits to the setting and action are limits of the imagination. The successful interpreter arouses in his audience real emotions, rich backgrounds and thorough understanding.

## JUDGING

- I. To what degree does the student understand and communicate the meaning of the selection in that he/she:
  - A. Makes clear the central theme?
  - B. Makes clear the various parts or divisions in the reading?
  - C. Emphasizes key words in each sentence?
  - D. Makes listeners aware of relationship of ideas to each other (ex: comparison, repetition, parenthetical)?
  - E. Presents ideas in groupings that are easy for the listeners to understand?
  - F. Indicates he/she knows the denotative (dictionary) meaning of strange words?
  
- II. To what degree does the student understand and communicate the emotional aspects of the selections in that he/she:
  - A. Presents the main emotion (in poetry) or attitude (in prose) of the writer?
  - B. Presents secondary emotions or attitudes?
  - C. Presents his/her own attitudes or comments as a reader on the selection?
  - D. Makes the audience see mental pictures of people, scenes, actions, etc., in the presentation?

- E. Enjoys or appreciates the selection and indicates he/she wants to share it with the audience?
- III. Does the student have effective delivery in that he/she:
- A. Uses a conversational (rather than a “read-ie” theatrical, or oratorical) style?
  - B. Maintains a sense of communication with the listeners (rather than at them, or to himself)?
  - C. Looks at the members of his audience (eye-to-eye, as contrasted to not looking at them at all or looking over them, or through them)?
  - D. Seems to present spontaneously (as contrasted to sounding memorized, drilled or carefully rehearsed)?
  - E. Uses a vocal pattern with variety in rate, pitch, volume, inflection?
  - F. Uses correct pronunciation?
  - G. Has good enunciation (as compared to an overly precise, mannered and careful formation of speech sounds, or a careless indistinct formation)?
  - H. Gets the audience to respond to the presentation (by holding attention, interest, or by getting an overt response such as smiles or laughter)?
  - I. Uses his body to contribute to the meaning and mood of the selection (or has a rigid or slovenly posture that deflects attention from the selection)?
  - J. Uses facial expression to contribute to the presentation (or has a poker face, or an artificial and mannered expression that detracts from the performance)?
  - K. (If poetry) Handles effectively the special reading problems presented in poetry?
    - 1. Reads by groupings or ideas (as contrasted to reading each line as a separate entity)?
    - 2. Handles the meter so that it does not dominate the reading to obscure the intellectual meaning?
    - 3. Handles rhyme effectively? (Subordinating it if it is quite obvious and dominant, or bringing it out if it is not strong, or if it contributes to mood or humor of selection).
    - 4. Makes the most of the imagery in the selection so that the audience sees scenes, feels action, etc.
    - 5. Recognizes and brings out sound values so that they contribute to the meaning and emotion of the poem: alliteration, onomatopoeia, repetition of words or phrases, assonance.

**A judge may not disqualify a contestant. Judges who feel violations of rules have occurred must notify tournament director.**



# Published Materials

Oral interpretation events require the use of published work. Selections used shall be cuttings from published printed material, the approved list of online sources, or e-books that also exist in published printed format. Recorded material not printed and published is prohibited. If a selection is challenged, a school representative must be able to identify the printed source or e-book on the spot and will be asked to produce an original or copy of an original to verify publication. For online sources, a school representative must provide a printed copy of the complete, original text with cuts denoted, in addition to a digital copy loaded from the original source link. If publication cannot be verified to the satisfaction of the tournament director, the student will be disqualified. All disputes will be settled at the conference, regional or state level where the challenge was made.

Tournament director must provide internet access for the purposes of validating authenticity of online sources that are challenged. It is recommended that tournament director appoint additional tab room staff specifically for this purpose. Only in the event that internet service becomes unavailable, the tournament director may defer to the hard copy.

## **Ad-Hoc Published Materials Committee**

Kimberlee Brittingham, New Kent High School  
Tiffany Carter, Bland/Rocky Gap High School  
Duane Hyland, Lake Braddock Secondary School  
Mark Ingerson, Salem High School-Salem  
Dan Prince, Lee-Davis High School

Members of VHSL schools may submit requests to approve sites by sending Director of Activities Lisa Giles ([lgiles@vhsl.org](mailto:lgiles@vhsl.org)) a link to the online source by **April 1** each year. A rationale for the site recommendation is appreciated, but not required. The ad hoc Published Materials committee will review requests annually, and those that are approved will be published each fall in the VHSL Forensics Manual. Requests received after April 1 will be carried over to the next year.

Approved sites do not necessarily reflect the committee's opinion on quality of material.

## 2015-16 Approved List of Online Sources

1. The Adirondack Review, <http://www.theadirondackreview.com>
2. IndieTheaterNow.com
3. Contemporary World Literature, <http://www.contemporaryworldliterature.com>
4. Cross Connect, <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/xconnect/>
5. East of the Web, [www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/indexframe.html](http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/indexframe.html)
6. Family Friend Poems, [www.familyfriendpoems.com](http://www.familyfriendpoems.com)  
**Note:** This site requires permission be obtained by authors before material is used. Permission must be on hand at tournament.
7. Free Drama, <http://www.freedrama.net>  
**Note:** Material from the "Mad-Scripts!" section of the site is prohibited.
8. Front Porch Journal, <http://frontporchjournal.com/index.asp>
9. The Library of Congress, Poetry 180, <http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/p180-list.html>
10. Memorious, <http://www.memorious.org>
11. Mushroom Cloud Press, <http://mushroomcloudpress.com/>
12. [www.poemhunter.com](http://www.poemhunter.com)
13. Poetry Foundation, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org>
14. Poetry Out Loud, [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org)
15. [www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org)
16. Speech Geek, [www.speechgeek.com](http://www.speechgeek.com)  
**Note:** This site disables links two months after purchase. It is the coach's responsibility to contact Speech Geek to ensure link is reactivated during competition, otherwise the contestant is in violation.
17. Story South, <http://www.storysouth.com>
18. Tibetan Tree Frog, <http://ttforensics.tripod.com/tibetantreefrogpublishing/>
19. Toasted Cheese, <http://tclj.toasted-cheese.com/>
20. The Oscar Wilde Collection, <http://www.oscarwildecollection.com>

# Handbook rules with interpretations and guidelines

**Principals and Coaches:** The following information is taken from the VHSL Handbook. Interpretations appear in orange italics.

## **SECTION 30: PENALTIES**

**30-4-4 Specific Penalty for VHSL Event Not Being in Compliance with Policies-**In situations where a member school hosts an event in which all VHSL guidelines are not enforced the following can apply:

- The host and all participating member schools will receive a Warning.
- The host school loses the ability to sanction that sport/activity tournament for three years.
- The host will be subject to a fine of \$50 for each VHSL member school participating in the event.

## **SECTION 112: EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING.**

**112-1-1 Introduction-**The League sponsors a program in extemporaneous speaking leading to championships in each group. These contests are held as part of the school, conference, regional and state forensic meets.

**112-2-1 Purpose-**The purpose of the extemporaneous speaking event is to encourage students to combine clear thinking, good extempore, conversational speaking and interesting presentation in establishing a definite thought with respect to current fact and opinion on a designated topic as presented by contemporary sources.

**112-3-1 Contest Regulations-**Topics for extemporaneous speaking shall be chosen from articles appearing in the issues of national newsmagazines such as *Newsweek*, *Time* and *U. S. News and World Report* or from mainstream newspapers with national circulations.

Topics will be selected from these periodicals, may relate to either domestic or foreign affairs and will be released at least 30 days before each tournament.

**112-3-2** Questions pertaining to topics will be provided and are not to be made known to the contestants before the event.

**112-3-3** The speech shall not exceed seven minutes in length. There is no minimum time requirement as long as the topic is adequately covered; however, the contestant is encouraged to speak at least four minutes.

**112-4-1 Preparation-**Speeches should have as their purpose either to stimulate, to convince, to persuade or to influence action.

**112-4-2** In preparing his/her speech, the contestant should concentrate on originality of his/her theme, relevance of his/her content to his/her topic, depth and logic of thought in his/her content, fresh and challenging approach, clarity of organization and adequate evidence. When delivering his/her speech, the contestant should keep in mind the conversational style of delivery, earnestness and concerned delivery (sincerity plus ardor), simplicity, accurateness and vividness of language and manner, pleasing and varied vocal qualities, posture and bodily movement that are neither stiff nor slovenly, and gestures that are *felt* as necessary. Above all, he/she should concentrate more on quality of content than on quality of delivery even though the latter is important in the process of communication.

**112-5-1 Contest Procedures-**The order in which contestants speak is determined by lot on the schematic pairings.

**112-5-2** Contestants shall report to an assigned area where they will, in order, draw three questions each. From these, each contestant is to choose one and return the other two. All students in each section will draw from the same list of questions. After the first speaker has chosen his/her question, the second speaker will draw his/her question ten minutes later, and so on, in ten-minute intervals for each speaker. A different topic area will be used for each round.

**112-5-3** Each contestant shall have 30 minutes to prepare before he/she is to speak. Timing begins immediately after the three questions are drawn. The speaker shall withdraw to the specified area and prepare himself/herself to speak. During this preparation period, he/she must not consult with anyone or make use of previously prepared notes. Reference books, newspapers and magazines shall be permitted.

**112-5-4** The speaker shall be allowed to use both sides of one note card not exceeding 4" x 6" in size and provided by the tournament.

**112-5-5** At the end of the 30-minute preparation period, it shall be the responsibility of the student to report immediately to the speaking area.

*Students must not leave the prep room with any materials other than their question strip and optional note card.*

**112-5-6** Either before beginning the speech or as part of the introduction, the contestant is to read his/her question in the *exact words or phrasing* as it appears on the paper he/she selected.

