

## 13 Speech Categories

**Public Speaking:** Original Oratory, Informative, Great Speeches, \*Extemporaneous Speaking, Discussion

**Interpretation:** Drama, Prose, Poetry, Humorous, Dramatic Duo, \*Storytelling, \*Extemporaneous Reading, Creative Expression

**\*Draw categories:** Extemporaneous Speaking, Extemporaneous Reading, Storytelling

## Public Speaking Categories

### **Public Speaking delivery**

- Delivery of Great Speeches, Informative, Original Oratory, and Extemp. Speaking is similar. All should be sincere, engaging and convincing
- Steps are usually taken at appropriate transitional points in the speech.
- Gestures should enhance the meaning of the speech
- Face should show involvement, concern, enthusiasm, etc.

### **Informative (8 minutes)**

This is a speech intended to educate its audience about a meaningful, worthwhile topic. The speech should not be persuasive. **This is the only category that allows the use of visual aids.**

#### Things to look for:

Attention getting introduction

Clear thesis statement and preview of main points of the speech

Example informative thesis: “The Crayola Crayon Company has a unique history and its future looks as colorful as ever.”

Clear organization of the speech. Usually a preview of the main points after the thesis will clarify this.

Credibility- at least 3-4 credible sources are expected.

Visual aids- should enhance the speech, be easily read and understood, be visually appealing.

### **Original Oratory (8 minutes with MSHSL rules; 10 minutes with NFL rules)**

This is a persuasive speech.

Usually the topics are value-based and not policy based, although either approach is acceptable.

#### Things to look for:

Attention getting introduction.

Clear thesis or central idea statement near the beginning of the speech.

Example Original Oratory thesis: "Extreme competitiveness in our society has spiraled out of control and we must become aware of its destructive consequences."

Credibility- strong, worthwhile examples given and at least 3 - 4 sources cited.

### **Great Speeches (8 minutes)**

This is a speech where the intention is to take a speech and examine why it was great through the student's own analysis and some expert support.

The speech can be historical or contemporary.

Most speakers analyze one speech. But several speeches around one theme could be used or several speeches by one speaker.

#### Things to look for:

Attention getting introduction which may or may not include an excerpt from the great speech

Analysis should be interspersed with text from the great speech. How much analysis and how much speech will vary

Analysis should examine why the speech is important, what impact it had on its audience, and what devices the writer used- i.e. emotional appeals, logic, figurative language, repetition, etc.

### **Extemporaneous speaking** (DRAW EVENT- 30 minutes prep, 7 minutes speak)

In this speech, the topic will be different each time the student speaks. He or she must draw 3 questions and then choose 1 of those to speak on. The student has 30 minutes to prepare a 7-minute speech that answers the question, which is about current events.

The speaker should give you a slip of paper with his /her question written on it.

The speech is usually persuasive in tone because the speaker is trying to convince his/her audience that his/her answer to the question is correct.

The speaker is allowed to use a note card with no more than 50 words on it, but most contestants do not use any scripts at all.

#### Things to look for:

Attention getting introduction which includes the speaker stating the question they have drawn and their answer to that question

Organization and main points should be clear by using a preview statement.

Credibility- sources should be numerous, quoted, and legitimate.

A convincing answer to the question with evidence to support it.

Fluid and clear delivery

(When a speaker is finished they may or may not watch the other speakers)

## **Discussion**

1. The topic this year is \_\_\_\_\_ . Students do research surrounding this topic so they become educated and well informed. At each round, “the task” is different. The goal of the round is for the students to “solve the task” they have been presented. The students will try to solve this task in a one-hour time limit.

*Example Task: You are all members of a volunteer community task force designed to provide healthy entertainment alternatives for juveniles in your community. Your group should brainstorm ideas, come up with specific plans and implementation procedures, and then design a format for presenting these plans to the young people in your community.*

As the judge, you will most likely be given the task for the round you are judging in your judging packet at the beginning of the day. Sometimes the task is delivered right to the round itself.

The students may or may not have been given the task in advance of the round, but either way, the judge is not to do anything to facilitate the discussion – the students will organize and begin themselves once all are present. Usually they will take a few minutes to research the task and get organized.

