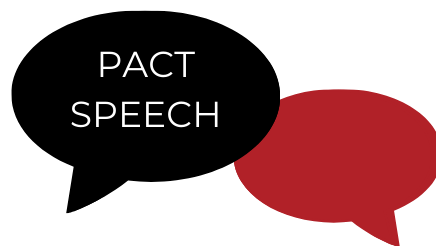




**PACT**  
Charter School

**PACT SPEECH  
JUDGES  
HANDBOOK**



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## **WELCOME!**

Thank you for volunteering to dedicate your time to be a Speech Judge. You are an important part of the PACT Speech Team and we are grateful for your support.

We value our ability to place high quality judges into the competitions we go to, as we know that Saturday competitions are one of the primary sources kids have for feedback on their speeches. But whether you are a seasoned veteran or totally new to the activity, your feedback will be valuable to them. We always emphasize to our students that their speeches need to be engaging and understandable to a wide range of audiences, so we love for them to get input from a wide range of judges, from lay people to veteran coaches.

Your willingness to judge also enables us to free up our coaching staff to go and watch their own students in rounds, or go watch particular categories to scout for trends and competition.

And we hope that by judging for this activity, you'll also gain a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the incredible work that these high school students are doing! So thank you, sincerely, for taking the time to further invest in this activity with us!

Warmly,

Christal Ruppert  
Head Coach

## INTERP EVENTS GENERAL JUDGING CRITERIA

- An introduction that establishes a theme or moral for the story or scene
- A clear plot or story with exposition, rising action, a climax, falling action and resolution
- Clear and consistent characterizations
- Character transitions (pops) are crisp and specific. If these are sloppy, it might be difficult to determine who is talking or what is happening in the story
- Creative use of movement and body to illustrate the story. However, if there's too much it can be overwhelming or confusing to watch
- Respect for other participants by being good audience members with active listening skills

	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>OBJECTIVE</i>	<i>ADDITIONAL JUDGING CRITERIA</i>
<i>CREATIVE EXPRESSION</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation of material written by the speaker</li> <li>• Usually written as a funny story, but may also be serious or poetry</li> <li>• Time limit: 10 minutes</li> </ul>	To encourage creativity through writing and performance techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative concept or premise</li> <li>• Strong use of language and/or dialogue</li> </ul>
<i>DUO</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two students work together to tell a story or a scene</li> <li>• May be humorous or serious</li> <li>• Students may play single or multiple characters</li> <li>• Students may move around the performance space freely, but may not make direct body or eye contact</li> <li>• Time limit: 10 minutes</li> </ul>	To convey emotion and environment through a variety of performance techniques focusing on the relationships and interactions between the characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork and balanced performance between the partners (one doesn't speak 2x as much as the other, etc.)</li> <li>• Strong interactions between characters</li> </ul>
<i>EXTEMP READING</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw event – 30 minutes prep.</li> </ul>	To read selections with effective vocal and physical expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth delivery of language</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students can choose to read prose or poetry</li> <li>● They should give you the slip with the title on it</li> <li>● Time limit: 7 minutes</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strong storytelling and audience engagement</li> <li>● Authenticity of emotion and character</li> </ul>
<i>HUMOR</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interpretation of literature intended to provoke laughter</li> <li>● Time limit: 10 minutes</li> </ul>	To test a student's comedic skills through script analysis, delivery, timing, and character development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creative, dynamic vocal and physical characterization</li> <li>● Authenticity of emotion and character</li> <li>● Are they funny?</li> <li>● Does it make sense?</li> <li>● Are characters clear?</li> </ul>
<i>DRAMA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interpretation of literature written for the stage that is essentially serious in nature</li> <li>● Time limit: 10 minutes</li> </ul>	To test a student's dramatic skills through script analysis, delivery, timing, and character development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Insightful, appropriate vocal and physical characterization</li> <li>● Strong character development</li> <li>● Emotional transformation or realization</li> </ul>
<i>POETRY</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interpretation of a poem or collection of poems that are essentially serious in nature</li> <li>● May be from a single poem, or a collection of poems</li> <li>● Time limit: 10 minutes</li> </ul>	To test a student's dramatic skills through script analysis, delivery, timing, and character development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Insightful, Appropriate vocal and physical characterization</li> <li>● Authenticity of emotion and character</li> <li>● Effective, varied rendition of poetic language and delivery</li> </ul>

