

Guidelines for Individual Events Judging at the Griffin Invitational

This is a brief/quick guide for judging. There are many unwritten rules that have developed over the years for judges and competitors. However, if you are new to judging here are some important guidelines to follow:

1. There are 3 Major Types of Individual Events and as a judge you need to know the different times, signals and expectations of the competitors for these separate areas. They are:

Limited Preparation Events: Impromptu Speaking and Extemporaneous Speaking

Oral Interpretation Events: Prose, Poetry, Drama, Program Oral Interpretation, Duo.

Platform Speaking Events: Informative, Persuasive, Speech to Entertain/After Dinner Speaking, Communication Analysis.

2. Judges, when you receive your ballot, please look at the event you are being asked to judge and take a look at the specific rules/suggestions for that event below. Impromptu and Extemporaneous Speaking have the most detailed timing requirements.

Please come to the Griffin Gate to get more information about any of these events.

A. Limited Preparation Events: Impromptu Speaking and Extemporaneous Speaking

These two events require you, as a judge, to provide verbal and nonverbal time signals depending on each event and situation. The timing for these events are vitally important.

Impromptu Speaking: This is one of the more complicated judging assignments, because you are responsible for providing verbal time signals in the first two minutes and non-verbal for the remaining 5 minutes. Please talk to someone in the Griffin Gate who is knowledgeable to provide you with what some “common” time signals look like. Do not make up your own signals.

You will pick up the impromptu topics in Griffin Gate. You will check your ballot and make sure that you have the correct person that corresponds with your ballot. If a student is double entered, please let that student go before someone who is not double entered.

Tell the competitor what your time signals will be, then hand them the slip with the 3 quotations. They will look at the quotations and begin prepping as you begin timing. They generally have 2 minutes to prepare and 5 minutes to speak. However, the time does not stop, once they begin prepping. If a novice uses a few seconds more than 2 minutes, that is not against any rule. If they use less than 2 minutes prep that is also acceptable. You can factor the use of their time in your decision, but there is no rule.

They have 7 minutes total. Your nonverbal signal at the seven minute mark should indicate that they should stop. Do not verbally say “stop”, however. If they continue to speak, allow them to speak and record their time on your ballot. You can use their going over time as a factor in your decision. However, there is no official rule for how to use that overtime.

What to Look For: The speeches themselves can be judged on poise and presence of the speakers, how directly they relate to the specific topic selected, level of organization, fluency of speech, depth of analysis, gestures, humor, etc.. Speakers should not be rewarded for canned speeches that do not directly address the selected topic or quotation, even though they may sound very smooth. Look for strong Introduction (attention getter, thesis which clearly answers the quotation/question, & preview), Body (with main points and clear transitions), and Conclusion (review main points, thesis and closure to attention-getter). Note too the nonverbal delivery elements and gestures.

Extemporaneous Speaking: The student will have prepped for 30 minutes prior to coming to your room to speak. They will already have the extemp question and you should have the choices on your ballot (or on a paper).

You should tell them your time signals when they come in the room. You will need to do this for each competitor, because they won't hear them until they come in the room for the first time. Please talk to someone in the Griffin Gate who is knowledgeable to provide you with what some "common" time signals look like. Do not make up your own.

They have 7 minutes total to speak. When you give the 7 minute signal they should stop speaking. Do not verbally say "stop", however You should record what their time is on the ballot. But you should not give them their time out loud.

What to Look For: The speaker has 30 minutes to prepare a speech on a current contemporary event relying on prepared files collected on all current news issues or the internet. That preparation occurs elsewhere on campus (prep room) before they arrive in your room to speak. This event is expected to provide deeper analysis than impromptu speeches due to the greater preparation times and the research materials. Speakers are expected to be able to not only answer the topic question directly but to prove the analysis through referencing or quoting the research materials

B. Oral Interpretation Events: Prose, Poetry, Drama, Program Oral Interpretation, Duo.

All these events require that the competitor use a "black book", which indicates that these are not the words of the speaker, but from one or more of the 3 genres of literature. When they close the book, to give an introduction, it indicates that now it is the words of the speaker.

