



“Live Doc” Information and Announcements for the
2026 NJSDL Middle School Championship
at Long Valley Middle School on Friday, May 8, 2026

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Day-Of Tournament Announcements

WIFI: Use the WTS_Guest account.

3:48pm - Judges please check-in at the library upon arriving
4:23pm - We're pushing Round 1 start time to finish judge check-in. An announcement will be made in the cafeteria shortly.
4:35pm - Round 1 blasted
5:25pm - Due to Round 1 starting late, Round 2 will also be pushed back slightly. We will update on start time as soon as possible
5:50pm - Round 2 will be blasted
6:42pm - We are scheduling a short dinner break between Round 2 and the Round 3/Finals; Goal is 7pm
7:01pm - Finalists will be announced at 7:05; Final Rounds will begin at 7:15pm
8:01pm - Award Ceremony will begin as soon as all events are finalized
8:26 - Awards Ceremony

Location

Long Valley Middle School
51 West Mill Road Long Valley, NJ 07853

📍 Long Valley Middle School

[Driving Directions via Google Maps](#)

Schedule (As of 9:30AM on Friday, May 8th)

Schedule subject to changes due to registration numbers and judge availability

4:00 On-site Check-in
4:15 Announcements for all Students and Judges
4:25 Round 1 - Speech & SPAR
4:25 Congress Session Begins
5:30 Round 2 - Speech & SPAR
6:30* Dinner Break and Speech Finals Announcement
6:55 Congress Session Continues
6:55 Round 3 - Original Oratory & SPAR

6:55 Finals - Declamation, Impromptu, Memorized Interp, Prose Interp, Poetry Interp
8:00 Awards Assembly

Event Room Locations

Congressional Debate - Room 39

Declamation - Rooms 29 and 30

Impromptu Speaking - Rooms 34, 35, 36, and 37

Memorized Interpretation - Rooms 28 and 29

Original Oratory - Room 31

Poetry Interpretation - Rooms 21 and 22

Prose Interpretation - Rooms 23, 24, and 25

SPAR Debate - Room 38

Dinner

Individual students can purchase pizza slices during the Dinner Break. Long Valley will also have snacks and drinks available for sale.

Team Sweepstakes Calculation

In order to provide a more equal opportunity for schools/programs to earn a team placement at the NJSDL Middle School State Championship, regardless of the size of the school/program, tournament staff will only use the results of the **top five entries** from each school/program.

A first place finish will earn a school/program six (6) points, a second place finish will earn five (5) points, a third place finish will earn four (4) points and so forth.

If two or more schools/programs are tied in total points we will look at each school/program's sixth best entry as a tiebreaker, and this will proceed until the tie is broken. If the tie cannot be broken using this method alone, then the school/program that has the **least amount of total entries** will win the tiebreaker. If schools/programs have an equal number of total entries at this point, then an unbreakable tie will be declared for that placement in the team sweepstakes.

Schools with less than five total entries will be awarded a 6th Place Finish for each slot not filled.

EXAMPLES

School A:

Entry 1- 1st Place, Entry 2- 3rd Place, Entry 3- 3rd Place, Entry 4- 4th Place, No fifth entry =
 $6+4+4+3+1 = 18$ team points

School B:

Entry 1 - 1st Place, Entry 2 - 1st Place, Entry 3 - 3rd Place, No fourth or fifth entries =
 $6+6+4+1+1 = 18$ team points

School C:

Entry 1 - 2nd Place, Entry 2 - 3rd Place, Entry 3 - 4th Place, Entry 4- 5th Place, Entry 5 - 5th Place = $5+4+3+2+2 = 16$ team points

School D:

Entry 1- 1st Place, Entry 2- 3rd Place, Entry 3- 3rd Place, Entry 4- 6th Place, Entry 5- 6th Place = $6+4+4+1+1 = 16$ team points

School B earns 1st Place (Wins tiebreaker against School A due to having less total entries)

School A earns 2nd Place (Loses tiebreaker against School B due to having less total entries)

School C & School D will need to look at Entry 6 to determine 3rd Place

If School C's Entry 6 earned a 6th Place finish, while School D's Entry 6 earned a 7th Place finish, then School B will be awarded 3rd Place.