Your job as the judge is to evaluate the discussion. You will be given one “flow sheet” instead of critique sheets. On this “flow” you can write both group and individual comments as the group is discussing. For an individual comment, write down the student’s name and the comment.

Most rounds of discussion will go 40-50 minutes. Some may be much shorter, depending on the knowledge and skill of the discussants. They should not go over an hour.

Sample Comments:

*“Samantha- good job of taking the leadership role. However, you could try to lessen your demanding tone.”*

*“Thomas- great job of presenting an article to back up your point.”*

*“Group- at times you guys seem to be drifting off-task. Thanks Jim, for leading the group back to the task.”*

It may be tempting for you to intervene, or give a comment. Under NO circumstances should you do this. It is not your job to provide comments to help the discussion or provide your own “oral critique.”

When ranking students in the round, take into consideration the following questions:

- Who was the positive leader in the round and was respectful of everyone in the group?
- Who provided strong, credible information to help the discussion progress?
- Who helped the group stay on task?
- Who asked helpful, thought-provoking questions?

- Who has a good understanding of the topic?

## Minnesota State High School League

### Critique Guidelines For Discussion

The following items are to be used by each judge in evaluating the contestants in  
**Discussion:**

**ATTITUDE:** objectivity, open-mindedness, consider all views, respect for others, cooperativeness, respect for group goal.

**ETHICS:** sincerity, preserves group goal, concern for group and its individuals rather than self-advancement.

**INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE:** offers own resources for advancement of group task, documentation.

**INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:** ability to give and receive feedback, awareness of group goals, understands appropriateness of contributions, maintenance of healthy group attitude.

**LEADERSHIP:** guiding the discussion, internal summary, resolving conflicts, encouraging others to share resources.

**LISTENING SKILLS:** offers verbal and non-verbal cues in response to others, ensures understanding before continuing.

**REASONING AND ANALYSIS:** sense of direction understands need for disagreement, thoughtfulness, awareness of task, inferences, deducting, support, use of fact, use of opinion.

**SPEAKING SKILLS:** clarity of expression, vocabulary, clarification techniques, (paraphrasing, questioning, etc.)

## Interpretation categories

### **Things to look for in all interpretation categories**

- Introduction sets up the theme, mood, and scene of the speech.
- Distinction between characters, if they are doing multiple characters.
- Bodily movement and gestures should be appropriate to the speech.
- Fluency and pace should vary accordingly.
- Characters should be believable.
- The speaker should establish a definite mood. Perhaps it changes throughout the piece but you should always know what mood is conveyed.
- Literary merit of selection (appropriate for the speaker and audience)
- Use of script is optional in ALL interpretation categories except extemp reading (use of book required) and storytelling (memorization required)

### **Extemporaneous Reading** (DRAW CATEGORY 30 minute prep, 6 min speak)

The story or poem will be different each time the student speaks. He or she must draw 3 stories or poems from this year's extemporaneous reading books, prose or poetry, and choose 1 to read.

The student should give you a drawn slip of paper indicating the story or poem to be read from the book.

#### Things to look for.

The introduction should be memorized

Use of the book is required when reading.

Overall, fine interpretation of the story

(When a speaker is finished, he or she may or may not watch other speakers.)

### **Storytelling** (DRAW CATEGORY 30 minute prep, 6 min speak)

The same procedure is followed for drawing as in extemp reading.

The storyteller should re-tell the story from the book in his/her own words.

#### Things to look for:

The entire delivery, including the introduction, should be memorized.

Emphasis should be placed on recreating the story using conversational narration style, fun and appropriate characters, and the creation of a fun, engaging, storytelling mood.

Oftentimes, students will end with a concluding statement that ties back to their introduction.

Characters may be exaggerated to convey the meaning of the selection.

**Creative Expression** (8 minutes)

This involves performance of a speech that is at least 80% original (written by the speaker)

The mood of the speech may be serious, humorous, or both.

Things to look for:

Solid writing ability and performance of the writing.

A clear message or theme that indicates some thought has been put into the creation of this speech.

The student may use pantomime, storytelling, or any variety of performance styles. The student may also walk around the room, unlike other interpretation categories.

