

Speech Judges' Handbook

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Speech Vocabulary

- **TEASER:** In interpretation categories, a short cutting of the selection that comes before the introduction that is used by many students.
- **SCRIPT/SELECTION/PIECE/MANUSCRIPT:** These are all terms used to refer to a student's speech. An example comment: "I like the piece you've chosen for your serious drama."
- **CATEGORY/EVENT:** Both terms are referring to the same thing. Original Oratory, for example, is both a category and an event.
- **BODILY EXPRESSION:** Includes things like stance, posturing to create characters, facial expression, and gestures.
- **DRAW CATEGORIES:** Categories where the student draws out of a hat the speech topic or story he will be speaking on for that round. Includes Ex Reading, Ex Speaking, and Storytelling.
- **NFL:** The National Forensic League. This is the National Speech and Debate society. NFL only recognizes the following categories: Extemporaneous Speaking, Original Oratory, Duo Interpretation, Dramatic Interpretation (prose, drama, poetry) and Humorous Interpretation.
- **MSHSL:** The Minnesota State High School League sponsors competitive speech in Minnesota.

FAQ's

Q: Can I comment on a speaker's appearance?

A: Be very careful with this. If their appearance is distracting from their presentation, it might be worth mentioning. You must be tactful. Do not tell a student to "get a new outfit."

Q: Can I comment if a student is a poor listener during a round?

A: Yes! Feel free to comment if the speaker is a courteous listener - always comment if he/she is not!

Q: If a student uses her script, how should it be used?

A: Some students keep their scripts in small 3-ring binders, others paste them on construction paper. Either is fine as long as it is neat. Note if the script is used well, avoid saying “get rid of the script,” remember that it is usually optional.

Q: What do I do if a student’s speech goes over the time limit?

A: Make sure you write down the time on the critique sheet, but students shouldn’t be penalized at the first couple invitational tournaments for going a little overtime.

Q: Should I mark a student lower if they aren’t memorized?

A: In Declam we don’t expect our students to memorize their presentations. Many students will get close to this throughout the season but our focus remains on a fully engaged presentation.

Interpretation Categories

Things to Look For in All Interpretation Categories:

1. Introduction sets up the theme, mood, and scene of the speech.
2. Distinction between characters (narration and dialogue).
3. Bodily movement and gestures should be appropriate to the speech.
4. Fluency and pace should vary accordingly.
5. Characters should be believable (they should fit the scene).
6. A definite mood should be established by the speaker. Perhaps it changes throughout the piece, but you should always know what mood is being conveyed.
7. Literary merit of the selection (appropriate for the speaker and audience).
8. Use of script is optional in ALL interpretation categories except storytelling (memorization required) and extemporaneous reading (use of book required).
9. Sample Comments for all interpretation categories:
 - a. *Slow down a little so we can hear each word and picture the scene. It’s difficult for us to listen when you rush through the details.*
 - b. *Be careful that your ending is not too abrupt. Help us prepare for it.*
 - c. *Avoid “over-dramatizing.” Remember to portray the believability of the character (especially in serious drama, prose, and duo). You appear poised, comfortable, and confident.*

Creative Expression (5-8 minutes)

1. This involves performance of a speech that is at least 80% original (written by the speaker).
2. The mood of the speech may be serious, humorous, or both. Sometimes a creative expression speech is a lot like humorous interp. Or, it could also be like serious drama.
3. Things to look for:
 - a. Solid writing ability and performance of the writing.
 - b. A clear message or theme that indicates some thought has been put into the creation of this speech.
4. The student may use pantomime, storytelling, or any variety of performance styles. The student may also walk around the room, unlike other interpretation categories.
5. Sample Comments:
 - a. *I really liked how you carried a distinct theme throughout your selection.*
 - b. *Inventive or imaginative writing style*
 - c. *Wonderful use of details*
 - d. *Creative concepts, but difficult for your listeners to track with your train of thought.*

Serious Prose, Poetry, and Drama (5-8 minutes)

Prose = a published story or novel

Poetry = a published poem

Drama = a published play

1. Students should be judged on his/her ability to convey the meaning of the selection through use of vocal, facial, and limited bodily expression. See “what to look for in all interp categories.”
2. Sample Comments:
 - a. *You did an excellent job building this selection to its climax.*
 - b. *I would have liked to have seen more tension in your face and voice during the argument scene.*