**112-5-7** Visual aids and/or props used while speaking are prohibited.

**112-5-8** A judge or person appointed by the judge will use a stopwatch to time each speech, indicating progress with hand signals. There is NO minimum time requirement but the contestant must cover the subject adequately. The timekeeper will indicate time

elapsed at the beginning of the fourth minute of the speech, show the progression of minutes at five and six, 6:30 and at the end of the seventh minute indicate that time has expired. The speaker must conclude the speech at the end of the seven minutes.

*Extemp students have a seven-minute time limit plus a 30-second grace period.*

The timekeeper will note for the speaker and judges the time for each speech.

**112-6-1 Bases for Judges' Decisions**-Criteria followed by judges in determining winners are relevance of theme to topic, thought content, logic, freshness, depth, clarity of organization, sincerity of speaker, adequacy and concreteness of supporting details, use of language (vividness, simplicity and comprehension), voice and diction (variety, acceptable pronunciation, clear enunciation), and control and use of body. Judges' rating forms are supplied by the League Office. All contestants are ranked and scored. Judges shall write a criticism for each speaker.

*Judges may no longer question speaker at the conclusion of his/her speech (2012-13).*

**112-7-1 Penalties**-In each contest, the contestant shall be given a 30-second grace period beyond the time limit for that event. Any student going over the grace period may not rank first in the round. No other penalty for a time violation shall be assessed. Any contestant at any conference, regional or state contest who violates any other regulation in this section shall be disqualified.

### **SECTION 113: ORIGINAL ORATORY.**

**113-1-1 Introduction**-The League sponsors a program in original oratory leading to championships on all levels within each group. These contests are held as part of the school, conference, regional and state forensic meets.

**113-2-1 Purpose**-The purpose of the original oratory contest is to train and encourage students to present speeches intelligently and truthfully (in an interesting and original manner, direct and conversational in delivery, clear in arrangement and presentation, and with some profit to an audience) on any worthwhile topic suitable for a public speech.

**113-3-1 Contest Regulations**-A speaker may not use a speech he/she has delivered in any previous year's contest.

**113-3-2** Each contestant shall deliver his or her own original speech not to exceed ten minutes in delivery. Contestant must present the same speech in each round of a given tournament. Adjudicator will not provide time signals, and there is no minimum time requirement.

**113-3-3** The oration shall not contain in excess of 150 words of directly quoted material, nor shall the oration be a paraphrase taken completely from one source. The speaker shall clearly acknowledge the sources of any quotations used.

**113-3-4** Speeches shall have been thoroughly prepared. The speaker shall be allowed to use both sides of two note cards each of which may not exceed 4" x 6" in size. Visual aids used while speaking are not permitted.

**113-3-5** Each speaker shall prepare a manuscript of his/her speech for each round of competition. Following the completion of the speech in each round, each speaker shall submit a copy of his/her manuscript to a judge who shall submit it to the tournament director, who may return it to the speaker.

**113-4-1 Preparation**-The original oration should have as its purpose to persuade. Therefore, one might wish to speak in order to convince, to stimulate or to inspire.

**113-4-2** Any idea might become a subject for an oration, provided it "bothers" a speaker and interests the audience.

**113-4-3** In preparing his/her speech, the contestant should concentrate on originality and worthwhileness of content and theme, soundness of thinking, excellence of organization, adequacy and concreteness of developmental or supporting details and illustrations and vividness of style. In rehearsing his/her speech, the contestant should keep in mind the conversational style of delivery, earnestness and concerned delivery (sincerity plus ardor), simplicity, accurateness and vividness of language and manner, pleasing and varied vocal qualities, posture and bodily movement that are neither stiff nor slovenly, gestures that are *felt* as necessary, and general effectiveness as a persuasive, convincing, stimulating or inspirational speaker whose speaking gives prominence to imaginative and emotional elements. ("Soundness of thinking and weight of content are supplemented by a degree of eloquence in delivery by a speaker who is stirred, aroused, and challenged by his/her subject and audience.") Above all, the speaker should predominately concentrate on quality of content rather than on quality of delivery even though the latter is important in the process of communication.

**113-5-1 Contest Procedures**-The order in which contestants speak is determined by lot on the schematic pairings.

**113-6-1 Bases for Judges' Decisions**-Criteria followed by judges in determining winners are originality and worthwhileness of subject, thought content (logic, freshness, depth), clarity of organization, sincerity of speaker, voice and diction (variety, acceptable pronunciation, clear enunciation), and control and use of body. Judges rating forms are supplied by the League Office. All contestants are ranked and scored. Judges shall write a criticism for each speaker.

*Judges may no longer question speaker at the conclusion of his/her speech (2012-13).*

**113-7-1 Penalties**-In each contest, the contestant shall be given a 30-second grace period beyond the time limit for that event. Any student going over the grace period may not rank first in the round. No other penalty for a time violation shall be assessed. A violation

of any other rule in this section, if discovered and reported to the tournament director before the end of the competition will result in disqualification and a redistribution of awards as necessary.

#### **SECTION 114: IMPROMPTU SPEAKING.**

**114-1-1 Introduction**-The League sponsors a program in impromptu speaking leading to school, conference, regional and state championships.

**114-2-1 Topics**-Impromptu topics will include proverbs, ordinary objects, events, quotations and famous people. All students, in each section, will draw from the same list of topics. A different subject area will be used for each round.

**114-2-2 Drawing**-Students will be assigned to a room with an adjudicator present. All students assigned to the room will check in with the adjudicator and then wait outside the room until they are called for their turn to speak. When the student is asked to speak, he/she will be brought into the room, given three topics and asked to choose one. All students will choose from the same three topics.

**114-2-3 Preparation**-The contestant shall prepare a speech without consultation and without reference to prepared notes or research materials. The student may make limited notes on both sides of one note card not exceeding 4" X 6" in size and provided by the adjudicator.

**114-2-4 Time**-Timing begins immediately after the three topics are drawn. There is NO minimum time requirement, but the contestant must cover the subject adequately. The maximum time for preparation and speaking is seven minutes. The student may divide this time in any way he/she see fit. Visual aids and/or props are prohibited. The adjudicator is expected to provide the student with oral time signals, indicating the amount of time elapsed at one minute, two minutes, etc. until the student begins speaking. The adjudicator should then provide the student with hand signals, showing the progression of each minute, again at 6:30 and at the end of the seventh minute, indicate that time has expired. The speaker must conclude the speech at the end of the seven minutes.

*Impromptu students have a seven-minute time limit plus a 30-second grace period.*

**114-2-5 Recuse**-A student may not leave the impromptu round until all students have finished speaking.

**114-3-1 Bases for Judges' Decisions**-Criteria followed by judges in determining winners are relevance of theme to topic, thought content, freshness, depth, clarity of organization, sincerity of speaker, adequacy of support and development, use of language, voice and diction and control and use of body.

*The most competitive contestants will have oratorical qualities with speeches that have a clear intro/thesis, body and conclusion (beginning, middle, end).*

Judges' rating forms are supplied by the League office. All contestants are ranked and scored. Judges shall write a criticism for each speaker.

**114-4-1 Penalties**-In each contest, the contestant shall be given a 30-second grace period beyond the time limit for that event. Any student going over the grace period may not rank first in the round. No other penalty for a time violation shall be assessed. A violation of any other rule in this section, if discovered and reported to the tournament director before the end of the competition will result in disqualification and a redistribution of awards as necessary.

#### **SECTION 115: ORAL INTERPRETATION.**

**115-1-1 Introduction**-The League sponsors a program in oral interpretation leading to championships on all levels within each group. Championships are determined in storytelling, prose interpretation, poetry interpretation, serious dramatic interpretation, humorous dramatic interpretation, serious duo interpretation and humorous duo interpretation. These contests are held as part of school, conference, regional and state forensic meets.

**115-2-1 Purpose**-The purpose of these contests is to encourage appreciation of the full meaning of the printed page and the oral communication of that meaning to others with apparent spontaneity, directness, simplicity and sincerity, without distracting the hearer through faulty pronunciation or indistinct enunciation. A speaker may not use a selection he/she has written or a selection written about his/her own experiences.

**115-3-1 Storytelling Contest Regulations**-A contestant will present a published children's story, not exceeding ten minutes in length including an introduction. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament. Adjudicator will not provide time signals and no notes may be used and a contestant may not use a story he/she has presented in any previous year's contest. Each contestant is to work alone without costume or props since he/she will be judged only on storytelling ability. Gestures are encouraged; however, movement must be restricted to movement in place, no walking. The contestant should assume that the audience consists of a group of children. The contestant may differentiate characters by the use of different voices, focal points and body postures.

**115-4-1 Prose Interpretation Contest Regulations**-Each contestant shall read one prepared published prose selection of his/her own choice with a total reading time of not more than ten minutes. The contestant should preface his/her reading with an introductory statement which will give the audience a better understanding of the selection read, provided this total time does not exceed ten minutes. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament. Adjudicator will not provide time signals.

The use of a manuscript is required. No reader may use a prepared prose selection, adaptation or cutting that he/she has read in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year.

**115-5-1 Poetry Interpretation Contest Regulations**-Each contestant shall read one prepared published poem or poetic group of his/her own choice with a total reading time of not more than ten minutes. The contestant should preface his/her reading with an introductory statement which will give the audience a better understanding of the selection read, provided this total time does not exceed ten minutes. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament. Adjudicator will not provide time signals. The use of a manuscript is required. No reader may use a prepared poetry selection, adaptation or cutting that he/she has read in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year.

**115-6-1 Serious Dramatic Interpretation Regulations**-Each contestant shall present one selection of a serious nature chosen from published material. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament. The selection should emphasize character development through consistent use of distinct voices, focal points and postures. Adaptations may be for the purpose of continuity only. The contestant should preface the selection with an introductory statement that will give the audience a better understanding of the selection, provided the total time does not exceed ten minutes. Adjudicator will not provide time signals. The use of a manuscript is prohibited. No contestant may use a selection, adaptation or cutting that he/she has used in a conference, regional, or state contest in a previous year. Properties or costumes are not permitted. Movement is allowed, but such movement should be restricted to bending (knees and/or waist); leaning, twisting or swiveling; and no walking. Use of body (gestures, appropriate audience/eye contact, etc.) to suggest character is permitted.

