

# NASHVILLE CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL FORENSIC LEAGUE

## General tips for all categories:

**Please give both positive comments and suggestions for areas of improvement.** Do not be afraid to criticize, but always be constructive. Explain to the students why they ranked where they did.

**Use your judgment in awarding speaker points.** Speaker points measure the closeness of the competitors AND the quality of the round. For example, if one of the students clearly stands out from the others, award him/her the highest points and widen the point spread between the other students. If the performance of two students was close, show this by keeping the point spread close.

- Do not automatically award 100 points for 1st place; however a 1st place score of 90 or less would indicate a weak round. Do not score anyone below an 82.
- A student's attire should not lead to loss of points or rank unless it interferes with the performance. However, it is appropriate for Judges to comment on attire as a suggestion even if it does not have an impact on the performance.
- *Do not give oral critiques.*
- **When warranted, explain your rankings.** If you drop the ranking of a student for a specific reason, such as exceeding the time limit, suggest re-working the piece. Alternatively, avoid false praise. If a student struggles through his/her performance and is ranked last in the round, don't write "Great Job!" without further suggestion or explanation.

For categories where the student selects their own piece:

- Is the material appropriate for a Catholic middle school student?
- Does the material meet the rules of the category? (length, memorized, etc.)
- Is there an emotional/intellectual understanding of the material?

Following are some things to consider as you evaluate students for each category.

## **JUDGING TIPS – AUDITION**

### **Introduction:**

- No intro required.
- No penalty is given for time requirements since the piece is provided by the host school.

### **Selection:**

- There is a news script for first round and an audition script for second round.
- For second round, the host school will provide a gender friendly script or one that has both male and female characters. Selections may be religious, humorous, or dramatic in nature. The piece should reflect the nature of its content through delivery. The selection may be a monologue or a dialogue. Pieces may include "he said" or "she said".

### **Presentation:**

- For the first round of news broadcast, students may sit or stand at a podium. For second round, they can use full body movement.
- Script must be held, but students may use one or both hands, and they may choose to change hands for dramatic purposes.
- Some eye contact is necessary, but judges should keep in mind that they only had 5 minutes of prep time.
- Keep in mind voice inflection, projection, and clarity. Look for confidence, composure, interpretation, and the impact of delivery.
- Ultimately, for second round, scores and ranking should be decided by the question, "To whom would you give the part?" if it were a real audition.



# **JUDGING TIPS – DECLAMATION**

## **Introduction:**

Should include the name of the original speaker and the date of the speech, but a better introduction would include what the speech is about and/or its significance.

## **Vocal elements:**

- Vocalization – Volume, emphasis, intensity, diction, inflection, mumbling, speed/pacing, expressiveness, projection, enunciation, pitch
- Phrasing/pacing – Fluid, choppy, flowing, rhythmic, hesitant

## **Physical presentation:**

- Eye contact – consistent, effective
- Facial expressiveness/gestures – natural, appropriate, expressive, effective use of space, movement, blocking
- Speaker presence – Confident, poised, energetic, polished, lackadaisical, comfortable with material

# **JUDGING TIPS – DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION**

## **Introduction:**

Effective, explanatory, attention-getting, sets mood/feeling

## **Vocal elements:**

- Vocalization – Volume, emphasis, intensity, diction, inflection, mumbling, speed/pacing, expressiveness, projection, enunciation, pitch
- Phrasing/pacing – Fluid, choppy, flowing, rhythmic, hesitant

## **Physical presentation:**

- Eye contact – consistent, effective
- Facial expressiveness/gestures – natural, appropriate, expressive
- Speaker presence – Confident, poised, energetic, polished, lackadaisical, comfortable with material
- Students may move their feet, bend, and turn around, but should not generally stride across the “stage”

## **Interpretation:**

- Character development – strong, appropriate, consistent, interesting, multiple characters are distinguishable
- Emotion – appropriate to character/selection, believable, intensity, tone – especially where there is only one character voice, the range of emotions should be key factor
- Transitions – fluid, explanatory

# **JUDGING TIPS – DUET ACTING**

## **Introduction:**

Effective, explanatory, attention– getting, sets mood/feeling

## **Vocal elements:**

- Vocalization – Volume, emphasis, intensity, diction, inflection, mumbling, speed/pacing, expressiveness, projection, enunciation, pitch
- Phrasing/pacing – Fluid, choppy, flowing, rhythmic, hesitant