**Serious Interpretation of Prose, Poetry, and Drama** (8 minutes MSHSL, 10 NFL)

Prose = A published story or novel.

Poetry = A published poem or cutting from a lyrical novel.

Drama = A published play/ script.

Students should be judged on his/her ability to convey the meaning of the selection through use of vocal, facial, and bodily expression.

**Duo Interpretation** (8 minutes MSHSL, 10 NFL)

The script can be taken from any genre of literature. Students may play multiple characters.

Only during the introduction or transitions may students look at each other. Usually, the 2 students will look straight ahead when talking to each other. The students do not need to make eye contact with the audience; however, eye contact with the audience is permitted. NFL rules do not place any restrictions on movement, while MSHSL rules allow for movement to convey transitions.

**Humorous Interpretation** (8 minutes MSHSL, 10 NFL)

This should be a funny speech and it can be taken from prose, poetry, or a play. It is not written by the student.

Things to look for

Wacky or exaggerated characters may help convey the humor.

Did you laugh? Was the audience engaged?

How difficult was the script? Were there many characters or just 1 character?

Were the characters distinct? (Could you tell who was who?)

Was the plot easy to follow?

## FAQ's

**Q: Should I ever make oral comments or critiques?**

A: No. Really, NEVER. Write your thoughts on the critique sheets.

**Q: Are scripts allowed?**

A: in almost all categories, yes. Some students keep their scripts in small 3-ring binders; others put them on construction paper or in page protectors. Any way is fine as long as it is neat. Note if the script is being used well. Avoid saying, “get rid of the script,” unless you feel the presentation would be better in some specific way without it. (I.E., the student could do more with gestures, or look at the audience more.)

**Q: Do I need to time the speakers?**

A: By section tournament time, the students are disqualified if they go over the time allowed for their category, but students shouldn't be penalized at invitational tournaments for going a little over time. If you are able to time, that is nice for the students (and you!) to see how long they are running (are they significantly over? Is their piece significantly short?), but timing is not required of the judge.

**Q: Should I comment on a speaker's appearance?**

A: You may certainly comment if the speaker looks nice. Yes you should comment if something is distracting—hair in the face, dangling earrings, extreme footwear, etc. However, be very careful with this. You must be tactful.

**Q: Should I comment if a student is a poor listener during a round?**

A: Yes! Feel free to comment if the speaker is a courteous listener – always comment if he/she is not!

**Q: Should I disqualify a student who “breaks the rules”?**

A: NO!! Disqualifications only occur at the section and state tournaments. If you feel a student has broken the rules, explain your concern on his/her critique sheet. Do not let this possible infringement impact how you rank the round.

**Q: How do NFL rules differ from MSHSL rules?**

A: Most invitational tournaments follow NFL rules for NFL categories. The NFL Categories (OO, Humor, Duo, Drama, Poetry, Prose) allow a 10 minute time limit and more movement and singing. MSHSL rules allow 8 minutes and limited movement and singing.

NFL rules can be found at [NFL.org](http://NFL.org)

MSHSL rules can be found at [MSHSL.org](http://MSHSL.org)

“A Judges Day At Work.” Follow the easy steps.

Find one of the heads coaches. They’re usually in the school cafeteria near the teams. If you cannot find them, check the judges lounge and they’ll find you there. They’ll give you a schedule of what you are judging and a map.

Start searching for your room about fifteen minutes before the round start time.

Once you find your room, sit in the middle of the room, towards the back, and begin filling out the ballot. Competitors will gradually come in to the room – collect critique sheets before calling the first speaker

**The Golden Rule:** Act like you know what you are doing, even if you think you don’t. Never admit that this is your first time (or second or third...) judging

As soon as you are completely ready – the first critique sheet is in front of you, the ballot is filled out, your stopwatch is set- you can call the first speaker’s name/code and her/she will walk to the front of the room and begin. Start you stop watch when the student begin speaking (or moving some way related to the speech.)

Listen intently. Concentrate on the speaker and pretend to love every minute of it, even if you don’t. You should write comments as the student is speaking. Take time to look at the student and show interest in their speech – kids are crushed and/or resentful or mistrusting of critiques when judges don’t look like they paid attention.

