

National Forensics Association

Championship Tournament



Judges' Handbook

Judging Individual Events at NFA

EVENT DESCRIPTIONS

This is a list and description of the events you will hear at a college individual events competition. Technically, these descriptions are all the judging standards by which you are bound. Realistically, as a first time judge, it might be helpful to know some of the generally accepted practices.

INTERPRETIVE EVENTS

There are some general observations that you may want to consider in all interpretive events:

1. Evaluate a performance on the student's ability to convey a message and evoke a reaction from you.
2. Write comments on what is good but also make suggestions for improvement.
3. Write comments that help the student understand the rank and rate they receive.
4. Are they very short or very long on the time limits?
5. Do they handle the black book well? Is the performance as polished as you'd like to see it? (voice, body language, vocal emphasis)
6. Does the student establish offstage focus for all dialogue?
7. Does the introduction enhance the piece(s)?
8. Is the cutting clear and complete?

Poetry Interpretation: A selection or selections of poetry of literary merit, which may be drawn from more than one source. A primary focus of this event should be on the development of language. Play cuttings and prose works are prohibited. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

*NOTE: Look for theme in multiple pieces.

Prose Interpretation: A selection or selections of prose material of literary merit, which may be drawn from more than one source. Focus of this event is on the development of the narrative/story. Play cuttings are prohibited. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

DI (Drama Interpretation): A cutting that represents one or more characters from a play or plays of literary merit. The focus of this event is on the development of characterization. This material may be drawn from stage, screen, or radio. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

*NOTE: This can be one or multiple characters

Dramatic Duo: A cutting from a play or plays of literary merit, humorous or serious, involving the portrayal of two or more characters presented by two individuals. The material may be drawn from stage, screen, or radio. This is not an acting event. Thus, no costumes, props, lighting, etc. are to be used. Presentation is from manuscript and the focus should be offstage and not to each other. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction. (You are allowed to take 2 duos (with different partners) to both Nationals.)

Program Oral Interpretation: A program of thematically linked selections of literary merit, chosen from two or three recognized genres of competitive interpretation (prose/poetry/drama). A primary focus of this event is on the development of the theme through the use of narrative/story, language, and/or characterization. A substantial portion of the total time must be devoted to each of the genres used in the program. Different genre means the material must appear in separate pieces of literature (e.g., a poem included in a short story that appears only in that short story does not constitute a poetry genre). Only one selection may be original. Use of a manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

PUBLIC ADDRESS EVENTS

There are some criteria that cross into all public address events as well. Note the following:

1. Evaluate the speech on organization, reasoning, evidence, and performance.
2. Write comments on the ballot about what is done well and about that which could be improved.
3. Write comments that help the student understand the rank and rate the received from you.
4. Comment on the effectiveness of body language (gestures, etc.). voice, rate, tone, etc.

Persuasive Speaking: An original speech by the student designed to inspire, reinforce, or change the beliefs, attitudes, values or actions of the audience. Audio-visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Multiple sources should be used and cited in the development of the speech. Minimal notes are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.

*NOTE: Be sure you hear a serious message here.

Informative Speaking: An original, factual speech by the student on a realistic subject to fulfill the general aim to inform the audience. Audio-visuals may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Multiple sources should be used and cited in the development of the speech. Minimal notes are permitted. Maximum time is 10 minutes.

After-Dinner Speaking (ADS): An original humorous speech by the student, designed to exhibit sound speech composition, thematic coherence, direct communicative public speaking skills, and good taste. The speech should not resemble a nightclub act, an impersonation, or comic dialogue. Audio-visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Minimal notes are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.

*NOTE: Be sure you hear a serious message here.

Communication Analysis: An original speech by the student designed to offer an explanation and/or evaluation of a communication event such as a speech, speaker, movement, poem, poster, film, campaign, etc. through the use of rhetorical principles. Audio-visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Manuscripts are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.

LIMITED PREPARATION EVENTS

Extemporaneous Speaking: Contestants will be given three topics in the general area of current events, choose one, and have 30 minutes to prepare a speech that is the original work of the student. Maximum time limit for the speech is 7 minutes. Limited notes are permitted. Students will speak in the listed order. Posting of the topics will be staggered.

*NOTE: You will need to provide time signals for the student. When the student begins speaking—start timing them. After they have spoken 2 minutes then give hold up 5 fingers (to indicate that they have five minutes left).

After each minute count down till 30 seconds showing the competitor how many minutes they have left.

For each round, contestants will select one of three topics on current national and international events. The contestant has 30 minutes to prepare (not for you to worry, they do it before they come and see your smiling faces) and then are given a time limit of seven minutes to speak. Time signals are crucial in this event (explanation after Impromptu description). The typical arrangement for the speech is 2 main arguments with 2 sub-points underneath each. The sub-points should support the main argument. The person must answer the question. Typically a “yes or no” question is given or a “how will” question is given. The speaker must incorporate sources in the speech from a VARIETY of sources. Most speakers have between 8 to 12 sources in the speech. The speaker can use a note card.

