



# Instructions for Speech Judges

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In judging speech contests, Judges adhere to the following:

1. Each Judge is employed to aid in a program of speech education. The results of her/his judging can be either a help or a hindrance. Care should be exercised in the wording of her/his statements in order that they may be detailed, constructive, and helpful. There is no place in Minnesota contests for unkind, sarcastic, caustic, or other objectionable remarks. Be considerate in the type of comments. Adverse criticism should be given when needed, but presented in a constructive and helpful manner. Written comments should be detailed enough to clarify the reason for the ranking given so students have sufficient suggestions to improve their work.
2. Judges must keep in mind that they are judging high school students and not college, university, or professional performers.
3. Judges should give close attention to the performance. Psychologically, pupils will accept an adverse decision if they feel the judge has given them fair and unbiased attention.  
  
No person is to converse with a judge while s/he is carrying out her/his duties as an adjudicator, and judges are instructed to inform any person approaching them that they have been requested to advise such person of this regulation.
4. Avoid generalized comments. Be specific!
5. Judges should be on time for all sessions and should help the Contest Manager keep the program on schedule.
6. When more than one Judge is assigned to a round of speaking, judges are not to sit together or to discuss the performer, but must give independent rankings and comments. The final tabulation of results will be determined by the Contest Manager/Committee.
7. Judges are not permitted to discuss with students their plans for attending college or university before, during, or after the time they are judging said students in any speech contest.
8. The contest manager will provide each judge with a copy of the "Speech Critique Sheet" and the "Description of Speech Contest Events" – or have these available online - in advance of the contest. It is assumed that judges are familiar with MSHSL Rules and Policies and requirements for the events they are judging.
9. If a Judge believes a contestant has violated a contest rule, the Judge must not rank on that basis or impose penalties. Rather, the Judge must rank speakers based on their relative quality and report the alleged violation to the Contest Manager immediately after the round has concluded. The Tournament Rules Committee and the Contest Manager will investigate the alleged violation and, if appropriate, disqualify or adjust the student's ranks according to the Speech Rules and Policies.

## **Equity Statement / Protest Procedure**

**Please read and thoughtfully consider the National Speech and Debate Association's Statement on Implicit Bias:**

We are all influenced by implicit bias, or the stereotypes that unconsciously affect our decisions. When judging, our implicit biases negatively impact traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised students. Before writing comments or making a decision, please take a moment to reflect on any biases that may impact your decision making.