



2023-2024

CATEGORY RULES

a subset of the WFCA Handbook

www.wfcaforensics.org



Handbook Highlights: *What's New*

Category Changes and 2024 Topics

- **Moments in History** – This season has two time periods; each student has the choice of 1970-1979 and/or 1900-1919.
- **Special Occasion Speaking** – This season's occasions are:
 - A. An address to a board of education
 - B. A public apology
 - C. A speech delivered to an assembly of current students
 - D. A wedding toast
- **Storytelling** – This season's topics are:
 - A. A mystery story
 - B. A story of advocacy / allyship
 - C. A story about money / greed

Other changes

- **Informative Speaking** no longer specifies that set up / strike down times shall be included in the timing.
- **Operating Bylaws Changes:**
 - I.B.5. Financial policies / Expenses / State Tournament: clarified c., added d.
 - III.A.6: Clarified Use of Devices section of Student Conduct
 - VI.A.5 Created State Grant section
- **Deviations from WISDAA Rules:**

WISDAA has merged Demonstration Speech with Informative Speech with a time limit of 10 minutes with visual aids allowed and an allowance for two presenters. These categories are now identical except for the two presenters in WISDAA. WISDAA has also added Expository Speaking, parallel with WFCA.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO USE RULES / EVALUATION SHEETS DATED "2023-24."



Code of Conduct

The code of conduct establishes the expected behavior of participating coaches, judges and students in order to help build a better world through communication.

Student Conduct

1. All participants should dress appropriately for competition. Students can use school expectations as a guideline. Finalists are expected to remain in their contest attire for the awards presentation.
2. Behavior should be attentive, courteous and supportive at all times.
3. Students should refrain from mouthing words, shuffling papers, making negative comments, or putting their heads down during other competitors' performances.
4. Students should clap, laugh, listen attentively, and support fellow competitors.
5. Students should be quiet in hallways and should enter contest rooms only before a round or during breaks between competitors.
6. The use of devices for the purpose of creating a distraction is prohibited in contest rooms, preparation rooms, or during awards. The common courtesy of quiet behavior during rounds is expected.

Team Conduct and Awards Ceremonies

Participants are expected to remain at the festival/tournament until the conclusion of the awards ceremony. Attendance at power rounds and the awards ceremony are an integral part of the educational and social process that is forensics. The awards ceremony is a time to honor the accomplishments of fellow competitors and celebrate the hard work and growth we all strive to achieve. Contestants should honor decorum requests of the tournament hosts. Teams are expected to sit together when possible, and coaches are encouraged to be with their teams. Supporting teammates and sharing the excitement is part of the fun that draws us to participate in forensics. Over-exuberance, directing negative sentiment toward other schools, presenting oneself in an undignified manner, taunting, being unsportsmanlike, or engaging in group cheers are actions considered inappropriate.

Judge/Coach Conduct

1. Business casual is the expected dress for coaches and judges.
2. Follow all instructions and requests of the tournament host and adhere to the tournament schedule.
3. Do not give oral critique to competitors, but provide constructive written comments for all competitors.
4. WFCA time limits should be strictly enforced (allowing a 15-second grace period). Entries exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in a round. A contestant going overtime does not warrant disqualification. All judges should have a stopwatch for the timing of performances.
5. There shall be no distracting noises or devices, activated cell phones or pages in hallways, contest rooms, or preparation rooms. The common courtesy of quiet behavior during rounds is expected.
6. Small children are not to be allowed in the coaches'/judges' rooms during festivals and tournaments sanctioned by the WFCA.

Violations

1. On the spot: The Tournament Director will talk with parties involved with infraction of rules or unethical conduct. Should circumstances warrant, the chairperson of the Tournament Practices & Procedures (TPP) Committee should follow up the incident with a telephone call.
2. TPP Committee: If unethical behavior continues, a referral to the TPP Committee will occur. The committee will send a letter to the coach.
3. Executive Committee: If the matter is still not resolved or if the matter is deemed severe and in need of immediate attention, the Executive Committee will send a letter to the coach, principal and offending person (if she/he is not the head coach).
4. Probation: Schools and/or coaches placed on probation by the Executive Committee will be excluded from WFCA participation for one forensic season. *(Adopted September 21, 2002 in Bylaws, Article III)*



Deviations from WISDAA Rules

Category	WFCA – Wis. Forensic Coaches' Assoc.	WISDAA – Wis. Interscholastic Speech & Dramatic Arts Assoc.
Farrago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Platform movement should be minimal and non-intrusive to the performance. ❖ Adaptations to material should be for purposes of continuity, for gender changes, or to avoid potentially offensive language; lines attributed to one character may not be attributed to another. ❖ Manuscript / binder may be used as a prop. ❖ Manuscript <i>may</i> be memorized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The participant may not walk, except during the introduction and transitions. ❖ Contestants presenting a transitionless program must announce as such.
Group Interpretive Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Chairs and stools are not allowed. ❖ The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. ❖ Time limit 10 minutes. ❖ Manuscript / binder may be used as a prop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Chairs and stools are allowed. ❖ Time limit 12 minutes.
Informative Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Notes permitted (no size or format restrictions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Called Informative / Demonstration Speech ❖ May be performed by 1 or 2 students ❖ One 4" x 6" notecard is allowed.
Moments in History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Notes permitted (no size or format restrictions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ One 4" x 6" notecard is allowed.
Oratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Notes are not permitted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ One 4" x 6" notecard is allowed.
Play Acting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ When using more than one scene, transitions must make the theme of the presentation clear. ❖ See Adaptations in "Farrago." ❖ Time limit 10 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Must be from a single work of drama ❖ Time limit 12 minutes
Poetry, Interpretation of Prose, Interpretation of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Manuscript <i>may</i> be memorized. ❖ See Adaptations in "Farrago." ❖ Platform movement should be minimal and non-intrusive. ❖ Manuscript / binder may be used as a prop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Category is called Poetry Reading or Prose Reading. ❖ The participant may not walk except during the introduction and transitions. ❖ Contestants presenting a transitionless program must announce as such.
Radio Announcing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Category is called Radio News Reporting.
Solo Acting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ See Adaptations in "Farrago." ❖ Category is divided into Humorous and Serious, each with a different set of criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A single, stationary chair is allowed. ❖ Students will enter either Humorous or Serious divisions.
Special Occasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Notes permitted (no size or format restrictions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ One 4" x 6" notecard is allowed.
Storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. 	
Additional Categories Offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Duo Interpretation of Literature ❖ Oral Interpretation of Literature ❖ Student Congress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Public Address



Evaluation Sheet

Please print legibly and completely fill out the following:

Speaker Code:	Name:	Rank: Best - 1	2	3	4	5 - Least
Title:					Time:	
Judge Name:			Judge School:		Judge Code:	
Round: 1 2 3 _____	Category:		Signature:			

PLEASE FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE CATEGORY RULES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA.

Positive Aspects of Performance	Areas to Improve

Key Factor in Rank:



Evaluation Sheet

Please print legibly and completely fill out the following:

Speaker Code:	Name:	Rank: Best - 1	2	3	4	5 - Least
Title:					Time:	
Judge Name:		Judge School:			Judge Code:	
Round: 1 2 3 SF Final	Category:	Signature:				

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Title:					Time:	
Judge Name:		Judge School:			Judge Code:	
Round: 1 2 3 SF Final		Category:			Signature:	

Please print legibly and completely fill out the following:

Evaluation Sheet





Rules for Duo Interpretation

Purpose of the Category

To develop skills in bringing a story to life through ensemble characterization.