Impromptu Speaking: An impromptu speech, substantive in nature, with topic selections varied by round and by section. Topics will be derived from quotations, objects and rhetorical inquiries. Speakers will have a total of 7 minutes for both preparation and speaking. Timing commences with the acceptance of the prompt. Limited notes are permitted.

Contestants will receive one quotation in which to interpret and form a speech. The first thing you need to do is ask all but the first speaker to leave the room so that the other speakers do not hear the quotation beforehand. Lay the quotation on a desk and then the speaker will go and pick it up and begin to prepare. Start time when they first read the quotation. Time signals will be discussed following this section. The speaker has 7 minutes total to prepare and speak. Typically, preparation takes between 1 to 2 minutes. The format is the same as Extemp., although some will follow typical three-point speech structure. The speaker should provide you his or her analysis of the quotation and whether they are in agreement or disagreement with the quotation. Note cards are allowed, but

not required. The best speeches are ones that use arguments as their main points and examples to support their arguments

******Time Signals******

The most important part of judging limited preparation events is time signals. For impromptu, the student prepares and speaks. During preparation, verbal 30-second time signals should be given. So every 30 seconds, you say 30 seconds used, 1 minute used, etc... Then once they stand up, you give them hand signals from 5 minutes down to nothing. At 2 minutes, hold up a five; at 3 minutes, hold up a four; at 4 minutes hold up a three; at 5 minutes, hold up a 2; at 6 minutes hold up a one. Then at 6:30 hold up your hand in a "C" like formation. Then, at 6:55, count down using your hand 5,4,3,2,1...stop. Extemporaneous is given time signals in the same manner, just without the verbal preparation. Typically time signals are not given until 2 minutes have been used and then a 5 can be held up.

GUIDELINES FOR JUDGING

Getting your ballots

If you are judging Individual Events or LD debate, they are available up fifteen minutes before each round in the front lobby of Santa Ana High School. (look for sign with "ballot out"). You will get receive a packet of six ballots for Individual Events and a packet of 2 for LD debate. All packets will have your name, room number and the names/codes of all competitors. If you are judging I.E.'s the ballot packet will a cover sheet with the speaker order on it.

You are not alone:

All preliminary rounds at NFA will have 2 judges in each round. Do not begin the round until the both judges are there. If you are judging with an experience judge, it is perfectly fine to ask them to run the round.

Running the round:

Begin the round on time (even if not all speakers have arrived). The speakers will have signed in on the board (usually) for your convenience. If a student has more than one event during the round, he or she will write (DE) (double entered) or (TE) (triple entered) next to the name and code. If the student is present and is double entered, please allow this speaker to speak first. If the student is not present, he or she will report to your room after his or her other event. Start the round without non-present speakers. After all double or triple entered students have performed, then move through the other students in the order on the board. For example, to call a student to perform, you should say something like, "O.K., next we will hear from B2, Adam Lambert." Feel free to write comments while the student is performing, and you can also take a few moments between speakers to finish your comments on your ballot. If you have questions or get confused, don't be afraid to ask the speakers for help. Finally, you will want to time each performance (performances not meeting the time limit may receive lower ranks in the round).

Filling out your ballot:

Your ballot for each competitor will include a place to rank the contestant compared to the others in that round. Ranking should be from 1 to 5, giving two speakers 5th place if there are six in your round. In elimination rounds (octo, quarter, semi and final rounds) speakers will be ranked 1 to 6. Each speaker should also be given a rating between 70 and 100 points that corresponds to their rank (in other words, you may not give a second place speaker more rating points than a first place speaker, nor can your speaker points tie.) Usually judges use rates **between 80 ish and 99**. We recommend that you only rate a performance below 75 if it was offensive, unethical, or if a performer was rude or disruptive during the round.

Your ballot also includes a space for you to write a) general comments about the student's performance, and b) comments that justify your ranking of the student in your section (labeled "Reason for Decision"). General comments should be educational in nature. Please avoid personal remarks and non-constructive criticism. Your comments should pivot around the skill areas that you feel the student should further develop, or the questions you feel that the performance did not address. Reason for decision comments should focus on the performance in comparison with others in the round, explaining why you preferred one speaker over another.

Comments on your ballot:

All of the individual events are somewhat subjective in nature. Listed below are areas to consider when evaluating the performance. Your comments should provide constructive criticism, praise, and justification for the student's rank in the round.