**115-7-1 Humorous Dramatic Interpretation Regulations**-Each contestant shall present one selection of a humorous nature chosen from published material. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament. The selection should emphasize character development through consistent use of distinct voices, focal points and postures. Adaptations may be for the purpose of continuity only. The contestant should preface the selection with an introductory statement that will give the audience a better understanding of the selection, provided the total time does not exceed ten minutes. Adjudicator will not provide time signals. The use of a manuscript is prohibited. No contestant may use a selection, adaptation or cutting that he/she has used in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year. Properties or costumes are not permitted. Movement is allowed, but such movement should be restricted to bending (knees and/or waist); leaning, twisting or swiveling; and no walking. Use of body (gestures, appropriate audience/eye contact, etc.) to suggest character is permitted.

**115-8-1 Serious Duo Interpretation of Literature**-Each duo team must present one selection of a serious nature chosen from a single published work. Though the material may contain humorous tones, the climax and resolution must be a serious dramatic nature. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament. Each interpreter may present one or more characters and either or both may present narration. A selection must maintain the author's intent, characters and words as written, except for minor use of transitions, unless written permission is granted by the author or publisher for modification and/or adaptation of the published work. No contestant may use a selection, adaptation or cutting that either member of the duo team has used in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year. The contestants should preface the selection with an introductory statement that will give the audience a better understanding of the selection. The use of a manuscript is prohibited. The performers may not have eye or physical contact with each other except during the introduction and should focus off stage. The performers must begin their presentation from center stage and restrict their physical blocking to movement around one another, switching positions, pivoting from side to side or turning around completely. No properties or costumes are permitted. The timing for this event shall be a maximum of ten minutes, with no minimum time requirement. Adjudicator will not provide time signals.

**115-9-1 Humorous Duo Interpretation of Literature**-Each duo team must present one selection of a humorous nature chosen from a single published work. Though the material may contain serious tones, the climax and resolution must be of a humorous nature. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament. Each interpreter may present one or more characters and either or both may present narration. A selection must maintain the author's intent, characters and words as written, except for minor use of transitions, unless written permission is granted by the author or publisher for modification and/or adaptation of the published work. No contestant may use a selection, adaptation or cutting that either member of the duo team has used in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year. The contestants should preface the selection with an introductory statement that will give the audience a better understanding of the selection. The use of a manuscript is prohibited. The performers may not have eye or physical contact with each other except during the introduction and should focus off stage. The performers must begin their presentation from center stage and restrict their physical blocking to movement around one another, switching positions, pivoting from side to side or turning around completely. No properties or costumes are permitted. The timing for this event shall be a maximum of ten minutes, with no minimum time requirement. Adjudicator will not provide time signals.

**115-10-1 Preparation**-In preparing for the contests, the following definition of good oral interpretation should be carefully considered: The prime requisite of oral interpretation is intelligibility, and to that end the contestant must have an intelligent comprehension of what he/she interprets and a due appreciation of its values, as well as the ability to communicate them to his/her audience. A pleasant voice, an acceptable accent and clear enunciation are first of all desirable. Monotony of tone or of pace and overemphasis or acting are to be avoided. Through modulation, proper stress and timing not only must the meaning of the passage be brought out, but also its *mood*- whether of humor, pathos, earnestness, excitement, satire or whatever. The audience must be given an opportunity to *hear*, to *understand*, and to *feel what the author is striving to convey*.

**115-11-1 Contest Procedures**-The order in which contestants read is determined by lot on the schematic pairings.

**115-12-1 Bases for Judges' Decisions**-Criteria followed by judges in determining winners are choice of selection, interpretation, pronunciation, timing, enunciation, eye contact, posture, gestures, voice, poise, appearance, energy level, coherence of story cutting,



vocal expression, facial expression, characterization, appeal to children and impact of message and performance. All contestants are ranked and scored. Judges shall write a criticism for each speaker.

*Appeal to children only applies to storytelling.*

**115-13-1 Penalty**-In each contest, the contestant shall be given a 30-second grace period beyond the time limit for that event. Any student going over the grace period may not rank first in the round. No other penalty for a time violation shall be assessed. A violation of any other rule in this section, if discovered and reported to the tournament director before the end of the competition will result in disqualification and a redistribution of awards as necessary.

# VHSL Forensic Tournament

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Judges are not going to give a student a lower rating because of what he/she is wearing, are they?

Certainly no qualified judge would lower a rating based solely on what a contestant is wearing. That being said, you must remember that forensics is a competition. It's very much like going for a job interview in which the applicants are judged on a number of qualifications. All things being equal, the interviewer also takes note of the applicants' appearance and how they present themselves. That's part of forensics too. When going to a job interview, you want to dress for success. The same is true for a forensic tournament. If you want to BE a winner, you need to LOOK like a winner! It's just all part of the "forensic package" and how a contestant presents himself. If he/she wants to be taken seriously as a competitor, then one's visual image must be considered.

### 2. What is really the difference between Serious Dramatic Interpretation (DI) and Prose Interpretation?

Serious Dramatic Interpretation may be dialogue between multiple characters or it may be a one-character monologue. Either way, character development is vital. Those characters need to become real to us; they need to be believable. Each character needs to be distinct and not "bleed" into another character. Each is differentiated by a distinctive voice, posture and focal point. The audience needs to be able to see, hear and feel each character and understand their interaction. The story is presented through its characters. In prose reading, making the story come to life is more important than the individual characters. While there may be dialogue between characters, most of the story may be told by a narrator. Usually prose reading is a bit more subdued in its delivery than DI. At the present time the use of a script is prohibited for DI, but mandatory for prose reading.

### 3. If poetry does not have to rhyme, then what is the difference between poetry and prose?

Both blank and free verse by definition does not rhyme. Poetry also may or may not be narrative in format, nor does it have to "look" like traditional poetry on the printed page, especially if it is contemporary. Poetry is distinct from prose in that it does contain classic literary devices such as figurative language, alliteration and assonance. It may have a rhythm. It definitely paints a vivid picture with strong imagery that appeals to the five senses. If you question whether material is or is not poetry, **report your suspicion to the tournament director, who will request the published source from the coach for verification.**

### 4. How much movement is allowed? Can a student get down on one knee?

In interpretation categories reasonable movement within a hula hoop area is permitted. A contestant may take a step or even do some dance steps within that hula hoop area. He/she may not move about the room. The most important point to remember is that interpretation is not acting. The interpreter does not need to "be" a character, but merely to create that character in the minds of the listeners. He uses voice, focal points and postures to allow his listeners to visualize a character, his situation and actions. While there is no specific rule against getting down on one knee, generally speaking, it would not be needed or even appropriate. For a good interpreter, just pretending to lower oneself to one knee is all that is necessary. Allow the listeners' imagination to take over and visualize the scene.

### 5. On the schematic some students from the same school compete with each other only once, while students from other schools compete against each other twice. Can't we do something to make this more equitable?

All students from the same school are protected against competing with each other **in the first round**. There is no such protection in the second or third rounds. It is desirable for students from the same school to compete against each other in at least one round. In an effort to be fair, contestants are placed in rounds randomly by our computer program. Further, the program attempts to position students near the beginning in one round, around the middle in another round and near the end in one round. With only two sections of each category, sometimes it is necessary for students from the same school to compete against each other twice. It is all random and the entire schematic is computer generated.

### 6. How far is too far in using the book or clothes as a prop?

Many students in interp events where use of a manuscript is required have found ways to effectively choreograph use of the book into the presentation, particularly to separate the introductory statement from the reading itself or to mark the



end. That is permitted, but in those events where props are disallowed, the book may not be used as a physical representation of a book as related to the content of the piece. Similarly, a participant's clothing may not be used as costuming. The spirit of this rule is to prohibit the use of objects that will be used literally -- as props or costuming are meant to do in a play -- and to encourage creativity through the use of mime, pantomime, suggestions and interpretations.

### **7. How much editing of a text is permitted?**

If written permission from the author is given, any changes within that permission may be made. Otherwise, minor editing is permitted to soften potentially objectionable language or content. Minor editing for continuity is also permitted. At all times, however, editing must maintain the author's intent.

### **8. May I videotape a performance?**

Videotaping performances at VHSL forensics **tournaments is strictly prohibited.**

### **9. In events with the guideline, "Each contestant shall present one selection... chosen from published material... No contestant may use a selection, adaptation or cutting that he/she has used in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year," can the student use the same book they used a previous year but a totally different section of the book?**

This question requires us to define "selection," which would essentially be a single, complete work of art. It is not synonymous with "cutting." Using different cuttings from different short stories (with different titles – same or different authors) in a single, published collection would be permitted. However, using cuttings from different sections of a single novel would not be permitted. If the student used a cutting from Chapter 1 of *Huck Finn* last year and wants to use a cutting from Chapter 20 of *Huck Finn* this year, the book title is the same. The author is the same. The mood, setting, characters, plot, point of view and overall theme is the same. When the contestant gets in front of the judge and presents his/her title, it's still going to be *Huck Finn* by Mark Twain. The purpose and spirit of the rule is to challenge the student to do different work each year. A different cutting from the same book is not going to do that as a new cutting from a different book would.

