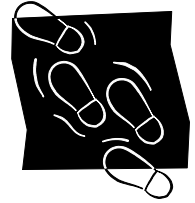


Step-by-Step Guide to Speech



Alberta Debate and Speech Association

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Many people dread public speaking. They go to great effort to avoid it. This is normal. This is common.

However, some people enjoy public speaking. Some make a good living doing it. The common assumption is that these people are maladjusted, social misfits. This is false. They have just learned how to prepare and deal with public speaking.

The reality is that there is a lot of tough competition in the world. Increasingly, employers place more emphasis on communication skills of all kinds. You can't hide from public speaking. The best advice: embrace the challenge and learn how to speak well. You might even enjoy it!

A lot of people are intimidated because they don't know where to begin. Here is where this handout will help. It'll teach you how to prepare and organize so that when it's time for you to get up and speak people will think that you are a natural.

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The Categories

THE CATEGORIES

Junior Competitor or Senior Competitor?

Good question and an easy one to answer. Unlike debate, there is no beginning class and open class. Whether you are a Jr. or a Sr. depends only on your grade level. Junior runs from grade 6 to grade 9 and senior from grade 10 to 12.

Competition Speech through the Alberta Debate and Speech Association is divided into six categories. There are junior and senior divisions for each of the categories and there is no competition between the two. Each of these categories requires different skills and therefore provides practice in exercising these skills.

They are:

Original Oratory

The giving of a prepared speech to inform, entertain, or persuade. The speech must be written by the speaker.

Impromptu

An immediate response to a topic provided for you. You are given five minutes to prepare the speech before being asked to deliver it.

Oral Interpretation - Prose / Oral Interpretation - Poetry

This is the 'performance' of published prose or poetry while reading it. This is difficult one to define. In the rulebook it says that it can be defined as a demonstration of analysis, performance, and communication skills.

Solo Acting

The performance of a monologue or one person play that gets across what the playwright had in mind and engenders belief in the audience for the duration of the performance.

Duet Acting

The performance of a published piece of a dialogue or portion of a play or a literary work that gets across what the playwright had in mind and engenders belief in the audience for the duration of the performance.

In a tournament setting, the categories are all judged separately. You will only compete against Oral Interpretation participants if you are in Oral Interpretation. Junior and senior competitors do not compete against one another either and this allows for people of different skill levels to compete.

Original

Oratory

ORIGINAL ORATORY

RULES:

- a) The speaker must construct an original speech meant to inform, entertain, or persuade.
- b) Students may select any subject which is of interest to them, which will appeal to their audience, or which will have sufficient impact to change the listener's point of view.
- c) Not more than 10% of an oration may consist of quoted materials.
- d) During the delivery of an oration, notes if a manuscript is being used, may be held or referred to by the contestant, but there must be no obvious reading except when using quotations.
- e) A speaker using manuscript should not be penalized for doing so provided he/she follows criterion (d).
- f) As a contestant completes a speech he/she will remain in the room for the remainder of the speeches.
- g) Maximum speaking time will be seven (7) minutes. There is no minimum.
- h) All speech activities will have a 15 second grace period commencing from the moment the stop signal is given. At the end of the 15 seconds the Chairperson will verbally interrupt the speaker and the judge shall disregard anything further that is said.

These rules offer few restrictions on the participant. In essence you must write your own speech which can be on basically any topic and not more than 10 % of it can be from another source. (Try not to become too preoccupied with the 10 % rule, it is a difficult rule to enforce and is more or less on the shoulders of the judge to interpret. So long as your speech is not noticeably full of quotations, there should be no problem.)

CHOOSING A TOPIC:

When choosing a topic for your speech, ask yourself:

- Who is your audience? Is your choice of topic suitable? Remember: The International Association of Grandmothers won't be able to appreciate a speech about why *Metallica* is better than *Marilyn Manson*. (Most of them anyway!)
- Is the content of your speech suitable for the occasion? (Here's a tip: Avoid stand-up comedy at a funeral)
- What do you want your audience to take away from the speech? What message do you want to get across?

There are no strict guidelines to choosing a topic for this category. Because you are writing it, your only limit is your imagination. You will want to choose something in good taste, of course. If the judge is offended by the content of your speech, you will be marked hard. This does not mean that you must avoid controversial topics, simply be aware that you are writing this for someone you do not even know, whose tastes or sense of humour may differ from yours.

There is no limit to the number of different speeches you could produce but a speech will usually fall into one of these categories:

There are many different types and styles of speeches. However, if you are a beginner, consider using one of these three basic styles to make preparation easier. Selecting one of these styles will help you keep your purpose in mind while preparing and help you remember key things to do in your speech.

One type of speech does not have to exclude another. For example, you can inform your audience while entertaining them. You can persuade your audience, entertain them and inform them all at the same time. The trick is to gain and keep the attention of your audience.

Despite the freedom you have in constructing a speech for this category - it is a good idea for the speech to have some point - don't ramble. The speech could be about something that you learned from your dog or your vacation...

a) THE SPEECH TO INFORM

The goal here is to impart knowledge. Keep your message clear. Keep in mind how much (or how little) the audience knows. If they are knowledgeable about the subject, go into depth. If the topic is new to them, keep your speech basic. Watch for audience reaction. If you see a lot of confused expressions, you need to slow down, repeat some points or simplify your comments as you go.

Don't overwhelm people with too much information. Complex statistics or data can be hard to absorb. Leave heavy details for written material that can accompany your speech.

