

SPEECH JUDGES' HANDBOOK 2023-24

EAST RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

SPEECH

Est. 2010

#speechridge

East Ridge Speech - SPEECHRIDGE

Thank you for taking the time to judge for us this season! We incredibly appreciate you and your willingness to volunteer a day (or more) for this team and its students. In this packet, we did our best to compile information regarding speech categories, what you will do as a judge, and some extra information.

If you have any questions, please ask! We want you to enjoy judging and have confidence in your ability.

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Speech Vocabulary

- **TEASER:** In interpretation (acting events), this is a short cutting/excerpt from the piece that comes before the introduction
- **SCRIPT/SELECTION/CUTTING/PIECE:** These are different terms used to describe the student's speech.
 - “The selection I chose for Storytelling was The Magic Fiddle.”
 - “My piece for Drama is called When Women Were Dragons by Kelly Barnhill.”
- **CATEGORY/EVENT:** Both terms mean the same thing. It is essentially the name/type of speech the student is giving.
 - For instance, Original Oratory is both a category and an event
- **PREP:** Students in draw categories have 30 minutes to prepare their selected speech.
 - “My prep started at 9:00 am, so I’ll speak at 9:30 AM.”
- **RFD:** Reason for Decision. This is a statement written at the end of a ballot by a judge to inform the student of their justification for rank/placement.
 - For example: “Your piece and characters were very entertaining. However, I found it a bit difficult to distinguish between two of your characters due to their voices sounding similar. For that reason, I ranked you 4th rather than 3rd.”
 - By doing this, you are still giving positive reinforcement and constructive criticism but justifying ranking them lower or higher.
- **NSDA/NFL:** National Speech and Debate Association, National Forensic League. This is the national organization/society for the U.S. They are the ones who host the National Tournament in June every year.
- **NIETOC:** National Individual Events Tournament of Champions. This is another national tournament that students may qualify for throughout the competitive season.
- **MSHSL:** Minnesota State High School League. They sponsor competitive speech in the state of Minnesota.

Interpretation Categories

Interpretation Categories are acting categories that can be humorous and/or serious in nature. It involves interpreting or bringing to life a piece of literature.

Things to Look For in ALL Interpretation Categories

1. A teaser or short excerpt from the piece to offer a preview of what the speech will be about.
2. An introduction that sets up the theme, mood, and scene of the speech. Frequently, there will be a moral/lesson.
 - a. All students **MUST** verbally cite the speech they are performing.
 - i. An example is "The Book Thief by Markus Zusak."
3. Distinction between characters verbally.
 - a. When portraying multiple characters, they should have a different voice for each one; that way, they are distinct enough.
 - b. They can vary by pitch and accent or have other "quirks" like a nasal voice or lisp.
4. Distinction between characters physically. Bodily movement and gestures.
 - a. When portraying multiple characters, each should be distinguished physically through body posture.
 - i. Hunched over, standing tall, limp, etc.
5. Fluency and pace should vary accordingly.
 - a. There should be variety in the pace or speed of the piece.
6. Characters should be believable (they should fit the scene).
7. The speaker should establish a definite mood. It may change throughout the piece, but you should always know what mood is being conveyed.
8. Literary merit of the selection (appropriate for the speaker and audience).
9. Script use is optional in ALL interpretation categories except storytelling (memorization required) and extemporaneous reading (use of book required).
10. Sample Comments for all interpretation categories:
 - a. Slow down a little so we can hear each word and picture the scene. It's difficult for us to listen when you rush through the details.
 - b. Be careful that your ending is not too abrupt. Help us prepare for it.

- c. Avoid “over-dramatizing.” Remember to portray the character's believability (especially in serious drama, prose, and duo). You appear poised, comfortable, and confident.

Creative Expression (10 minutes)

1. This involves the performance of a speech that is at least 80% original (written by the speaker).
2. The mood of the speech may be serious, humorous, or both. Sometimes, a creative expression speech is a lot like a humorous interp. Or, it could also be like a serious drama.
3. Things to look for:
 - a. Solid writing ability and performance of the writing.
 - b. A clear message or theme that indicates some thought has been put into the creation of this speech.
4. The student may use pantomime, storytelling, or any variety of performance styles. The student may also walk around the room, unlike other interpretation categories.
5. Sample Comments:
 - a. I really liked how you carried a distinct theme throughout your selection.
 - b. Inventive or imaginative writing style
 - c. Wonderful use of details
 - d. Creative concepts, but difficult for your listeners to track with your train of thought.