### **10. Are published song lyrics from liner notes of a CD permitted in the poetry category?**

Unless the lyrics are published as poetry, the answer is no. While poetry and lyrics have many similar qualities – effective imagery, emotional evocativeness, skilled use of sound and rhyme, and a host of literary devices (alliteration, metaphor, onomatopoeia...), poetry and lyrics are not the same thing. A poem is designed to be read on the page; a lyric is designed to be sung by the human voice, usually with music. A poem is designed to connect with a *reader*; a lyric is designed to connect with a *listener*. Since music moves the lyric quickly past the listener's consciousness, the lyric needs to communicate with immediacy, clarity and focused impact. A song lyric conveys its power through music and sound. In terms of song structure, lyric writing is a specialized craft. A good lyricist must understand how to create viable verses, climbs, choruses and bridges. A lyric writer needs to also consider the singers who will perform his work. Certain words and phrases are smooth to sing. Others can be difficult or awkward. Poetry can be of almost any length. Lyrics must be concise. A poem can go on for pages, using concealed images that reveal themselves only after careful re-reading. In a song lyric, the music moves quickly and every word counts. The best lyric writers use as few words as possible to set a scene and evoke a feeling. Few songs that gain radio play these days are longer than three or four minutes. Most successful lyrics conform to popular song structures. They offer clear rhyming schemes. They also include clearly delineated verses, choruses, refrains, hooks and/or bridges. *Portions of this response adapted from [www.songlyricist.com](http://www.songlyricist.com).*

### **11. May a coach bring an e-reader to a tournament instead of a printed manuscript?**

Yes, but material published in e-books must also exist in published, printed format and coaches may be asked to produce an original or copy of an original to verify publication.

### **12. May a judge use a digital stopwatch app when timing contestants?**

Yes.

# New Critique Sheets for 2015-16 Competition

At its May 2015 annual meeting, the VHSL Debate, Drama and Forensics Advisory Committee (DDFAC) recommended an update to the VHSL Forensics critique sheets with an incorporation of a rubric to assist both judges as to what they should look for, and contestants (and their coaches) as to where their presentation excels or falls short. The ballots were drafted in June, revised through July, then shared with coaches August-October, who were encouraged to provide feedback. In September, the critique sheets were also presented/discussed at the Virginia Association of Speech, Debate and Drama Coaches Conference. Final edits were made, coaches were polled, and 90% were in favor of adopting these new critique sheets with rubrics. The VHSL Executive Committee adopted the critique sheets on Wednesday, December 2 for immediate implementation for the 2015-16 school year.

Those taking part in this revision and update were Todd Necessary (Marion), David Noland (Woodgrove), Shelley Nowacek (Great Bridge), Tina Tapp (Radford), and Terri Towle (Westfield). State tournament director Charlene Tiller also reviewed the drafts. VHSL Assistant Director Lisa Giles served as advisor and facilitated the process.

This Manual includes the new critique sheets that are to be used in all VHSL competition (conference, region and state). It is important, particularly in this first year of use, that coaches review these critique sheets with their team and become familiar with them. Tournament directors also should share these critique sheets with their judges in advance of their events so that they, too can become familiar with them and get comfortable with the transition so that delays are avoided on tournament day. Tournament directors should allow time in their judges meeting for questions potential questions pertaining to the new critique sheets.

Know in advance:

**1. What if a judge does not complete the ratings rubric?**

If a ballot taker at a tournament notices a critique sheet with an incomplete ratings rubric upon submission, he/she should ask the judge to complete it before accepting the form. If the incomplete rubric is not noticed until after the fact, coaches may inform the tournament director, who should address the issue with ballot takers and judges from an educational standpoint in a good faith effort to improve the process. Tournament directors, however, are not expected or required to hunt down the judge to get the rubric completed. A completed ratings rubric is not necessary to determine winners.

**2. The critique sheet states, "Your ratings should reflect your overall score and ranking. While ratings do not have a numerical value, contestants with higher ratings should have higher scores and lower (better rankings)." What if this is not true?**

Ballot-takers will not have time to look for this kind of thing while working the tournament, but coaches who feel this may be the case may provide a copy of the ballot to the tournament director, who should address the issue with the appropriate judge from an educational standpoint.

**3. Are any errors or perceived errors made by judges with the ratings rubric appealable within the 60-minute-rule?**

No. Again, a completed ratings rubric is not necessary to determine winners. **The purpose of the ratings rubric is to (1) assist judges as to what they should look for in a presentation, and (2) help contestants (and their coaches) know where their presentation excels or falls short. The ratings rubric is not a scorecard, and the individual elements do not necessarily carry equal weight.**

# Information for Extemporaneous Speaking Judges

**Purpose of Contest:** To encourage students to combine clear thinking, good extempore conversational speaking and interesting presentation in establishing a definite thought with respect to current fact and opinion on a designated topic as presented by contemporary sources.

## Contest Regulations:

1. Topics for extemporaneous speaking shall be chosen from articles appearing in the issues of national newsmagazines such as *Newsweek*, *Time* and *U.S. News and World Report* or from mainstream newspapers with national circulations. Topics will be selected from these periodicals, may relate to either domestic or foreign affairs and will be released at least 30 days before each tournament. Questions pertaining to topics are not to be made known to the contestants before the event.
2. Contestants shall report to an assigned area where they will, in order, draw three topics each. From these, each contestant is to choose one and return the other two. Each contestant shall have 30 minutes to prepare before he/she is to speak. **Time begins immediately after the three topics are drawn.** During preparation period, contestant must not consult with anyone or make use of previously prepared notes. As with impromptu speaking, it is important for coaches running the extemp prep room to be **CONSISTENT** with each contestant in each round and in each division (1A, 2A, 3A...). **Extemp proctors, please be sure that students do not leave prep room with any prep materials other than their question strip and optional note card.**
3. The speech may not exceed seven minutes in length. The timekeeper will indicate time elapsed at the beginning of the fourth minute of the speech, show progression of minutes at five, six, 6:30 and at the end of the seventh minute indicate that time has expired. Any contestant who exceeds the established time limit by more than 30 seconds may not rank first or score highest in the round. There is no minimum time requirement as long as the topic is adequately covered. Visual aids and/or props used while speaking are prohibited.
4. The speaker shall be allowed to use both sides of one note card not exceeding 4" X 6" in size and provided by the tournament.
5. Either before beginning the speech or as part of the introduction, the contestant is to read his topic in the exact words or phrasing as it appears on the paper he selected.

## Judging Procedures:

1. Both content and delivery are key criteria areas for judging. Look for originality and value of content and theme, soundness of thinking, excellence of organization, adequacy and concreteness of developmental or supporting details and illustrations, vividness of style and content appropriate to the speaker and to the audience in support of contemporary community values; conversational, earnest and concerned delivery; vividness of language; pleasing and varied vocal qualities, posture and bodily movement that are neither stiff nor slovenly; gestures that are felt as necessary; and general effectiveness as a persuasive, convincing, stimulating or inspirational speaker. The purpose is to persuade, so the speaker may seek to convince, stimulate or inspire.
2. Use the Critique Form to write comments on the speaker's performance.
3. After each speech, use the Rating Form to score the speaker. **Decisions should be reached independently, without consulting other judges.**

After all speakers have been heard, rank all contestants (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) and score them between 100-70 in the same order in which they are ranked. Turn in your rating form to the tab room chairman who will tally them and assign a ranking (sum of each judge's assigned ranking for that contestant) and a score (total of assigned numerical scores) to each speaker. **Important:** Final results are based first on a student's ranking. The lowest total is overall 1st place speaker, next lowest is 2nd and so forth. In the event of a tie, follow the tie-breaking procedure outlined on the Explanation of Scoring for Individual Events.

4. Judges may no longer question speaker at the conclusion of his/her speech (2012-13).

# Extemporaneous Speaking Critique Sheet

Speaker's Code: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle one)

Round: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
70 (lowest) - 100 (highest)

Name of Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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**JUDGE:** As you watch each contestant, please rate each performance element as superior, excellent, good or fair and provide specific, helpful comments below to elaborate your ratings. Your ratings should reflect your overall score and ranking. While ratings do not have a numerical value, contestants with higher ratings should have higher scores and lower (better) rankings.

## RATINGS

**Superior:** shows mastery of element by applying skill effectively and consistently for entire presentation

**Excellent:** shows effective application of element for a majority of presentation

**Good:** applies element well at times, but lacks mastery

**Fair:** shows attempt at implementation of element, but application is inconsistent and often ineffective

ELEMENT	S	E	G	F
<b>Appearance:</b> speaker's appearance is appropriate for competition				
<b>Poise:</b> speaker is prepared, confident, composed				
<b>Organization:</b> speech has distinct beginning (with strong thesis), middle (with supporting details and illustrations) and end (without mere restatement of thesis)				
<b>Relevance:</b> speech is on-topic, reasoning is sound and supported with citations				
<b>Eye contact:</b> appropriate, focused				
<b>Communication:</b> speaker is conversational, presents material effectively in a way audience can understand content and speaker's stance on topic; purpose (to inform/persuade) is achieved				
<b>Mechanics:</b> diction, grammar, appropriately colorful vocabulary, pronunciation				
<b>Articulation:</b> speaker enunciates, is understandable				
<b>Projection:</b> speaker uses appropriate volume				
<b>Pace:</b> pacing is appropriately varied, is not too fast or too slow				
<b>Movement:</b> movement is meaningful and deliberate; posture is neither stiff nor slovenly; gestures are appropriate				
<b>Energy:</b> speaker presents material with appropriate energy level, is not monotonous				
<b>Citations:</b> speaker clearly and adequately acknowledges sources of quotes, statistics, etc.				
<b>Impact:</b> presentation is impactful and arouses emotion in audience				

## COMMENTS:

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Judge must work independently and not confer!**

# Information for Original Oratory Contest Judges

**Purpose of Contest:** The purpose of the original oratory contest is to train and encourage students to present speeches intelligently and truthfully, in an interesting and original manner, direct and conversational in delivery, clear in arrangement and presentation, and with some profit to an audience, on any worthwhile topic suitable for a public speech.