Here are some example topics:

- How to bake something
- How to eat something
- How to repair something
- Show and Tell (bring in an object for the audience to see - explain what it is and what it does)
- How to change the cat litter
- Etc.

b) THE SPEECH TO PERSUADE

The goal is not just to inform, but convince people of your point of view. Do some research and find evidence (other than your own opinion) to support your argument. Rely on reason, logic and evidence. Find credible authorities to support you. An emotional appeal may be effective in some cases. Avoid misquotations, distortions, and evidence taken out of context.

Why Canada should lower its corporate tax rate
Why Canada should raise the legal drinking age
Why the British Government should concede to the demands of the IRA
Why people should stop littering

c) THE SPEECH TO ENTERTAIN

Even though you are entertaining, you must still prepare. A witty choice of words or style of presentation is often as good as a joke. Remember, you can be humorous and entertaining while making a serious point.

Humor should be relevant and audience suitable. Remember: be careful with humor! It's easy to offend people with jokes taken the wrong way. Self-directed humor is usually good. Err on the side of caution and "keep it clean".

My summer vacation
My Dog
An entirely made up story or anecdote
Any story which may be true but interesting or funny or thought provoking

Remember that you must write the speech and have less than 10% of it can be quoted material.

These are only examples of topics you may consider writing a speech on. Do not feel bound by them and certainly feel free to stretch the envelope or definitions. The more creative your speech is the more memorable it will be. If something stands out in the judges head when they are ranking the contestants, then they are more apt to put your name in above other, not so memorable speeches.

PREPARING YOUR SPEECH:

There is no point in directing you to write a speech in a specific way. There is no one way that a speech should be written to be effective. It can vary in length, in organization, in style, presentation, word choice...

For anyone to say that there is only one type of speech and one way of delivering it and only one way of organizing it is not allowing for individual expression of ideas or the individual tastes of the judges. One judge may like your choice of organization for your story or speech or routine, another in the very same room may hate it and score you low. There is no way to tell. All you can do is write a good speech, practice it and present it in a clear way.

The only real criteria for your speech is that it should meet its goal (to inform, to entertain or to persuade or any combination of the three.) In order for any speech to meet its goal, there must be clarity in the presentation. You must be understood. If you are not understood, the judge will have only one thing going through his or her head when it comes time to rank you against the others - what on earth did that speaker just say? So while you are remembering that there is no single way to construct a speech you must also bear in mind that you must be understood. The construction or organization of your speech must be apparent to you and to the judges. Never take for granted that the judges understand you.

A good formula to follow, whether you are a beginner or a pro, is ...

- | |
|---|
| a) Tell them what you are going to tell them (a.k.a.: The Introduction) |
| b) Tell them (a.k.a.: The Body) |
| c) Tell them what you told them (a.k.a.: The Conclusion) |

Now, don't literally tell the audience your specific point three different times. That is a guaranteed cure for insomnia. Think of it this way: you are guiding the audience on a mental tour. There are no signs so they will get lost unless you keep telling them where they are.

I. The Introduction (What are you going to say?)

Use it to gain audience attention and create a favorable impression. Use it to set the tone and lead into the speech. State the central idea and how you will divide your speech.

Pretend you are giving a speech about your view that Elvis Presley is still alive. You may wish to open your remarks in some of the following ways:

- a) Explain the terms you will use. Define what you are *and are not* talking about.
Example: "Today, my comments will focus on evidence that proves 'the King' is still alive. When I refer to 'the King' of course I refer to Elvis Presley and not the many cheap Las Vegas impersonators who soil 'the King's' legacy every year!"
- b) Begin with a personal experience designed to identify with the listeners.
Example: "When I was a young girl, I would lock myself in my room for weeks and listen to Elvis' music. I would often forget to sleep or eat because I loved Elvis so much. I promised that when I grew up I would marry him!"
- c) Ask a question or a series of questions.
Example: "Are you aware that Elvis' name is misspelled on his tombstone? Are you aware that there have been more Elvis sightings in 7-11 than in any other place? Are you aware that this is all evidence of a government conspiracy!?"
- d) State a relevant quotation.
Example: "Since my baby left me, I found a new place to dwell." Clearly, Elvis did find a new place to dwell by leaving Graceland in search of the peace of suburbia.
- e) Challenge your audience with a startling Statement.
Example: "In 1998, there were 786 Elvis sightings in Kentucky alone!!"
- f) Tell a humorous anecdote.
Example: "Last week at the National Elvis Convention in Moose Jaw ..."
- g) All of the above.

Some Explanation on Introduction

(Your Introduction should be like a road map through your speech. If the judges know what to listen for in advance - they are more likely to notice when they hear it..)

Now that you have the undivided attention of your audience, it is time to explain what it is you are going to say in as clear and brief a manner as you can. You are at this point, explaining the point of your speech to the audience. If you are about to try to explain to the judges that Quebec should separate from the rest of Canada or the best way to plant a poplar or why English is such a wonderful language - it is in the introduction that you tell them what it is you will be discussing today.

When you do this, provide them not only with your topic but give them a brief summary of your speech. It is like providing them with directions or a road map of your presentation. This way they will know what to look for and when you actually say it not only will they be impressed, they will take note of your point.

If you chose to tell the audience that English is the greatest language on the planet and everyone should speak it, after getting their attention, you will provide them with the skeleton of your speech.

"... I will provide you, ladies and gentleman with some convincing reasons for adopting English as the official language of the world. It is already becoming necessary to speak it in almost every country anyway, it has the potential to be as lyrical and romantic as any other language and it is also easy to learn. Allow me to explain each of these points in detail..."