Dramatic Interpretation, Serious (10 minutes)

1. The type of literature in this category is a play or screenplay (TV, movie)
2. Students should be judged on their ability to convey the meaning of the selection through the use of vocal, facial, and limited bodily expression. See “What to look for in all interp categories.”
3. Sample Comments:
 - a. You did an excellent job building this selection to its climax.
 - b. I would have liked to have seen more tension in your face and voice during the argument scene.

Duo Interpretation (10 minutes)

1. The script can be taken from any genre of literature.

2. Only during the introduction or transitions may the students look at each other. Usually, the two 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.
3. Movement is restricted. Students are allowed at most about 2-3 steps. These movements should be used as transitions.
4. Students are NOT allowed to look at/make direct eye contact or touch one another.
5. Sample Comments:
 - a. The two of you have a nice chemistry. I can tell you enjoy doing this together. When you're not talking, remember to react facially when it is appropriate.

Extemporaneous Reading (7 minutes, Draw)

1. 30-minute preparation, 7-minute speaking limit
2. The story will be different each time the student speaks. They must draw three stories from this year's extemp reading book and choose 1 to read.
3. The student's drawn slip of paper indicating the story to be read should be given to the judge.
4. Things to look for:
 - a. The introduction should be memorized.
 - b. Use of the book is required when reading.
 - c. Overall, there is a nuanced interpretation of the story.
5. When a speaker is finished, they may or may not watch other speakers (depending on the size of the room and the conditions you prefer to work under).
6. Sample Comments:
 - a. You obviously chose a selection you like.
 - b. You were very familiar with the piece, and I could tell you were enjoying yourself throughout your performance.
 - c. Remember that you're not just reading to us; you are interpreting the literature.
 - d. Build this story to its climax and convey its meaning to us.

Humorous Interpretation (10 minutes)

1. This should be a funny piece that can be taken from prose, poetry, or a play. The student does not write it.

2. It should amuse, give enjoyment, and create laughter.
3. Things to look for:
 - a. Wacky or exaggerated characters may help convey the humor.
 - b. Did you laugh?
 - c. How complex was the script? Were there many characters or just one character?
 - d. You should be able to distinguish between the many characters.
 - e. You should be able to follow the plot of the story easily.
4. Sample Comments:
 - a. Your characters were entertaining and so distinct! I always knew who was talking. Don't rush over funny lines. We won't laugh if we don't hear them.

Poetry Interpretation (10 minutes)

1. This is a published poem or a collection of multiple poems.
2. Students should be judged on their ability to convey the meaning of the selection through the use of vocal, facial, and limited bodily expression. See "What to look for in all interp categories."
3. Sample Comments:
 - a. You did an excellent job building this selection to its climax.
 - b. I would have liked to have seen more tension in your face and voice during the argument scene.

Program Oral Interpretation (10 minutes)

1. This is a mix of stories, plays, and poems. There should be multiple types of literature.
2. It can be both humorous and dramatic in tone.
3. It should revolve around a singular theme or lesson.
4. It is designed to test a student's ability to intersplice multiple types of literature into a single, cohesive performance.
5. A manuscript is required (typically a small black binder) and may be used as a prop within the performance if the performer maintains control of the manuscript at all times.

Prose Interpretation (10 minutes)

1. This is a short story or novel that is performed with a serious tone.

2. Students should be judged on their ability to convey the meaning of the selection through the use of vocal, facial, and limited bodily expression. See "What to look for in all interp categories."
3. Sample Comments:
 - a. You did an excellent job building this selection to its climax.
 - b. I would have liked to have seen more tension in your face and voice during the argument scene.

Storytelling (7 minutes. Draw)

1. 30-minute preparation, 7-minute speaking limit
2. The same procedure is followed for drawing as in extemp reading
3. The storyteller should retell the story from the book in her OWN words.
4. Things to look for:
 - a. The entire delivery, including the introduction, should be memorized.
 - b. Emphasis should be placed on recreating the story using a conversational narration style, fun and appropriate characters, and the creation of a fun, engaging storytelling mood.
5. Characters may be exaggerated to convey the meaning of the selection.
6. Sample Comments:
 - a. Your characters were very fun, distinct, and energetic!
 - b. I thought you could have focused more on the theme or message of the selection in your introduction.