## Contest Regulations:

1. Each contestant shall deliver an original speech of his/her own writing not to exceed ten minutes in delivery. Any contestant who exceeds the established time limit by more than 30 seconds may not rank first or score highest in the round. Adjudicator will not provide time signals, nor may a student time him/herself. There is no minimum time requirement. Contestant must present the same speech in each round of a given tournament.
2. A speaker may not use a speech he has delivered in any previous year's contest. The oration shall contain no more than 150 words of directly quoted material, nor shall the oration be a paraphrase taken completely from one source. The speaker shall clearly acknowledge the sources of any quotations used.
3. Speeches shall have been thoroughly prepared. **During the delivery of his speech, the speaker shall be allowed to use both sides of two note cards each of which may not exceed 4" X 6" in size.**
4. Each speaker is to prepare a manuscript of his speech **for each round of competition. Following the completion of the speech in each round, each speaker shall submit a copy of his/her manuscript to a judge who shall submit it to the tournament director.**

## Judging Procedures:

1. Both content and delivery are key criteria areas for judging. Look for originality and value of content and theme, soundness of thinking, excellence of organization, adequacy and concreteness of developmental or supporting details and illustrations, and vividness of style and content appropriate to the speaker and to the audience in support of contemporary community values; conversational, earnest and concerned delivery; vividness of language; pleasing and varied vocal qualities; posture and bodily movement that are neither stiff nor slovenly; gestures that are felt as necessary; and general effectiveness as a persuasive, convincing, stimulating or inspirational speaker. The purpose is to persuade, so the speaker may seek to convince, stimulate or inspire.
2. Use the Criticism Form to write comments on the speaker's performance. These forms will later be given to the speakers.
3. After each speech, use the Rating Form to score the speaker. **Decisions should be reached independently, without consulting other judges.**

After all speakers have been heard, rank all contestants (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) and score them between 100-70 in the same order in which they are ranked. Turn in your rating form to the tab room chairman who will tally them and assign a ranking (sum of each judge's assigned ranking for that contestant) and a score (total of assigned numerical scores) to each speaker. **Important:** Final results are based first on a student's cumulative ranking. The lowest total is overall first place speaker, next lowest is 2nd and so forth. In the event of a tie, follow the tie-breaking procedure outlined on the Explanation of Scoring for Individual Events.

4. Judges may no longer question speaker at the conclusion of his/her speech (2012-13).

# Original Oratory Critique Sheet

Speaker's Code: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle one)

Round: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
70 (lowest) - 100 (highest)

Name of Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**JUDGE:** As you watch each contestant, please rate each performance element as superior, excellent, good or fair and provide specific, helpful comments below to elaborate your ratings. Your ratings should reflect your overall score and ranking. While ratings do not have a numerical value, contestants with higher ratings should have higher scores and lower (better) rankings.

**RATINGS**

**Superior:** shows mastery of element by applying skill effectively and consistently for entire presentation

**Excellent:** shows effective application of element for a majority of presentation

**Good:** applies element well at times, but lacks mastery

**Fair:** shows attempt at implementation of element, but application is inconsistent and often ineffective

ELEMENT	S	E	G	F
<b>Appearance:</b> speaker's appearance is appropriate for competition				
<b>Poise:</b> speaker is prepared, confident, composed				
<b>Organization:</b> speech has distinct beginning (with strong thesis), middle (with supporting details and illustrations) and end (without mere restatement of thesis)				
<b>Relevance:</b> speech is on-topic, reasoning is sound and supported with citations				
<b>Eye contact:</b> appropriate, focused				
<b>Communication:</b> speaker is conversational, presents material effectively in a way audience can understand content and speaker's stance on topic; purpose (to inform/persuade) is achieved				
<b>Mechanics:</b> diction, grammar, appropriately colorful vocabulary, pronunciation				
<b>Articulation:</b> speaker enunciates, is understandable				
<b>Projection:</b> speaker uses appropriate volume				
<b>Pace:</b> pacing is appropriately varied, is not too fast or too slow				
<b>Movement:</b> movement is meaningful and deliberate; posture is neither stiff nor slovenly; gestures are appropriate				
<b>Energy:</b> speaker presents material with appropriate energy level, is not monotonous				
<b>Citations:</b> speaker clearly and adequately acknowledges sources of quotes, statistics, etc.				
<b>Impact:</b> presentation is impactful and arouses emotion in audience				
<b>Choice of Topic:</b> topic is appropriate to speaker and audience, and is engaging				

**COMMENTS:**

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Judge must work independently and not confer!**

# Information for Impromptu Speaking Judges

**Purpose of Contest:** To encourage students to combine clear thinking, good speaking skills and interesting presentation in responding quickly to one of three topics with a clear, specific point in a well-developed speech.

## Contest Regulations:

1. Impromptu topics will include proverbs, ordinary objects, events, quotations and famous people. All students, in each section, will draw from the same list of topics. A different subject area will be used for each round.
2. Students will be assigned to a room with an adjudicator present. All students assigned to the room will check in with the adjudicator and then wait outside the room until they are called for their turn to speak. When the student is asked to speak, he/she will be brought into the room, given three topics and asked to choose one. All students will choose from the same three topics.
3. The contestant shall prepare a speech without consultation and without reference to prepared notes or research materials. **The student may make limited notes on both sides of one note card not exceeding 4" x 6" in size and provided by the adjudicator.** Visual aids and/or props are prohibited
4. There is NO minimum time requirement, but the contestant must cover the subject adequately. The maximum time for preparation and speaking is seven minutes. **Time begins immediately after the three topics are drawn.** The student may divide this time in any way he/she sees fit. Any contestant who exceeds the established time limit by more than 30 seconds may not rank first or score highest in the round. **The adjudicator is expected to provide the student with oral time signals, indicating the amount of time elapsed at one minute, two minutes, etc. until the student begins speaking. The adjudicator should then provide the student with visual hand signals showing the progression of each minute, again at 6:30, and at the end of the seventh minute, indicate that time has expired. It is essential that a judge be consistent with start times and time signals, both oral and visual.**
5. A student may not leave the impromptu round until all students have finished speaking.

## Judging Procedures:

1. Consider both content and delivery. Criteria for determining winners are relevance of theme to topic, thought content, freshness, depth, clarity of organization, sincerity of speaker, adequacy of support and development, use of language, voice and diction and control and use of body.
2. Use the Criticism Form to write comments on the speaker's performance. These forms will later be given to the speakers.
3. After each speech, use the Rating Form to score the speaker. **Decisions should be reached independently, without consulting other judges.**

After all speakers have been heard, rank all contestants (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) and score them between 100-70 in the same order in which they are ranked. Turn in your rating form to the tab room chairman who will tally them and assign a ranking (sum of each judge's assigned ranking for that contestant) and a score (total of assigned numerical scores) to each speaker. **Important:** Final results are based first on a student's ranking. The lowest total is overall 1<sup>st</sup> place speaker, next lowest is 2<sup>nd</sup> and so forth. In the event of a tie, follow the tie-breaking procedure outlined on the Explanation of Scoring for Individual Events.

# Impromptu Speaking Critique Sheet

Speaker's Code: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle one)

Round: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
70 (lowest) - 100 (highest)

Name of Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**JUDGE:** As you watch each contestant, please rate each performance element as superior, excellent, good or fair and provide specific, helpful comments below to elaborate your ratings. Your ratings should reflect your overall score and ranking. While ratings do not have a numerical value, contestants with higher ratings should have higher scores and lower (better) rankings.

**RATINGS**

- Superior:** shows mastery of element by applying skill effectively and consistently for entire presentation
- Excellent:** shows effective application of element for a majority of presentation
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ELEMENT	S	E	G	F
<b>Appearance:</b> speaker's appearance is appropriate for competition				
<b>Poise:</b> speaker is prepared, confident, composed				
<b>Organization:</b> speech has distinct beginning (with strong thesis), middle (with supporting details and illustrations) and end (without mere restatement of thesis)				
<b>Relevance:</b> speech is on-topic, reasoning is sound and supported				
<b>Eye contact:</b> appropriate, focused				
<b>Communication:</b> speaker is conversational, presents material effectively in a way audience can understand content and speaker's stance on topic				
<b>Mechanics:</b> diction, grammar, appropriately colorful vocabulary, pronunciation				
<b>Articulation:</b> speaker enunciates, is understandable				
<b>Projection:</b> speaker uses appropriate volume				
<b>Pace:</b> pacing is appropriately varied, is not too fast or too slow				
<b>Movement:</b> movement is meaningful and deliberate; posture is neither stiff nor slovenly; gestures are appropriate				
<b>Energy:</b> speaker presents material with appropriate energy level, is not monotonous				
<b>Impact:</b> presentation is impactful and arouses emotion in audience				

**COMMENTS:**

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Judge must work independently and not confer!**



# Information for Storytelling Contest Judges

**Purpose of Contest:** To encourage appreciation of the art of telling a good story in a way that will fully engage children in the dramatic values, with apparent spontaneity, and with directness, simplicity and enthusiasm without distracting the audience through faulty pronunciation and indistinct enunciation.

## Contest Regulations:

1. A contestant will present a children's story, not exceeding ten minutes in length including an introduction. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament. Any contestant who exceeds the established time limit by more than 30 seconds may not rank first or score highest in the round. Adjudicator will not provide time signals, students may not time themselves, no notes may be used and a contestant may not use a story he/she has presented in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year. Each contestant is to work alone without costume or props since he/she will be judged only on storytelling ability. Gestures are encouraged; however, movement must be restricted to movement in place, defined as a space the size of a hula-hoop. The contestant should assume that the audience consists of a group of children. The contestant may differentiate characters by the use of different voices, focal points and body postures.