If you chose to inform your audience or entertain them, in the introduction you will still have to provide the audience with the same kind of brief overview or map of the course your speech will be taking. If you are demonstrating how to change the cat litter, your introduction should still give the audience some information about the body of your speech - the order which you will take them through the process of changing the cat litter.

Remember to be brief. If you get detailed in your introduction, you won't have anything to say for the rest of your speech, or you run the risk of repeating yourself and this will make the judges tune out and not listen to you.

II. The Body

This is the main part of the speech. There are a number of different ways to structure the body depending on which best suits the purpose of your speech. (The following is based upon Getting Started in Public Speaking by James Payne and Diana Prentice, National Textbook Company, Lincoln-Wood, 1985)

- a) **Logical or Topical Order**
 A good method when you have several ideas to present and the ideas seem to naturally flow from one to another. For example, if you were giving a speech about the benefits of exercise, you might organize it like this:
1. Physical Benefits
 - a. Cardiovascular Strength
 - b. Muscle Tone
 - c. Weight Loss
 2. Mental Benefits
 - a. You are more alert
 - b. You feel better about yourself
- b) **Chronological (Time) Order**
 Use time sequence as a framework to organize your speech. This method is especially useful for speeches requiring background information. It also works well for speeches explaining a process or explaining how to do something. For example, a speech on the history of baseball could begin with its invention and follow the rule changes up to the present day.
- c) **Spatial Order**
 Uses physical space as the framework. If you were describing a house, you would start in one room and walk your way around the house. A weather report is usually given region by region without randomly skipping around the country. This style works well with informative speeches.
- d) **Classification**
 This method organizes things into categories or classes of items. This technique is useful for all types of speeches. Information is easily given by classifying ideas. A speech about Elvis could be categorized as follows: songs written by Elvis, biographical facts about Elvis, facts surrounding his "alleged" death, and your theories about why he is still alive.
- e) **Problem-Solution Order**
 This is a good technique for persuasive speeches. The first part of the speech outlines the problem and the second part gives a solution. Within the problem-solution pattern, you will find other types of organization. For example, the problem section of the speech might be organized using a logical sequence. The solution portion of the speech might involve classification. If your goal is to persuade, select one solution and present arguments for why it is the best option.
- f) **The Cause and Effect Order**
 This method, like the Problem-Solution method, contains two parts. The first describes the cause of the problem, and the second its effects. For example, if you were doing a speech on toxic waste pollution, the first part of the speech might explain how and why toxic waste causes environmental damage. The second part would discuss the effects of toxic waste on property and health. As with the problem-solution speech, other forms of organization are usually incorporated into the major sections.

Some Explanation on Body or Exposition

The middle part of a speech, like the middle part of a paragraph or a story - usually the stuff between the first paragraph and last paragraph (or first and last chapter if it is a book) is called exposition. It is the detailed explanation of your point. It is where support for your point will be given and it where you will spend the greatest amount of time when you are delivering your speech.

It is in the exposition that you will give the audience a more detailed look at the map you provided them in the introduction - and it should follow the same order you laid out in your introduction, too. (If you change order, the judges will be confused.)

(The body or exposition of your speech is the detailed information - the point of your speech and the proof for that point, the instructions on how to do something or the thoughts or stories or ideas you wish to entertain them with.)

In the exposition, as you provide support for your main contention or idea, or you will provide the detailed instructions or information you wish to give them or you will give them the story or tale you have chosen to entertain them with.

Whatever type of speech you are going to give to the audience, whether to inform or entertain or persuade, you will use the body of the speech to make your point. If your point was how to change the cat litter, the exposition will tell them how to do so, if you point was to tell them about the humorous and important time you spent at summer camp in 1987, then you will do so in the exposition, if you have decided to persuade the audience into thinking that English is the best language for the world to speak, it is in the body of your speech that you will prove that to them.

Say you have chosen the English should be spoken by the world topic - it is the one that has been developed so far so we will stick with it - you will have followed the steps so far and the audience will have heard this:

An attention grabbing opening statement which will compel or make the audience want to listen to you.

An introduction in which you have told them your topic, how you will support your topic and the order in which they will hear that support.

So now you have the attention of the audience and they also know what it is they will be looking for while you speak - now you have to give them what you promised in the introduction.

Following the 'English is the best' example, you will now have to explain your topic in detail. You will tell them not only what your topic is, but you will also explain what the point of your speech is and why your point is valid. You will have to prove to the audience that English is in fact the best language for the world to speak and you will do by proving the compelling reasons you gave them in the introduction - most everyone has to speak it already, it is lyrical as any other language and it is easy to learn.

Not only will you give them these reasons but you must prove to the audience that they are valid reasons.

Proof can take many forms - when trying to persuade, think about what kinds of things will sway you into thinking that a point is a good one. Some standard means of proving a point are:

Some types of evidence or proof:

Quotations

Experts in the field and their opinions are often good ways of convincing people.

Common Sense or Logic

Things that are quite obvious or are just simply the case. That pollution is bad is a fairly accepted view, that there is a hole in the ozone layer, that mountains are difficult to move and the earth is round. Remember that common sense is not always so common and doesn't always make sense. Make sure you provide a solid argument for any point you are trying to make.

Statistics/figures

There are lies, there are damned lies are statistics. Statistics can say pretty much anything that you want them to. This is why that they are a good thing to use as proof. For the same reason, they can be a bad thing as well. If you are providing a statistic, make sure it is valid and that you aren't stretching how applicable or useful it is.