Definition of the Category

Duo Interpretation is performance that creates an atmosphere of time and place, emphasizing development of character and appropriate physical movement. Lines are spoken from memory using offstage focus.

Rules

1. From memory, two students present a single source of published, quality literary material that includes any number of characters. Published material is considered any material publicly or commercially available in print, online, audio, or video form. Quality material is characterized by insights into human values, motivations, relationships, problems, and understandings and is not characterized by sentimentality, violence for its own sake or unmotivated endings. Original material is not allowed. Adaptations, if any, should be minimal, and may be made for the following purposes only: (1) to establish continuity; (2) for gender changes including things such as pronoun changes; or (3) to avoid potentially offensive language. Lines attributed to one character in the literary script may not be attributed to another character during the performance. The coach is responsible for providing access to a copy of the students' original source of materials to provide to the Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee, should the validity be questioned.
2. An introduction that provides the title and author and familiarizes the audience with tone and theme is required, and along with any necessary transitions, is to be presented without the use of notes. The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. The presentation may begin with a portion of selected material prior to the presenters' personal introduction.
3. It is permissible for contestants to play more than one character or to present dramatic material consisting of a series of vignettes. The performance responsibility between both actors must be as balanced as possible.
4. Movements to suggest relationships, feelings, changes, ideas, moods, locales, etc., consistent with the offstage focus of the presentation are acceptable and subject to critique. Onstage focus (direct eye contact) and physical contact (touching) between participants is prohibited, except in the introduction. Any sound effects and forms of vocal music must be an integral part of the literature and incidental to the performance and should not overwhelm the presentation.
5. Costumes and props are not allowed.
6. Maximum time limit: 10 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the introduction familiarized the audience with the tone and theme.
2. The extent to which the material chosen provided insights into human values, motivations, relationships, problems, and understandings. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
3. The extent to which the interpretation established and projected the motivations, emotions, and interrelationships of the characters through the use of vocal quality and emphasis.
4. The extent to which the interpretation established and projected the motivations, emotions, and interrelationships of the characters through physical expression and bodily movement.
5. The extent to which the performance constituted a well-paced, consistent and unified segment of characterization and action.



Rules for Expository Speaking

Purpose of the Category

To develop the skill of speaking to describe, clarify, illustrate, or define an object, idea, concept, or process.

Definition of the Category

The challenge to the speaker is to present well-developed material that has the primary intent of providing information. The speech is to be coherent, unified, and clear.

Rules

1. The speech must be the original work of the participant.
2. Visual aids may not be used.
3. The use of notes is permitted, but is subject to critique.
4. Maximum time limit: 5 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the speaker demonstrates their commitment to the topic and engages the audience in understanding the topic.
2. The extent to which the speech is well-developed and organized, including a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions. The information is accurate, documented, and cited correctly.
3. The extent to which the speaker uses quality word choices and effective language skills throughout.
4. The extent to which the speaker utilizes effective vocal techniques, such as appropriate pitch, volume, and rate. Articulation and pronunciation are clear and correct.
5. The extent to which the speaker utilizes appropriate and effective physical techniques, such as gestures, movement, eye contact and facial expressions.



Rules for Extemporaneous Speaking

Purpose of the Category

To develop skills in locating and recalling information that can be brought to bear in the construction of a clear and coherent message in a limited period of time.

Definition of the Category

The extemporaneous speech should provide a direct response to the question drawn. The challenge to the speaker is to phrase a clear proposition and support it with contentions, which in turn, are supported with evidence and reasoning. Questions will be based on current events.

Rules

1. The speech is to be original with the participant, who may consult published books, magazines, newspapers and journals or articles therein, including printed or copies of information from online services as well as the original source material from the online source provided: (a) they are originals or copies of the originals; (b) that original articles or copies are intact or uncut; (c) there is no written material on that original or copy other than source attribution and date; and (d) topical index without annotation may be present. No other material shall be allowed in the prep room, including prepared speeches, handbooks, briefs and outlines. Underlining or highlighting in the prep room will be allowed. Internet enabled data storage and retrieval devices are allowed. Please review the specific guidelines for use of electronics in Extemp.
2. One-half hour before speaking, the participant will draw five questions, choose one, and return the remaining four. Identical sets of questions will be used for multiple sections. The student may not speak on the same question more than once in any contest (of more than one round), and must replace any card drawn that contains a question they have already spoken on.
3. Before speaking, the participant must provide the judge with the question card actually drawn.
4. Notes are permitted but limited to both sides of one 4" x 6" card. The tournament shall provide uniform, identifiable 4" x 6" cards. Use of a notecard is subject to critique. Visual aids are not permitted.
5. Maximum time limit: 7 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round. Contestants may use a stopwatch, or have another student give them time signals. Judges are not required to give time signals.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which a direct and well-defined response to the question chosen was provided.
2. The extent to which the ideas were analyzed and organized.
3. The extent to which the main ideas were supported with worthwhile evidence.
4. The extent to which the presentation reflected effective language skills, including such items as use of transitions and clear, vivid and appropriate word choices. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
5. The extent to which delivery techniques were clear and appropriate, including such items as vocal articulation, pronunciation, volume, rate, pitch, and voice quality as well as facial expression, eye contact, gesture, and bodily movement.



Extemporaneous Speaking

WFCA Guidelines for use of Electronic Devices

1. Students shall be responsible for providing their own electronic devices and power source for those devices used in the Prep Room; this includes computers, cell phones, etc. and chargers and batteries. They may plug into outlets in the room if they are readily accessible.
2. Students may connect to the internet if it is available wirelessly. Internet enabled devices may not be used for communication between contestants and any other parties; devices are for the sole use of research.
3. Students cannot use electronic devices to prepare speeches. They can be used to search and read, but not to write or organize speeches.
4. Students are prohibited from accessing outlines and speeches prepared prior to their draw time.
5. Any student using an electronic device must be prepared to show prep room or tournament staff what they are accessing at any time. Any student not providing requested access to tournament officials may be disqualified.
6. Students should be aware that they are subject to extensive monitoring of their use of electronic devices.
7. Students cannot access audio, video, or other multi-media files in the prep room.
8. Students cannot use electronic devices from the time they leave the Extemp Prep Room until they have completed their speech. Students may take their electronic devices with them to their assigned speaking room, or to lunch, but cannot use them outside the Prep Room until after their speech is completed. Any student using electronic retrieval devices in the hallways or classrooms prior to their speech may be disqualified.
9. WFCA does not assume any liability for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices. Host schools may provide wireless internet access but will not guarantee that contestants will be able to gain access when needed. Contestants choosing to use laptop computers and/or related devices accept the risk of equipment failure. Judges and/or contest directors will give no special consideration or accommodation, including no additional prep time, should equipment failure occur. Students, parents, and coaches should be aware that the students are bringing and using these devices at their own risk.



Rules for Farrago

Purpose of the Category

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

Definition of the Category

The challenge of farrago is to select material from a variety of literary genres (poetry, short stories, speeches, essays, drama, novels), which addresses a central specific theme or emotion, and to interpret the material through oral presentation.