Timing: Do time and record the time on your ballot. **DO NOT GIVE TIME SIGNALS IN ANY OF THESE EVENTS.** The maximum is 10 minutes for all of these events. There is not an official rule for the minimum, but it is generally considered that 8 minutes is probably the minimum. It is up to you, as the judge to decide if time, either over or under was a deciding factor in your judgement.

What to Look For: Judges can look for the believability of the character portrayal, development of a theme in the introduction and support for that theme in the selection, verbal and nonverbal support of persona traits, familiarity with the text, and performance skills. How compelling the literature is (textual merit), may be used as judging criteria.

1. **Prose Interpretation** – standard sentence format, paragraph style of writing common to books, short stories, letters, essays, etc. . . .Often utilizes first person point of view.
2. **Poetry Interpretation** – rhyming and free verse are certainly allowed, though free verse is more typical these days. Expect a fairly eclectic mix of selections on a theme.
3. **Dramatic Interpretation** – Dialogue driven genre, typically plays, screenplays, monologues, radio dramas, movies, or television scripts or even advertising scripts.

4. **Programmed Oral Interpretation (POI)** – must include at least two of the above genres on a common theme.

5. **Duo Interpretation** – Two interpreters performing literature., usually in the dramatic genre. Tradition dictates that the performers do not touch, or maintain direct eye contact, though both are often implied.

C. Platform Speaking Events: Informative, Persuasive, Speech to Entertain/After Dinner Speaking, Communication Analysis.

These speeches should be the original work of the students. They should be researched and written by the speaker. The maximum time limit is 10 minutes, and there is no formal minimum time limit. However, it is generally considered that between 8-10 minutes is expected. Do time them and record their time. **DO NOT GIVE TIME SIGNALS FOR ANY OF THESE EVENTS.** It is up to you, as the judge to decide if time, either over or under was a deciding factor in your judgement.

Speakers should generally not rely on note cards or scripts by convention, not rule. Early in the year you will see more rely on such notes. Visual aids are allowed but not required.

What to Look For: Platforms should be well organized, reasoned and should document their claims with qualified evidence. Each speech should have a clear Introduction, Body and Conclusion with transitions. Level of analysis, quality of research and verbal and nonverbal elements of delivery are all important criteria for your assessment, as can be quality and recency of evidence to support arguments, or points.

1. **Persuasion Speeches** – Speakers are generally expected to develop a strong, compelling argument on a current contemporary issue of social significance. They should clearly prove their argument and usually propose a workable solution to the problem they have selected. That is what they are typically trying to persuade you of. Look for current, qualified research to support main points. Different types of claims may require different types of proof.

2. **Informative Speeches** – Speakers should inform us of something that most people are not already aware of. The topic should be socially significant and have ramifications that impact society as a whole. Look for good current research to support points. The potential for further application is also considered. Quality visual aids can help inform.

3. **Speech to Entertain, or After Dinner Speaking** – Also a well-organized speech, typically of an informative or persuasive nature but written in a lighter tone. One main purpose is to entertain. But it should not just be a nightclub routine of disjointed jokes. Some research is expected, but not usually as extensive as one might find in Informative or Persuasive speeches. Some contestants ad-lib a bit in this event, perhaps even linking to other speeches in the round.

4. **Communication Analysis, or Rhetorical Criticism** - A more specialized form of an informative designed to shed light on a communication related topic. It is often a rhetorical analysis of a communicative event, such as a speech, cultural artifact or movement, examined through the paradigmatic lens of a particular frame of reference or often a scholarly model of understanding. The speech should first explain the communicative act being examined and the model being used to examine it, and then analyze the act through the proposed model, and discuss social implications. Some research is expected. Recency and amount of evidence is less critical than for other platforms.

Other Judging Considerations:

The Ballot: Please fill in the ballot completely. Try to explain the reason you gave the rank and rate you awarded in the comments portion of the ballot. Unexplained decisions are frustrating and unfulfilling to students and coaches alike. Speakers appreciate specific references to what worked or did not work for you in each speech. Try to be constructive in your criticism. It is against organizational and school policy to engage in practices that could be considered sexually harassing or demeaning in any way, such as offering pejorative comments based on race, gender, ethnicity, preference, etc. Please always remain courteous and civil.

Thank you for judging!!