## **Physical presentation:**

- The duet should be well-blocked with purposeful movement and action – gestures should be clear and meaningful
- Facial expressiveness – natural, appropriate, expressive
- Neither student should speak lines with their back to the “audience”

## **Interpretation:**

- Character development – strong, appropriate, consistent, interesting, multiple characters are distinguishable
- Emotion – appropriate to character/selection, believable, intensity, tone
- Each student should be familiar with their character and the two should respond to each other and time their lines for best pacing

# **JUDGING TIPS – DUET IMPROVISATION**

## **Introduction:**

Effective, explanatory, attention– getting, sets mood/feeling

## **Presentation:**

- Vocalization – Volume, emphasis, intensity, diction, inflection, mumbling, speed/pacing, expressiveness, projection, enunciation, pitch
- Phrasing/pacing – Fluid, choppy, flowing, rhythmic, hesitant
- Facial expressiveness/gestures – natural, appropriate, expressive
- Presence – students should make good use of space and use body movements to distinguish their characters

## **Interpretation:**

- Character development – each student's character should be clear and defined
- Emotion – appropriate to character/selection, believable, intensity, tone
- Transitions – fluid, explanatory

# **JUDGING TIPS – DUET INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE**

## **Introduction:**

Effective, explanatory, attention– getting, sets mood/feeling, presented equally

## **Vocal elements:**

- Vocalization – Volume, emphasis, intensity, diction, inflection, mumbling, speed/pacing, expressiveness, projection, enunciation, pitch
- Phrasing/pacing – Fluid, choppy, flowing, rhythmic, hesitant

## **Physical presentation:**

- Eye contact –consistent, effective
- Facial expressiveness/gestures – natural, appropriate, expressive
- Speaker presence – Confident, poised, energetic, polished, lackadaisical, comfortable with material, appropriate use of manuscript

## **Interpretation:**

- Character development – strong, appropriate, consistent, interesting, multiple characters are distinguishable
- Emotion – appropriate to character/selection, believable, intensity, tone
- Transitions – fluid, explanatory

# **JUDGING TIPS – HUMOROUS INTERPRETATION**

## **Introduction:**

Effective, explanatory, attention– getting, sets mood/feeling

## **Vocal elements:**

- Vocalization – Volume, emphasis, intensity, diction, inflection, mumbling, speed/pacing, expressiveness, projection, enunciation, pitch
- Phrasing/pacing – Fluid, choppy, flowing, rhythmic, hesitant

## **Physical presentation:**

- Eye contact –consistent, effective
- Facial expressiveness/gestures – natural, appropriate, expressive
- Speaker presence – Confident, poised, energetic, polished, lackadaisical, comfortable with material, appropriate use of manuscript
- Students may move their feet, bend, and turn around, but should not generally stride across the “stage”

## **Interpretation:**

- Character development – strong, appropriate, consistent, interesting, multiple characters are distinguishable
- Emotion – appropriate to character/selection, believable, intensity, tone – especially where there is only one character voice, the range of emotions should be key factor
- Transitions – fluid, explanatory

## **JUDGING TIPS – IMPROMPTU SPEAKING**

The contestant will be evaluated on his/her ability to organize and deliver a clear and concise speech based upon the selected topic. The contestant will also be judged by his/her original and creative approach to the topic.

### **KEY ELEMENTS**

- Utilization of prep and speaking time
- Communication skills – a good, clear voice, natural gestures and movement, etc.
- Composed pauses with minimal “uhs” or “ums”
- Few repeated phrases or statements

# **JUDGING TIPS – ORIGINAL ORATORY**

## **Introduction:**

Should be included in the speech and set the tone and topic of the thesis

## **Structure & delivery:**

Organization – logical, clear, effective use of transitions, main positions substantiated, effective use of supporting material from qualified sources, clear explanations, good flow, clear and potent word choice, effective use of rhetorical devices

## **Vocal elements:**

- Vocalization – Volume, emphasis, intensity, diction, inflection, mumbling, speed/pacing, expressiveness, projection, enunciation, pitch
- Phrasing/pacing – Fluid, choppy, flowing, rhythmic, hesitant

## **Physical presentation:**

- Eye contact – consistent, effective
- Facial expressiveness/gestures – natural, appropriate, expressive, effective use of space, movement, blocking
- Speaker presence – Confident, poised, energetic, polished, lackadaisical, comfortable with material

# **JUDGING TIPS – PANTOMIME**

## **Introduction:**

Not required, but helpful to set the scene.