Rules

1. The contestant must choose quality material from at least two literary genres, which have a common theme or emotion. Published material is considered any material publicly or commercially available in print, online, audio, or video form. Quality material is characterized by insights into human values, motivations, relationships, problems, and understandings and is not characterized by sentimentality, violence for its own sake or unmotivated endings. Adaptations, if any, should be minimal, and may be made for the following purposes only: (1) to establish continuity; (2) for gender changes including things such as pronoun changes; or (3) to avoid potentially offensive language. Lines attributed to one character in the literary script may not be attributed to another character during the performance. The coach is responsible for providing access to a copy of the student's original source of materials to provide to the Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee, should the validity be questioned. Original material is not allowed. Multiple sources may be combined and creatively woven together to create a cohesive thematic performance.
2. An introduction, which establishes the tone and theme is required, and along with any transitions, if any are used, is to be presented without the use of notes. All selections must be verbally identified by title and author. It is at the presenter's discretion where, when, and how to accomplish those identifications. The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. The presentation may begin with a read portion of the selected material prior to the presenter's personal introduction. **The student must identify the genre of each selection presented.**
3. The student must use a manuscript. The material is to be interpreted; however, the participant will not be penalized whether or not the selection is memorized.
4. Platform movement should be minimal and non-intrusive to the performance. Costumes, props, music or other audio-visual supports may not be used, with the exception of the manuscript. The manuscript and /or binder containing the manuscript may be used as a prop or in other creative ways. Use of the manuscript is subject to critique.
5. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation
6. Maximum time limit: 10 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the introduction and transitions provided the listener with appropriate unifying information and identified the type of literature used.
2. The extent to which the chosen materials demonstrated literary merit. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
3. The extent to which the reader indicated an intellectual, emotional and sensory understanding of the material presented.
4. The extent to which the reader's vocal interpretation projected the imagery of the material, including such items as rhythm, cadence, diction, and phrasing, as well as the use of effective pauses, volume, rate, and pitch.
5. The extent to which the reader's physical presence was appropriate to the individual selections, including such items as eye contact, facial expression, gestures, and bodily movement.



Rules for Group Interpretive Reading

Purpose of the Category

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

Definition of the Category

Contrary to dramatic performance, the challenge of this category is to present a literary script in such manner that the audience imagines action being described rather than witnessing it being performed. Symbolic characterization and vocal and physical action rather than a literal dramatization or pantomime is required.

Rules

1. Group Interpretive Reading is an ensemble presentation by 2-5 readers of a literary cutting, a complete work, or compiled from a variety of sources. Published material is considered any material publicly or commercially available in print, online, audio, or video form. The material may be prose, poetry, or essay – or a combination of these forms – but drama is prohibited. Original material is allowed. The coach is responsible for providing access to a copy of the students' original source of materials to provide to the Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee, should the validity be questioned. Multiple sources may be combined and creatively woven together to create a cohesive thematic performance.
2. An introduction, which includes titles, authors, tone and theme is required, and along with any necessary transitions, is to be presented without the use of notes. The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. The presentation may begin with a read portion of the selected material prior to the presenter's personal introduction.
3. The selections are to be read from a manuscript or book. The material is to be interpreted; however, the participant will not be penalized whether or not the selection is memorized. Chairs or stools are not allowed.
4. Movements to suggest relationships, feelings, changes, ideas, moods, locales, etc., consistent with the offstage focus of the presentation are acceptable and subject to critique. Onstage focus (direct eye contact) and physical contact (touching) between participants is prohibited, except in the introduction. Costumes and props are not allowed, with the exception of the manuscript. The manuscript and /or binder containing the manuscript may be used as a prop or in other creative ways. Use of the manuscript is subject to critique.
5. Maximum time limit: 10 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the introduction and transitions contributed to the coherence of the presentation.
2. The extent to which the ensemble demonstrated an understanding of the intellectual, emotional, and sensory experiences inherent in the literature. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
3. The extent to which vocal aspects of the performance were appropriate and enhancing to the meaning of the literature, including such items as articulation, pronunciation, vocal clarity, volume, rate, and pitch.
4. The extent to which visual aspects of the performance were appropriate and enhancing to the meaning of the literature, including such items as the handling of scripts as well as gestures, facial expression, and bodily movement.
5. The extent to which the ensemble's interpretation constituted a well-paced and unified literary presentation.



Rules for Impromptu Speaking

Purpose of the Category

To develop the skills necessary to quickly provide a responsive statement to a variety of everyday words, phrases and topics.

Definition of the Category

The impromptu speaker should be able to quickly create and effectively deliver an original, well-organized and imaginative interpretation of the designated topic, supported by varied materials. The information presented should be well-chosen, pertinent, and sufficient to support the central thought of the topic and organized according to some logical plan to produce a complete speech within the time allowed.

Rules

1. Topics will be chosen from proverbs, objects, abstract words, events, quotations, and famous people. The speech must be original with the student and must be developed during the round. No pre-written or memorized speeches are allowed. The contestant should be held accountable for strict adherence to the topic drawn and discounted severely for shifting to some other topic of personal preference.
2. A judge in each section/room shall be provided an envelope containing a uniform set of topics, with a different subject area used for each round. The speaker will draw three topics, immediately choose one, and return the other two to the envelope. The speaker has five minutes in which to prepare and present a speech. Timing begins the moment the selection of the topic is made. When the contestant is ready to speak, the judge must be ready to listen and evaluate the speech.
3. Preparation materials are limited to one 4" x 6" note card that may be used during delivery, a writing implement, and time-keeping device. Properties and/or visual aids are not permitted. Students may not consult any pre-written material or electronic retrieval devices. Speakers may use a cell phone but only as a timing device; judges may request to verify usage. During the preparation period, the contestant shall not receive advice, information or suggestions from anyone.
4. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation.
5. Maximum time limit: 5 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement, and a contestant should not be penalized for brevity unless they fail to cover the subject adequately. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which a direct and well-defined response to the topic chosen was provided.
2. The extent to which the ideas were analyzed and organized.
3. The extent to which the content (a) supported the response with worthwhile example, data, and personal insight; and (b) employed effective language skills including such items as the use of transitions and clear, vivid and appropriate word choices. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
4. The extent to which vocal interpretation contributed to the clarity and effectiveness of the presentation including such items as articulation, pronunciation, volume, rate, pitch, and vocal quality.
5. The extent to which the physical presence contributed to the clarity and effectiveness of the presentation, including such items as facial expression, eye contact, gestures, bodily movement, and poise.



Rules for Informative Speaking

Purpose of the Category

To develop the skill of speaking informatively and/or demonstrably on any issue, and highlighting its current relevance.

Definition of the Category

The challenge to the speaker is to present well-developed material that has the primary intent of informing, although persuasive elements may be present. The speech is to be coherent, unified, and clear. A range of support materials and devices are to be used which can include quotations, statistics, examples, comparisons, and analogies.

Rules

1. The speech must be the original work of the participant.
2. Visual supporting materials may be used. Items of dress may be worn for illustration during the course of the presentation. Electronic devices may not be used.
3. The use of notes is permitted, but is subject to critique.
4. Maximum time limit: 10 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the speaker demonstrates their commitment to the topic and engages the audience in understanding the topic.
2. The extent to which the speech is well-developed and organized, including a clear introduction, body, and conclusion with effective transitions. The information is accurate, documented, and cited correctly.
3. The extent to which the speaker uses quality word choices and effective language skills throughout.
4. The extent to which the speaker utilizes effective vocal techniques, such as appropriate pitch, volume, and rate. Articulation and pronunciation are clear and correct.
5. The extent to which the speaker utilizes appropriate and effective physical techniques, such as gestures, movement, eye contact and facial expressions. If used, visual(s) aid in understanding the speech, and are not unnecessary or distracting.