After the student is done speaking, applaud, write a few final comments, and then call the next speaker. The next speaker should be called within a minute or two at most.

Sometimes it is hard to keep the speakers in a round straight. Feel free to write notes somewhere to help you remember who is who – just keep these discreet. Also, if you use any method of ranking the speakers as they go (which is absolutely fine), keep that discreet as well.

After the last speaker, finish your ballot by indicating rank and rating, thank the students, and hand back their critique sheets or return them to the tab room (depending on the instructions for the tournament). **Do Not Give Oral Critiques.** \* You can ask students to step into the hall for a minute so you have time/space to finish up critiques and rankings; just don’t keep them waiting for more than a few minutes.

Bring your completed ballot to the ballot table (usually near the tab room). **DO NOT** dilly-dally around. The tab room needs your ballot ASAP.

After round three, stay for final round postings. Check to see if your code or name is listed on any of the postings. Please wait until you see all the postings before you either go watch a round for fun or go home – Thanks!

Sample Comments
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**Sample Comments on Vocal Delivery:**

Your articulation is really good *or* your diction needs to be sharper; I'm missing words.

Try putting more conviction in your voice. You need to show us in your face and voice- that you believe in what you are saying.

You need more expression in your voice when you say the line "\_\_\_\_\_"

You could use more pauses – really draw out this sad part – don't rush through that too fast – really feel the emotion.

Be careful that your ending is not too abrupt. We want to be prepared for it.

Avoid over dramatizing. Remember to portray the characters believably.

This presentation could use more levels – in pace, emotion, volume, and/or intensity. Right now, its all the same level – look for a place you can build more, and look for places you could bring it down and be slower/quieter.

Don't rush over funny lines. We wont laugh if we don't hear/can't understand them.

**Comments on Body posture/ Gestures**

You are very poised and confident – nice presence.

Make sure you wait until we are ready before you begin speaking.

When you're not talking remember to react facially when its appropriate (Duo)

Nice job of creating distinct characters – I could always tell who was who.

Bring gestures up to or above waist level and make them stronger and more convincing.

### **Sample Comments on Organization/ Content of Speech:**

I needed more road mapping at the beginning – I couldn't tell what your main points were going to be. (Info and OO)

You need more support for the arguments you are making, Perhaps some more examples and another quoted source or two would make your arguments more convincing.

Be careful – your speech tends to get a little persuasive in tone. Perhaps you could cover some of the negative aspects begin this topic (Info)

You could really use a V.A. when you talk about \_\_\_\_\_ - I would love to see a picture of the \_\_\_\_\_ you just described. (Info)

Your main points were well supported and I appreciated the fact that you gave credit to many sources. (OO, Info, and Extemp Speaking)

Perhaps you could have given a real brief explanation about how the problem with \_\_\_\_\_ began. This would help those of us who aren't familiar with that problem. (OO and Extemp)

I had trouble separating your analysis from the text of the great speech, Perhaps a step for transition would help or maybe a stronger change in your voice. (Great Speeches)

Your analysis could include more about why this speech is important today. (Great Speeches)

## Categories of critique

### Novice Level Interpretation

#### Piece Selection and Cutting:

- Is the literature appropriate for the student and for high school speech competition
- Does the cutting flow from one moment to another and is it clear?
- Is the overall message of the piece clear?

#### Introductions:

- Does the intro set up the mood, characters, literary merit, and theme of the piece?

#### Physical Interpretation:

- Does the student use strong gestures to communicate a feeling?
- Does the student have a controlled stance or stage presence?
- Are there distinct physical characters?
- Does the student use eye contact or focal points effectively?
- Does the student use facial expression to communicate a feeling or emotion?

#### Vocal Interpretation:

- Does the student incorporate vocal variety or paralanguage (pitch, tone, rate)?
- Does the student have adequate volume and voice projection?
- Does the student articulate well?
- Are there distinct vocal characters?

#### Believability and Honesty:

- Does the student create believable scenes, images, and characters?
- Does the student send an honest message?

### Novice Level Public Address

#### Topic Selection:

- Is the topic interesting and significant for audience?
- Does the student have a clear thesis statement, which indicates the purpose?