## Judging Procedures:

1. Criteria for determining winners are choice of selection, interpretation, pronunciation, timing, enunciation, eye contact, posture, gestures, voice, poise, appearance, energy level, coherence of story cutting, vocal expression, facial expression, characterization, appeal to children and impact of message and performance. **Content should be appropriate to the speaker and to the audience in support of contemporary community values.**
2. Use the Criticism Form for writing comments on the speaker's performance. These forms will later be given to the speaker.
3. After each performance, use the Rating Form to score the speaker. **Decisions should be reached independently, without consulting other judges.**

After all performances have been heard, rank all contestants (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) and score them between 100-70 in the same order in which they are ranked. Turn in your rating form to the tab room chairman who will tally them and assign a ranking (sum of each judge's assigned ranking for that contestant) and a score (total of assigned numerical scores) to each participant.

**Important:** Final results are based first on a student's cumulative ranking. The lowest total overall is 1st place, next lowest is 2nd and so forth. In the event of a tie, follow the tie-breaking procedure outlined on the Explanation of Scoring for Individual Events.

# Storytelling Critique Sheet

Speaker's Code: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle one)

Round: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
70 (lowest) - 100 (highest)

Name of Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**JUDGE:** As you watch each contestant, please rate each performance element as superior, excellent, good or fair and provide specific, helpful comments below to elaborate your ratings. Your ratings should reflect your overall score and ranking. While ratings do not have a numerical value, contestants with higher ratings should have higher scores and lower (better) rankings.

**RATINGS**

- Superior:** shows mastery of element by applying skill effectively and consistently for entire presentation
- Excellent:** shows effective application of element for a majority of presentation
- Good:** applies element well at times, but lacks mastery
- Fair:** shows attempt at implementation of element, but application is inconsistent and often ineffective

ELEMENT	S	E	G	F
<b>Appearance:</b> speaker's appearance is appropriate for competition				
<b>Poise:</b> speaker is prepared, confident, composed				
<b>Choice of Selection:</b> selection is appropriate, and fitting to speaker, category and audience				
<b>Organization:</b> selection flows; editing/cutting is coherent				
<b>Eye contact:</b> appropriate, focused				
<b>Interpretation:</b> speaker's interpretation is intelligible, effective, engaging, and entertaining				
<b>Communication:</b> speaker presents material effectively in a way audience can understand story, characters, and character(s) motivation; establishes mood				
<b>Articulation:</b> speaker enunciates, pronounces words correctly, and is understandable				
<b>Projection:</b> speaker uses appropriate volume				
<b>Vocal Characterization:</b> speaker clearly and thoughtfully creates different voices/accents for characters and is consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Physical Characterization:</b> speaker clearly and thoughtfully creates and presents characters by incorporating appropriate and distinct gestures, body postures, behaviors, and other relevant physicality, and is consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Pace:</b> pacing is appropriately varied, is not too fast or too slow				
<b>Memorization:</b> delivery is free of memorization lapses and errors				
<b>Freshness:</b> speaker presents material with an "illusion of the first time" as if it were brand new; presentation is not stale or rote				
<b>Energy:</b> speaker presents material with appropriate energy level, is not monotonous				
<b>Impact:</b> presentation is impactful and arouses emotion in audience				

**COMMENTS:**

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Judge must work independently and not confer!**

# Information for Poetry Interpretation Contest Judges

**Purpose of Contest:** To encourage appreciation of the full meaning of the printed page and the oral communication of that meaning to others with apparent spontaneity, and with directness, simplicity and sincerity without distracting the audience through faulty pronunciation or indistinct enunciation.

**Poetics:** The student's selection need not rhyme. By definition, neither blank verse nor free verse rhymes. Furthermore, free verse has no meter or rhythm. All forms of poetry share certain literary elements, mainly imagery or language that appeals to the five senses. Other common elements include metaphor, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, etc. Blank verse and free verse, especially in contemporary forms, also may not appear like poetry on the printed page. When in doubt whether the selection is truly poetry, report your doubt to the tournament director, who will request the published source from the coach to see how the material is identified.

## Contest Regulations:

1. Each contestant shall read one prepared poem or poetic group of his/her own choice with a total reading time of not more than ten minutes. Any contestant who exceeds the established time limit by more than 30 seconds may not rank first or score highest in the round. There is no minimum time requirement. Adjudicator will not provide time signals, and students may not time themselves. The contestant may preface his/her reading with an introductory statement that will give the audience a better understanding of the selection read, provided his total time does not exceed ten minutes. Visual contact with the manuscript is required. No reader may use a prepared poetry selection, adaptation or cutting that he/she has read in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year, a selection he/she has written or a selection written about his/her own experiences. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament.

## Judging Procedures:

1. **The prime requisite of oral interpretation is intelligibility, and to that end the contestant must have an intelligent comprehension of what he interprets and a due appreciation of its values, as well as the ability to communicate them to his audience. Content should be appropriate to the speaker and to the audience in support of contemporary community values.** A pleasant voice, an acceptable accent and clear enunciation are first of all desirable. Monotony of tone or of pace and overemphasis or acting are to be avoided. Through modulation, proper stress and timing not only must the meaning of the passage be brought out, but also its mood -- whether of humor, pathos, earnestness, excitement, satire or whatever. The audience must be given an opportunity to hear, to understand and to feel what the author is striving to convey.
2. Use the Criticism Form for writing comments on the speaker's performance. These forms will later be given to the speaker.
3. After each performance, use the Rating Form to score the speaker. **Decisions should be reached independently, without consulting other judges.**

After all readers have been heard, rank all contestants (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) and score them between 100-70 in the same order in which they are ranked. Turn in your rating form to the tab room chairman who will tally them and assign a ranking (sum of each judge's assigned ranking for that contestant) and a score (total of assigned numerical scores) to each reader. **Important:** Final results are based first on a student's cumulative ranking. The lowest total is overall 1st place, next lowest is 2nd and so forth. In the event of a tie, follow the tie-breaking procedure outlined on the Explanation of Scoring for Individual Events.

# Poetry Interpretation Critique Sheet

Speaker's Code: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle one)

Round: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
70 (lowest) - 100 (highest)

Name of Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
**JUDGE:** As you watch each contestant, please rate each performance element as superior, excellent, good or fair and provide specific, helpful comments below to elaborate your ratings. Your ratings should reflect your overall score and ranking. While ratings do not have a numerical value, contestants with higher ratings should have higher scores and lower (better) rankings.

## RATINGS

**Superior:** shows mastery of element by applying skill effectively and consistently for entire presentation

**Excellent:** shows effective application of element for a majority of presentation

**Good:** applies element well at times, but lacks mastery

**Fair:** shows attempt at implementation of element, but application is inconsistent and often ineffective

ELEMENT	S	E	G	F
<b>Appearance:</b> speaker's appearance is appropriate for competition				
<b>Poise:</b> speaker is prepared, confident, composed				
<b>Choice of Selection:</b> selection is appropriate, and fitting to speaker, category and audience				
<b>Organization:</b> selection flows; editing/cutting is coherent				
<b>Interpretation:</b> speaker's interpretation is intelligible, effective, engaging, and entertaining				
<b>Communication:</b> speaker presents material effectively in a way audience can understand story, characters, and character(s) motivation; establishes mood				
<b>Articulation:</b> speaker enunciates, pronounces words correctly, and is understandable				
<b>Projection:</b> speaker uses appropriate volume				
<b>Vocal Characterization:</b> speaker clearly and thoughtfully creates different voices/accents for characters and is consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Physical Characterization:</b> speaker clearly and thoughtfully creates and presents characters by incorporating appropriate and distinct gestures, body postures, behaviors, and other relevant physicality, and is consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Pace:</b> pacing is appropriately varied, is not too fast or too slow				
<b>Freshness:</b> speaker presents material with an "illusion of the first time" as if it were brand new; presentation is not stale or rote				
<b>Energy:</b> speaker presents material with appropriate energy level, is not monotonous				
<b>Impact:</b> presentation is impactful and arouses emotion in audience				
<b>Eye Contact:</b> appropriate, focused, balance between audience and manuscript to convey dramatic reading				
<b>Delivery:</b> speaker interprets poetic devices in material to differentiate it from prose				

## COMMENTS:

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Judge must work independently and not confer!**

# Information for Prose Interpretation Contest Judges

**Purpose of Contest:** To encourage appreciation of the full meaning of the printed page and the oral communication of that meaning to others with apparent spontaneity, and with directness, simplicity and sincerity without distracting the audience through faulty pronunciation or indistinct enunciation.

## Contest Regulations:

1. Each contestant shall read one prepared prose selection of his/her own choice with a total reading time of not more than ten minutes. Adjudicator will not provide time signals, and students may not time themselves. In a prose selection, there may be dialogue, but most of the story may be told by a narrator. Usually prose is also a bit more subdued in its delivery than a serious dramatic interpretation, and making the story (rather than the characters) come to life is more important. No reader may use a prepared prose selection, adaptation or cutting that he/she has read in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year, a selection he/she has written or a selection written about his/her own experiences. The contestant may preface his/her reading with an introductory statement that will give the audience a better understanding of the selection read, provided his total time does not exceed ten minutes. Visual contact with a manuscript is required. Any contestant who exceeds the established time limit by more than 30 seconds may not rank first or score highest in the round. There is no minimum time requirement. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament.

## Judging Procedures:

1. **The prime requisite of oral interpretation is intelligibility, and to that end the contestant must have an intelligent comprehension of what he interprets and a due appreciation of its values, as well as the ability to communicate them to his audience. Content should be appropriate to the speaker and to the audience in support of contemporary community values.** A pleasant voice, an acceptable accent and clear enunciation are first of all desirable. Monotony of tone or of pace and overemphasis or acting are to be avoided. Through modulation, proper stress and timing not only must the meaning of the passage be brought out, but also its mood -- whether of humor, pathos, earnestness, excitement, satire or whatever. The audience must be given an opportunity to hear, to understand and to feel what the author is striving to convey.
2. Use the Criticism Form for writing comments on the speaker's performance. These forms will later be given to the speaker.
3. After each performance, use the Rating Form to score the speaker. **Decisions should be reached independently, without consulting other judges.**

After all readers have been heard, rank all contestants (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) and score them between 100-70 in the same order in which they are ranked. Turn in your rating form to the tab room chairman who will tally them and assign a ranking (sum of each judge's assigned ranking for that contestant) and a score (total of assigned numerical scores) to each reader. **Important:** Final results are based first on a student's cumulative ranking. The lowest total is overall 1st place, next lowest is 2nd and so forth. In the event of a tie, follow the tie-breaking procedure outlined on the Explanation of Scoring for Individual Events.