How to use proof in your speech:

It is important if you are going to be using proof in your speech that you are able to use it properly. The use of common sense is pretty much, well, common sense. It need only be brought into your speech with a minimum amount of explanation. Quotations and Statistics are a different story, though. In order for you to introduce a quotation a statistic as proof, the audience has to be assured that you aren't making it up as you go. You should provide a source for the quotation, that is who it is was written or spoken by, the date of the quotation (usually only necessary for statistics or quotations from newspapers or magazines or other dated periodicals) and the actual place it came from. (If you got it from a book or a newspaper rather than from a speech - the author as well as the title of the publication are both necessary.) If you provide the judges with this information, then there is no room for confusion as to where the statement came from, that it is going toward strengthening your point and they can also keep track of the amount of quoted material in your speech - this last point is most important.

(Don't forget the 10% rule. No more than 10% of your speech can be quoted material. Citing sources when you use quotations and statistics helps the judges make sure you are under 10% - They don't always give you the benefit of the doubt if they aren't sure if it was an original statement.)

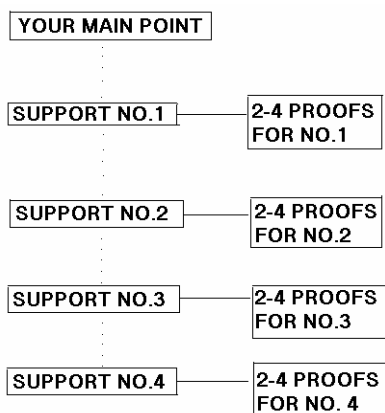
Not long ago on CBC, a gentleman was interviewed who had decided to seek out the source or a list that he had heard quoted by a number of people including Mrs. George Bush, the U.S. Secretary for Education and a number of other highly respected individuals. They were all quoting items from a list that itemized all of the problems in American schools in the 1990's. Things like guns, stabbings, drugs, etc. All of these people who quoted the list as scientific fact were using the information incorrectly because it turned out that the source was a Fundamentalist , right wing preacher from Texas who found God in prison and decided that he would write up a list, with no proof, of what he thought the biggest problems in schools were.

Regardless of how valid the point he had was, and regardless of how valid the point of the then First Lady or the Secretary for Education in the U.S., the proof was not valid. Without the valid proof, how is the audience supposed to believe you?

(Be careful of the proof you choose to support your point with. Try to use evidence that is well accepted or credible, the judges will be more likely to believe you if they believe your proofs.)

Going back to something that was stated earlier, you should try to have between 2 and 4 supports for your point. This goes for all types of speeches. If your point is to inform or explain something to the audience, between 2 and 4 items of explanation is a good idea. 2 to 4 steps in the process, for example. If you are trying to entertain, perhaps 2-4 thoughts or events that occurred or locations visited. If it is your job to persuade or convince, there is one extra step. Your speech should flow like this:

(2-4 points of support or steps in the process you are explaining or 2-4 thoughts in your speech to entertain. This is a comfortable number to work with and an easy number of things to keep track of if you are a judge.)



Your main point is the topic of your speech. If it is an informative speech it is how to do something or providing the audience with information. If it is a speech to entertain the point or main point or topic is the time you went to camp or the time your dog ate the box of crayons. If your speech is to persuade, then the main point is what you are trying to convince the audience to believe in.

Your supporting points are the body of your speech. They are the steps you take to do something, they are the locations in your tale or they are lessons that you have learned from an experience in your life. The supports are also the reasons that the audience should trust in what you are saying and change their minds about it. Your proofs are the details or reasons for your supports. If you are explaining the next step in a process, the proof is the actual action. The details involved in the step. If your support is a location or a lesson, the proof is simply the details surrounding that lesson or the events which occurred in that location. If your supports are reasons to change your mind about something, that is if you are trying to persuade your audience, the proofs are the quotes and states and logic that you use to supports make sense and if your supports make sense, then your main point makes sense and if your point makes sense, then your speech has fulfilled its goal.

III. Conclusion

The conclusion should end the presentation on a high note and tie the whole speech together. You should try to achieve three things:

- 1) Make the audience aware that the speech is drawing to a close.
- 2) Make sure the audience knows the point you are trying to make, the belief you are trying to establish, or the action you wish the audience to take.
- 3) Leave the audience with something to remember.

Some explanation on Conclusion

Your conclusion is the wrapping paper on your present to the judges. It is where you say what you said. Like your introduction, it should be short - only a sentence if you like - and it sums things up as briefly as you can. It states the point of your speech once more, it states the supports or steps or reasons once more and then you tell them that obviously they have learned something from you now and you tell them what that was. Whether it was that they now know that English should be a universal language or how to change the cat litter or that they should now have learned what you have learned from the dog eating the crayons.

Punch Line

This is like the attention grabbing opening sentiment. Something to finish up everything and make them remember what a good speech you have just delivered. It could be another shocking statement, it could be a humorous statement to make them laugh and think of you fondly or it could be a sad and poignant quotation that makes them sit in awkward silence - but at least they will remember you.

GETTING READY FOR THE TOURNAMENT:

So you have been roped into this by your English teacher and you had no idea what it was going to take and now you're nervous and there is only a week left before the tournament and...

If you have your speech written then you have half the battle won. You have read the how to choose a topic and how to prepare your speech and now all you need to know is what to do to avoid humiliation or nervousness or placing last.

When you are getting ready for a tournament and you are competing in Original Oratory, you are going to have to remember your speech. You will have to recite it. That does not help, does it? If you wrote it you should have at least some vague idea what it is about and that is all you really need.

