

The American Legion – Department of New York
High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – “A Constitutional Speech Contest”
Chairman’s Guide

All contests are to be conducted according to procedures, rules and regulations established by The Department Oratorical Committee within the guidelines as set forth by The National Americanism Committee.

Some of these rules are listed in the brochure but these guidelines are to help make all contests in the Department uniform and prepare contestants for participation at the National Level.

A. Judge’s

1. High School, County and District contests are to be judged by at least three (3) competent judges. Zone and Department contests will have at least five (5) competent judges.
2. A good panel of judges should have two (2) speech instructors (one might be an English instructor), one attorney, one clergyman, and one a distinguished layman.
3. Judges and contestants remain in separate rooms prior to contest.
4. Do not publicize the judges' names prior to the contest. Appropriate publicity should be given the judges after the contest.
5. Each judge should have a copy of the Oratorical Brochure. Judge's Guide and Judge's Score sheet, two weeks prior to the contest.
6. Judges should be given specific instructions just prior to the contest.
7. Each judge should select a seat in different areas of the auditorium - front, back, center, etc. Judges do not sit together.
8. Judges should not judge in a contest if they have judged any of the contestants in another contest.
9. The decision of the judges is **FINAL**.

B. Tabulators

1. All contests should be assigned three tabulators - one, of which, is designated Head Tabulator.
2. The Tabulators will tabulate the judges' score sheets or use the electronic scoring system.
3. Tabulators should **not** make any gestures or give any indication as to who the winners are.
4. Tabulators should be instructed as to their specific duties just prior to the contest.

C. Timers

1. All contests should have two (2) timers - one, of which, is designated Chief Timer.
2. The timers are provided with a time record sheet to record the time of all contestants. Both the timers and Chairman, keep a record of the time.
3. Each timer should be provided with a stopwatch.
4. The Primary Timer will inform the Contest Moderator of the official time. The Contest Moderator will announce the time and penalty, if any, to the audience.
5. The timers will show timecards - 8, 9, and 10 minutes for the Prepared Orations and 3, 4, and 5 minutes for the Assigned Topics Discourse, for the benefit of the contestants and audience.
6. Timers are given instructions as to their specific duties just prior to the contests.

D. Escorts

1. All contests should have one escort assigned to each contestant, if possible.
2. The Head Escort should co-ordinate the duties of all the other escorts and maintain a non-distracting and quiet atmosphere in the auditorium.
3. The escorts should remain with their assigned contestants until the contest is completed.
4. Escorts should be given instructions as to their specific duties just prior to the contests.

E. Contestants

1. Contestants are given instructions to specific rules just prior to the contests. Thereafter, they are only permitted to talk with their escorts.
2. The contestants draw speaking order with no one in the room except the Contest Moderator and escorts just prior to the contest starting.

F. Program

1. The Contest Moderator at the contest level presides at the contest.
2. Opening Ceremonies - They should be kept to a minimum.
 - a. Posting of Colors.
 - b. Invocation
 - c. Pledge of Allegiance (an Eagle Scout could lead it).
 - d. The National Anthem (if a soloist plays or sings this, Legionnaires stand and salute. If the audience sings it, Legionnaires stand at attention but do not salute, but with Legion cap in hand over their heart).
 - e. Welcome (**A Short Welcome**)
3. After the Opening Ceremonies, the Contest Moderator proceeds as follows:
 - a. Briefly explains the contest to the audience and cites the specific rules.
 - b. Announces the time and place of the next contest.
 - c. Clears the stage, and then he introduces the first speaker as "Speaker Number One", etc.