## **Presentation:**

- Facial expressiveness/gestures – natural, appropriate, expressive, effective use of space, precise movement, blocking
- Character development – strong, appropriate, consistent, interesting, multiple characters are distinguishable
- Emotion – appropriate to character/selection, believable, intensity, tone
- Judges should consider whether they understand the actions the student is making

# **JUDGING TIPS – READER’S THEATER**

## **Introduction:**

Effective, explanatory, attention– getting, sets mood/feeling

## **Vocal elements:**

- Vocalization – Volume, emphasis, intensity, diction, inflection, mumbling, speed/pacing, expressiveness, projection, enunciation, pitch
- Phrasing/pacing – Fluid, choppy, flowing, rhythmic, hesitant

## **Physical presentation:**

- Eye contact – consistent, effective
- Facial expressiveness/gestures – natural, appropriate, expressive
- Speaker presence – Confident, poised, energetic, polished, lackadaisical, comfortable with material, appropriate use of manuscript

## **Interpretation:**

- Character development – strong, appropriate, consistent, interesting, multiple characters are distinguishable
- Emotion – appropriate to character/selection, believable, intensity, tone
- Transitions – fluid, explanatory
- Judges should consider how well the cast works together – timing, pacing, etc.

# JUDGING TIPS – INTERPRETATION OF POETRY

## Introduction:

- Effective, explanatory, attention– getting, sets mood/feeling

## Vocal elements:

- Vocalization – Volume, emphasis, intensity, diction, inflection, mumbling, speed/pacing, expressiveness, projection, enunciation, pitch
- Phrasing/pacing – Fluid, choppy, flowing, rhythmic, hesitant
- Student should avoid falling into a cadence or “sing-song” if the rhythm is strong

## Physical presentation:

- Eye contact – consistent, effective
- Facial expressiveness/gestures – natural, appropriate, expressive
- Speaker presence – Confident, poised, energetic, polished, lackadaisical, comfortable with the material, appropriate use of manuscript

## Interpretation:

- Character development – strong, appropriate, consistent, interesting, multiple characters are distinguishable
- Emotion – appropriate to character/selection, believable, intensity, tone
- Transitions – fluid, explanatory

Poetry does *\*not\** have to rhyme. Pieces with multiple character voices and/or emotional differences should be more highly considered.

# **JUDGING TIPS – INTERPRETATION OF PROSE**

## **Introduction:**

Effective, explanatory, attention– getting, sets mood/feeling

## **Vocal elements:**

- Vocalization – Volume, emphasis, intensity, diction, inflection, mumbling, speed/pacing, expressiveness, projection, enunciation, pitch
- Phrasing/pacing – Fluid, choppy, flowing, rhythmic, hesitant

## **Physical presentation:**

- Eye contact – consistent, effective Facial expressiveness/gestures – natural, appropriate, expressive
- Speaker presence – Confident, poised, energetic, polished, lackadaisical, comfortable with material, appropriate use of manuscript

## **Interpretation:**

- Character development – strong, appropriate, consistent, interesting, multiple characters are distinguishable
- Emotion – appropriate to character/selection, believable, intensity, tone
- Transitions – fluid, explanatory

## **JUDGING TIPS – STORYTELLING**

### **Introduction:**

Effective, explanatory, attention– getting, sets mood/feeling

### **Vocal elements:**

- Vocalization – Volume, emphasis, intensity, diction, inflection, mumbling, speed/pacing, expressiveness, projection, enunciation, pitch
- Phrasing/pacing – Fluid, choppy, flowing, rhythmic, hesitant

### **Physical presentation:**

- Eye contact – consistent, effective
- Facial expressiveness/gestures – natural, appropriate, expressive
- Speaker presence – Confident, poised, energetic, polished, lackadaisical, comfortable with material
- Student should use their whole body to aid in the telling

### **Interpretation:**

- Character development – strong, appropriate, consistent, interesting, multiple characters are distinguishable (by voice, body posture, etc.)
- Emotion – appropriate to character/selection, believable, intensity, tone
- Transitions – fluid, explanatory