Speech Events Information

Overview of Judging Speech

In speech, a typical round will contain six different contestants, although this number can fluctuate depending on how many students are entered in the event. Prior to the start of the round, the judge will receive an email and/or text with a link to their electronic ballot via an online tournament software (e.g. [Speechwire.com](https://www.speechwire.com), [Tabroom.com](https://www.tabroom.com), etc.) or pick up a set of printed ballots from the tournament organizer. *(For all NJSDL league tournaments and festivals we use [Speechwire.com](https://www.speechwire.com) for ballots; some invitational tournaments by NJSDL schools may use [Tabroom.com](https://www.tabroom.com))* These ballots are where judges will record their thoughts on each performance, suggestions for improvement, and general feedback for the performer. At the end of the

tournament, each school will receive all the ballots written about their competitors so contestants can use your feedback to improve!

In each round after the final student has spoken, the judge will evaluate the speakers and rate them on a scale from one to six, with the best performance receiving the one ranking. Depending on the tournament, you may be asked to assign competitors speaker points, typically on a scale from 90-100, with 100 being outstanding. After the rankings are complete, judges should return their ballots to the tournament organizer.

The judge will meet the students in the assigned room and watch the entirety of the round, which usually lasts for one hour. During each speech, the judge will make notes on the ballot, keep the contestant's time, and ensure the round runs smoothly.

Students will occasionally ask for time signals, it is up to you whether or not you would like to honor that request. Time signals are a simple system that let competitors know how much time they have used throughout the speech. The most common time signals are to alert the student when they have two minutes remaining by holding two of your fingers in the air, like a peace sign, and to alert them when they have one minute remaining by holding one finger in the air.

In speech, it is common for competitors to enter in more than one event for the tournament, this is called being cross-entered. Students who are cross-entered should be allowed to speak earlier in the round if they have another event to go to, and should be excused for entering the round late if they were competing in a different event in the same round.

During preliminary rounds of the tournament, there is usually only one judge per round. However, when students begin competing in elimination rounds, rounds will have more than one judge. This is called a panel.

Original Oratory Resources

Overview of Original Oratory

Original Oratory is a speech written by the student with the intent to inform or persuade the audience on a topic of significance. Oratory gives students the unique opportunity to showcase their voice and passion for their topic. An Oratory is not simply an essay about the topic—it is a well researched and organized presentation with evidence, logic, emotional appeals, and sometimes humor to convey a message. Topics may be of a value orientation and affect people at a personal level, such as avoiding peer pressure, or they can be more of a policy orientation and ask an audience to enact particular policies or solve societal problems.

High School Original Oratory performance from NSDA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ISFjmcld9w>

NSDA Judge Training Video - Original Oratory

<https://youtu.be/TYh-ze6w5H8>

Original Oratory Blank Ballot from NSDA

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Sample-Ballot-Oratory-Blank.pdf>

Original Oratory Ballot with Sample Comments from NSDA

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Sample-Ballot-Oratory-Comments.pdf>

Declamation Resources

Overview of Declamation

Declamation is a public speaking event where students deliver a portion or portions of a speech previously delivered. The speech the student delivers can be any publicly delivered speech. Commencement addresses, historical speeches, political speeches, and celebrity speeches are common examples that students may use to select their declamation. Speeches are up to 10 minutes in length. As a result, students typically shorten the text of the speech to meet time requirements. The goal of a declamation is to convey a message with clarity, emotion, and persuasiveness. The event is not designed for students to mimic the original author of the speech. Instead, speakers are to develop an oration that delivers the message of the author in an original and engaging manner.

Example Clip from a Middle School Declamation performance from NSDA

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/230066129>

NSDA Judge Training Video - Declamation

<https://youtu.be/ixXjIZtZr-Q>

How to judge Declamation from NSDA

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/how-to-judge-declamation/>

Declamation Blank Ballot from NSDA

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Sample-Ballot-Declamation-Blank.pdf>

Declamation Ballot with Sample Comments from NSDA

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Sample-Ballot-Declamation-Comments.pdf>

Impromptu Resources

Overview of Impromptu Speaking

Impromptu is a public speaking event where students have seven minutes to select a topic, brainstorm their ideas, outline and deliver a speech. The speech is given without notes and uses an introduction, body, and conclusion. The speech can be light-hearted or serious. It can be based upon prompts that range from nursery rhymes, current events, celebrities, organizations, and more.