Public Address Categories

Things to Look for in ALL Public Address Categories

1. Delivery of public address is similar. All should be sincere, pleasant, and convincing.
2. Steps can be taken at appropriate transitional points in the speech.
3. Gestures should enhance the meaning of the speech.
4. Face should show involvement, concern, enthusiasm, etc.
5. The speech should follow a structure and be well-organized.
 - a. Introduction, three main points, conclusion
6. Sample Comments:

- a. Your articulation is precise; now, work for more vocal variety. Bring gestures up to waist level and make them stronger and more convincing.
- b. You are a very poised, comfortable, engaging speaker, and you clearly communicate your ideas to the audience.
- c. Try to put more conviction in your voice.
- d. Show us that you believe in what you're saying.

Discussion (up to 60 minutes)

1. It's the effort of the group (typically six students) to try and reach a solution to a problem through the informal exchange of facts, judgment, etc.
2. The goal is to try and form a consensus rather than a majority rule/having someone "win."
3. Ask a judge, ask yourself
 - a. Did the discussant's contributions add to the group effort?
 - b. Did the discussant possess sufficient information, and was the information high quality?
 - c. Did the discussant's contributions reflect an understanding of significant issues?
 - d. Did the discussant's behavior reflect a respect for the dignity and worth of other participants?
 - e. Did the discussant exhibit active listening skills?

Extemporaneous Speaking (7 minutes, Draw)

1. 30-minute preparation period, 7-minute speaking limit
2. The speech is an original synthesis of current facts and opinions on a topic drawn by the contestant. Speakers may choose from either International or U.S. topics
3. The Judge(s) should consider the quality of information presented by the speaker, together with the speaker's use of that information to support the thesis.
4. The student should be responsible for
 - a. Strict adherence to the question drawn.
 - b. Well-chosen information relative to the question drawn.

- c. Organization of the material.
 - d. Effective delivery.
5. A contestant may use one side of one 3" x 5" notecard during the speech delivery.

Great Speeches (10 minutes)

1. This speech intends to take a great speech from history or modern times and examine why it was great through the student's analysis of the rhetorical model the author of the speech used and, perhaps, some expert support.
2. Things to look for:
 - a. Attention-grabbing introduction, which may or may not include an excerpt from the great speech.
 - b. Analysis should be interspersed with text from the great speech. How much analysis and how much speech will vary.
 - c. Analysis should examine why the speech is important, what impact it had on its audience, and what rhetorical devices/model the author used –
3. The speech can be historical or contemporary.
4. Several speeches around one theme could be used, or several speeches by one speaker could be used.
5. Sample Comments:
 - a. I needed help separating your analysis from the text of the great speech.
 - b. A step for transition or a more substantial change in your voice may help.
 - c. Your analysis could include more about why this speech is important today.

Impromptu (7 minutes)

1. Students have a TOTAL of 7 minutes to select a topic, brainstorm ideas, outline, and then deliver a speech.
2. Students typically use 2-3 minutes to prep their speech
3. The speech is given with little to no notes
4. Structure: introduction, body, conclusion
5. Tone: can be light-hearted and/or serious

Informative Speaking (10 minutes)

1. This speech is intended to educate its audience about a meaningful, worthwhile topic.
2. The speech should NOT be persuasive.
3. Things to look for:
 - a. Attention-getting introduction
 - b. Clear thesis statement and preview of main points of the speech
 - i. Example Informative thesis: "The Crayola Crayon Company has a unique history, and its future looks as colorful as ever."
4. Clear speech organization (usually, a preview of the main points after the thesis will clarify this).
5. Credibility – at least two credible sources are expected.
6. Sample Comment:
 - a. Be careful - your speech tends to get a little persuasive in tone.
 - b. Perhaps you could cover some of the opposing arguments, as well.

Original Oratory (10 minutes)

1. This is a persuasive speech intended to get its listeners to think or feel a certain way about a particular topic.
2. Usually, the topics are value-based rather than policy-based, although either approach is acceptable.
3. Things to look for:
 - a. Attention-getting introduction.
 - b. Clear thesis or central idea statement near the beginning of the speech.
 - i. Example Original Oratory thesis: "Extreme competitiveness in our society has spiraled out of control, and we must become aware of its destructive consequences."
4. Clear organization of the speech. Usually: problem, cause, solution.
5. Credibility – strong, worthwhile examples are cited, and sources should be quoted (at least two sources).
6. Sample Comments:
 - a. Your thesis statement seemed like it needed to be clarified.
 - b. I'm having problems following the structure of your speech. Perhaps the organization could be cleared up a bit.

- c. I'm looking for some credible support for the arguments you are making.
- d. Some examples and a quoted source or two would help make your arguments more convincing.