<p><i>PROSE</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interpretation of fiction or nonfiction literature that is essentially serious in nature</li> <li>● Time limit: 10 minutes</li> </ul>	<p>To test a student’s dramatic skills through script analysis, delivery, timing, and character development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Insightful, appropriate vocal and physical characterization</li> <li>● Strong character development</li> <li>● Emotional transformation or realization</li> </ul>
<p><i>STORYTELLING</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draw event – 30 minutes prep.</li> <li>● Reinterpretation of a fairy tale or fable with limited preparation</li> <li>● They should give you the slip with the title on it</li> <li>● Time limit: 7 minutes</li> </ul>	<p>To recreate the story in his/her own words and convey its relevance to a modern audience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creative, dynamic vocal and physical characterization</li> <li>● Effective, balanced, and appropriate use of narration and dialogue</li> <li>● Analysis of story’s moral relevance to the audience</li> </ul>

## PUBLIC ADDRESS EVENTS GENERAL JUDGING CRITERIA

- Strong organization of ideas
- Good research with reliable and knowledgeable sources
- Balanced approach to each area of analysis (equal time allocation)
- Confident, well-paced, and fluent delivery that is energetic, interesting and passionate
- Respect for other participants by being good audience members with active listening skills

	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>OBJECTIVE</i>	<i>ADDITIONAL JUDGING CRITERIA</i>
<i>EXTEMP SPEAKING</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draw event – 30 minutes prep.</li> <li>● Delivery of a speech answering a current events question</li> <li>● Students should give judge the slip with the question on it</li> <li>● Time limit: 7 minutes</li> </ul>	To synthesize/analyze current events into an answer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creative concept or premise</li> <li>● Strong use of language and dialogue</li> <li>● Adherence to the question drawn</li> <li>● Well-chosen, relevant information</li> <li>● Organization of the material</li> </ul>
<i>GREAT SPEECHES</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Delivery and analysis of a historical speech determined by the speaker to be “great”</li> <li>● The use of a communication or a rhetorical model to examine and analyze the original speech</li> <li>● Time limit: 10 minutes</li> </ul>	To convey the significance of the speech, optionally using a communication model to demonstrate why the speech was successful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Selection and editing of source material</li> <li>● Sensitivity to author's ideas and purpose</li> <li>● Analysis of speech's historical potential and/or rhetorical importance</li> </ul>
<i>INFORMATIVE</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Delivery of an original informative composition on a topic chosen by the student</li> <li>● The student may use visual aids to show or demonstrate aspects of the topic</li> <li>● Time limit: 10 minutes</li> </ul>	To inform and educate the audience on the topic <i>and</i> convey the topic's importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appropriate choice of subject and information for the audience</li> <li>● Student must be effective at teaching, engaging the audience, and making the topic come alive</li> <li>● Inventive use of visual aids</li> </ul>



<p><i>ORIGINAL ORATORY</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify a problem in society (institutional, behavioral or attitudinal)</li> <li>● Use research to analyze the problem and develop solution(s)</li> <li>● Time limit: 10 minutes</li> </ul>	<p>To craft a persuasive speech that showcases the student’s writing skills and ability to advocate and educate</p> <p>Typically developed as a problem, cause, solution speech or a cause, effect, solution speech</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A variety of persuasive skills (uses evidence, logic, and emotional appeals)</li> <li>● Eloquence in style</li> <li>● A topic that is of personal interest and significance to the speaker</li> <li>● A topic that is current and relatable to audience members</li> </ul>
<p><i>DISCUSSION</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Small group effort to reach a solution to a problem/task (provided to the contestants) through informal interchange of facts, inferences, and judgments</li> <li>● Emphasis on the task and social dimensions of group interaction</li> <li>● Each round is 60 min, max</li> </ul>	<p>To encourage cooperation and critical thinking in problem solving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contributions to the group effort</li> <li>● Possession of sufficient, high-quality information and evidence</li> <li>● Understanding of major issues</li> </ul>

## **Minnesota State High School League**

### **Critique Guidelines For 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 nonverbal 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.)

## JUDGES' CHECKLIST

### WHAT TO BRING

- Pens
- Timer (or you can use your cell phone in "Airplane Mode," just be sure it's charged up)
- A book or other distraction for during off rounds or before final round postings
- A notebook (if you wish to write down titles, take notes during spectating rounds, or just doodle)

### WHAT TO DO

#### Before Speech Tournament

Plan to arrive at specified school location at least 30 minutes before the first round.  
Check in with PACT staff (typically found in the school commons or cafeteria) so they know that you have arrived.

