IMPROMPTU SPEAKING
JUDGE GUIDE

OVERVIEW

Impromptu Speaking is a limited-preparation event in which students receive three prompts, select one, and have 7 minutes TOTAL to prepare and deliver a fully memorized speech from start to finish. There is no required balance between prep time and speaking time; students may spend more time preparing or more time speaking as long as the entire process stays within the 7-minute limit. Before the round begins, judges should pick up the envelopes containing the Impromptu prompts in the judge lounge. Prompts should be given to students one at a time so the student can review each option before deciding which prompt to keep. Once a student selects a prompt, they must return the two unchosen prompts back into the envelope. Prep time begins only after the two unchosen prompts have been returned. Students should read their chosen prompt aloud and may hold the prompt during the speech. After the student finishes their speech, the process restarts for the next competitor: the judge again distributes 3 prompts one at a time, the student selects one, returns the two unchosen prompts to the envelope, and then begins their 7-minute total time. Students may prepare on a blank piece of paper only and may not use technology or any paper that is not blank. Students may not use notes or a script while speaking; any student who uses notes must be ranked last. All competitors must remain in the room for the entire round.

WHAT TO JUDGE

CONTENT:
- Clear focus on chosen prompt
- Logical structure and coherent flow with 2-3 main points
- Thoughtful ideas that go beyond restating the prompt
- Creative approach to the topic
- Effective transitions and purposeful organization

DELIVERY:
- Confident presence and strong eye contact
- Clear, audible voice with steady pacing
- Smooth fluency (minimal pauses or filler words)
- Purposeful, non-distracting movement
- Professional tone

TIMING

- 7 minutes TOTAL (prep + delivery combined)
- No separate prep period
- Students may brainstorm silently or with scratch paper, but may not use notes while speaking
- Grace period: 30 seconds (7:30)
- If anyone goes past 7 minutes and 30 seconds, they cannot be ranked first

BALLOTS

- Rank all speakers 1-7 (1 is best)
- Assign speaker points 90-100, aligned with their rank (100 is best)
- Provide specific written comments (strengths + areas to grow)
- Focus feedback on structure, support, and delivery
- Do not verbally disclose your decision

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE
JUDGE GUIDE

OVERVIEW

Congressional Debate simulates the U.S. legislative process. Students act as representatives debating bills and resolutions through structured speeches, questioning, and parliamentary procedure. A student Presiding Officer (PO) runs the chamber by recognizing speakers, managing debate flow, and maintaining order. Your role is to score every speech, evaluate legislative engagement, and rank the top performers.

WHAT TO JUDGE

CONTENT:

- Speech addresses the bill/resolution
- Clear structure + logical arguments
- Accurate evidence and relevant sources
- Direct response to previous arguments
- Original, meaningful contributions (not repeating earlier points)

DELIVERY:

- Professional tone
- Clear voice, appropriate pace
- Confident presence and controlled demeanor
- Effective eye contact
- PO evaluation: fairness, efficiency, knowledge of procedure

TIMING

- Speeches: Up to 3 minutes
- Questioning:
  - 2 minutes for sponsorship speeches
  - 1 minute for all others
- **Session length: 2-hour hard stop** (including a short recess)

Judge responsibilities:
- Score every speech 1-6 (6 is the best; 1 is the worst)
- Keep notes on participation & decorum

BALLOTS

- Score each speech 1-6 based on argument quality & delivery.
- Score the Presiding Officer once per hour, so the P.O. should get 2 speech scores.
- Rank the top 8 legislators at the end; all others receive rank 9.
- Provide specific written comments (strengths + areas to grow) about clarity, organization, and delivery for every single speaker
- No verbal disclosure allowed.