Rules for Moments in History

Purpose of the Category

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

Definition of the Category

The challenge to the speaker is to select and explore an historical topic within the limits presented each year. Students may consider (but are not limited to) using the following areas of research: archival records, diaries, personal interviews, letters, newspapers, etc. The speaker is to use this research information to compose and present a well-organized, informative speech. **This is an original informative speech category, and not an acting category.**

Rules

1. The speech must be the original work of the participant, and the topic chosen must conform to the annual focus and guidelines. The topic (person, event, trend, etc.) need not have been well publicized.

The 2023-24 season has two time periods; each student has the choice of:

**1900 to 1919
and / or
1970 to 1979**

Students may select a topic that focuses on any region of the world during the time period. Possible areas of consideration may include, but are not limited to: historic sites/monuments, natural disasters, inventions, medicine, arts and entertainment, education, military activity, ethnology/legends/folklore, geography, politics, fashion and fads, transportation, sports, religion, heroes, villains, and personalities.

2. Visual supporting materials may be used, but not worn. Electronic devices may not be used.
3. The use of notes is permitted, but is subject to critique.
4. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation.
5. Maximum time limit: 6 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the speech was clearly informative and well researched.
2. The extent to which the organization of the speech was characterized by an objective presentation of accurate, well-developed, and unified information.
3. The extent to which the presentation reflected effective language skills, including such items as use of transitions and clear, vivid, and appropriate word choices. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
4. The extent to which the vocal presentation was clear and appropriate to the subject, including such items as articulation, pronunciation, volume, rate, pitch, and voice quality.
5. The extent to which the speaker's physical presence contributed to the clarity and effectiveness of the presentation, including such items as the use of note card, any visual materials, facial expression, eye contact, gestures, and bodily movement.



Rules for Oral Interpretation of Literature

Purpose of the Category

To develop skill in conveying an understanding of prose and poetry through the use of body and voice.

Definition of the Category

The presenter prepares a literary program in poetry and a program in prose (short stories, cuttings from novels, monologues and soliloquies, essays, or other non-fiction work) – each centering on a theme or emotion – for interpretation in alternating rounds of competition.

Rules

1. The student should prepare two programs of literature (poetry and prose – each of which have a common theme or emotion), which are presented in alternating rounds of competition. Published material is considered any material publicly or commercially available in print, online, audio, or video form. Adaptations, if any, should be minimal, and may be made for the following purposes only: (1) to establish continuity; (2) for gender changes including things such as pronoun changes; or (3) to avoid potentially offensive language. Lines attributed to one character in the literary script may not be attributed to another character during the performance. Original material is allowed. The coach must bring a photocopy of the student's original source of materials to provide to the Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee, should the validity be questioned. Multiple sources may be combined and creatively woven together to create a cohesive thematic performance.
2. An introduction, which includes titles, authors, tone and theme is required, and along with any necessary transitions, is to be presented without the use of notes. The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. The presentation may begin with a read portion of the selected material prior to the presenter's personal introduction.
3. The participant must use a manuscript. The material is to be interpreted; however, the participant will not be penalized whether or not the selection is memorized.
4. Platform movement should be minimal and non-intrusive. Costumes and props may not be used, with the exception of the manuscript. The manuscript and /or binder containing the manuscript may be used as a prop or in other creative ways. Use of the manuscript is subject to critique.
5. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation.
6. Maximum time limit: 10 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the introduction and optional transitions established the theme and contributed to an understanding of the selection.
2. The extent to which the intended intellectual content (what is happening) was created. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
3. The extent to which the vocal quality, inflection, force and emotional comprehension (how it feels) of the selection was revealed through control of vocal quality, inflection, force and timing.
4. The extent to which the vocal interpretation projected the visual imagery of the selection, including such items as articulation and pronunciation, use of emphasis, effective pauses and proper volume, rate and pitch.
5. The extent to which the physical presence was appropriate to the selection, including such items as eye contact, facial expression, gestures and bodily movement.



Rules for Oratory

Purpose of the Category

To develop skill in composing and presenting a formal speech on a significant topic.

Definition of the Category

An oration is expected to be a thoroughly prepared, well-composed, persuasive speech on a topic of significance to general society. A good oration is characterized by vivid and forceful language and appropriate stylistic devices such as metaphor, comparison/contrast, irony, etc. Thoughtfulness in the choice of and approach to the topic and the quality of supporting materials is a necessary part of the good oration.

Rules

1. The speech must be the original work of the participant, fulfilling its persuasive challenge in one of three ways: 1) by alerting the audience to the existence of a problem; 2) by affirming the existence of a problem and offering a solution; 3) by urging the adoption of a policy.
2. Properties or visual aids are not permitted.
3. Notes are not permitted.
4. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation.
5. Maximum time limit: 10 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the content (a) reflected a worthwhile topic, and (b) provided quality modes of support materials, including analysis, reasoning and factual information.
2. The extent to which organizational structure was both clear and effective.
3. The extent to which clear and compelling language and effective stylistic devices were used appropriately. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
4. The extent to which the vocal presentation was clear and appropriate to the subject including such items as articulation, pronunciation, volume, rate, pitch and voice quality.
5. The extent to which the physical presence contributed to the clarity and effectiveness of the presentation, including such items as facial expression, eye contact, gestures and bodily movement.



Rules for Play Acting

Purpose of the Category

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

Definition of the Category

Play Acting is a group presentation of a memorized scene or cutting from a play without costume, make-up, lights, or properties other than an available table (or desk as a substitute) and chairs, if required. Emphasis is on character development and movement, with physical actions – other than stage movement – pantomimed.

Rules

1. Play Acting is a memorized ensemble presentation by 2-5 students. Material must be from a published source. Published material is considered any material publicly or commercially available in print, online, audio, or video form. Original material is not allowed. Adaptations, if any, should be minimal, and may be made for the following purposes only: (1) to establish continuity; (2) for gender changes including things such as pronoun changes; or (3) to avoid potentially offensive language. Lines attributed to one character in the literary script may not be attributed to another character during the performance. The coach must bring a photocopy of the students' original source of materials to provide to the Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee, should the validity be questioned.
2. An introduction, which includes titles, authors, tone and theme is required, and along with any necessary transitions, is to be presented without the use of notes. The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. The presentation may begin with a read portion of the selected material prior to the presenters' personal introduction.
3. It is permissible for contestants to play more than one character or for groups to present dramatic material consisting of a series of vignettes.
4. Costumes and props are not allowed, however, available tables and chairs may be used.
5. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation.
6. Maximum time limit: 10 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the introduction prepared the audience for the scene being presented.
2. The extent to which the interpretation established and projected the motivations, emotions, and interrelationships of the characters through the use of voice. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
3. The extent to which the interpretation established and projected the motivations, emotions, and interrelationships of the characters through bodily movement.
4. The extent to which the interpretation had consistency among such factors as blocking, tempo, and climax.
5. The extent to which the performance constituted a well-paced and unified segment of dramatic action.



Rules for Interpretation of Poetry

Purpose of the Category

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

Definition of the Category

The student should select a poem or a group of poems centering on a specific theme or emotion.