Stop by Registration table to collect information:

- o If available, grab a school map and a tournament schedule
- o Registration may have a "dance card," which will detail your round assignments for the day

Scout out the location to determine where the following are located:

- o **Ballot table** – this is where you will pick up ballots before rounds and drop off ballots after rounds. Some tournaments have separate **Ballot Pick Up** and **Ballot Drop Off** tables - so just be aware of that; they will likely be near each other. The Ballot Table is also where you can ask questions or report any issues with a competitor.
- o **Judge's lounge** – this is where refreshments, meals, and snacks will be available throughout the tournament. It is also a good place to connect with other judges and find coaches.

#### During Rounds

If you're not judging, you should either stay in the judge's lounge or near the ballot table until all ballots have been handed out (this way, you will be able to pick up a ballot if they need a spare judge). From there, you may go to watch a round or you may choose to hang out in the judge's lounge until the round is completed.

If you are judging, be sure to follow the judge's protocol (found on page 12)

#### After Each Round

If you judged, submit your completed Ballot and Critique Sheets to the Ballot Drop Off.

Check the postings or check the Ballot Pick Up Table to see if you've been assigned to judge the next round.

You may choose to check in with other judges, coaches, or students between rounds. However, you should NEVER discuss your ranks or share any negative comments about students or speeches in common areas or with students. These are things you may choose to discuss after

the tournament or with PACT coaches in private. Your opinions and observations are important, but be respectful that coaches and students may overhear.

### **After Final Round Postings**

If you are not judging, you may choose to stay and watch finals and awards or you may leave. Unless you have cleared it with Coach Ruppert, you should not take your students home with you. Even if they don't break, ESPECIALLY if they don't break, we want them to watch, learn, and support their teammates in finals and at awards.

If you are judging, be advised that final rounds may contain more than one judge. Check with the Ballot Table to find out how many judges will be in your round. NEVER start a final round without the correct number of judges in the room.

### **After Final Rounds**

Your duties as a judge are complete! You may stay for the awards ceremony (which usually start within a half an hour of the completion of final rounds and they last about an hour), or you may leave.

## **VIRTUAL TOURNAMENTS**

### **IF THE TOURNAMENT IS VIRTUAL and ASYNCHRONOUS:**

Log into [live.speechwire.com](https://live.speechwire.com) using the email address Ruppert has been using to communicate with you.

Look at your judging assignments and the due date.

Watch the videos and complete the e-ballots before the due date.

### **IF THE TOURNAMENT IS VIRTUAL and SYNCHRONOUS:**

Log into [live.speechwire.com](https://live.speechwire.com) using the email address Ruppert has been using to communicate with you.

Make sure to look at the schedule and check back on Speechwire for postings per round.

Depending on the format of the tournament. go to the corresponding virtual platform.

Follow the Judges Protocol (p. 12) for calling students and running your room.

Fill out the e-ballots on Speechwire and submit them.

Repeat for each round.

### **[SPEECHWIRE JUDGES VIDEO](#)**

## JUDGES' PROTOCOL

### BEFORE THE ROUND

- Once assigned to a round, judges must collect a Ballot and (unless instructed otherwise) Critique Sheets from the Ballot Table
- The Ballot will contain the room number for the round as well as the start time. Judges usually proceed directly to the round after they collect their Ballot and Critique Sheets
- If there is another round in progress, Judges and competitors should wait outside the room until the round is over and the previous competitors and Judge have left the room
- Students do not typically enter a room until a judge has entered, so do not be surprised if competitors and audiences are waiting for you

### DURING THE ROUND

- To start the round, take attendance based on the Ballot and find out which students are double-entered (competing in two or more events).
  - Competitors who are not present, but listed on the Ballot may be double-entered or they may be late.
  - Competitors who are present but not listed on the Ballot should be sent to check the postings to be sure they are in the correct room. If the Ballot and the posting do not match, that student must be sent to the Ballot Table for clarification. Do not allow students to perform that are not listed on your Ballot unless that competitor has been given permission by the Ballot Table
  - Double-entered students who are present in the round should perform first and then be excused to go compete in their additional category(s)
- Always instruct students and audience members to turn off their cell phones or put them on "airplane mode." In order to avoid distractions and interruptions
- You should time each speech and record the time on the Ballot (if requested) and on the Critique Sheet of each speaker. Time should begin as soon as the speaker starts speaking or performing
- You may write on the critique while the competitor is performing. However, you should try to make eye contact and watch as much of the speech as you can in order to make the speaker feel valued and important
- Judges should set the example of audience etiquette:
  - Turn cell phones off or switch to "airplane mode"
  - Do not text, rifle through bags, eat or drink, or engage in other distracting or interrupting behaviors during speeches
  - Do not verbalize feedback or make overt gestures or facial expressions of disapproval or disagreement.
  - Be positive and supportive of every student, even if you disagree with their argument or choices. They are still teenagers and it is difficult and scary to perform in front of people you don't know.
- Judges should applaud at the conclusion of each speech and should finish that competitors critique sheet quickly, or should move on to the next speaker and complete comments on the