I should actually say that you are allowed to have a copy of your speech there for you to refer to - but you cannot read off of it. It is entirely too easy to glance down at the paper while you are up there in front of the judges and find that comfort in the words and just read, eyes down, not ever looking up. That is not good.

There are a number of problems associated with having a copy of the speech with you as you speak. One big one is that you are tempted to read from it and no matter how much you say you won't - how it is just for reference - you will always end up talking to your paper and not the judges.

Another problem is that often, the speech will be written on loose-leaf or binder paper. There are two setup options at a tournament. There may be a podium, or you may just have to speak from the front of the room. If you have to speak with nothing but a piece of paper in front of you, it makes a great deal of noise and it rattles and it limits your ability to use your hands to communicate and this is important. If you tend to get nervous as many people do, nothing shakes like loose-leaf in nervous hands. This is very distracting for the judges and will only get you sympathy, not a good placing. If you happen to get a podium, then you no longer have the problem of rattling papers, now you are glued to the podium. This can be almost as bad as fluttering papers. You are again limiting yourself and the potential for the use of body language. Some judges prefer you to remain stationary, others will like it more if you pace with purpose when your speech calls for it. The point is, only one of these options is available to you if you are standing behind a podium, unwilling to move.

If there is no real problem with you memorizing your speech but there is a concern you have about freezing up and being unable to remember what comes after 'Ladies and Gentlemen...' you may find that a preferable option for you would be to make an outline of your speech and use it for reference.

(Outlines are highly preferable options to using a written out copy of your speech, Reading off of your paper and paying no attention to your audience will usually hurt you more than it will help you - even if you get the speech entirely correct, if you neglect your audience you will not be marked well.)

Outlines can be very scant or very detailed depending on how much assistance you feel you will need. You should still try to avoid copying your speech word for word. Usually, if you really do have it memorized and you are able to relax a bit, a single word or sentence is enough to help you recall entire passages of your speech.

When you are writing an outline, try to write it without the speech in front of you. If you do it from memory first, that will help you immensely later on, when you are trying to work on it. Later, go back through the speech without the outline then put it down and go back to the outline without the speech.

Another option is going through the speech first and then making a fairly detailed outline from it right away. Make this right from a full copy of the speech. Then put the full copy away and write a new outline using the detailed one as reference. Make the new outline a bit less detailed than the one you are working from. Do the same thing, getting rid of the detailed outline and working on a new, scant outline. Use the scant outline to make an even more scant outline and eventually you will have a reasonably good knowledge of how your outline relates to your speech.

(Write down quotations on your outline in full. This way you will get all information out and there will be no doubt what of your speech is original and what is quoted material.)

One thing that you should write in full on your outline is your quotations if you are using any. Writing down the exact wording of the quote and the source that it is from is a good way of making sure you get all of the information spoken. If you are nervous and leave something out, there may be some doubt in the judge's mind about the originality of the statement. If you give all of the information

for the quotes that you use and the judges notice this, they will know for sure what is quoted and what is original material. This gives you an advantage over someone whose speech the judges are unsure of.

Write your outline on 3x5 cards - recipe cards. This stiffer paper can be cupped in your hand or even held loose and they will not rattle no matter how nervous you are.

Using an outline can spur you into remembering what you wanted to say and in what order and it also keeps you from simply reading your speech to the judges.

If you need no outline but still need a place to write quotations down on, the 3x5 recipe card will do just fine.

Once you have an outline down, rehearsal is important. The more comfortable you are with the speech, the more that assurance will be conveyed to the audience.

PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE

Talk your outline through as much as you can - even practice without the outline around in the shower or before you go to sleep. Don't worry if you forget bits and pieces. Go back to the outline later and figure out what it is you missed.

Eventually you should come to a point where, if you do miss a bit of your speech and know that it will not come to you right away, move on to the next bit you do remember. If you can do this with out disrupting the flow of the speech then you are well prepared.

(The more comfortable you are with the material, the more that will show through and the more relaxed you will be in front of your audience.)

The more you can work with the outline, the better. When you can go through the sequence laid out in your outline and do so in detail without help, that will help relax you more than anything else come the day of the tournament.

You should practice as much as you can in front of others. People you are comfortable with at first. Family, friends, your speech coach. When you are rehearsing in front of others, try to emphasize eye contact with them. This is something that the judges will be looking for. A good speaker will talk with the audience, not at the audience.

When you practice out loud, make sure that there is variation in your voice. More like you are speaking and not how you read. At appropriate times in the speech, experiment with gesture. Hand motions and other body language are good - but only if used properly. Overdoing the gestures becomes distracting and will harm you rather than help you.

(Gesture and body language can be important in a speech and add to the presentation of a speaker - but if used at inappropriate moments or if the speaker is uncomfortable with the motions, it will become distracting and detract from the presentation.)

It is up to you to decide at what points in your speech there are sentiments or cause for a waving of a hand or the clenching of a fist - but remember to be comfortable with the motions as well. The judges will know if you threw something in and are not relaxed with it.

Pay careful attention to your time when you are rehearsing. Ask someone to time your speech. You must not go over the 7 minutes.

If your speech is not 7 minutes long, don't be concerned or if it is close and you forget some of it at the tournament and you find that you still have a minute left, don't feel that you have to stand up there with nothing to say for the whole 7 minutes.

When you practice, have someone time you and give you a countdown in minutes by holding up fingers or cards. This is what will happen at the tournament. If you can keep track of landmark times in your speech - for example at 3 minutes, I am usually at the bit about the dog, this will help you to pace yourself.

(When you are rehearsing, look for points in your speech and the time at which you reach them. If you take note of these landmarks, you will be able to tell if you are going too quickly and can learn to pace yourself.)

