

Summer 2012 District 28
Toastmasters
Leadership Institute



Speech Contest Judging: How to Judge Like a Genius

What's In It For Me:

- Altruism and the love of your peers: Quality, fair, and unbiased judging is extremely valuable to ensure that contests are meaningful and fair to the contestants. It also, reinforces good speaking skills to all members.
- Better speeches and better evaluations: Judging develops skill in analyzing the elements that make great speeches and allow you to apply this skill and knowledge to improve your own speeches and help others improve theirs.

The Basics:

- A judge's *only* duty is to **select a winner** – the speaker who has given the best speech at that specific contest. They should *not* consider other speeches by the contestant or how the speech could be improved.
- Judges should not discuss their decisions or opinions with the contestants – it can be an unfair advantage to contestants and can be distract the judge from the purpose.
- Before you agree to judge, ensure that you do not have any conflicts of interest or potential biases against any of the contestants. Do not judge if you cannot be completely impartial – all contestants deserve fair, consistent, and unbiased results
- Before you begin, review the judging criteria on the back of the ballot. Also, review the rule book; the rule book contains all rules and cannot be supplemented.
- All ballots must be signed and there must be no tie scores; either of these will nullify the ballot.

Ethics and Bias:

- Ethical judging requires being fair and consistent to all contestants. Judges must be vigilant about potential sources of bias. Some common barriers to objectivity are:

Barrier	Strategy
Speaker Position in Order	Take notes to allow thorough comparison to previous speeches
Champion the Underdog	Judge objectively – most contestants are underdogs at some point
Halo Effect	Focus on how the current speech meets each of the judging criteria
Reverse Halo Effect	Be consistent in point usage and focus point allocation to criteria
Previous Speeches	Judge this speech - do not consider previous speeches or contests
Club Norms	Consider if the “norm” needs to be universally applied
Prejudices and Preferences	Content subject should not be considered – focus on criteria

Disecting the International Speech Contest Ballot:

Content: 50% of total score (50 points available):

Speech Development (20 points):

Speech Development “is the way the speaker puts ideas together so the audience can understand them. The speech is structured around a **purpose**, and this **structure** *must* include an opening, body, and conclusion. A good speech *immediately* engages the audience’s **attention** and then moves forward toward a significant conclusion. This development of the speech **structure** is supported by relevant examples and illustrations, facts and figures, delivered with such **smoothness** that they blend into the framework of the speech to present the audience with a unified whole.”

Purpose: (0 - 6 points suggested)

- Is there a message?
- Does the speech give the audience something to ‘take away’?
- Can you determine the purpose?

Structure: (0 - 6 points suggested)

- Can you follow what the speaker is saying?
- Do the examples, illustrations, facts, and figures enhance your understanding?
 - Are they clear or are they confusing?
 - Do they seem to be added in as filler material?
 - Are they ‘warm and fuzzy’ and cute but serve no purpose?
- Is the conclusion transitioned into the body or is it abrupt and separated (e.g. “in conclusion”).
- Does the conclusion effectively review (directly or indirectly) the main points?

Attention: (0 - 2 points suggested)

- Does the speech get your attention and engage you quickly in a way that is specific to the speech (rather than “Thank you Mdme./Mr. Toastmaster, Fellow Toastmasters...)?

Smoothness: (0 - 6 points suggested)

- Do the ideas flow logically?
- Are the transitions between sentences and ideas clear and natural?

Effectiveness (15 points):

Effectiveness is measured, in part, by the audience’s reception of the speech, but a large part is your **subjective** judgment of how the speech came across.

Subjective: (0 - 10 points suggested)

- “Was I able to determine the speaker’s purpose?”
- “Did the speech relate directly to that purpose?”
- “Was the audience’s interest held by the speaker?”
- This is the only subjective element of the judging criteria. If you thought the speaker was effective, observe how others in the audience are reacting. If most of the audience is reacting differently than you, you may want to consider that when scoring in this category.

Speech Subject: (0 - 5 points suggested)

- “Was the speech subject appropriate for this particular audience?”
- This category *does not* take into consideration whether you like the subject or agree with the subject or premise. Do not be swayed by your feelings. A ‘warm and fuzzy’ topic should not necessarily be ranked higher than a controversial topic unless it is truly presented in a more effective way.

Speech Value (15 points):

Speech Value justifies the act of speaking. The speaker has a responsibility to say **something meaningful** and **original** to the audience. The listeners should feel the speaker has made a contribution to their thinking. The ideas should be important ones, although this does not preclude a humorous presentation of them.

