

Judges Instructions

(All Contests)

FOR JUDGING AT NATIONAL FINALS, ALL JUDGES MUST HAVE SOME TYPE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICE (LAPTOP / NOTEPAD, ETC) WITH THEM FOR THE TABULATION PROCESS. TABULATION WILL BE DONE ELECTRONICALLY THRU NATIONAL SPEECH AND DEBATE TAB ROOM PROCESS. INSTRUCTIONS ON THE ELECTRONIC TABULATION PROCESS WILL BE PROVIDED PRIOR TO THE CONTEST.

ETHICAL JUDGING: Impartial judging in all contests is the key to fairness and the success of the Oratorical Contest program; which the end result is the selection of a National Champion.

JUDGES POOL: Each contest shall have five judges who shall reach a combined decision, with each judge having equal involvement in determining contest placing. Judges will be seated in different locations (areas) in the contest room and each judge shall render his/her decision **without consultation with other judges or individuals.**

EXPERTISE: While someone certainly does not need to be a constitutional scholar to serve as an American Legion oratorical judge, basic foundational knowledge of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship is necessary.

JUDGING STANDARDS: Contestants are judged upon the content of their oration (e.g., application of knowledge on the subject, logic, originality, etc.) and speaking skills (e.g., voice and diction, style, poise, etc.).

During the contest, Judges should consider when judging each contestant the following –

Knowledge of our nation's laws, duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.
Knowledge of the United States Constitution
Gives credit where credit is due and/or cites the sources of specific information
Topic relevance to the Constitution

During the contest, Judges should consider when scoring each contestant the following

Content

1. Was the speech original, fresh, and direct, applying the student's knowledge?
2. Did the student skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies and specific data?
3. Was the speech logical, well organized and developed?
4. Did the student show a comprehensiveness of knowledge of the subject matter?

Speaking skills

1. Did the student use volume, rate, pitch and diction effectively? Speakers style – language, word use, transitions effectively?
2. Rate the speaker's style: language use, word arrangement and selection; transitions.
3. Were body actions – poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions – appropriate?

Time – adheres to the time for the prepared and assigned topic oratory

CONTEST FORMAT: The contest is conducted in two phases. The contestants will all appear the first time to present their **Prepared Orations** and then appear a second time for their **Assigned Topic Discourse**. This allows the judges an opportunity to re-evaluate and reconsider "first impressions" and compare each speaker against all other speakers.

Judges should carefully study and possess a thorough understanding of the scorecard and scoring system. This is to include all areas under, and including (A) **Content**, and (B) **Speaking Skills**, on the scorecard. A

judge having any questions concerning the scoring system should consult with the contest briefer prior to the contest.

As a guideline, judges are encouraged to award their top choice (speaker) **approximately 90 points** with all others proportionally lower. This is particularly important should a tie exist in the record-of-choice totals.

Lack of emphasis in the prepared oration and the assigned topic on the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen must result in the judges downgrading the contestant involved. Judges may downgrade a contestant up to a total of ten points for failure to speak on the Constitution of the United States. The individual conducting the contest will announce any violation of time for each contestant. A penalty of one point for each minute, or fraction thereof, shall be assessed against the contestant's total score.

The judges when directed by the contest chairman/moderator shall proceed to the tabulation room for final review of the scorecards and the tabulation process.

FINAL SCORING SUBMISSION: Each judge shall insert the total number of points credited to the contestant and also insert in the record-of-choice column, his/her choice of placement for each contestant in accordance with the highest total point scores. If a tie exists in the total point scores on a judge's scorecard, the judge **must make adjustments** in his/her scoring of the tied contestants so that **no two contestants have the same total point score**. This will enable the judge to rank one contestant above the other in the record-of-choice column.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Judges shall refrain from discussing any phase of the contest or their judging methods with contestants, coaches, or others following the contest. Exception would be Contest Moderator and Chief Tabulator. Moderators and tabulators are not permitted to divulge the judge's scorecard at the site of the contest. Contest scores are not released. Persons interested in the comments may, upon written request at a later date, be provided copies of the comments with any personal reference to the Judges that the Judges may have placed omitted.