Impromptu is a public speaking event that tests a student's ability to analyze a prompt, process their thoughts, organize the points of the speech, and deliver them in a clear, coherent manner. Students' logic is extremely important. They must be able to take an abstract idea, such as a fortune from a fortune cookie, and put together a speech that has a thesis and supporting information.

(NOTE: An adapted version of Impromptu, Prepared Prompt Speaking, has been used at online tournaments. In Prepared Prompt, students will be given a list of topics prior to the tournament, select one prompt from the official list, prepare a speech, and submit it through the recording process.)

Example Clip from a High School Impromptu performance from NSDA

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/230066902>

NSDA Judge Training Video - Impromptu

https://youtu.be/c9j_xOmll3g

How to Judge Impromptu from NSDA

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/how-to-judge-impromptu> Oral Interpretation of Prose

Prose combines multiple elements of oral interpretation of literature. Prose corresponds to usual patterns of speech — that which you would find most every day in a particular space and time (in contrast to poetic form and language). Prose typically has a narrative with its related rises and falls, much like Storytelling. Prose may also feature character development and dialogue, much like Dramatic Interpretation. Prose may have humorous elements embedded, much like Humorous Interpretation. In short, while many categories have specific interpretation focal points, Prose Interpretation is very wide open, and choices of material may vary from region to region or even tournament to tournament.

Oral Interpretation of Poetry

Poetry is characterized by writing that conveys ideas, experiences, and emotions through language and expression. Often Poetry is very creative in terms of vocabulary and composition. While Poetry may tell a story or develop a character, more often Poetry's focus on language and form are designed to elicit critical thought, reflection, or emotion. Students may choose what the National Speech & Debate Association refers to as traditional Poetry, which often has a formal meter or rhyme scheme, or nontraditional Poetry, which often has a rhythmic flow but lacks formal rhyme or meter. Poetry is different than Original Spoken Word Poetry in that students in Poetry will perform works written by others.

Example Clip from a High School Poetry performance from NSDA

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/230060862>

NSDA Judge Training - Interpretation Events (Dramatic, Humorous, Duo, Prose, Poetry)

<https://youtu.be/wbrqiq65mJY>

Oral Interpretation of Prose

Prose combines multiple elements of oral interpretation of literature. Prose corresponds to usual patterns of speech — that which you would find most every day in a particular space and time (in contrast to poetic form and language). Prose typically has a narrative with its related rises and falls, much like Storytelling. Prose may also feature character development and dialogue, much like Dramatic Interpretation. Prose may have humorous elements embedded, much like Humorous Interpretation. In short, while many categories have specific interpretation focal points, Prose Interpretation is very wide open, and choices of material include short stories, cuttings from novels, etc. and must be from a published source. The cutting for prose should tell a story with a clear progression of events. Must be within 10 minutes (30 second grace period). An introduction is required and it must include the title and author of the piece.

Example Clip from a High School Prose performance from NSDA

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/230060544>

NSDA Judge Training - Interpretation Events (Dramatic, Humorous, Duo, Prose, Poetry)

<https://youtu.be/wbrqiq65mJY>

Memorized Interpretation

A combination of the high school level Dramatic, Humorous, and Duo Interpretation events, our Memorized Interpretation event is for middle school students who chose a piece of literature/entertainment that falls outside the Prose & Poetry Interpretation events.

This includes television and movie screenplays, Broadway scripts, stand up comedy routines, etc., however a published version of the original source material must be available.

Since this is a memorized event, the use of a manuscript is prohibited. Costumes, props, lighting etc., are also prohibited.

Competitors should focus on showcasing well-developed, and relatable characters going through an easy to understand story and sequence of events.

Must be within 10 minutes (30 second grace period).

An introduction is required and it must include the title and author of the piece.