Judging Expectations

Schedule/How To

1. Pack a bag for the tournament; you will be here for the day.
 - a. Include a laptop, a laptop charger, phone or timer, notebook/notepad, pens/pencils, drinks (water, coffee, etc.), and snacks. Lunch is provided for Judges.
2. Please arrive at the school at least 20 minutes before the competition starts.
3. When you arrive, please head to the Judge's Lounge and text a coach that you have arrived.
4. Please log in to Speechwire and connect to the WiFi.
5. Usually, there will be a brief meeting for judges in the Judges' Lounge.
6. Start searching for your room about 10 minutes before the round start time.
7. Once you find your room, **sit in the middle of the room**, toward the back, and log into SpeechWire.
8. Once logged in, select the round you will be judging and see if any students are double-entered (DE).
9. Students will gradually come into the room. Greet the students. Be friendly. Remember, they may be very nervous.
10. As soon as you are completely ready -- the ballot is open, your stopwatch is ready, and most of the students are there, you can begin the round by clicking the link on your category that says "Click here to begin round."
 - a. This notifies the tournament staff that you have begun and the tournament runs smoothly/on time.
11. Welcome the students and ask if any double-entered students need to speak first.
 - a. Typically, students go in the order that has been assigned, BUT if a student needs to go to another round afterward, they get the priority to speak first.

- b. If two or more students are double-entered, revert back to the speaking order for those who are double-entered.
 - i. For example, both Alex and Sam are double-entered. However, Alex is listed as the 3rd speaker, whereas Sam is listed as the 5th. Alex will speak first, then Sam, and then you will continue at the beginning of the original speaking order.
12. Call the first speaker's name (or code) and clap to welcome them to the front of the room. They will walk to the front of the room and begin once you have made eye contact with them and nodded to indicate you are ready to begin.
13. Start the timer/stopwatch when the student begins speaking.
14. Listen intently. Concentrate on the speaker and pretend to love it even if you do not. You should write comments as the student is speaking. Take time to look at the student and show interest by smiling, nodding your head, or laughing when appropriate.
15. After the student is done speaking, stop your timer/stopwatch and applaud.
16. Write down the total time of the speech and some final comments, then click on the button titled "Save Comments." This is to ensure your notes are saved.
17. Once you are done typing comments, call the next speaker. The next speaker should be called within a minute or two. Repeat this process until all students have given their speeches.
18. After the last speaker, thank the students and tell them good luck for the rest of the day.
 - a. Do NOT give any feedback whatsoever.
19. Take a few minutes to finish your thoughts, give the ranks/speaker points, and submit your ballot.
20. Once you are done, you can pack up your things and leave the room. Feel free to head to the judge's lounge.
21. Relax... Usually, you'll have 20-30 minutes until the second round begins.
22. Go to your next round at the assigned time! There are typically three preliminary rounds and one final round.
23. Once finals are completed, you can leave the school and head home. Please check in with a coach so they are aware you are going.

Time Signals

1. Draw Categories:
 - a. Students will typically ask for a countdown when there are 2 minutes left, 1 minute left, 30 seconds left, 15 seconds left, and 0 seconds left.
 - b. When asked to do so, make a note on a paper or document so you are aware
 - c. When there are 2 minutes left (5 minutes into the speech), hold up two fingers high above your head
 - d. When there is 1 minute left (6 minutes into the speech), hold up one finger high above your head
 - e. When there are 30 seconds left (6 minutes 30 seconds into the speech), hold up your hand in the letter "C."
 - f. When there are 0 seconds left (7 minutes), hold up your hand in a fist
2. All others:
 - a. Students will typically ask for 2 minutes, 1 minute, and 0 seconds
 - b. When there are 2 minutes left (8 minutes into the speech), hold up two fingers high above your head
 - c. When there is 1 minute left (9 minutes into the speech), hold up 1 finger high above your head
 - d. When there are 0 seconds left (10 minutes), hold up your hand in a fist
3. Most students will verbalize and show what they need for time signals. If you need clarification, please ask the student to reiterate or demonstrate what they need. A few extra seconds to ensure you are on the same page will help you throughout the round.

Ranks and Speaker Points

1. Ranks
 - a. Students are given a rank of 1 to 5.
 - i. 1 being the highest/1st place
 - ii. 5 being the lowest/5th place.
 - b. Even if there are more than five students, you cannot give them a rank lower than 5.

2. Speaker Points

- a. The highest amount a student can be given is 100
 - i. Think of 100 like 100%; it is almost like a grade
- b. The distinction between each speaker should only be about 1-2 points
- c. Typically, students are NOT given lower than an 85
- d. Example
 - i. 1/99, 2/98, 3/97, 4/96, 5/95, 5/94
- e. When there are more than five students in a round, it is vital to ensure the speaker points are distinct so they can rank.