Rules

1. Contestants may use either published or original material for Interpretation of Poetry. Published material is considered any material publicly or commercially available in print, online, audio, or video form. Adaptations should be for the purpose of continuity only, and lines attributed to one character may not be attributed to another. Original material is allowed. The coach must bring a photocopy of the student's original source of materials to provide to the Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee, should the validity be questioned. Multiple sources may be combined and creatively woven together to create a cohesive thematic performance.
2. An introduction, which includes titles, authors, tone and theme is required, and along with any necessary transitions, is to be presented without the use of notes. The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. The presentation may begin with a read portion of the selected material prior to the presenter's personal introduction.
3. The participant must use a manuscript. The material is to be interpreted; however, participant will not be penalized whether or not the selection is memorized.
4. Platform movement should be minimal and non-intrusive. Costumes and props may not be used, with the exception of the manuscript. The manuscript and /or binder containing the manuscript may be used as a prop or in other creative ways. Use of the manuscript is subject to critique.
5. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation.
6. Maximum time limit: 8 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the introduction and optional transitions, if used, established the theme and contributed to an understanding of the poetry.
2. The extent to which intended intellectual content (what is happening) was recreated. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
3. The extent to which the emotional comprehension (how it feels) of the poetry was revealed through control of vocal quality, inflection, force and timing.
4. The extent to which the appropriate vocal techniques, including such items as rhythm, cadence, phrasing, articulation and pronunciation, were used.
5. The extent to which the physical presence was appropriate to the poetry, including such items as eye contact, facial expression, gestures and bodily movement.



Rules for Interpretation of Prose

Purpose of the Category

To develop skill in conveying an understanding of prose through the use of body and voice.

Definition of the Category

A selection from prose literature, including short stories, cutting from novels, monologues and soliloquies, essays, or other non-fiction work centering on a specific theme or emotion, is to be interpreted.

Rules

1. Contestants may use either published or original material for Interpretation of Prose. Published material is considered any material publicly or commercially available in print, online, audio, or video form. Adaptations should be for the purpose of continuity only, and lines attributed to one character may not be attributed to another. Original material is allowed. The coach must bring a photocopy of the student's original source of materials to provide to the Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee, should the validity be questioned.
2. An introduction, which includes titles, authors, tone and theme is required, and along with any necessary transitions, is to be presented without the use of notes. The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. The presentation may begin with a read portion of the selected material prior to the presenter's personal introduction.
3. The participant must use a manuscript. The material is to be interpreted; however, participant will not be penalized whether or not the selection is memorized.
4. Platform movement should be minimal and non-intrusive. Costumes and props may not be used, with the exception of the manuscript. The manuscript and /or binder containing the manuscript may be used as a prop or in other creative ways. Use of the manuscript is subject to critique.
5. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation.
6. Maximum time limit: 8 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the introduction and optional transitions established the theme and contributed to an understanding of the prose.
2. The extent to which the intended intellectual content (what is happening) was created. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
3. The extent to which the emotional comprehension (how it feels) of the prose was revealed through control of vocal quality, inflection, force and timing.
4. The extent to which the vocal interpretation projected the visual imagery of the prose, including such items as articulation and pronunciation, use of emphasis, effective pauses and proper volume, rate and pitch.
5. The extent to which the physical presence was appropriate to the prose, including such items as eye contact, facial expression, gestures and bodily movement.



Rules for Radio Announcing

Purpose of the Category

To develop the skills of selecting, editing, and organizing news items from supplied material in a limited period of time, to deliver a succinct oral newscast.

Definition of the Category

The challenge to the speaker is to present a well-organized, clearly communicated newscast. Source material provided by the tournament director of approximately 15-20 minutes in length is to be cut and edited with special efforts made to end right at 5 minutes.

Rules

1. One-half hour before the contest, the speaker will receive source material. Identical material will be provided for each contestant at six-minute intervals. The tournament should provide the judge with a copy of the packet of material given to each speaker.
2. The speaker may delete or edit any parts of items from the provided material. However, no new articles or items may be added except transition sentences, introductions and conclusions. Different material of 15 to 20 minutes in length will be provided for each round of competition. The speaker must supply their own stopwatch and equipment for cutting, editing, and reading the newscast.
3. The newscast will include one or more commercials advertising some product or service. Commercials will be supplied with the material, which the student may use as written or make changes to further enhance the product or service. Original commercials may not be used. The commercial(s) may be inserted at any point but must be included within the time limits.
4. Use of visual aids is not permitted. The speaker is to be seated in profile position to the adjudicator.
5. The time limit shall be five minutes and the speaker is expected to finish "on the nose;" however, if a speaker concludes the presentation within ten seconds on either side, the speaker will not be penalized. Beyond those limits, the evaluation should reflect a deduction for further deviation. If all speakers in the round finish more than 10 seconds over or under the limit, no first shall be given in that round.
6. Speaker must present the radio broadcast in one professional/newsreader voice. Multiple voices are not permitted apart from the commercial.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the student provided clear and logical organization of the news script, balancing the levels and types of news including international, national and state news, weather and sports.
2. The extent to which the presentation reflected effective language skills, including use of smooth transitions with clear, vivid, and appropriate word choices. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
3. The extent to which the delivery was in a clear, pleasant, and confident voice, reflecting good articulation, pronunciation, volume, pitch and voice quality. Physical presence of the contestant is not to be a consideration.
4. The extent to which the commercial(s) was incorporated as an important item in the newscast without dominating the news.
5. The extent to which the student delivered the newscast within the time limits without unnatural speeding up or slowing down.



Rules for Solo Acting Humorous

Purpose of the Category

To develop skills in bringing a humorous text to life through solo performance

Definition of the Category

By using self as a medium between the selection and the audience, the student shall use vocal and physical skills to develop a complete humorous performance, creating distinct character(s) and actions motivated by the text that are appropriate to the characterization(s) within the control of the setting.

Rules

1. Material shall be a cutting from published humorous drama or other literature adapted to the dramatic format with brief narrative transitions. Published material is considered any material publicly or commercially available in print, online, audio, or video form. Original material is not allowed. Adaptations, if any, should be minimal, and may be made for the following purposes only: (1) to establish continuity; (2) for gender changes including things such as pronoun changes; or (3) to avoid potentially offensive language. Lines attributed to one character in the literary script may not be attributed to another character during the performance. The coach is responsible for providing access to a copy of the students' original source material to provide to the Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee, should the validity be questioned.
2. An introduction, which includes titles, authors, tone and theme is required, and along with any necessary transitions, is to be presented without the use of notes. The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. The presentation may begin with a portion of the selected material prior to the presenter's personal introduction.
3. The presentation is to be memorized.
4. Costumes, props (including tables and chairs), sound, lighting, and make-up are not allowed. The use of a single stationary chair is not allowed.
5. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation.
6. Maximum time limit: 10 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the introduction set the tone for the performance.
2. The extent to which the material chosen provided a humorous situation with motivated action and characterization(s). Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
3. The extent to which the presentation established and projected the motivations and interrelationships of the character(s) through voice.
4. The extent to which the presentation established and projected the motivations and interrelationships of the character(s) through bodily movement and facial expression.
5. The extent to which the presentation constituted a well-paced and unified segment of humorous action.



Rules for Solo Acting Serious

Purpose of the Category

To develop skills in bringing a dramatic text to life through solo performance

Definition of the Category

By using self as a medium between the selection and the audience, the student shall use vocal and physical skills to develop a complete dramatic performance, creating distinct character(s) and actions motivated by the text that are appropriate to the characterization(s) within the control of the setting.

