

Rules Summary

1. In this event, each competitor prepares and presents a short speech with limited preparation. The maximum time for Impromptu Speaking is **seven minutes in the Senior Division, and ten minutes in the Junior Division**, which includes both prep time and speaking time. There is a fifteen-second grace period, after which the student must be dropped in rank/rating. No violation of the grace period in Regional/State Quarterfinal, Semifinal, or Final rounds may result in disqualification. No performance violating the grace period may receive '1' in the round.
2. **SENIOR:** Students may speak all seven minutes if they desire, but must be penalized if they speak for less than four minutes.
3. **JUNIOR:** In the Junior Division, students may speak for all ten minutes if they desire, but must be penalized if they speak for less than three minutes.
4. **TIME SIGNALS.** Time signals are required. During Prep time, the judge will call out time at the intervals requested by the contestant. During the performance, time signals using the Count-Down method must be used, indicating the time remaining.
5. Prep time begins after the speaker has received the topic(s) and has been allowed a few seconds to view it (them). No electronic devices (e.g., computers or tape recorders) may be used, and source materials are not permitted.
6. The speaker may use one 3 X 5 note card (front and back) while speaking. Students using more than the front and back of one 3 X 5 note card while speaking must be ranked last in the round. Students may use multiple note cards and/or paper to plan speeches during the preparation time before speaking begins.
7. In all rounds except the final round, the contestant will be given two quotations from which to choose one.
8. Students will remain outside the room until it is their time to speak, will prepare in the room, and may leave the room once they have spoken if they have another event to attend this round.
9. Finalists at the State Tournament will respond to an object. At all other rounds of the State Tournament, and in all Rounds at the Regional Tournaments, the topics will be quotations. Invitational tournaments may follow the State or Regional format.

Hints for Judges

1. Do not permit other students to listen before they have spoken. Contestants must remain outside the room until called upon to speak.
2. Clarify with the student before he/she begins how time signals will be communicated. Call out the student's prep time and give hand signals while the student is speaking. Start timing after the student receives the topic(s) and has had a few seconds to view it (them).
3. Make sure the student returns the topic(s) to you after he/she has spoken.
4. Content and delivery are equally important.

Judging Criteria

I. Choice of Material Used in Speech

Did the speaker effectively develop the topic? Did the speaker use analysis, support, and/or refutation to answer the topic? (The method lies within the topic itself. Impromptu Speaking is not necessarily a persuasive speech.)

II. Organization of Speech

Did the speaker use an effective introduction? Did the speaker identify and support main points? Did the speaker have an effective summary or conclusion?

III. Presentation of Speech

Did the speaker demonstrate attributes of effective speech habits? Did the speaker exhibit poise, control of body, and clarity of voice to effectively communicate with the audience?

*****Judge Notice*****

In an effort ensure fairness in judging practices, KHSSL has standardized the point values given to student performances. Please use the following rubric in order to assign point values to each student performance. Students may **not** receive the same point value. Students may **not** receive more points than an individual more highly ranked. Judges are strongly encouraged to justify the reason for the rating on the ballot.

Point Value	Description
100-95	Excellent performance: Student/s demonstrated a great command of the performance and understanding of the material. Excellent use of speech habits (eye contact, gestures, vocal clarity, very few stumbles, etc.). “I really liked this! I would definitely watch it again.”
94-90	Good performance: Student/s demonstrated a good command of the performance and understanding of the material. Good use of speech habits (eye contact, gestures, vocal clarity, a few stumbles, etc.). Student/s may lack a bit of energy or emotional variety. “Hey, this is pretty ok. I would watch this again.”
89-85	Average performance: Student/s somewhat demonstrated a command of the performance and understanding of the material. Some observation of speech habits (eye contact, gestures, vocal clarity, a few stumbles, etc.). Student/s lacks some energy or emotional variety. “I enjoyed this, but I bet it would be even better with a bit more practice. I would love to see the performance again in the future.”
84-80	Performance needs some improvement: Student/s demonstrated a little command of the performance and understanding of the material. Growth needed in basic speech habits (eye contact, gestures, vocal clarity, etc.) and/or quite a few stumbles. Student/s lacking energy or emotional variety in performance. “Definitely putting forth effort but needs a bit more practice. I would like to see this later in the season.”
79 and Below	Needs significant improvement: Student/s did not demonstrate a command of performance or understanding of the material. Good speech habits not practiced (little or no eye contact, lack of memorization, few or no gestures, vocal clarity problems, many stumbles, etc.). Student/s may have behaved inappropriately (inattentive, on phone, deliberately distracting, etc.). Student/s lacks energy or emotional variety. “I feel that this performance would benefit from additional coaching and/or the student/s may need some more time with the material.”



KHSSL STATE TOURNAMENT 2026

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

Junior and Senior Divisions

Contestant Code: _____ Contestant Name: _____

Quotation or Object chosen for speech topic: _____

Round (circle): I II III QF SF F Room: _____

COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE:

REASONS FOR DECISION:

YOU MAY USE THE BACK FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Rules Violations and Penalties assigned (if any)

Please rank and rate each contestant in the round. Ratings and ranks should correspond in corresponding order (highest rating for the 1, second highest rating for the 2, etc.) with no two contestants receiving the same rank or rating. The rating scale is 70 to 100, but a low rating of 70 **does not** have to be given. Judges should use the guidelines included in this packet to assign ratings.

Rank _____ of _____ in round Rating (70-100) _____ Performance Time _____

Judge Signature: _____ Affiliation: _____



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