Humorous Prose, Poetry or Drama (5-8 minutes)

1. This should be a funny piece and it can be taken from prose, poetry, or a play. It is not written by the student.
2. Things to look for:
 - a. Wacky or exaggerated characters may help convey the humor.
 - b. Did you laugh?
 - c. How difficult was the script? Were there many characters or just 1 character?
 - d. You should be able to distinguish between the many characters.
 - e. You should be able to follow the plot of the story easily.
3. Sample Comments:
 - a. *Your characters were very fun and so distinct! I always knew who was talking. Don't rush over funny lines. We won't laugh if we don't hear them.*

Dramatic Duo (5-8 minutes)

1. The script can be taken from any genre of literature.
2. Only during the introduction or transitions may the students look at each other. Usually, the 2 students will look straight ahead when talking to each other. The students do not need to make eye contact with the audience. However, eye contact with the audience is permitted.
3. Movement is restricted. Students are not allowed more than about 2-3 steps. These movements should be used as transitions.
4. Sample Comments:
 - a. *The two of you have a nice chemistry. I can tell you enjoy doing this together. When you're not talking, remember to react facially when it is appropriate.*

Extemporaneous Reading—Prose (draw)

(30 minute prep, 4-6 minutes speak)

1. The story will be different each time the student speaks. He or she must draw 3 stories from this year's extemp reading book and choose 1 to read.
2. The student's drawn slip of paper indicating the story to be read should be stapled to the Critique Form.
3. Things to look for:
 - a. The introduction should be memorized.
 - b. Use of the book is **required** when reading.
 - c. Overall, fine interpretation of the story (see “things to look for” above)
4. The selections of prose are on a three year rotation and will be taken from *When I Was Your Age (Vol. 1 or Vol. 2)* or **13**.
5. When a speaker is finished, he or she may or may not watch other speakers (depends on the size of the room and conditions you prefer to work under). They should stay if possible and learn from other speakers.
6. Sample Comments:
 - a. *You obviously chose a selection you like.*
 - b. *You were very familiar with the piece and throughout your performance; I could tell that you were enjoying yourself.*
 - c. *Remember, that you're not just reading to us, you are interpreting the literature.*
 - d. *Build this story to its climax and convey its meaning to us.*

Storytelling (draw)

(30 minute prep, 4-6 minutes speak)

1. The same procedure is followed for drawing as in extemp reading
2. The storyteller should re-tell the story from the book in her OWN words.
3. Things to look for:
 - a. The entire delivery, including the introduction, should be memorized.

- b. Emphasis should be placed on recreating the story using conversational narration style, fun and appropriate characters, and the creation of a fun, engaging, storytelling mood.
- 4. This year, the stories will be taken from *Best Loved Folktales of the World*.
- 5. Characters may be exaggerated to convey meaning of the selection.
- 6. Sample Comments:
 - a. *Your characters were very fun, distinct, and energetic!*
 - b. *I thought you could have focused on the theme or message of the selection in your introduction.*

Public Speaking Categories

Public Speaking Delivery

- 1. Delivery of Great Speeches, Informative, and Original Oratory. Speaking is similar. All should be sincere, pleasant and convincing.
- 2. Steps can be taken at appropriate transitional points in the speech.
- 3. Gestures should enhance the meaning of the speech.
- 4. Face should show involvement, concern, enthusiasm, etc.
- 5. Sample Comments:
 - a. *Your articulation is precise; now work for more vocal variety. Bring gestures up to waist level and make them stronger and more convincing.*
 - b. *You are a very poised, comfortable, engaging speaker and you communicated your ideas to the audience very clearly*
 - c. *Try to put more conviction in your voice.*
 - d. *Show us that you believe in what you're saying.*

Original Oratory (5-8 minutes)

- 1. This is a **persuasive** speech intended to get its listeners to think or feel or certain way about a particular topic.
- 2. Usually the topics are value-based and not policy based. Although either approach is acceptable.
- 3. Things to look for:
 - a. Attention-getting introduction.
 - b. Clear thesis or central idea statement near the beginning of the speech.

Example Original Oratory thesis: "Extreme competitiveness in our society has spiraled out of control and we must become aware of its destructive consequences."