Rules

1. Material shall be a cutting from published serious drama or other literature adapted to the dramatic format with brief narrative transitions. Published material is considered any material publicly or commercially available in print, online, audio, or video form. Original material is not allowed. Adaptations, if any, should be minimal, and may be made for the following purposes only: (1) to establish continuity; (2) for gender changes including things such as pronoun changes; or (3) to avoid potentially offensive language. Lines attributed to one character in the literary script may not be attributed to another character during the performance. The coach is responsible for providing access to a copy of the students' original source material to provide to the Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee, should the validity be questioned.
2. An introduction, which includes titles, authors, tone and theme is required, and along with any necessary transitions, is to be presented without the use of notes. The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. The presentation may begin with a portion of the selected material prior to the presenter's personal introduction.
3. The presentation is to be memorized.
4. Costumes, props (including tables and chairs), sound, lighting, and make-up are not allowed. The use of a single stationary chair is not allowed.
5. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation.
6. Maximum time limit: 10 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the introduction set the tone for the performance.
2. The extent to which the material chosen provided insights into human values, motivations, relationships, problems, and understandings. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
3. The extent to which the presentation established and projected the motivations, emotions, and interrelationships of the character(s) through voice.
4. The extent to which the presentation established and projected the motivations, emotions, and interrelationships of the character(s) through bodily movement and facial expression.
5. The extent to which the presentation constituted a well-paced and unified segment of dramatic action.



Rules for Special Occasion Speaking

Purpose of the Category

To develop skills related to adapting oral presentations to specific situational demands.

Definition of the Category

The challenge to the speaker is to make an appropriate presentation that responds to the constraints of the occasion, including the probable audience. In considering the "appropriateness" of the speaker's work attention will be paid to the purpose the speaker chooses, the position taken, the content, organization and general stylistic tone, and the manner of delivery. It is possible that a speech may pursue more than one of the standard general purposes of informing, persuading, and entertaining.

Rules

1. The participant must choose one of the annually presented topics to develop and present an appropriate original speech. *Situations for 2023-24 are:*
 - A. An address to a board of education
 - B. A public apology
 - C. A speech delivered to an assembly of current students
 - D. A wedding toast
2. Prior to the presentation, the participant is to briefly announce which of the above situations has been chosen. This announcement is not considered part of the presentation on which the student will be evaluated.
3. Visual supporting materials may be used, but not worn. Electronic devices may not be used as a visual aid.
4. The use of notes is permitted, but is subject to critique.
5. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation.
6. Maximum time limit: 6 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the apparent specific purpose was appropriate to the occasion.
2. The extent to which the content and organization of the speech fulfilled the speaker's purpose.
3. The extent to which the presentation reflected effective language skills, including such items as use of transitions and clear, vivid and appropriate word choices. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
4. The extent to which the vocal presentation was clear and appropriate to the chosen occasion, including such items as articulation, pronunciation, volume, rate, pitch and voice quality.
5. The extent to which the physical presence contributed to the clarity and effectiveness of the presentation, including such items as the use of a notecard, any visual materials, facial expression, eye contact, gestures and bodily movement.



Rules for Storytelling

Purpose of the Category

To develop skill in presenting imaginative material in the narrative form.

Definition of the Category

To tell a story is to chronicle events. The burden of the storyteller is to chronicle those events in a coherent, unified, clear, and interesting manner. The storyteller may use vocal variation and physical movement from a seated position to suggest different characters and character relationships in order to make the story clearer and more interesting. It should be remembered throughout that the emphasis of the storyteller's art is on the teller as intermediary or narrator. The student is expected to "demonstrate a sense of audience," that is, tell the chosen story in such a manner that would be suitable for the intended audience, be it young children, teenagers, adults, or chronologically advanced.

Rules

1. The student will select material based upon the three topic areas announced each year. A student will choose and rehearse one or more stories for each topic area. Original material is acceptable.

Topic areas for the 2023-24 season are:

- A. A mystery story
- B. A story of advocacy / allyship
- C. A story about money / greed

2. The tournament will determine by random selection the round in which each of the three story topics will be presented. The story topics and round schedule will be announced to competitors and judges prior to the start of round one. Every contestant will perform the same story topic in a given preliminary round. Students advancing to elimination rounds will select the story of their choice (immediately prior to the start of the final round) for presentation in any such round. At a tournament with multiple elimination rounds, students must select a different story for each elimination round. Hosts of such tournaments shall provide materials to keep track of which stories a student has already told in earlier elimination rounds.
3. An introduction, which includes titles, authors, tone and theme is required, and along with any necessary transitions, is to be presented without the use of notes. The introduction must be the original work of the speaker. The presentation may begin with a read portion of the selected material prior to the presenter's personal introduction.
4. Notes are not permitted. The participant must sit in a chair during the performance. No costumes, props, or visual material may be used.
5. Vocal music, if used, should be incidental and not overwhelm the presentation.
6. Maximum time limit: 8 minutes, with an allowable 15-second grace period. There is no minimum time requirement. Any entry exceeding the grace period may not be ranked first in the round. If all entries in a round exceed the grace period, no first rank shall be given in that round.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the story and introduction (including comments which identify author, title and any other orienting material), as told, constituted a coherent, spontaneous and unified narrative appropriate to the topic area.
2. The extent to which the teller's choice of language was appropriate to the chosen story and audience. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
3. The extent to which nonverbal expressions, including such items as gestures, facial expression and bodily movement contributed to clarity.
4. The extent to which the vocal aspects of the performance were appropriate and enhancing to meaning of the story, including such items as articulation, pronunciation, vocal clarity, volume, rate and pitch.
5. The extent to which the suggestions of character and character relationship was appropriate to the material.



State Student Congress Procedures

Purpose of the Category

If the crux of debate is building arguments and responding to the opposition, and if the purpose of persuasive speaking is to eloquently convince and motivate an audience, and if the aim of role-playing is to understand the persona and motivation of a character within the setting and context of a given situation; then Student Congress combines these elements under the real-life structure of a model legislature, employing parliamentary procedure.

Definition of the Category

Student Congress is a mock legislative assembly for which students draft legislation, which they later debate and vote to pass into law. Prior to a Congress, students research and prepare arguments for the legislative docket. At the Congress – moderated by a student presiding officer – students support or oppose each issue by delivering brief extemporaneous speeches to establish their position, rebuild complementary arguments, and refute divergent claims.

State Congress Rules (see also WFCA Bylaws Part V. State Congress)

