

Schedule for 2018 – 2019

Fall Warm Up Meet: Saturday, October 6, 2018 at JP11
Final Meet: Saturday, December 8, 2018 at JP11

General Rules

(Created by Debbie Figueroa; updated August 2018)

Speech and Drama competitions are an excellent outlet to help our children gain confidence and poise. However, it is still a competition. Some students will rank higher than others; some students will be elated and some saddened. Each competition is aimed at helping students to improve, while the final competition actually ranks the competitors through a process of elimination. Also, the way to evaluate and rank each student is a subjective one—relying on the opinion of the judge(s).

-- In the warm-up meet(s), each participant will perform only one piece in two different rounds (although, if desired, students may perform in up to two events—contact Kevin Steinberg about this). Students may choose to perform a piece from either Section A or Section B at either meet. At the final competition, participants may perform up to two pieces: one from Section A and one from Section B. Participants in the final tournament may perform any piece, even if they did not place with it in the others meets, or even if they did not perform it at all. Each participant is limited to two pieces, one from each section, for the final competition. Coaches will determine if they are ready for a competitive performance.

The categories are divided as follows:

Section A:

**Dramatic Interpretation
Duet Acting
Storytelling
Poetry**

Section B:

**Humorous Interpretation
Oratory
Prose
TV Commercial
Two Man Improvisation**

Tournament management software will be used to assign contestants to rooms. Although in most cases the program tries to assign students from the same school to different rooms, in some cases due to the size of the event, Speechease must assign students from the same school to the same room.

--Students will be timed on each performance. In the first two meets, the time will be recorded on the ballots but students will not be counted off for time. This will allow the student to make the proper changes to stay in the time limits by the final competition. **In the final competition, failure to stay within the time limits will result in disqualification.** A grace period of 5 seconds will be used for over or under time in order to allow for human error. For Two-Man Improvisation only, judges will display time cards to notify students when they are within thirty seconds of the time limit (a yellow card) and when they have reached the time limit (a red card). All other events will require that the student adequately prepare in advance for the time limit.

-- If they wish their judges to have time keeping assistance, schools must provide their own time keepers. Should a school choose not to provide time keepers to assist the judges from the school, their judges may keep time themselves or request any other adult in the room to keep time. Time keepers may be students in grades 5th and up, or any adult volunteer. Anyone over 18 must be Safe Environment cleared.

--Judges can be **parents, teachers, college students, or high school sophomores, juniors or seniors.** Anyone over 18 must be Safe Environment cleared. Schools are responsible for providing only Safe Environment cleared adults as volunteers and for determining the Safe Environment clearance status of all adult volunteers.

--**Judges will be required to comment on all sections of the ballot.** Coaches will need to spend some time "coaching" their volunteer judges prior to submitting them as a judge on your school's behalf so they know how to provide **constructive** feedback. Please remind them to be thorough and constructive. Also, remind them that these are middle school students who are still developing their competitive speaking skills.

-- In the first two meets, judges will be given a point system in which to grade the students. Each section of the ballot will be rated from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). The judge will total up the scores from each section on the ballot and record the total on the bottom of the ballot. The scores from the two rounds will be totaled and awards based on a scale. Only a perfect score of 60 will receive a trophy and a blue ribbon. All other scores will receive ribbons based on a point scale. Award levels for the first two meets are as follows:

Trophy: 60 points (perfect score)

Blue Ribbon: 57 - 59

Red Ribbon: 50 - 56 points

White Ribbon: 40 - 49 points

(no ribbon for scores of 39 and below)

--Judges will return all ballots to the ballot table. **They will need to wait to have the ballots checked by the staff to ensure that scores are recorded correctly and the ballots are signed by the judge.** After ballots are processed in the tab room, coaches will pick up the ballots from the box on the ballot table and return them to their students.

--All students, parents, and coaches should use a proper chain of command in filing a complaint. Parents and students must tell their concerns to their coach and not the judge. Only coaches can lodge a complaint to the coordinator or staff representative. We must remember that most judges are well-meaning people who have volunteered to help us put on a successful competition. However, it is still up to the judge(s) to rate each student.

--Please remember that each piece (except TV Commercials, Oratory, and Two-Man Improv) must be a published piece. Be careful when using the Internet. Not all pieces on the internet are published. A student may not use a piece that he/she wrote and published on the Internet. When there is doubt check with the Library of Congress and/or ISBN information.