- a. Clear organization of the speech. Usually: problem, cause, solution.
- b. Credibility – strong, worthwhile examples are cited and sources should be quoted (at least 2 sources).
- 1. Sample Comments:
 - a. *Your thesis statement seemed unclear.*
 - b. *I'm having problems following the structure of your speech. Perhaps the organization could be cleared up a bit.*
 - c. *I'm looking for some credible support for the arguments you are making.*
 - d. *Perhaps some examples and a quoted source or two would help make your arguments more convincing.*

Informative (5-8 minutes)

- 1. This is a speech intended to educate its audience about a meaningful, worthwhile topic.
- 2. The speech should NOT be persuasive.
- 3. Things to look for:
 - a. Attention-getting introduction
 - b. Clear thesis statement and preview of main points of the speech

Example Informative thesis: "The Crayola Crayon Company has a unique history and its future looks as colorful as ever."

- a. Clear organization of the speech (usually, a preview of the main points after the thesis will clarify this).
- b. Credibility – at least 2 credible sources are expected.
- 1. Sample Comment:
 - a. *Be careful - your speech tends to get a little persuasive in tone.*
 - b. *Perhaps you could cover some of the opposing arguments, as well.*

Great Speeches (5-8 minutes)

1. This is a speech where the intention is to take a great speech from history and examine why it was great through the student's own analysis and perhaps some expert support.
2. Things to look for:
 - a. Attention-grabbing introduction which may or may not include an excerpt from the great speech.
 - b. Analysis should be interspersed with text from the great speech. How much analysis and how much speech will vary.
 - c. Analysis should examine why the speech is important, what impact it had on its audience, and what devices did the writer use -- i.e. emotional appeals, logic, figurative language, repetition, etc.
3. The speech can be historical or contemporary.
4. Several speeches around one theme could be used or several speeches by one speaker could be used.
5. Sample Comments:
 - a. *I had trouble separating your analysis from the text of the great speech.*
 - b. *Perhaps a step for transition would help or maybe a stronger change in your voice.*
 - c. *Your analysis could include more about why this speech is important today.*

A Judge's Day at Work

1. Find your coach! - usually in the school cafeteria near their team. If you can't find them, hang out in the judges' lounge and they'll find you.
2. Look over the tournament judges' packet/folder that is given to you. In this packet you'll find out what categories you'll be judging that day and a schedule.
3. Usually there will be a brief meeting for judges in the Judges' Lounge.
4. Start searching for your room about 10 minutes before the round start time.
5. Once you find your room, sit in the middle of the room, toward the back if possible and begin filling out your ballot.
6. Students will gradually come in to the room. Greet the students. Be friendly. Remember, they are very nervous.
7. **The Golden Rule:** Act like you know what you are doing, even if you think you don't.
8. **Never** admit that this is your first time (or second or third) time judging.
9. Students generally have critique sheets with them. They will fill them out and hand them to you. Once you receive the critique sheets, you can fill in the students names on your ballot.
10. As soon as you are completely ready -- the first critique sheet is in front of you, your ballot is completely filled out, your stop watch is ready (if you choose to use one—you can also note the starting and stopping time from the clock on the critique sheet) -- you can call the first speaker's name (or code) and he/she will

walk to the front of the room and begin. Start the stop watch when the student begins speaking.

11. Listen intently. Concentrate on the speaker and pretend to love it even if you don't. You should write comments as the student is speaking. Take time to look at the student and show interest by smiling, nodding your head, or laughing when appropriate.
12. Prewritten comments may be circled, or you may use \checkmark 's & X's in the columns to indicate their scoring (A/B/C). Tallying may be done as a general average from your circles & checks. You may also use + & - on the final score.
13. After the student is done speaking, applaud, write some final comments, set the sheet aside and call the next speaker. The next speaker should be called within a minute or two.
14. **After the last speaker, finish your ballot, thank the students, and hand back their critique sheets. Do not give any oral critiques.**
15. Bring your completed ballot to the ballot table (usually near the registration table in the cafeteria—sometimes they will be in the Judges Lounge).
16. Relax... Usually you'll have 20-30 minutes until the second round begins.
17. Go to your next round at the assigned time!
18. Return your completed ballot to the ballot table and check out with your coach.

THANK YOU FOR JUDGING!