You should be able to be consistent in the time you can deliver your speech in. You may find, though, that at the tournament your pace will pick up. Try to look for the landmark times and pace yourself - you don't want to speak too quickly. If you can catch errors in the first round or in the first couple minutes of your speech, there is still time to correct them.

THE USE OF PROPS IN ORIGINAL ORATORY:

One thing I have not discussed is the use of props in the Original Oratory category. It is better to get a firm handle on speaking before introducing props. You must be able to deliver your speech without props first. But, you may have decided that your speech will be an expository - or how to speech. Or, you may have decided to bring in something to talk about. Kind of a 7 minute show-and-tell. In these cases, you are going to need props or objects to bring into the room either to hand around or to demonstrate the inner workings of.

When you select your topic and you have a feeling that you are going to need a prop, try to choose a cooperative prop. Try not to choose something that will likely become complicated or difficult to demonstrate. Also, items that have a habit of not doing what they are supposed to should be avoided as well. The chances of complications become greater when there are people watching or when you are nervous. Your speech should also be able to function independently of your props. That is if your prop was relying on a fish that can jump out of its bowl on command and your fish dies en route to the tournament, you have a problem. If a problem occurs and your prop is rendered useless for the day of the tournament, you should still try to deliver your speech without it. Your speech should not be so dependent on the prop that it cannot hold up on its own.

(If you choose to use a prop for your speech, make sure your speech can stand alone, without the prop, just in case something goes wrong with the item.) If, after all this veiled warning you decide to use a prop or need an object for demonstration, there is no problem.

You may need time to set up things if you do not speak first - if this is the case, just let the judges know that you need a moment to set up before you deliver your speech.

(Choose a prop with a minimum setup time. Try not to keep the judges waiting for you.)

Choose something with a minimum setup time. The longer you keep the judges waiting, the potentially harder they will mark you. Anything you can do to make the judges appreciate you and your speech should be done. Not to say that the wheels are there to be greased, but rather - they have to sit for many hours at a tournament and listen to speeches that they may not have liked in other rooms. It is your job to make sitting through speeches a pleasant thing. They may not say anything, but if they have to wait too long, that is a mental black check by your name.

THE TOURNAMENT:

So you have made it to the tournament and you are officially nervous about the whole thing. The best advice, the easiest advice to give and also the hardest advice to take is to relax.

There are some exercises at the end of this booklet which will show you how to warm up for a tournament - how to relax your jaw and to exercise your voice and how to articulate your words. All this area is for is to describe to you what the tournament is like for you who are competing in Original Oratory.

When you arrive there will be some kind of registration where you will be given a package of materials and then you will be told to go to a cafeteria or some other common area where you may find juice and doughnuts and coffee. There you will receive some briefing or other and then, either in the package you are given when you register, or posted in the common area somewhere there is a room assignment. This will be done by category and by class (Jr. or Sr.).

The room assignment is simply the rooms in which you will be competing for the duration of the tournament.

There are normally 6 to 8 people in a category. All people in a category will be in the same rooms together for the day/evening.

In your room there may be a podium or there may not. There will probably be a desk at the front of the room or a table. If there is not, and your speech requires some table room, ask to have the judges face a useful area (like the teacher's desk) when they arrive.

There are usually three judges - or at least an odd number of judges in a room. This is not as important as it may be in a Debate tournament. The judges are not being asked to pick a winner out of two and because of how the marking works, there are no ties at a speech tournament.

There will be three rounds and depending on how big the tournament is, there is the chance of there being a semifinal and/or a final round. These usually take place in larger rooms and those who have been knocked out - or are not competing in semifinals or finals are spectators.

If you make it to a final or semifinal round, the judging is the same, it is just the crowds that are bigger.

Most tournaments are similar in setup with the exception of Provincial Speech Competitions.

The top ranking 10 or 11 students at the Provincial will compete for two spots at the Nationals tournament. The Students who will be competing for this spot prepare an Original Oratory speech not more than 5 minutes long and it cannot have been presented at any other ADSA sponsored event - including Provincial.

No more surprises.

JUDGING:

At the end of this section you will find the ballot used by judges for the category of Original Oratory.

You should look over the ballot carefully. (There are 2 sides)

On the front of the ballot, you will note that there are the rules - the same rules as at the beginning of the Original Oratory section of this booklet - some of the rules are a little more detailed and concern penalties against the speaker.

More than anything else (with the exception of you being comfortable with your presentation) it is the judging criterion you should know. If you know these and how to fulfill them, you will deliver a superior speech.

You will note that there is a numeric scoring system and then the judge has to rank you against your fellow orators. This means that the judge will be paying attention to you the whole time and making sure that you are performing the requirements constantly. This is why you should know them well.

All of the requirements have been talked about in this guide - delivery tips are in a section all their own. Delivery is common to all the categories and does not have to be discussed here.

(Take the advice of the judges seriously - there may be something to what they have to say.)

It has been mentioned that the judges at a tournament are volunteers. All judges will have received a briefing and in the briefing they will learn how to fill out the ballots and what sorts of things to look for in your speech. At the conclusion of all the competitor's speeches, brief comments will be given. These comments are meant to assist you and should be constructive. There are likely to be points on delivery or perhaps something about the organization of the speech that they found confusing. You should at least consider the advice given - if it made sense to you or if you see how they would have felt that way, then you should look at making some minor alterations in your speech for the next time.

It is always possible to get the judge who is not happy to be at the tournament or had a bad morning and their comments may be harsh or picky. Don't be dismayed or bothered by this. It happens and thank them for their comments then move to the next room and new judges.