1. Prior to the Congress, schools may submit legislation, which is the original work of their students in the current school year. The tournament/Congress director will release a docket of legislation to all participating schools, omitting legislation lacking serious purpose, national Congressional jurisdiction or correct formatting.
2. The parliamentarian in each chamber will conduct an election for presiding officers in accordance with the Bylaws. The parliamentarian shall moderate an amicable agreement among the candidates, as to who will serve when.
3. As the Congress begins, each chamber should convene an Agenda Committee, comprised of one student from each school, who will determine an order for debate that allows each school to have an authorship speech early, and places more debatable legislation for earlier consideration.
4. Speeches must be each speaker's original work, and notes may be used. Once recognized, students may not yield any time to another speaker. Presiding officers may not give speeches during their term of service.
5. Recognition of Speakers. When more than one speaker seeks the floor, the presiding officer must first recognize students who have not spoken during the session (this will not reset), next recognizing students who have spoken fewer times, then among those few speaking an equal number of times, recognizing the student who has spoken least recently (called "recency"). Before recency is established, in both the preliminary and final session the Congress Director shall provide a randomized list of students. The first presiding officer shall use this list to determining initial precedence to speak for all speeches except for authorship speeches. The parliamentarian shall ensure the list is used. Precedence and recency shall not reset during the preliminary session.
6. Speeches introducing legislation are *up to* three minutes, followed by a mandatory, full two-minute questioning period. A student from the authoring school gets the privilege of recognition, regardless of recency; otherwise the P.O. may recognize a "sponsor" from the chamber, provided this recognition follows the recency guidelines above. Regardless, this speech of introduction must be followed by two minutes of questions. Should no student seek recognition for the authorship/sponsorship, the chamber should move to lay the legislation on the table until such time that a student is prepared to introduce it.
7. Following the speech of introduction on legislation, the presiding officer will alternately recognize negative and affirmative speakers, who will address the chamber for up to three minutes. The first negative speech is followed by a mandatory, full two-minute questioning period. All subsequent speeches are followed by a mandatory thirty-second questioning period, regardless of time left over. In the final session, subsequent speeches are followed by a mandatory one-minute questioning period. The chamber may not move for additional questioning time. There is no "minimum cycle" rule, however, if debate gets repetitive or "one-sided," the chamber may decide to move the previous question.
8. A direct questioning method shall be used in cross examination. The presiding officer shall select questioners based on questioning precedence (the number of questions already asked) to ensure roughly equal opportunities to cross examine but, for the sake of time and convenience, is not required to track or determined recency. The P.O. starts timing questioning periods when s/he has recognize the first questioner, and keeps the clock running continuously until the time has lapsed, providing each question are recognized with a continuous thirty-second period to ask the speaker questions. Presiding officers should discourage students from making statements as part of questioning since, that is an abusive use of the limited questioning time available.
9. Amendments must be presented to the presiding officer in writing, with specific references to lines and clauses that change. The parliamentarian will determine whether the amendment is "germane" – that is, it upholds the original intent of the legislation – otherwise, it is considered "dilatatory."
10. Since the rules above ensure fairness for competition, they may not be suspended; the presiding officer should rule such motions "dilatatory."

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The extent to which the content of a legislator's speech reflected a valid and convincing viewpoint, supported with illustration and appropriately documented research.
2. The extent to which the organizational structure was both clear and effective in providing responses or reactions to any previous speeches and served to advance the current debate.
3. The extent to which the student demonstrated accurate knowledge of parliamentary procedure, and appropriate decorum and interpersonal skills.
4. The extent to which the vocal presentation was clear and appropriate to the subject including such items as use of compelling language, articulation, pronunciation, volume, rate, pitch and voice quality. Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
5. The extent to which the physical presence contributed to the clarity and effectiveness of the presentation, including such items as facial expression, eye contact, gestures and bodily movement.



Student Congress Evaluation Sheet

Please print legibly and completely fill out the following. Remember to give up to 6 points per hour of presiding (PO).

School Code:	Speaker Name	Chamber:	Session:	
Judge Name:	Judge School:			
Topic:	Auth / Aff / Neg / PO	Points: Superior -6 5 4 3 2 1 -Poor		

1. To what extent did the content of the legislator's speech reflect a valid and convincing viewpoint, supported with illustration and appropriately documented research?
2. To what extent was the organizational structure both clear and effective in providing responses or reactions to any previous speeches and serving to advance the current debate?
3. To what extent did the student demonstrate accurate knowledge of parliamentary procedure, and appropriate decorum and interpersonal skills?
4. To what extent was the vocal presentation clear and appropriate to the subject including such items as use of compelling language, articulation, pronunciation, volume, rate, pitch and voice quality? Individual judges may lower the rank due to use of profanity or vulgarity.
5. To what extent did the physical presence contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of the presentation, including such items as facial expression, eye contact, gestures and bodily movement?

Please explain your evaluation and justify your ranking, providing constructive suggestions for improvement.

COMMENTS:



Student Congress Speech Evaluation

Please print legibly and completely fill out the following:

Session:	Chamber:	Affirm / Negate	Student:	School Code:
Legislation Topic:			Points: 1 2 3 4 5 6	Judge:

Please explain your evaluation and justify your rating, providing constructive suggestions for improvement.

- Attention-getting introduction
 - Clear claims
 - Credible evidence
 - Implications of arguments are clear
 - Signposting/transitions are clear throughout
 - Arguments respond/refute
 - New arguments introduced
- ARGUMENT**
- Clear and compelling language
 - Avoids redundant/unnecessary verbiage
 - Fluent vocal delivery
 - Effective use of pause and emphasis
 - Confidence physical presence
 - Use of purposeful gestures
 - Meaningful eye contact
 - Responds effectively to questions (if applicable)
- DELIVERY/STYLE**

Student Congress Presiding Officer Evaluation



Please print legibly and completely fill out the following:

Session:	Chamber:	Student:	School Code:
Points: 1 2 3 4 5 6			Judge:

Please explain your evaluation and justify your rating, providing constructive suggestions for improvement.

- Knowledgeable of parliamentary procedure
- Clear in explaining procedures and rulings
- Fair and consistent in order of recognition and rulings
- Efficient and effective in moving chamber business along (avoiding unnecessary verbiage)
- Controlled the chamber and delegates (including willingness to rule dilatory motions out of order)
- Fosters a respectful, professional and collegial atmosphere

Student Congress - Amendment Form

Session:	Chamber:	Legislation Title:
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Submitted by _____ School _____

Line(s) affected: _____ Reviewed by Parliamentarian (Initial): _____

Specific Wording: _____

1/3 Second: _____ Tally Votes: _____ Pass _____ Fail _____



Writing Legislation

Legislation should be typed and double-spaced with line numbers, not exceeding one page. Capitalizing the words “WHEREAS” and “RESOLVED” in resolutions, and “SECTION” in bills, as well as inverse-indenting each clause or section helps to distinguish between ideas and concepts. Conventions for written structure of legislation differ in various leagues and regions. The suggestions herein are based on a synthesis of the various formats, as well as format used by the U.S. Congress (see <http://thomas.loc.gov>).

1. Resolutions: Think “R” for reasons or rationale for a position on an issue. Resolutions encourage, and when passed, establish a strong conviction by a lawmaking body to do something. Any time a lawmaking body wants to take further and "higher" action (i.e., amend the Constitution, engage in a treaty, take action through the UN or some other multinational group), a resolution is the means by which this is done. Resolutions never establish the "how" of law, i.e., issues of enforcement, nor how it will work when passed.
2. Bills - A bill, when passed into law, has the full power of enforcement behind it, because the national Congress has jurisdiction. Therefore, a bill establishes the details and nuances behind how a particular law must work, including when it takes effect, how much of the treasury (tax levy) will be appropriated (if applicable), how infractions/violations will be dealt with, etc. A bill may answer the who, what, when, where – and most specifically how – but it will never answer “why.” Legislators must explain the rationale behind bills in their speeches.

Format

Following are samples of legislation, formatted in the proper manner. In the resolution, note the semicolon, and how it precedes the word “and” at the end of each “whereas” clause, and the phrase “now, therefore, be it” at the end of the last “whereas” clause.

A Resolution to Urge Further Action on a Specific Issue

1. **WHEREAS**, State the current problem (this needs to be
2. accomplished in one brief sentence); and
3. **WHEREAS**, Describe the scope of the problem cited in
4. the first whereas clause (this clause needs
5. to flow logically from the first); and
6. **WHEREAS**, Explain the impact and harms perpetuated
7. by the current problem (once again, the
8. clause needs to flow in a logical
9. sequence); now, therefore, be it
10. **RESOLVED**, By the Student Congress here assembled
11. that: state your recommendation for
12. dealing with the problem (the resolution
13. should be a clear call for action); and, be it
14. **FURTHER RESOLVED**, That (an *optional* additional
15. recommendation; if not used, end the
16. previous “resolved” clause with a period).