Something Meaningful: (0 - 10 points suggested)

- Is there a ‘take-away’? Is it obvious what the speaker wants you to do with the information, story, etc.?
- There is value in humor and entertainment, but does the speech also have a message?
- Are the speech ideas logical, do they make sense?

Originality: (0 - 5 points suggested)

- Is the concept novel or unique?
- Are sources referenced for all quotes and material not original to the speaker?*
- Does the material not original to the speaker comprise no more than 20-30% of the speech, even if the sources are referenced.*
- The majority of the speech is not someone else’s story. For example: a story about a famous person, a person you heard or read about (other than you, a family member or a friend who has said you can use the story). Stories about people you have heard or read about could be used as an example to illustrate a point, but should not constitute most of the speech.
- * This is the speech component that judges and contestants can protest. It is not mandatory that a judge protests a lack of originality. Sometimes it might be a matter of degree. For a speech that contains unoriginal element(s) [source not referenced, etc], a judge could deduct or omit points. If a judge chooses to protest, s/he should first mark his/her ballot assuming the contestant will not be disqualified, then the judge should notify the Chief Judge on the ballot. A judge’s choice to protest is a subjective decision; however, *it should be applied consistently to all contestants.*

Delivery: 30% of total score (30 points available):

Physical (10 points):

Physical is “presentation of the speech carries part of the responsibility for effective communication. The speaker’s **appearance** should reinforce the speech, whether profound, sad, humorous or instructional. **Body language** should support points through gestures, expressions and body positioning. The speaker makes effective use of and stays within the designated **speaking area.**”

Appearance: (0 - 3 points suggested)

- Is the speaker's attire appropriate for the speech?
- Is the speaker's appearance neat and clean, unless the speech subject calls for otherwise?

Body Language: (0 - 5 points suggested)

- Are the gestures, expressions, and body positioning intentionally and effectively used?
- Is the body language consistent with the words?
- Does the body language distract from the message (e.g. pacing, repetitive movements that do not add value, etc.)

Speaking Area: (0 - 2 points suggested)

- The speaking area should be defined and made known to the contestants and judges prior to the contest.
- Does the use of the speaking area help or hinder the speech? Effective use of the speaking area depends on the speech. It may be appropriate for a speaker to stand in one place if moving would be a distraction or have no purpose.
- If a speaker leaves the speaking area, it is appropriate to score no points.

Voice (10 points):

Voice is "the sound that carries the message. It should be flexible, moving from one pitch level to another for emphasis, and should have a variety of rate and volume. A good voice can be clearly heard and the words easily understood."

Voice: (0 - 2 points suggested each)

- Does the speaker have good diction (enunciation and pronunciation)?
- Is the speaker too loud or too soft and is the volume intentionally varied?
- Is the pace too fast or too slow?
- Is the pitch too high or too low?
- Are words emphasized intentionally and effectively to increase understanding or relay emotion.

Manner (10 points):

Manner is "the indirect revelation of the speaker's **real self** as the speech is delivered. The speaker should speak with enthusiasm and **assurance**, showing interest in the audience and confidence in their reactions.

Real Self: (0 - 5 points suggested)

- Does the speaker appear genuine and believable?
- Does the speaker appear to be 'feeling' the speech or does it appear that s/he is performing a memorized speech?

Assurance: (0 - 5 points suggested)

- Does the speaker appear confident and assured?
- Does the speaker appear comfortable and confident with the audience?

Language: 20% of total score (20 points available):

Appropriateness (10 points):

Appropriateness “of language refers to the choice of words that relate to the speech purpose and to the particular audience hearing the speech. Language should promote clear understanding of thoughts and should fit the occasion precisely.”

Appropriateness: (0 - 10 points suggested)

- Does the speech use excessively ‘bad’ language?
- Does the speech use slang or colloquialisms that are not intentionally included to relay a message?
- Are there verbal pauses or filler words (e.g. ah, um, etc.)

Correctness (10 points):

Correctness “of language ensures that attention will be directed toward what the speaker says, not how it is said. Proper use of grammar and correct pronunciation will show that the speaker is the master of the words being used.”

Correctness: (0 - 10 points suggested)

- Is grammar used correctly throughout the speech? Obviously, some minor misuse of grammar is acceptable in spoken language but poor grammar that interferes with the understanding or listenability should be scored down.
- Are words generally pronounced correctly?