Example Clip from a 2024 High School Humorous Interpretation National Finalist

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQLuQFI_qFI

NSDA Judge Training - Interpretation Events (Dramatic, Humorous, Duo, Prose, Poetry)

<https://youtu.be/wbrqiq65mJY>

SPAR (Spontaneous Argumentation) Debate Information

Event Overview: Debaters will be assigned to the pro or con side prior to the assignment of the topic based on their speaking order (1st Speaker - AFF, 2nd Speaker - NEG, 3rd Speaker - AFF, 4th Speaker - NEG, etc.). In the event of a round having an odd number of speakers, the 1st Speaker will serve as the opponent for the last speaker (i.e. 5th Speaker - AFF will compete against 1st Speaker - NEG). Only the first debate of the 1st Speaker (i.e. 1st Speaker - AFF vs. 2nd Speaker - NEG) will be taken into consideration when determining the 1st Speaker's rank and score.

Each pair of speakers will consider three (3) topics. When selecting topics, the AFFIRMATIVE will get first strike. This means that the NEGATIVE will ultimately decide the topic.

Competitors may NOT access the internet during the 2 minute prep period OR at any other point during the round; including when another pair of debaters are performing. Competitors may use blank paper or notecards, but may NOT consult pre-written notes.

Following both constructive arguments, will be the four-minute crossfire. The timing for the crossfire at our tournament will be split into two sections. The first two minutes will be direct questioning between the two debaters, which will be followed by two minutes of indirect questioning where the debaters will respond to questions from all students in the round. The students "in the gallery" during this indirect questioning period should be explicit as far as who their question is directed towards (i.e. State, "my question is for the affirmative."). If no competitors "in the gallery" wish to ask a question, the two debaters may continue direct questioning.

In the end there will be three debates within one round, and EACH debate will follow this timing period:

SPAR Time Limits, and Speaking Order

Prep Time After Topic Selection - 2 minutes

AFF Construction - 2 minutes

NEG Construction - 2 minutes

Direct Crossfire - 2 minutes (Two debaters ask questions to each other)

Indirect Crossfire - 2 minutes (All students in the round can ask questions to the debaters)

AFF Rebuttal - 2 minutes

NEG Rebuttal - 2 minutes

Judging

Similar to Congressional Debate and Speech events, all competitors in the entire round are ranked. SPAR competitors should be judged on the basis of overall presentation, wit, persuasion, and quality argument construction. Win-Loss record should NOT be the major factor when deciding ranking. A competitor who lost their paired debate can still be ranked higher than

a competitor who won their paired debate after taking into account the other factors. As an example:

Rank 1 - Competitor 3 (Won vs. Competitor 4)

Rank 2 - Competitor 4 (Lost vs. Competitor 3)

Rank 3 - Competitor 6 (Won vs. Competitor 5)

Rank 4 - Competitor 1 (Won vs. Competitor 2)

Rank 5 - Competitor 5 (Lost vs. Competitor 6)

Rank 6 - Competitor 2 (Lost vs. Competitor 1)

In the event that an odd number of competitors are assigned to a round, where the last competitor will debate against the first competitor in the speaking order, judges should only use the FIRST debate when considering the first competitor's score and ranking.

Reference Video: For an overview of how a judge will be perceiving the event, and ultimately ranking our students, you can [watch this YouTube video](#) made by Gary Yablon, coach of Hudson Arts & Science Charter School.

Congressional Debate Information

Legislation: [Congressional Debate Legislation for 2026 NJSDL Middle School State Championship](#) (The docket was released on Friday, April 24th, 2026)

Students will prepare to speak on legislation using a docket inspired that includes portions of legislation from the National Speech and Debate Association's (NSDA) monthly congressional packet series. [Congressional Debate Legislation for 2026 NJSDL Middle School State Championship](#). With the assistance of a Parliamentarian, the students will determine the order of the legislation at the beginning of the first session at the tournament.

Event Overview: Congressional Debate is like a simulation of the real United States legislature. A group of 10-25 students, called a Chamber, will compete in a legislative session. A series of bills and resolutions will be proposed by students from various schools. Students in turn will be selected by a presiding officer — a student elected to conduct the business of the round — to give speeches both advocating for and encouraging the defeat of the measure in front of them. Following each speech, competitors will be able to pose questions of the speaker. Once debate is exhausted on a particular item, the chamber will vote either to pass or fail the legislation, and debate moves on to the next item. Legislation comes in two types — a bill and a resolution. A bill is a plan of action, detailing how a particular policy proposal will be implemented. A resolution, meanwhile, is a statement expressing the opinion of the chamber. Typically, one session of Congress lasts about 2-3 hours. During that time, students typically give speeches 3 minutes in length. The first two speeches on a piece of legislation are known as the first advocacy, or first pro, and the first rejection, or first con. These speeches are followed by 2 minutes of cross examination. After the first pro and con speech are established, each additional speaker is subject to one minute of cross examination by the chamber.