--Introductions may include limited movement, if permitted by the rules of the event, but should not be counted off if there is none. Judges will be informed of this rule. See the specific movement rules for each category.

--Students must wear appropriate clothing. Boys are encouraged to wear slacks, a polo shirt or nice dress shirt, and dress shoes. Girls are encouraged to wear a skirt (to the knee) or slacks and a nice blouse. (No low-cut, spaghetti straps, or backless tops.) Flip-flops and sneakers are discouraged. If a student is wearing a costume for TV Commercials, then discretion and modesty needs to be considered when deciding on a costume. Changing from costumes to appropriate dress for the awards ceremony is recommended. Please keep in mind that we are in a Catholic School environment. Also, remember that how the students present themselves in appearance may be reflected in how they are judged (depending on the judge). The coaches are responsible for enforcing dress code. Last but not least, **a student's clothing should NOT identify his/her school.**

--Coaches, students and parents must remember that each piece be appropriate with no obscene language. If it is not allowed in your school, it's not allowed in the competition.

--The school numbers will be randomized so that judges do not know what school the student attends. Please remind students not to say what school they attend—even if the judge asks. Judges will be reminded of this rule.

--Parents are encouraged to help their children in practicing. Remember that the coach is limited on the time to practice with each child. Coaches should send out the ballots to help parents and students understand the rating process.

--Remember to encourage the students to enjoy themselves; tell them to try their best and explain that it is a (somewhat) subjective competition. Ultimately, it's the experience that is important—not the ribbon or trophy.

--Coaches need to be responsible for training their judges and for following Safe Environment Clearances. **Any volunteer over 18 must be Safe Environment cleared and show proof by either a badge or other documentation.**

General Information about the Final Tournament

There is no qualifying for the final tournament. The coach determines who is prepared to go the final tournament. A student may use a selection that he or she has previously performed during the same year, if desired. *Students should not perform pieces that they have performed in prior years.* Students should not copy pieces or blocking from other students.

The number of rounds in the final competition will be based on the number of entries in the event. We will try to have at least two rounds in each event; however events with fewer than ten entrants will go straight to finals. Semifinal and final rounds will be judged by a panel of three judges. Rounds for sections will be staggered so that each contestant will be able to perform two different pieces, one in each both sections. **Coaches will need to be prepared to be judges at the final competition.**

The final competition will use ballots with points. Contestants will be ranked by judge's preferences using the UIL judge's preference tabbing system. The judges will not confer to decide upon rankings. The round completion sheet will reflect the order in which each judge individually ranked the contestants in the room. Results will be posted in the common area and ballots returned to the ballot room. The coach can pick up the ballots after each round and share with the participants. Only the top three ranking participants in each category will receive trophies. Finalists who do not place will receive a ribbon.

*We reserve the right to make changes if necessary. You will be notified of any changes.

What to Look for in a Performance

(updated 2014)

Introduction:

A good introduction will heighten the interest of the audience. It should set the background, if needed, mood, and setting (if applicable) of the selection. It must be memorized and include author and title of the selection. It cannot include the contestant's name or school affiliation. TV Commercials will not have an introduction. Oratory will have the introduction built in as the main idea of the speech.

Selection:

Remember to judge the presentation of the selection, not the selection itself. The judge may not like the selection, however it is the way the selection is presented. It should be well edited so that it is clear and unified. It must be a piece published in written form, except for the TV Commercial, Two Man Improv, and Oratory, which must be original. The reader should be able to convey the meaning of the selection.

Vocal Control:

The contestant should be heard and understood. The voice should change for moods, emotions, and characters, and be consistently used throughout the piece. Be aware of dental appliances or breathing problems such as asthma, and how these may affect the pronunciation. Don't count off for them.

Body Control:

Every movement should have meaning. Prose and Poetry Readings should use only gestures from the waist up. All other categories should use full body movement. Facial expressions and eye contact are very important.

Approach to Audience:

The contestant should engage the entire audience, not just the judge. Please sit toward the middle of the room and not to one side, because acting has been practiced facing the audience.

Presentation and Characterization:

Moods and emotions should be communicated to the audience. Characters should be distinguished and consistent with voices, mannerisms, and facial expressions.