#### Research and Writing:

- Does the student provide adequate sources supporting the information presented?
- Are the sources current?
- Is the writing clear and colorful?

#### Organization:

- Does the student use a preview of the main ideas, transitions, and a review of the main ideas?
- Does the student make original and accurate connections between ideas?

#### Physical Delivery:

- Does the student use strong gestures to complement the ideas in the speech?
- Does the student have a controlled stance or stage presence?
- Does the student use direct eye contact to connect with the audience?

Vocal Delivery:

Does the student incorporate vocal variety or paralanguage?

Does the student have adequate volume and voice projection?

Does the student articulate well?

Is the student “conversational” in overall delivery?

### Varsity Level Interpretation

First, does the student have all the basic skills under control? (See Novice Interpretation)  
Continue to use those basic standards to critique varsity speakers, yet open your critique include more specific comments.

Characterization (especially in humor, drama, creative, duo, or storytelling)

Suggest other vocal choices for multiple characters that will further develop a more specific/distinct/believable/\_\_\_\_\_ character.

Suggest other physical choices for multiple characters that will further develop a more \_\_\_\_\_ character

Provide thoughts, ideas, and insights about the character's personality, feeling towards other characters, and feelings about the situation.

The Creation of Emotions and Moments (Cite specific lines from the speech)

Suggest other emotional choices for specific moments.

Suggest the use of pause, rate, volume, pitch, inflection, and articulation in specific places to create more humorous or dramatic moments

Suggest the use of specific gestures or movements to create more humorous or dramatic moments.

Provide thoughts or ideas about the themes of the selection to help the student think through the more complex moments of the performance.

### Varsity Level Public Address

First, does the student have all the basic skills under control? (See Novice Public Address)  
Continue to use those basic standards to critique the varsity speaker, yet open your critique to include more specific comments.

Research and Writing:

Suggest other sources to expand the student's knowledge of the topic.

Suggest other avenues for the student to explore.

Suggest ways to polish up the writing itself. Cite specific areas where writing needs work.

Look for minute flaws in the student's logic and arguments and/or ambiguous connections between ideas

Suggest ways to improve connections between ideas

Vocal Delivery

Suggest use of pause, rate, volume, pitch, inflection, and articulation in specific place to create variety and understanding

Physical Delivery

Suggest the use of specific gestures/movement to create clarity of understanding.

## Speech Vocabulary

**Category/Event:** Both terms are referring to the same thing; these refer to the 13 different types of speeches given.

**Script/Selection/Piece:** These are all terms used in reference to a student's speech.

**DE or Double Entering:** When a student is competing in more than one category.

**Bodily expression:** AKA "non-verbals" includes things like stance, posture, facial expression and gestures

**Pops:** When a student "pops" from one character into another (generally used in humorous instances)

**Meld:** When a student "melds" from one character to another, generally slower than a pop. (Used in more dramatic instances)

**Focal Points:** Often students will use specific focal points to delineate between multiple characters in interp.

**Blocking:** AKA "tech". The movement that occurs during any interp event, pantomime, intricate transitions, etc.

**P.A. Categories:** stands for Public address category. Same as public speaking categories.

**Road Mapping/Sign Posting:** A preview of the main points that the student will give in the intro to many P.A. categories

**V.A.'s:** VA stands for visual aids – which students may only use in informative.

**Draw Categories:** Categories where a student draws out of a hat the speech topic or story that he/she will be speaking on for that round. (Extemp Reading, Extemp Speaking, Storytelling)

**NFL:** The National Forensics League. This is the National Speech and Debate Society. NFL only recognizes the following categories: Extemporaneous Speaking, Original Oratory, Duo Interpretation, Dramatic Interpretation and Humorous Interpretation.

**MSHSL:** The Minnesota State High School League Sponsors competitive Speech in Minnesota.

**Tab Room:** The room where all of the results are "tabulated" for the tournament – it's most often where you turn in your ballots.

**Ballots:** The sheet where you do your ranking of the round. The Tab Room needs this immediately after each round.

**Critiques** The sheets of paper students will give the judge for them to make helpful, constructive comments on.

Flow: The blank sheets of paper that discussion judges write their comments on. The flows are then photocopied for every student who was in that discussion round.