What (Not) to Say

1. **The Golden Rule**: Act like you know what you are doing, even if you think you don't.
 - a. *Never* admit that this is your first time (or second or third) time judging.
2. Once a round is over, follow the "5 Minute 5 Mile" Rule
 - a. Either wait AT LEAST 5 minutes after the round or when you are "5 miles" away from the room to speak about the round and/or pieces you saw.
 - b. We never know who is listening, who is around, and what school they're from as a student, coach, judge, or family member.
 - c. You may not like a speech, and that's okay! However, do not go around the school bashing a student's speech and/or with their name specifically.
 - i. Remember, these students are children. They're young, learning, and may be new to a category or speech overall.

Tips and Tricks

How to Rank

1. Keep a list or create a table that you update after each speaker. This way, you rank as you go rather than trying to scramble and remember it all at the end.
2. Write the student's name at the top of each column.
3. As you go down each row, you update your ranking.
 - a. Look at the table below for an example.

Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3	Speaker 4	Speaker 5	Speaker 6				
1									
1						2			
2						3	1		
3						4	1	2	
3						4	1	2	5
4						5	1	2	5 (6)

Writing Ballots

1. I find it easier to write my comments on a separate document (Microsoft Word or Google Document) because I can misspell words, be too blunt in feedback, or struggle to verbalize what I'm trying to say.
 - a. This way, before submitting my final comments, I can review grammar/spelling and reword or edit anything I had listed.
 - b. Additionally, this is where you could write your Reason for Decision (RFD).
2. Follow the Compliment Sandwich method.
 - a. When writing comments for students, we want to highlight what they are doing well and mention areas where they could improve.
 - b. The best way to offer feedback is to "sandwich" constructive criticism with positive reinforcement.
 - i. For example, You have great energy, and I can tell you genuinely enjoy this piece. (Positive/Compliment) However, you may have been too energetic, as you were speaking fast, and I found it difficult to hear exactly what you said. (Constructive Criticism) But I followed along since your voices and body language help distinguish characters from one another. (Positive/Compliment)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: How do I know how to distinguish/rank speakers?

A: Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Did I understand what was going on? Could I follow along?
- Was their argument/claim proven with their piece?
- Did the lesson/moral they spoke about in the introduction appear in their piece?
- Were their characters distinct, both verbally and physically?
- Was their speech well organized and structured?

It can be difficult to rank one student above another, especially when you believe them to perform at the same level or skill. In this instance, you'll need to get nitpicky. What did one student do better than the other? Did one piece resonate with you more?

Q: Can I comment on a speaker's appearance?

A: Yes and No. You must be careful with this. If their appearance is distracting from their performance, it may be worth mentioning. You must be tactful.

- Example: A student's hair is falling in their face and blocking their eyes. Yes, you can comment and recommend that they style their hair in a way that doesn't affect their ability to perform through facial expressions.
- Example: A student is wearing tennis shoes with their suit, and it doesn't match. They should wear dress shoes or flats. No, you shouldn't comment on this. We don't know a student's financial situation or their comfort level in attire, and we need to be respectful of that.

Q: Can I comment on whether a student is a poor listener during a round?

A: Yes! We expect students to give each other the same respect they want/desire out of an audience member. If they are on their phone, not paying attention, falling asleep, etc., give them a comment.

Q: If a student uses their script, how should it be used? Does it affect anything?

A: Some students keep scripts in a small binder or paste them on black construction paper. Both options are acceptable as long as they are neat.

Q: What do I do if a student's speech goes over the time limit?

A: Make sure you write down the time on the ballot. At the first 2-3 tournaments, students shouldn't be penalized for going a little overtime, as they're still learning. If a student goes overtime by 5-10 seconds, it's understandable. But it's a point of concern if they're 30 seconds or more overtime. However, once we get to our invitational (East Ridge), the only note is that they shouldn't be ranked first.

Q: Should I mark a student lower if they aren't memorized?

A: No, while the goal for most students is to be memorized, remember that we judge them based on their ability to give/perform a speech. If they are more confident, you can follow along with what they are saying, and their points are distinct, they are still good speakers.

Helpful Links

SpeechWire - Judge Login: <https://live.speechwire.com/>

MSHSL Rules and Policies, Events, Etc.:
https://www.mshsl.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Speech%20rules%20and%20policies_2022-2023.pdf

NSDA Competition Events Guide:
https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Combined-Competition-Events-At-A-Glance_2023-10-12.pdf

East Ridge Speech Website: <https://www.erhsspeech.com/>