# Prose Interpretation Critique Sheet

Speaker's Code: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle one)

Round: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
70 (lowest) - 100 (highest)

Name of Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**JUDGE:** As you watch each contestant, please rate each performance element as superior, excellent, good or fair and provide specific, helpful comments below to elaborate your ratings. Your ratings should reflect your overall score and ranking. While ratings do not have a numerical value, contestants with higher ratings should have higher scores and lower (better) rankings.

**RATINGS**

- Superior:** shows mastery of element by applying skill effectively and consistently for entire presentation
- Excellent:** shows effective application of element for a majority of presentation
- Good:** applies element well at times, but lacks mastery
- Fair:** shows attempt at implementation of element, but application is inconsistent and often ineffective

ELEMENT	S	E	G	F
<b>Appearance:</b> speaker's appearance is appropriate for competition				
<b>Poise:</b> speaker is prepared, confident, composed				
<b>Choice of Selection:</b> selection is appropriate, and fitting to speaker, category and audience				
<b>Organization:</b> selection flows; editing/cutting is coherent				
<b>Interpretation:</b> speaker's interpretation is intelligible, effective, engaging, and entertaining				
<b>Communication:</b> speaker presents material effectively in a way audience can understand story, characters, and character(s) motivation; establishes mood				
<b>Articulation:</b> speaker enunciates, pronounces words correctly, and is understandable				
<b>Projection:</b> speaker uses appropriate volume				
<b>Vocal Characterization:</b> speaker clearly and thoughtfully creates different voices/accent for characters and is consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Physical Characterization:</b> speaker clearly and thoughtfully creates and presents characters by incorporating appropriate and distinct gestures, body postures, behaviors, and other relevant physicality, and is consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Pace:</b> pacing is appropriately varied, is not too fast or too slow				
<b>Freshness:</b> speaker presents material with an "illusion of the first time" as if it were brand new; presentation is not stale or rote				
<b>Energy:</b> speaker presents material with appropriate energy level, is not monotonous				
<b>Impact:</b> presentation is impactful and arouses emotion in audience				
<b>Eye Contact:</b> appropriate, focused, balance between audience and manuscript to convey dramatic reading				

**COMMENTS:**

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Judge must work independently and not confer!**

# Information For Serious Dramatic Interpretation Contest Judges

**Purpose of Contest:** To encourage and increase appreciation of dramatic literature and to communicate to the audience its emotional and intellectual content with spontaneity, directness and clarity, clearly suggesting the characters and personality of one or more persons in dialogue.

## Contest Regulations:

1. Each contestant shall present ONE selection that he/she has not used in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year. The selection should emphasize character development through consistent use of distinct voices, focal points and postures. It must be of a serious nature chosen from published material. Selections from the Internet must appear on the Approved List of Online Sources. The selection may not have been written by the student or about his or her own experiences. The use of a manuscript is prohibited. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament.
2. Movement is allowed, but such movement should be restricted to bending (knees and/or waist); leaning, twisting or swiveling; and no walking, all within the space of a hula-hoop. Use of body (gestures, appropriate audience/eye contact, etc.) to suggest character is permitted.
3. The time limit, including narration, introductory and transitional remarks, is 10 minutes. Adjudicator will not provide time signals, and students may not time themselves. Any contestant who exceeds the established time limit by more than 30 seconds may not rank first or score highest in the round. There is no minimum time requirement.

## Judging Procedures:

1. **The prime requisite of oral interpretation is intelligibility, and to that end the contestant must have an intelligent comprehension of what he interprets and a due appreciation of its values, as well as the ability to communicate them to his audience. Content should be appropriate to the speaker and to the audience in support of contemporary community values.** A pleasant voice, an acceptable accent and clear enunciation are first of all desirable. Monotony of tone or of pace and overemphasis or acting are to be avoided. Through modulation, proper stress and timing not only must the meaning of the passage be brought out, but also its mood -- whether or pathos, earnestness, excitement, satire or whatever. The audience must be given an opportunity to hear, to understand and to feel what the author is striving to convey.
2. Use the Criticism form for writing comments on the student's performance. These forms will later be given to the student.
3. After each presentation, use the Rating Form to score the contestant. **Decisions should be reached independently, without consulting other judges.**

After all contestants have been heard, rank all the contestants (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) and score them between 100-70 in the same order in which they are ranked. Turn in your rating form to the tab room chairman who will tally them and assign a ranking (sum of each judge's assigned ranking for that contestant) and a score (total of assigned numerical scores) to each contestant. **Important:** Final results are based first on a student's cumulative ranking. The lowest total overall is 1st place, next lowest is 2nd and so forth. In the event of a tie, follow the tie-breaking procedure outlined on the Explanation of Scoring for Individual Events.

# Serious Dramatic Interpretation Critique Sheet

Speaker's Code: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle one)

Round: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
70 (lowest) - 100 (highest)

Name of Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**JUDGE:** As you watch each contestant, please rate each performance element as superior, excellent, good or fair and provide specific, helpful comments below to elaborate your ratings. Your ratings should reflect your overall score and ranking. While ratings do not have a numerical value, contestants with higher ratings should have higher scores and lower (better) rankings.

**RATINGS**

- Superior:** shows mastery of element by applying skill effectively and consistently for entire presentation
- Excellent:** shows effective application of element for a majority of presentation
- Good:** applies element well at times, but lacks mastery
- Fair:** shows attempt at implementation of element, but application is inconsistent and often ineffective

ELEMENT	S	E	G	F
<b>Appearance:</b> speaker's appearance is appropriate for competition				
<b>Poise:</b> speaker is prepared, confident, composed				
<b>Choice of Selection:</b> selection is appropriate, and fitting to speaker, category and audience				
<b>Organization:</b> selection flows; editing/cutting is coherent				
<b>Eye contact:</b> appropriate, focused				
<b>Interpretation:</b> speaker's interpretation is intelligible, effective, engaging, and entertaining				
<b>Communication:</b> speaker presents material effectively in a way audience can understand story, characters, and character(s) motivation; establishes mood				
<b>Articulation:</b> speaker enunciates, pronounces words correctly, and is understandable				
<b>Projection:</b> speaker uses appropriate volume				
<b>Vocal Characterization:</b> speaker clearly and thoughtfully creates different voices/accents for characters and is consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Physical Characterization:</b> speaker clearly and thoughtfully creates and presents characters by incorporating appropriate and distinct gestures, body postures, behaviors, and other relevant physicality, and is consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Pace:</b> pacing is appropriately varied, is not too fast or too slow				
<b>Memorization:</b> delivery is free of memorization lapses and errors				
<b>Freshness:</b> speaker presents material with an "illusion of the first time" as if it were brand new; presentation is not stale or rote				
<b>Energy:</b> speaker presents material with appropriate energy level, is not monotonous				
<b>Impact:</b> presentation is impactful and arouses emotion in audience				

**COMMENTS:**

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Judge must work independently and not confer!**



# Information for Humorous Dramatic Interpretation Contest Judges

**Purpose of Contest:** To encourage and increase appreciation of dramatic literature and to communicate to the audience its emotional and intellectual content with spontaneity, directness and clarity, clearly suggesting the characters and personality of one or more persons in dialogue.

## Contest Regulations:

1. Each contestant shall present ONE selection that he/she has not used in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year. The selection should emphasize character development through consistent use of distinct voices, focal points and postures. It must be of a humorous nature chosen from published material. Selections from the Internet must appear on the Approved List of Online Sources. The selection may not have been written by the student or about his or her own experiences. The use of a manuscript is prohibited. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament.
2. Movement is allowed, but such movement should be restricted to bending (knees and/or waist); leaning, twisting or swiveling; and no walking, all within the space of a hula-hoop. Use of body (gestures, appropriate audience/eye contact, etc.) to suggest character is permitted.
3. The time limit, including narration, introductory and transitional remarks, is 10 minutes. Adjudicator will not provide time signals, and students may not time themselves. Any contestant who exceeds the established time limit by more than 30 seconds may not rank first or score highest in the round. There is no minimum time requirement.

## Judging Procedures:

1. **The prime requisite of oral interpretation is intelligibility, and to that end the contestant must have an intelligent comprehension of what he interprets and a due appreciation of its values, as well as the ability to communicate them to his audience. Content should be appropriate to the speaker and to the audience in support of contemporary community values.** A pleasant voice, an acceptable accent and clear enunciation are first of all desirable. Monotony of tone or of pace and overemphasis or acting are to be avoided. Through modulation, proper stress and timing not only must the meaning of the passage be brought out, but also its mood -- whether or humor, pathos, earnestness, excitement, satire or whatever. The audience must be given an opportunity to hear, to understand and to feel what the author is striving to convey.
2. Use the Criticism form for writing comments on the student's performance. These forms will later be given to the student.
3. After each presentation, use the Rating Form to score the contestant. **Decisions should be reached independently, without consulting other judges.**

After all contestants have been heard, rank all the contestants (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) and score them between 100-70 in the same order in which they are ranked. Turn in your rating form to the tab room chairman who will tally them and assign a ranking (sum of each judge's assigned ranking for that contestant) and a score (total of assigned numerical scores) to each contestant. **Important:** Final results are based first on a student's cumulative ranking. The lowest total overall is 1st place, next lowest is 2nd and so forth. In the event of a tie, follow the tie-breaking procedure outlined on the Explanation of Scoring for Individual Events.