Critique Sheets at the end of the round (see Evaluating Speeches for guidance for Critique Sheet writing)

### Limited Prep Judging

- Students will not be present before the round; they will show up at their speaking times and wait outside the door until it is their turn to perform. You may have the previous speaker call in the next speaker or you can go and ask them to come in.
- If you are judging a limited preparation event (Extemporaneous Reading, Extemporaneous Speaking, Storytelling - *but timing is especially important in Extemp Speaking -- you may not ever be asked to show these signals in Reading or Storytelling*), you should give visual time signals with your non-writing hand counting down from 5 minutes. Show each competitor what your time signals look like before the speech starts:
  - 5 minutes to 1 minute of speaking time remaining: use fingers to show remaining minutes
  - 30 seconds of speaking time remaining: make a “C” out of your hand
  - 5 seconds to 0 seconds: start with a “high five” and count down each second with each finger
  - Time conclusion: make a closed fist. Students may finish the sentence they are on, but should not start a new sentence.

NOTE: Be sure to hold time signals high and clearly so the students can see them. Do not verbalize time signals and be careful not to be distracting with your signals.

### AFTER THE ROUND

- Once all speakers have presented, excuse them all to their next round
  - If a competitor does not show up during the round and all others have performed, excuse the competitors who are present and wait for the final speakers. If he or she has not shown up within ten minutes after you’ve excused other speakers, go to the Ballot Table and inform them of the “No Show”.
  - No Show’s may be competitors who have dropped (are not competing at the tournament or in the event due to illness, etc.), or they may have gotten lost or gone to the wrong round. If you have a No Show in your round and you turn your Ballot in, be sure to stay in common judges’ areas (in the cafeteria with the team, in the judges’ lounge, or near the Ballot table), in case the tournament officials need to find you to have that No Show perform for you quickly. Additional instructions will be given to you in the rare event that this happens.
- (Unless otherwise instructed) Do not give Critique Sheets to students. These are usually turned in with the Ballot to the Ballot Table at the end of each round.
- Complete the Ballot with the necessary information and sign the bottom
  - Assign a rank (1 through 5) to each of the speakers. No speakers may have the same rank unless you have more than 5 speakers. In that case, you will give a 5 for the fifth place speakers on down.

- o If the Ballot has a space for “Rate” or for “Speaker Points,” it is asking you to assign a number to determine the strength of the rank. The scale for these qualitative ratings is from 80 to 100, with 100 being the best and 80 being the absolute worst thing you’ve ever seen in your entire life.
  - In addition to telling kids the strength of their rank, speaker points are also used to break ties in the tab room and help the strongest performers advance over kids who just “got lucky with a crappy round”
  - Ratings follow rankings, meaning the “1” in the round must receive the most speaker points and the “5” must receive the least.
  - And, like rankings, speaker point ratings usually cannot be duplicated (there cannot be two 99’s given in a round).

SPEAKER POINT VALUE	WHAT IT MEANS
100	Best in the round. There is nothing that could be done to improve this performance.
97 - 99	Very strong performance
90 - 95	Performance was pretty good, but there is still need for improvement
87-89	The performance needs work
86 and Below	These are very, very low speaker ratings. Typically, rates this low are reserved for students who offend a judge in some way (they are disrespectful, they are terrible audience members, or they say or do offensive things in their speech). Please only use rates this low if you are able to clearly articulate on the Critique Sheet what the student did to offend you or others, and why you gave them the rating that you did.

Note: on average a “1” ranking will receive between 96 and 100 speaker points, a “2” will receive between 95 and 99, a “3” will receive between 94 to 98, a “4” will receive between 93 to 97, and “5” will receive between 90 and 95.

It may be helpful to reserve scoring on the ballot until you’ve seen all the speakers in the round. The chart below demonstrates one way of evaluating speakers as they perform: The first speaker would be ranked a “1” because it’s the only one you’ve seen. After each subsequent speaker, you re-evaluate (e.g. if the second speaker is better, speaker 1 becomes ranked a “2”) until all speakers have performed.

