

The American Legion – Department of New York
High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – “A Constitutional Speech Contest”
Suggestions to Judges

It is suggested that prior to the contest, each judge should carefully study the point scoring system in relation to the factor to be considered during the presentation of the prepared oration and the assigned topics discourse by each contestant, namely, content of oration and speaking skills. Listed below you will find items which should be given attention in specific areas. (See listing of point values on Official Score Sheet)

A. Content

1. **Originality, freshness, directness, applies knowledge on topic.**
 - a. Is there an original and fresh approach to the topic?
 - b. Does it relate directly to the subject?
 - c. Is information applied to aspects of the subject?
 - d. Does the information flow directly to the audience?
 - e. Does the speaker stay on the topic?

2. **Skill in selecting examples, description, analogies, specific data**
 - a. Are examples applicable?
 - b. Do the illustrations appear as an "ax to grind", not exactly related to subject?
 - c. Is adequate information provided on examples or descriptions to inform the audience fully on the points?
 - d. Is proper credit given to quotations or subject matter borrowed from authorities?
 - e. Are specific data utilized to enrich the subject matter?

3. **Logic (Correctness of Inference)**
 - a. Are illustrations supported by logic or facts?
 - b. Are conclusions properly drawn?
 - c. Are there inconsistencies in the use of application of the logic?
 - d. Are inferences made without proper support or logic?

4. **Comprehensiveness of Knowledge (knows subject matter)**
 - a. Is plagiarism involved?
 - b. Does speaker show a broad grasp of the subject?
 - c. Does the overall speech effectively demonstrate comprehensiveness and unity of thought or thoughts?
 - d. Is the topic significant when viewed as a whole?
 - e. Does the overall impression outweigh the component parts?
 - f. Is the total speaking informational and educational for the audience?
 - g. Is an overall humbleness (or respect) evident in both the prepared and assigned topics discourse?

B. Speaking Skills

1. **Voice and Diction**
 - a. Does the voice used detract from the content (pitch, nasal, quality)?
 - b. Is proper inflection utilized?
 - c. Is the speaker easily understood?
 - d. Does the speaker use the proper volume for the physical conditions which surround them?
 - e. Do the words and sentences run together? Articulation? Enunciation?
 - f. Are there errors in pronunciation?

B. Speaking Skills (cont'd)

2. **Style: Language use, word arrangement, transition, word selection**
 - a. Is the language used appropriate?
 - b. Are the sentences succinct?
 - c. Are the sentences involved to the point that immediate interpretations are not easy? Grammar?
 - d. Does the speaker get lost with many extraneous clauses or phrases?
 - e. Are the words easily identifiable for meanings? Do they fit?
 - f. Is sentence and paragraph transition smooth and continuous?
 - g. Is there a proper introduction, a main body of the speech, and a summary or conclusion?
3. **Body Action: Poise, eye contact, posture, gestures**
 - a. Is the speaker at ease while speaking?
 - b. Does the speaker have eye contact with all of the audience so that they appear to be speaking to all of them?
 - c. Is their posture of an alert nature?
 - d. Do their movements and gestures enhance or detract from the content and delivery?
 - e. Is the speaker too dramatic?
 - f. Does the speaker's body action and delivery give the appearance of cockiness or "know-it-all" attitude?

Be sure also to note this provision of the rules, **LACK OF EMPHASIS IN THE PREPARED ORATION AND THE ASSIGNED TOPICS DISCOURSE ON THE DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF A CITIZEN MUST RESULT IN THE JUDGES DOWNGRADING THE CONTESTANT INVOLVED.**

C. Official Judging of Score Card:

- a. The method of judging and scoring and the point values indicated on the score sheet were devised especially for this contest.
- b. These were devised to provide judges with criteria to select fairly and adequately the best contestant of the contest.
- c. To attain this objective, judges must become familiar with all factors involved.

Quotations are to be indicated as such, and if the quotations are more than ten (10) words in length, the name of the author must be given. The penalty for plagiarism is **DISQUALIFICATION**.

Singing is grounds for disqualification. Contestants may quote verses from a song.

At the close of the contest, judges should be sure to fill out the score sheet completely in accordance with the contest rules, total all columns and affix signatures.

Tabulators will collect score sheets from the judges at the close of the contest and tabulate the results under the close supervision of the Chairman.

At the proper time, in accordance with the contest rules, the Chairman, or their representative, will announce the results of the contest and introduce the judges to the contestants and audience.

Contest Chairperson will review all scorecards and tabulation card following the contest. Any corrections in the final placements must happen within 48 hours after the close of the contest. This is also true for protests.

JUDGES ARE REQUESTED NOT TO DISCUSS ANY PHASE OF THE CONTEST OR THEIR JUDGING METHODS WITH CONTESTANTS, COACHES, ESCORTS, OR OTHERS OUTSIDE THE CHAIRMAN FOLLOWING THE CONTEST. Previous experience has proven this to be an unwise practice and usually results in criticism of judges.

Chairman, tabulators, or any judge's are not permitted to divulge the judges score sheet at the site of the contest. Persons interested in the scoring for professional reasons may, upon written request to National Headquarters, be mailed at a later date copies of the scores with the names of the judges omitted.