

JUDGING TIPS

(original document by Rachael Castillo, Atherton High School – thanks Rachael)

Finding your ballots

- Log in to your account at tabroom.com
- Click on your email address in the upper right corner of the page.
- If the ballots have been published, you will see your ballots on the next page. You will know because you'll see a green button that says "START ROUND"

Preparing for the round

- Click "START ROUND" to access your ballot so the tournament admin know you are present and aware of the round.
- At the top of the page, you will see the rules for the event you're judging. Read those! Call the tabroom if you have any questions. I will send the phone number for that later. If you want to preview the event rules ahead of time, you can find those here.
- Go immediately to your assigned room. No competitors are to enter the classroom before you.

Running the round

- If you are judging impromptu, improv, or broadcasting, students should wait outside until it is their turn so they don't hear the prompt ahead of time. In all other events, students can watch each other.
- You don't need to ask the students who wants to go first. Instead, ask who is doubling or tripling. Students who are doubling or tripling and have not yet competed in their other event(s) should be allowed to go first and then leave to go to their other event(s). Also, students competing in Congress should be allowed to go first. If multiple students are doubling or tripling, go by the order of their names on the ballot. Students who are only doing one event should remain in the room while the other competitors perform.
- As the students speak, you should take some notes to help you make your decisions at the conclusion
 of the round. You can take these notes in tabroom or in a separate document.
- If a student asks for time signals, please give them. Judges in impromptu, improv, and exemp should always give time signals.
- Please don't leave until everyone has spoken! Some students might be quite late because they have
 other events to complete first. If you're concerned that the round has ended and a student has not
 shown up, please call the tabroom.

Submitting your ballot

- At the conclusion of the round, rank each competitor 1st through 6th (or however many there are in your round). First place goes to the competitor whose performance was most impressive, and last place goes to the competitor with the greatest room for improvement.
- You will also give each competitor a score between 70 and 100. A score of 70 is extremely low and rare. The student in first place must get the highest score, and the students in last place must get the lowest. There will be a rubric on your ballot.
- You may be hearing arguments and ideas with which you disagree, and some students might be
 performing pieces with mature material. Please keep personal biases out of your decisions and
 judge only on the students' presentations.

- It is very important that you submit your ballots quickly. As soon as you have decided on ranks and scores, submit your ballot! You can add more comments/feedback later. Don't delay the tourney!
- You have to write at least a little feedback for each competitor before the site will allow you to submit.
- You will be the only judge in the room for round 1-3, but don't worry! Your decision is not the only one that counts. They will do the same thing 3 times for 3 separate people, so just trust your gut. For finals, there will be 3 judges in the room.

Making written comments

- Written comments are arguably the most important part of a ballot! They are what help students and coaches improve their presentations for future competitions.
- Try to encourage the competitors with positivity. Many are participating in Speech and Debate not to win but to gain speaking experience. This should be an easy, friendly environment for them.
- At the same time, it's frustrating for students to place last (or even second) and not know why they
 didn't place first. Try to maintain a balance of praise and advice. Students want to know how they can
 improve!! See below and next page for tips.

Try to use both praise and constructive criticism. For example:

Eye Contact:

"excellent focus on the audience" "eyes moved from walls to ceiling"
"made me feel a part of your speech" "looked around and over the audience"

Poise:

"confident and polished presentation" "fidgeting with hands"
"your professionalism impressed me" "avoid pacing back and forth"

Articulation:

"excellent volume and speaking rate" "some mumbling and slurring of words" "good variation of tone and vocal emphasis" "needed to speak more slowly"

Quality of Material / Choice of Selection: "selection was well-suited for audience"

"topic was interesting"

"selection was too... for this audience"
"topic was too... for this event"

Quality of Writing / Skill of Interpretation:

"Fine character development"

"great use of metaphor and analogy"

"gestures not true to character"

"needed better support for main ideas"

Even when all competitors in your round are great and it is difficult to rank them 1-6, they will wonder why they were given lower rankings. Please offer reasons for the rankings assigned. Example:

"There were many seasoned competitors in this round, and I ranked others higher than you because their characters were more fully-developed / their eye contact really pulled me into their pieces / your movements were not as fluid - keep working on making your gestures more natural."

Helpful Words

Areas of Critique

believability characterization

cohesion

confidence

content delivery

enthusiasm enunciation

eve contact

facial expressions

gestures innovation

movements

posture

rate of speech

stage presence

volume

Posture, Gestures

at ease calm

charming elegant

face the audience

fidgety

araceful hunched

natural

poised

repetitive

tense unnatural

Oomph

animation

energy enthusiasm

gusto

life

liveliness

passion

pizzazz

sparkle

stage presence

Strong

amazing

breathtaking

beautiful

brilliant

decent

delightful

dynamic

enjoyable

excellent

extraordinary

fabulous

fine

first-class

first-rate

grand

great

impressive

incredible

logical

lovely

marvelous

perfect

pleasant

remarkable satisfactory

spectacular

splendid

stunning

superb terrific

wonderful

Weak

artificial

awkward

broad

dull

faulty

flawed incoherent

mellow

monotonous

mumbled