If a judge has seen your presentation in another round and it is not the final, it is possible that some mistake has been made. You should not get the same judge for more than one round of preliminary competitions. Mention this to the chairperson or timekeeper and allow them to talk to the organizer. Chances are they will just switch two judges in different rooms.

Now that you know all there is to know about Original Oratory, you may want to switch categories.

The Alberta Debate and Speech Association

ORIGINAL ORATORY SPEECH BALLOT

ROUND _____ ROOM _____ JR./SR. _____

Judge's Name: _____ Chairperson/Timer: _____

The evaluation of an effective speaker in a formal competition is identical to the daily assessment of speakers who communicate views to the public. The major criteria for evaluation are:

(Did the speaker have sufficient impact to inform, entertain, and/or persuade?)

In formal competition, we ask the judges to apply these criteria to presentations and to evaluate speakers in the same manner as they would in a real life situation. We do, however, expect a higher standard of presentation in formal competition and have added a number of specific areas which should be examined.

RULES (*ADSA Policy & Rules Manual*)

- a) The speaker must construct an original speech meant to inform, entertain, or persuade.
- b) Students may select any subject which is of interest to them, which will appeal to their audience, or which will have sufficient impact to change the listener's point of view.
- c) Not more than 10% of an oration may consist of quoted materials.
- d) During the delivery of an oration, notes if a manuscript is being used, may be held or referred to by the contestant, but there must be no obvious reading except when using quotations.
- e) A speaker using manuscript should not be penalized for doing so provided he/she follows criterion (d).
- f) As a contestant completes a speech he/she will remain in the room for the remainder of the speeches.
- g) Maximum speaking time will be seven (7) minutes. There is no minimum.
- h) All speech activities will have a 15 second grace period commencing from the moment the stop signal is given. At the end of the 15 seconds the Chairperson will verbally interrupt the speaker and the judge shall disregard anything further that is said.

RANKING PROCEDURE

The *Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Second Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Third Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Fourth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Fifth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Sixth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Seventh Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Eighth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

Judge's Signature _____

Please complete and sign this sheet. Tear off and give to Chairperson/Timer at the end of the round. Then proceed to give comments to all competitors.

ORIGINAL ORATORY WORKSHEET

Remember: A short quality speech should be rated more highly than a long, ineffective one.

Procedure: Fill in the contestant's number as per the draw in the dark boxes below. In each box below the contestant's number write one of the following.

- 1 – for did not do
- 2 – for poor
- 3 – For Average
- 4- for good
- 5- for Excellent

CRITERIA

Participant's Code No.									
Achivement of Purpose									

Did the speaker have sufficient impact to inform, entertain or persuade? Additional Comments:

Organization									
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- Did the candidate provide an effective introduction?
- Did the candidate arrange his/her ideas in a logical order?
- Did the candidate link his/her ideas coherently?
- Did the candidate conclude effectively?

Delivery									
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- Did the candidate establish direct eye contact with his/her audience?
- Did the candidate make effective use of body language?
- Did the candidate achieve fluency?
- Did the candidate display enthusiasm in his/her presentation?
- Did the candidate exhibit clear, distinct diction?
- Did the candidate vary his/her tone effectively?
- Did the candidate show poise?

Content									
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

- Did the candidate choose ideas that demonstrated his/her understanding of the topic?
- Did the candidate use rationale, believable or persuasive statements?
- Did the candidate limit the topic to ideas that could be developed adequately in the time available?
- Did the candidate make use of one or more statistics, examples, anecdotes, common knowledge, and expert opinion to inform, entertain or persuade?

Audience Appeal									
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Did the speaker capture and hold your interest?

Impromptu

IMPROMPTU

This is one of the most difficult categories simply because in the other categories, you are given the time to become good at the delivery of your particular speech. It is upon your shoulders to practice, to know your material, to become confident in it. In impromptu, you have 5 minutes to gain all of that.

The rules say this about impromptu:

RULES:

- a) The speaker must construct an original speech meant to inform, entertain, or persuade.
- b) Length of preparation will be five (5) minutes.
- c) Topics will be assigned five (5) minutes prior to time of delivery.
- d) During the delivery of an impromptu address notes may be held or referred to by the contestant, but there must be no obvious reading from those notes.
- e) A speaker using notes should not be penalized for doing so provided he/she follows criterion (d).
- f) As a contestant completes a speech he/she will remain in the room for the remainder of the speeches.
- g) Maximum speaking time will be five (5) minutes. There is no minimum.
- h) All speech activities will have a 15 second grace period commencing from the moment the stop signal is given. At the end of the 15 seconds the Chairperson will verbally interrupt the speaker and the judge shall disregard anything further that is said.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR SPEECH:

The impromptu speech is not one where you are given a topic and then you are instructed to ramble on said topic for five minutes. There should be some organization to your ramblings. Five minutes before you are asked to deliver your speech, you will be given a card or an envelope and written down will be a topic for you to create a speech on. It could be posed in the form of a question or it could be a word or a sentiment or a quotation but it is up to you to interpret it and make it into a speech appropriate for the audience and yourself.

The same principles exist when constructing a speech in impromptu as do when constructing a speech for original oratory. You may wish to have a more rigid framework in mind when you are constructing a speech for impromptu - there is less time to tinker with the organization of your speech. Instead of having a speech and then creating a method of organization for that speech, you will be creating a method of organization and then plugging the body of your speech into that framework.