*Respectfully submitted,
Name of School*

A Bill to Establish a Specific Policy

BE IT ENACTED BY THE STUDENT CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

1. **SECTION 1.** State the new policy in a brief declarative
2. sentence, or in as few sentences as
3. possible.
4. **SECTION 2.** Define any ambiguous terms inherent in
5. the first section.
6. **SECTION 3.** Name the government agency that will
7. oversee the enforcement of the bill along
8. with the specific enforcement mechanism.
9. **SECTION 4.** Indicate the implementation
10. date/timeframe.
11. **SECTION 5.** State that all other laws that are in conflict
12. with this new policy shall hereby be
13. declared null and void.

*Respectfully submitted,
Name of School*



Table of Most Frequently Used Parliamentary Motions
Adapted for use in Student Congresses

Type	Motion	Purpose	Second Required?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Required Vote	May Interrupt?
Privileged	24. Fix time for reassembling	To arrange time of next meeting	Yes	Yes-T	Yes-T	Majority	Yes
	23. Adjourn	To dismiss the meeting	Yes	No	Yes-T	Majority	No
	22. Recess	To dismiss the meeting for a specific length of time	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	Majority	No
	21. Rise to a question of privilege	To make a personal request during debate	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	20. Call for orders of the day	To force consideration of a postponed motion	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
Incidental	19. Appeal a decision of the chair	To reverse a decision	Yes	No	No	Majority	Yes
	18. Rise to a point of order or parliamentary procedure	To correct a parliamentary error or ask a question	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	17. Division of the chamber	To verify a voice vote	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	16. Object to the consideration of a question	To suppress action	No	No	No	2/3	Yes
	15. Divide a motion	To consider its parts separately	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
	14. Leave to modify or withdraw a motion	To modify or withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Majority	No
	13. Suspend the rules	To take action contrary to standing rules	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Subsidiary	12. Rescind	To repeal previous action	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	No
	11. Reconsider	To consider a defeated motion again	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
	10. Take from the table	To consider tabled motion	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	9. Lay on the table	To defer action	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	8. Previous question	To force an immediate vote	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
	7. Limit or extend debate	To modify freedom of debate	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	2/3	No
	6. Postpone to a certain time	To defer action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	5. Refer to a committee *	For further study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	4. Amend an amendment °	To modify an amendment	1/3	Yes	No	Majority	No
	3. Amend °	To modify a motion	1/3	Yes	Yes	Majority	No
Main	1. Main motion	To introduce a business	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No

* No. 5 should include:

1. How appointed?
2. The number
3. Report when? or to what standing committee

T = Time

° Nos. 3 and 4 by:

1. Adding (inserting)
2. Striking (deleting)
3. Substituting





This table of evaluation standards may be used by any judge who would like assistance in determining scores for speeches. Each scorer independently (without collaborating) awards 1 to 6 points for each speech. Each speaker has up to three minutes to present arguments followed by a questioning period (the time length for which will vary, depending on specific league rules).

Student Congress Speech Rubric

<i>Points</i>	3	4	5	6
	Mediocre	Good	Excellent	Superior
Content: Organization, Evidence & Language	The speech lacked a clear thesis and organizational structure. Claims are only asserted with generalizations and no real evidence. Language use is unclear or ineffective.	While the speaker's purpose is present, the speech lacks logical organization and/or developed ideas. Analysis of evidence, if present, fails to connect its relevance to the speaker's claims. Use of language is weak.	While a clear purpose is apparent, organization may be somewhat loose (weak introduction/conclusion; no transitions between points). Diction represents a grasp of language. Much evidence is presented, but not in a persuasive or effective manner; or the speaker relies on <i>one</i> piece of evidence, but does so effectively.	Content is clearly and logically organized, and characterized by depth of thought and development of ideas, supported by a variety of credible quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (testimony) evidence analyzed effectively to draw conclusions. Compelling language, a poignant introduction and conclusion and lucid transitions clearly establish the speaker's purpose and frame the perspective of the issue's significance.
Argument & Refutation	The speaker offers mostly unwarranted assertions, which often simply repeat/rehash previous arguments.	The speaker fails to <i>either</i> introduce new arguments (simply repeating previous arguments) <i>or</i> the speaker fails to refute previous opposing arguments; in other words, no real <i>clash</i> is present.	New ideas and response to previous arguments are offered, but in an unbalanced manner (too much refutation or too many new arguments). Questions are answered adequately.	The speaker contributes to the spontaneity of debate, effectively synthesizing response and refutation of previous ideas with new arguments. If the speaker fields questions, they respond with confidence and clarity.
Delivery	Little eye contact, gestures and/or movement are present. Vocal presentation is inarticulate due to soft volume or lack of enunciation.	Presentation is satisfactory, yet unimpressively read (perhaps monotonously) from prepared notes, with errors in pronunciation and/or minimal eye contact. Awkward gestures/movement may be distracting.	The presentation is strong, but contains a few mistakes, including problems with pronunciation and enunciation. The speech may be partially read with satisfactory fluency. Physical presence may be awkward at times.	The speaker's vocal control and physical poise are polished, deliberate, crisp and confident. Delivery should be extemporaneous, with few errors in pronunciation. Eye contact is effective and consistent.

Scores of **less than three (3)** are rarely encouraged, and should be reserved for such circumstances as abusive language, a degrading personal attack on another legislator, or for a speech that is extremely brief (less than 45 seconds) or delivered without purpose or dignity for the cause exhorted by the legislation. Substantial written comments and description of specific incidents should accompany such scores.



Student Congress
Rubric for Presiding Officer

This table of evaluation standards may be used by any judge who would like assistance in determining scores for a presiding officer (PO). Each scorer independently (without collaborating) awards 1 to 6 points for each hour of presiding.

Points	1-2	3-4	5-6
	Weak – Mediocre	Good	Excellent – Superior
Speaker Recognition	The P.O. needs to improve their communication with fellow delegates to gain their trust and respect relating to the rationale for rulings made. Frequent errors are made in speaker recognition, which lacks consistent method or impartiality.	While the P.O. does not adequately explain their preferences for running the chamber in advance, they do clearly explain rulings, when necessary. Speaker recognition may be somewhat inconsistent or biased.	Presiding preferences are clearly explained at the beginning of the session and executed consistently. The P.O. is universally respected and trusted by their peers, and is consistent in recognition (<i>very few</i> errors) and rulings, distributing speeches throughout the room geographically, equally between schools of the same size, and among individuals.
Parliamentary Procedure	The P.O.'s knowledge of parliamentary procedure is lacking, and they show negligible effort to correct errors and/or consult written rules.	The P.O. demonstrates competency in procedure, but makes mistakes in determining the results of motions and votes, etc.	The P.O. has command of parliamentary procedure (motions) and uses this almost transparently to run a fair and efficient chamber, seldom consulting written rules and ruling immediately on whether motions pass or fail.
Delivery/ Presence	The P.O. needs to improve their vocal and physical presence and professional demeanor.	The P.O. displays a satisfactory command of the chamber in their vocal and physical presence. Word choice is usually concise.	The P.O. dynamically displays a command and relates well to the chamber through their vocal and physical presence. Word choice is economical and eloquent.