Speaker 5					[ranking]
Speaker 4				[ranking]	[updated ranking]
Speaker 3			[ranking]	[updated ranking]	[updated ranking]
Speaker 2		[ranking]	[updated ranking]	[updated ranking]	[updated ranking]
Speaker 1	[ranking (1)]	[updated ranking]	[updated ranking]	[updated ranking]	[updated ranking]

- Complete your Critique Sheets with any remaining comments and, if there's a space for it, note the student's speech time, their rank and their rating.
- You should finish your ballot and your critiques **within ten minutes** of the round ending. This helps ensure that the tournament does not fall behind and that the next round scheduled to start in that room can begin on time
- Return your completed Ballot and Critique Sheets to the Ballot Table. They will check that you've ranked and rated the competitors completely (no duplicate scores, no missed ranks, etc.) and that you've signed the Ballot
- Once you turn in your Ballot you should immediately check to see if you have another Ballot waiting for you for next round



## **SPEECH VOCABULARY**

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

**Blocking:** aka “tech”. The movement that occurs during any interp event, pantomime, intricate transitions, etc.

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

**DE or Double Entering (or in very rare cases, TE - Triple Entering):** When a student is competing in more than one category.

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

**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.

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

**Pops:** When a student “pops” from one character into another (generally used in Humor, Creative, Storytelling, and some Duos)

**Meld:** When a student “melds” from one character to another, generally slower than a pop. (Used in more dramatic instances), or melds from their character into their introduction.

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

**NSDA:** The National Speech and Debate Association. This is the National Speech and Debate Society. NSDA only recognizes the following categories: Extemporaneous Speaking, Original Oratory, Duo Interpretation, Dramatic Interpretation, Humorous Interpretation, Informative, and POI (Programmed Oral Interpretation).

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

**Tab Room:** The room where all of the results are “tabulated” for the tournament – it’s most often close to where you turn in your ballots.

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

## FAQs

### **Q: Should I ever make oral comments or critiques to the students?**

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

### **Q: Are scripts allowed?**

A: In all categories except for the draw categories and discussion, 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. You might comment on the use of a script if 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: While you are not specifically required to 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?). By section tournament time, the students are disqualified if they go over the time allowed for their category. Students are usually not penalized at invitational tournaments for going a little over time, but more tournaments are getting stricter about this, knowing that kids will be held to that standard at Sections. Check the Judge Information sheet for the tournament to see how strict they would like judges to be on time.

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

A: You may comment if something is distracting—hair in the face, dangling earrings, extreme footwear, etc. However, be very careful with this. You must be tactful. Sometimes it might be good to write a small note and have the Ballot Table folks give it to the Tab Room to give to that speaker's coach, and then they can help decide how to approach that student.

### **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 NDSA rules differ from MSHSL rules?**

A: Many invitational tournaments follow NDSA rules for NDSA categories. The NDSA Categories (OO, Humor, Duo, Drama, Informative, and POI) are somewhat less restrictive when it comes to sourcing, otherwise, our rules in terms of movement, time limits, and music are all the same for both sets of rules..

NDSA rules can be found at [NSDA.org](https://www.nsdanet.org)

MSHSL rules can be found a [MSHSL.org](https://www.mshsl.org)

## EVALUATING SPEECHES

Critique Sheets are the only method that competitors and coaches have for understanding what the Judge’s rank means and what the reaction to the performance was. While it can be a tiresome and challenging thing to come up with insightful feedback, it is vital that judges try very hard to convey what they liked, what they think needed improvement, and any suggestions for how to improve the speech of the performance

### GENERAL CRITIQUE SHEET CRITERIA

**Balance Your Feedback:** Critique Sheets that are 100% positive are not terribly useful, especially if they accompany a “5” ranking. Additionally, Critique Sheets that are 100% negative can hurt feelings and discourage students. Therefore, try for a balanced approach to feedback and aim for 3 positive comments and 3 constructive comments (see next page for examples)

**Consider What is Useful:** As a competitor or a coach reads your Critique Sheet, you want them to use your feedback to improve the speech or performance. Therefore, try to provide suggestions in addition to comments. Suggestions may or may not be taken, but if they are often the most appreciated form of a comment because it helps the coach and the student understand what they could have done differently or better to improve their rank and it may inspire them to make a different choice or focus on improving a specific aspect of the performance for next time.

