

Judging Criteria OHSSL Speech Categories (Individual Events)

The nine individual events (IE) of speech competition include the following:

Original Oratory (OO)

This is a public speaking event in which the student writes his/her own material. The contestant is permitted to use up to 150 directly quoted words from other sources with proper citation; however, the use of paraphrasing with proper citation is unlimited. The contestant may select any topic that is suitable and appropriate for competition. This oration is typically a combination of informative and persuasive speaking as the student may solve a problem, simply alert the audience to a problem without proposing any solution, urge or motivate the audience to action, or eulogize a person. The use of humor is at the discretion of the speaker. The speech must be memorized and adhere to the required time limit of 8 to 10 minutes with a 30 second "grace period."

Judging is based upon the content of the student's writing abilities as well as the verbal and physical delivery of the oration.

Oratorical Interpretation (OI)

In this category, the contestant will memorize and deliver a speech that was written, delivered, and published by another person. Frequently, speeches used in this category are "recycled" original oratory speeches from previous years; however, classical speeches of an historical or political nature are also common. The speaker in this category must state the title and author of the speech, and he/she may explain the circumstances under which it was originally delivered during his/her introduction. The time limit is 8 to 10 minutes with a 30 second "grace period."

Judging in this category is based upon delivery only since the contestant did not write the material. Besides verbal and physical delivery aspects, it is best to determine how well the speaker has re-created or interpreted the original thoughts, feelings, and emotions of the original performance.

Extemporaneous Speaking (United States=USX; International=IX)

This is a category of spontaneous public speaking based upon the speaker's knowledge of current events in either domestic or foreign topics. The speaker will deliver an original speech of current facts and persuasive opinion on a designated topic that he/she previously chose in the prep room. The speaker has 30 minutes of prep time to compose this speech, complete with accurate source citations/references. The required time limit is 7 minutes with a 30 second "grace period." Because this speech is not memorized, the judge will need to give time signals indicating 2 minutes remaining, 1 minute remaining, 30 seconds remaining, time at 7 minutes, and an indication at the end of the grace period if necessary. Notes should not be used by the speaker when presenting.

The content of this speech must adhere strictly to the chosen topic (which is typically stated in the form of a question), and the information must be well chosen, pertinent, truthful, and sufficient to support the topic. A thorough extemp speech usually contains 5 to 7 source citations.

In addition to content, the speaker is also judged on verbal and physical delivery. The speaker is specifically judged on adherence to the exact wording of the topic, clear speech structure, sound logic, and accurate and sufficient support. How well did the speaker address, analyze, or answer the question?

Humorous, Dramatic, and Duo Interpretation (HI, DI, and DUO)

These interpretation events are derived from published literature. Selections will be “cuttings” (sections) from play scripts, novels, or short stories. Speakers will be portraying one or more characters through the use of verbal and physical delivery skills. Off-stage focal points are typically used when characters are in direct dialogue with other characters, but speakers may also give eye contact to the audience depending upon the demands of the script. These events are fully memorized and should contain an introduction complete with the title and author of the selection. For DUO partner teams, the introduction and transitions are the only times in which partners may look at or touch each other; otherwise, all interaction between partners must be done through “blocking.” The required time limit for these events is 8 to 10 minutes with a 30 second “grace period.”

Judging is based upon clear, appropriate distinction of characters, suitability of the material to the speakers, portrayal of the characters, consistency of focal points, the partner’s ability to work together as a balanced team in DUO, and verbal and physical delivery aspects.

Prose/Poetry (P/P)

In this category, the speaker prepares a program of prose and poetry selections, tying the two together by a central theme (i.e. adoption, loss of a loved one, the journey in life, etc.). Although this considered to be a **reading** event, complete with a manuscript in a binder, the speaker is still permitted to incorporate oral interpretation skills into his/her performance; however, the speaker must “give credit” to the various authors by reading from the manuscript rather than being fully memorized.

Selections must come from published sources, and there must be a minimum of 200 words of prose and 200 words of poetry throughout. Prose includes novels and short stories – no plays; poetry includes any style of verse (rhymed or unrhymed) and may also include song lyrics or a play written in verse (i.e. Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet). Introductions to the selections must be presented from memory with a closed binder; the speaker may introduce all pieces at once or scatter individual introductions throughout the performance. The required time limit is 8 to 10 minutes with a 30 second “grace period.”

Judging criteria is based upon the effectiveness of the program as unified literature, the interpretation of meanings, themes, and rhymes in literature, handling of the manuscript in the binder, and the usual verbal and physical delivery aspects.

Impromptu Speaking (IMP)

This is a limited-prep category in which speakers select three quotations or three proverbs from an envelope in the round. (Judges will be provided with the envelopes.) After a brief review, contestants will discard two topics and immediately begin prepping for the chosen topic. The speaker must analyze the meaning of the quote or proverb during a maximum speaking time of 7 minutes with a 30 second “grace period.” The speaker’s prep time is part of the 7 minutes. Typically, speakers prep for 2 minutes and speak for 5 minutes. The judge will need to give time signals indicating 2 minutes remaining, 1 minute remaining, 30 seconds remaining, time at 7 minutes, and an indication at the end of the grace period if necessary. Notes should not be used by the speaker when presenting; however, they are permitted during prep time. A speaker should not leave the room during prep time.

Speeches should be judged upon an attention-grabbing introduction, speech organization, ample support of main points through examples, details, reasons, etc., creativity, logical analysis, a strong conclusion, and verbal and physical delivery aspects.

Handout submitted by Melissa Donahue, Mason High School Speech

(C) 2009 Ohio High School Speech League. Commercial reproduction prohibited. Requests for commercial reproduction should be made in writing to the Ohio High School Speech League. Noncommercial reproduction for educational purposes allowable and encouraged.