Event Overview from <https://www.speechanddebate.org/competition-events>

NOTE: Unlike the Congressional Debate Authorship Challenge in which some students may have competed asynchronously during the pandemic, students may choose to speak in favor of or against any piece of legislation during this tournament and all other in-person Congressional Debate sessions.

Parliamentary Procedure:

The adult or experienced high school student serving as Parliamentarian will guide the students through their use of parliamentary procedure. Copies of [Frequently Used Parliamentary Motions](#) will be available but students may want to review and become familiar with them before the tournament.

Example Clip from a High School Congressional Debate Speech from NSDA
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/230067413>

How to judge Congressional Debate from NSDA
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4S9XtKVIUI>

Public Forum Debate Information

UPDATE (5/5/26): Due to low entry totals, this event has been canceled this year.

Public Forum Topic: Based on the voting of middle school coaches the tournament will be using the NSDA April 2026 topic.

RESOLVED: The United States should eliminate the President's authority to deploy military forces abroad without Congressional approval.

Public Forum Debate Event Overview: As a team event, students who compete in Public Forum need to be able to work well with a partner. Balanced teams, both in terms of preparation before debates and contributions within a debate, helps provide a competitive advantage during tournaments. PF looks at current event topics. Students who do Public Forum must be prepared to debate in front of judges without any formal debate training. Being able to persuade a range of judges is a central component to this event. Additionally, PF is focused upon debating varying resolutions that change frequently, which exposes students to a variety of topics during a singular competitive season.

Event Overview from <https://www.speechanddebate.org/competition-events>

Public Forum Debate Time Limits:

Speech	Time Limit	Purpose
Team A Speaker 1 – Constructive	4 minutes	Present the team's case
Team B Speaker 1 – Constructive	4 minutes	Present the team's case
Crossfire	3 minutes	Speaker 1 from Team A & B alternate asking and answering questions
Team A Speaker 2 – Rebuttal	4 minutes	Refute the opposing side's arguments
Team B Speaker 2 – Rebuttal	4 minutes	Refute the opposing side's arguments
Crossfire	3 minutes	Speaker 2 from Team A & B alternate asking and answering questions
Team A Speaker 1 – Summary	3 minutes	Begin crystallizing the main issues in the round

Team B Speaker 1 – Summary	3 minutes	Begin crystallizing the main issues in the round
Grand Crossfire	3 minutes	All four debaters involved in a crossfire at once
Team A Speaker 2 – Final Focus	2 minutes	Explain reasons that you win the round
Team B Speaker 2 – Final Focus	2 minutes	Explain reasons that you win the round

Time Limits from <https://www.speechanddebate.org/competition-events>

Example Clip from a High School Public Forum Debate Speech from NSDA

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/230031307>

General Judging Resources

SpeechWire.com Judging Resources

Access your Ballots for an NJSDL Tournament using SpeechWire.com

<https://live.speechwire.com>

Reset your Judging Password on SpeechWire.com

<https://www.speechwire.com/c-forgot.php?sitesource=live>

Electronic Ballot Handout for Speech Judges

<https://www.speechwire.com/handbooks/eballots-speech-judges.docx>

Electronic Ballot Handout for Debate Judges

<https://www.speechwire.com/handbooks/eballots-debate-judges.docx>

**Video Tutorial of Judging Speech and Debate on SpeechWire.com with Electronic Ballots
(In-person, synchronous, and asynchronous)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJXxeVS-KgM>

Culturally Competent Judging Resources

Culturally Competent Judging Handout

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Culturally-Competent-Judge-Training.pdf>

Cultural Competence Course

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/2019-cultural-competence-course>

In-Depth Judging Course

Full Adjudicating Speech and Debate Course

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/adjudicating-speech-and-debate>