**Be Specific:** If you can remember one, give a specific reason why something needs to be improved (example: The first line is really fast. Since this is the first time I’m hearing you, slow down and let me get used to the sound of your voice.) You should also try to be specific with your positive feedback as well. Tell them your favorite part (example: your last line is really powerful), or your favorite character. This shows that you were paying attention and makes students feel memorable and valued.

### If You Can’t Say Something Nice...

If you don’t mind a little extra writing, you might try writing comments on a notepad during speeches and then translating or transcribing them onto a critique sheet at the end of the round. This is useful to help sensor your feedback and provide only that which is constructive and insightful.

### General Things Judges Comment On:

Energy	Passion or Engagement	Vocal control or Conversationalist Tone	Poise and Confidence	Technique (pops, affectations, accents, etc.)
Volume and Diction	Eye Contact or Audience Interaction	Gestures or Movement	Speed and Control of Pacing	Speech Organization or Plot Development

**JUDGES' CODE: HOW TO SAY WHAT YOU MEAN WITHOUT BEING MEAN**

POSITIVE COMMENT	CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENT	DON'T SAY
Good Energy	A ton of energy, but be careful not to overwhelm me	Whoa there, psycho. You look like you're getting shot with a taser
Eye contact is consistent without being creepy – good job!	Keep working on eye contact	Where the hell are you looking? Do you see dead people? Is this the 6 <sup>th</sup> Sense, because I get the sense that you'll get 6 <sup>th</sup>
Nice recovery from stumbles	Keep working on memorization and polish	Get your life together and stop wasting my time. And stop looking at me all panicked. I don't know your speech either!
Character voices are good	Need to concentrate on making the character postures and faces more distinct and consistent	Whoa there, sloppy pants. This is like "Mud: the musical." I can't tell what you're saying, who is talking, why they are talking or what's going on.
You look like you're having fun	Work on your confidence and control of your speech	You're annoying.
Topic is interesting	I'm getting a little lost. Keep working on refining your argument and making it clear for your audience	No one knows what the hell you're talking about. Including you.
This was a very difficult round	This was a close round, keep working	Everyone wanted the 4. There is not a clearance sale on 4's, stop stocking up. Everyone needs to stop being mediocre at life.
Good use of speaking time	Watch your time, you might want to cut/add some more to your speech	Stop talking and sit down.

## ADDITIONAL EXAMPLE COMMENTS

### **Organization**

*I liked how you set the stage in your intro. It was a very vivid picture.*

*Great job connecting your conclusion to your intro. This helped me see the big picture.*

*I was a little confused on the ending. I did not think it was a clear ending.*

*You mentioned three points in your intro. I did not hear your third point in your summary or ending.*

### **Content**

*Great grasp of the facts. I liked how you went beyond common knowledge with many facts.*

*Specific and clear examples to support your ideas.*

*You know your facts, but you may want to look for more convincing evidence*

*I did not see the connection between your ideas and the examples that you shared. For example, you mentioned the first Bollywood movie. How does that relate to the present day Bollywood movie boom?*

### **Verbal Communication**

*I liked how you changed your pace to create the mood of your speech.*

*Excellent use of pauses for dramatic impact.*

*Be aware of the vocalized pauses that you are using such as “um” and “you know.” Overusing these sounds and words can be distracting to your message.*

*Your rate was very fast. It was difficult for me to follow at times.*

### **Non-Verbal Communication**

*I enjoyed your facial expressions! They really made your speech even funnier!*

*Your hand gestures were very natural and relaxed. Nice job.*

*Be careful that your hand gestures are not distracting such as playing with the buttons on your shirt.*

*Remember to stand tall and be confident. Practice your hand gestures.*

**SAMPLE CRITIQUE SHEET**

The Lakeville North Speech Tournament

Contestant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Round: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Piece Title/Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The time limits are 10 mins for prepared events and 7 mins for draw events. All events have a 30-second grace period.

Comments (please use back for additional space):

Reason for Decision:

Rank (circle): 1      2      3      4      5      6      7

Rating (100-85): \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Judge: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

SAMPLE BALLOT

**00**

Lakeville North Tournament ballot  
**Round 1, Section A, Room 214 (8:30 AM)**  
Judge: W1 Mandi Dickie (Lakeville North)

**W1**

#	Code	Name	Rank	Points
1	W5	Joshua Weinstein		
2	W1	Taylor Bauman		
3	W4	Tori Knutson		
4	W2	Taylor Loth		
5	W3	Amanda Permuth		
6				
7				
8				
9				

Judge's signature: \_\_\_\_\_