Interpretation Events: Prose, Poetry, DI, POI, & Duo: 8-10 minutes

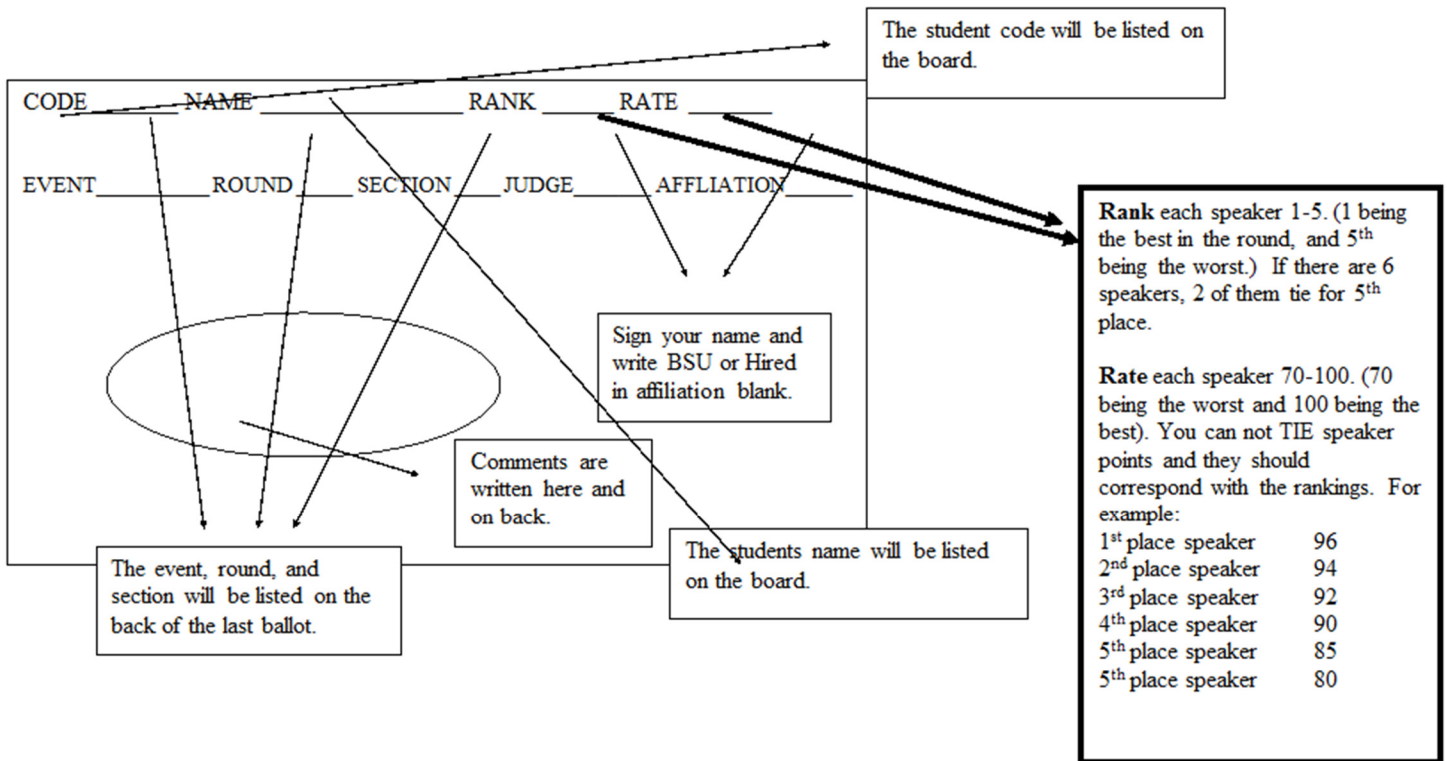
Literary Merit	Vocal variety
Clarity of introduction	Rate (speed)
Character Development	Articulation
Emotional Depth	Cutting of piece flows
Timing of humor	Varied, appropriate facial expressions
Volume	Body movements
Enthusiasm/ Energy	Gestures reinforce content
Volume	Appropriate posture

Public Address Events: Persuasion, Informative, After Dinner Speaking, & Rhetorical Criticism: 8-10 minutes

Logical strategy of development	Sufficient number of sources
Main ideas labeled clearly, succinctly	Quality of evidence: qualified, objective, recent
Points sufficiently developed	Variety of evidence and sources
Smooth transitions between points	Free from serious logical flaws
Clear purpose for each main idea	Presentational aids (if used) reinforce key points
Ideas covered in proper proportion	Enthusiastic

Your ballot is strictly confidential. The student will receive the ballot at the completion of the tournament.

SAMPLE BALLOT



Turning in your ballot:

After you have heard all speakers in your round, fill out the ballot and the cover sheet. Make sure you have assigned a rank/rating to each competitor in the round and signed each ballot. AS QUICKLY AS YOU CAN, TAKE YOUR COMPLETED BALLOT TO THE BALLOT TABLE. When you bring your ballot back to the "Ballot In" table, make sure you put your ballots in speaking order as this makes it much easier for the ballot table to check your work. After you turn in your ballot, wait until someone at the ballot table has cleared you. You may go to the "Ballot Out" table and pick up your ballot for the next round, and start the process all over again.