# Humorous Interpretation Critique Sheet

Speaker's Code: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle one)

Round: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
70 (lowest) - 100 (highest)

Name of Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**JUDGE:** As you watch each contestant, please rate each performance element as superior, excellent, good or fair and provide specific, helpful comments below to elaborate your ratings. Your ratings should reflect your overall score and ranking. While ratings do not have a numerical value, contestants with higher ratings should have higher scores and lower (better) rankings.

**RATINGS**

- Superior:** shows mastery of element by applying skill effectively and consistently for entire presentation
- Excellent:** shows effective application of element for a majority of presentation
- Good:** applies element well at times, but lacks mastery
- Fair:** shows attempt at implementation of element, but application is inconsistent and often ineffective

ELEMENT	S	E	G	F
<b>Appearance:</b> speaker's appearance is appropriate for competition				
<b>Poise:</b> speaker is prepared, confident, composed				
<b>Choice of Selection:</b> selection is appropriate, and fitting to speaker, category and audience				
<b>Organization:</b> selection flows; editing/cutting is coherent				
<b>Eye contact:</b> appropriate, focused				
<b>Interpretation:</b> speaker's interpretation is intelligible, effective, engaging, and entertaining				
<b>Communication:</b> speaker presents material effectively in a way audience can understand story, characters, and character(s) motivation; establishes mood				
<b>Articulation:</b> speaker enunciates, pronounces words correctly, and is understandable				
<b>Projection:</b> speaker uses appropriate volume				
<b>Vocal Characterization:</b> speaker clearly and thoughtfully creates different voices/accents for characters and is consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Physical Characterization:</b> speaker clearly and thoughtfully creates and presents characters by incorporating appropriate and distinct gestures, body postures, behaviors, and other relevant physicality, and is consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Pace:</b> pacing is appropriately varied, is not too fast or too slow				
<b>Memorization:</b> delivery is free of memorization lapses and errors				
<b>Freshness:</b> speaker presents material with an "illusion of the first time" as if it were brand new; presentation is not stale or rote				
<b>Energy:</b> speaker presents material with appropriate energy level, is not monotonous				
<b>Impact:</b> presentation is impactful and arouses emotion in audience				

**COMMENTS:**

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Judge must work independently and not confer!**

# Information for Duo Interpretation Contest Judges

**Purpose of Contest:** To encourage and increase appreciation of dramatic literature and to communicate to the audience its emotional and intellectual content with spontaneity, directness and clarity, clearly suggesting the characters and personality of two or more persons in literature.

## Contest Regulations:

1. Each duo team must present one selection chosen from a single published work. Selections from the Internet must appear on the Approved List of Online Sources. The selection may not have been written by the student or about his or her own experiences. No team may use a selection, adaptation or cutting that either member of the duo team has used in a conference, regional or state contest in a previous year. Contestant must present the same selection in each round of a given tournament.
2. Each interpreter may present one or more characters and either or both may present narration.
3. A selection must maintain the author's intent, characters and words as written, except for minor use in transitions, unless written permission is granted by the author or publisher for modification and/or adaptation of the published work.
4. The use of a manuscript is prohibited.
5. The performers may not have eye or physical contact with each other except during the introduction, and should focus off stage. The performers must begin their presentation from center stage and restrict their physical blocking to movement around one another, switching positions, pivoting from side to side or turning around completely. No properties or costumes are permitted.  
**Note:** *with increased movement now permitted, blocking with even the appearance of eye contact is strongly discouraged.*
6. The timing for this event shall be a maximum of 10 minutes, with no minimum time requirement. Adjudicator will not provide time signals, and students may not time themselves. Any entry which exceeds the established time limit by more than 30 seconds may not rank first or score highest in the round.
7. In a serious duo interpretation, material may contain humorous tones, but the climax and resolution must be of a serious dramatic nature.
8. In a humorous duo interpretation, material may contain serious tones, but the climax and resolution must be of a humorous nature.

## Judging Procedures:

1. **The prime requisite of oral interpretation is intelligibility, and to that end the contestants must have an intelligent comprehension of what they interpret and a due appreciation of its values, as well as the ability to communicate them to their audience. Content should be appropriate to the speaker and to the audience in support of contemporary community values.** A pleasant voice, an acceptable accent and clear enunciation are first of all desirable. Monotony of tone or pace and overemphasis or acting is to be avoided. Through modulation, proper stress and timing not only must the meaning of the passage be brought out, but also its mood -- whether of humor, pathos, earnestness, excitement, satire or whatever. The audience must be given an opportunity to hear, to understand and to feel what the author is striving to convey.
2. Use the Criticism Form for writing comments on the students' performance. These forms will later be given to the students.
3. After each presentation, use the Rating Form to score the contestants. **Decisions should be reached independently, without consulting other judges.**

After all contestants have been heard, rank each pair of contestant (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) and score them between 100-70 in the same order in which they are ranked. Turn in your rating form to the tab room chairman who will tally them and assign a ranking (sum of each judge's assigned ranking for that duo entry) and a score (total of assigned numerical scores) to each duo entry.

**Important:** Final results are based first on the duo's cumulative ranking. The lowest total is overall 1st place, next lowest is 2nd and so forth. In the event of a tie, follow the tie-breaking procedure outlined on the Explanation of Scoring for Individual Events.

# Serious Duo Interpretation Critique Sheet

Speaker's Code: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle one)

Round: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
70 (lowest) - 100 (highest)

Name of Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**JUDGE:** As you watch each pair of contestants, please rate each performance element as superior, excellent, good or fair and provide specific, helpful comments below to elaborate your ratings. Your ratings should reflect your overall score and ranking. While ratings do not have a numerical value, contestants with higher ratings should have higher scores and lower (better) rankings.

**RATINGS**

- Superior:** shows mastery of element by applying skill effectively and consistently for entire presentation
- Excellent:** shows effective application of element for a majority of presentation
- Good:** applies element well at times, but lacks mastery
- Fair:** shows attempt at implementation of element, but application is inconsistent and often ineffective

ELEMENT	S	E	G	F
<b>Appearance:</b> speakers' appearance is appropriate for competition				
<b>Poise:</b> speakers are prepared, confident, composed				
<b>Choice of Selection:</b> selection is appropriate, and fitting to speakers, category and audience				
<b>Organization:</b> selection flows; editing/cutting is coherent				
<b>Eye contact:</b> appropriate, focused				
<b>Interpretation:</b> speakers' interpretation is intelligible, effective, engaging, and entertaining				
<b>Communication:</b> speakers present material effectively in a way audience can understand story, characters, and character(s) motivation; establishes mood				
<b>Articulation:</b> speakers enunciate, pronounce words correctly, and are understandable				
<b>Projection:</b> speakers use appropriate volume				
<b>Vocal Characterization:</b> speakers clearly and thoughtfully create different voices/accents for characters and are consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Physical Characterization:</b> speakers clearly and thoughtfully create and present characters by incorporating appropriate and distinct gestures, body postures, behaviors, and other relevant physicality, and are consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Pace:</b> pacing is appropriately varied, is not too fast or too slow				
<b>Memorization:</b> delivery is free of memorization lapses and errors				
<b>Freshness:</b> speakers present material with an "illusion of the first time" as if it were brand new; presentation is not stale or rote				
<b>Energy:</b> speakers present material with appropriate energy level, is not monotonous				
<b>Impact:</b> presentation is impactful and arouses emotion in audience				
<b>Chemistry:</b> partners complement one another stylistically and have strong rapport				
<b>Balance:</b> each speaker is integral to the development of the presentation and is equally matched in skill				

**COMMENTS:**

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Judge must work independently and not confer!**

# Humorous Duo Interpretation Critique Sheet

Speaker's Code: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle one)

Round: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
70 (lowest) - 100 (highest)

Name of Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**JUDGE:** As you watch each pair of contestants, please rate each performance element as superior, excellent, good or fair and provide specific, helpful comments below to elaborate your ratings. Your ratings should reflect your overall score and ranking. While ratings do not have a numerical value, contestants with higher ratings should have higher scores and lower (better) rankings.

**RATINGS**

- Superior:** shows mastery of element by applying skill effectively and consistently for entire presentation
- Excellent:** shows effective application of element for a majority of presentation
- Good:** applies element well at times, but lacks mastery
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ELEMENT	S	E	G	F
<b>Appearance:</b> speakers' appearance is appropriate for competition				
<b>Poise:</b> speakers are prepared, confident, composed				
<b>Choice of Selection:</b> selection is appropriate, and fitting to speakers, category and audience				
<b>Organization:</b> selection flows; editing/cutting is coherent				
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<b>Interpretation:</b> speakers' interpretation is intelligible, effective, engaging, and entertaining				
<b>Communication:</b> speakers present material effectively in a way audience can understand story, characters, and character(s) motivation; establishes mood				
<b>Articulation:</b> speakers enunciate, pronounce words correctly, and are understandable				
<b>Projection:</b> speakers use appropriate volume				
<b>Vocal Characterization:</b> speakers clearly and thoughtfully create different voices/accents for characters and are consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Physical Characterization:</b> speakers clearly and thoughtfully create and present characters by incorporating appropriate and distinct gestures, body postures, behaviors, and other relevant physicality, and are consistent when transitioning between/among characters				
<b>Pace:</b> pacing is appropriately varied, is not too fast or too slow				
<b>Memorization:</b> delivery is free of memorization lapses and errors				
<b>Freshness:</b> speakers present material with an "illusion of the first time" as if it were brand new; presentation is not stale or rote				
<b>Energy:</b> speakers present material with appropriate energy level, is not monotonous				
<b>Impact:</b> presentation is impactful and arouses emotion in audience				
<b>Chemistry:</b> partners complement one another stylistically and have strong rapport				
<b>Balance:</b> each speaker is integral to the development of the presentation and is equally matched in skill				

**COMMENTS:**

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Judge must work independently and not confer!**

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