As for sources you are able to draw on, the sky is the limit. Like Original Oratory, there is no restriction put on how you interpret your topic. There may be times when the limitations are implied by the narrowness other the topic you are given - for example - Canada's involvement in the UN - but there is still a great deal of movement allowed.

Here are some possible formats for Impromptu that you will want to have handy for your speech:

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE
PROS AND CONS
COMPARISON
PROBLEM AND SOLUTION
LOCAL AND NATIONAL ASPECT
PERSONAL AND GENERAL INTEREST
CAUSE AND EFFECT

In each of these, and in all speeches, keep in mind that you should tell the judges what it is you are going to say, say what you are going to say and then tell them that you said it. A simple way of seeing this is introduction, body, conclusion.

(For a more detailed look at how to construct an organized speech, look in the Original Oratory section.)

For the UN topic, it would apply to each of the sample organizations like this:

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE:

How Canada has functioned in the UN in the past, how it's role has developed since then into the role of peace keeper that it is today and then explain how you think Canada will function in the UN in the future.

PROS AND CONS:

What is good vs. what is bad about the UN and how Canada's role is seen
-Peacekeeping vs. military operations

COMPARISON"

Canada's role in the UN vs. the role of the United States in the UN.

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION"

Canadian peace keepers becoming increasingly more endangered in UN missions and how that can be remedied

You get the idea...

PREPARING FOR A TOURNAMENT:

One way of looking at Impromptu is you have to make an off the cuff speech sound as polished and rehearsed as possible. The only way to hone this skill is to practice.

The best way to rehearse is to enlist as much help as you can. You will need topics - many topics with which to practice. Ask your coach if you have one or a teacher - social studies teachers and English teachers will have reams of topics similar to ones that you will receive at a tournament. Ask them to come up with topics both serious and humorous and ask them to be as specific as possible. One example is what you would do if you were in charge of all the countries in the world for one day.

Ask someone to keep time for you - giving you five minutes to prepare a speech on the topic to have picked or have had picked for you.

Prepare on recipe cards and prepare as general an outline as possible - it should not seem like you are reading your speech to the audience. You may refer to your notes but the more general you are, the less you have to refer to and the less likely you will be to read your speech.

After your delivery, ask for constructive comments. Anyone can tear down the doings of another and make it difficult for the person to want to carry on - this does not help you. Ask them to comment on these things:

- Organization
- Content
- Gestures
- Eye Contact
- Voice

If there is one part they did not like or understand, try to find out what it is that could make the speech clear. Find out if you seemed to be reading too much or if you were loud enough or if they (the audience) felt as though they were being spoken to. Did you fidget too much, was it distracting, did you move around or pace and did that detract from your presentation? These are things that the judges will be looking for and commenting on. If you can improve your delivery before you even get in front of a judge, then you have an edge.

(When you are rehearsing, you should learn to budget your time effectively. Get a member of your practice audience to time you so that you are able to keep track of how long it takes to develop certain areas of your speech.)

Even if your speech will be different you are developing the skills to clean up the presentation. Despite the content being different, the method you will develop when your practice will carry over from speech to speech. When you are delivering your speech, get someone who is watching to time you - giving you appropriate time signals either with cards or just by signaling with fingers how much time you have left. This practice will get you used to budgeting your time. When you are preparing your speech, you may not fully develop an idea on paper. The development will occur at the time of delivery. If you are doing this, it is an easy thing to become wrapped up in a single example and you will run out of time to develop the remainder of your speech. If you are learning to watch the clock before you reach the tournament, you will be able to budget automatically the time that you will spend on areas of your speech.

JUDGING:

At the end of this section, you will find the impromptu judging ballot. Learn what it is that the judges are expecting to see and then learn to give that to them.

You must satisfy the goals of your speech. If you chose a speech to inform, you must inform the judges. The same is true if you decide to entertain or to persuade. If you do not meet your goals, the judges will be forced to rank you lower than if you did.

The judges are looking for an organized and polished speech which was delivered well by the speaker. They are also going to be examining the content of the speech, the development of the topic and your understanding of it. They will be able to note how comfortable you are with your understanding. If you are confident, then you will be relaxed and deliver a good speech - no judge can mark you down for that.

The Alberta Debate and Speech Association

IMPROMPTU SPEECH BALLOT

ROUND _____ ROOM _____ JR./SR. _____

Judge's Name: _____ Chairperson/Timer: _____

The evaluation of an effective speaker in a formal competition is identical to the daily assessment of speakers who communicate views to the public. The major criteria for evaluation are:

(Did the speaker have sufficient impact to inform, entertain, and/or persuade?)

In formal competition, we ask the judges to apply these criteria to presentations and to evaluate speakers in the same manner as they would in a real life situation. We do, however, expect a higher standard of presentation in formal competition and have added a number of specific areas which should be examined.

RULES (*ADSA Policy & Rules Manual*)

- a) The speaker must construct an original speech meant to inform, entertain, or persuade.
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- e) A speaker using notes should not be penalized for doing so provided he/she follows criterion (d)
- f) As a contestant completes a speech he/she will remain in the room for the remainder of the speeches.
- g) Maximum speaking time will be five (5) minutes. There is no minimum.
- h) All speech activities will have a 15 second grace period commencing from the moment the stop signal is given. At the end of the 15 seconds the Chairperson will verbally interrupt the speaker and the judge shall disregard anything further that is said.

RANKING PROCEDURE

The *Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Second Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Third Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Fourth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Fifth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Sixth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Seventh Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Eighth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

Judge's Signature _____

Please complete and sign this sheet. Tear off and give to Chairperson/Timer at the end of the round. Then proceed to give comments to all competitors.

IMPROMPTU WORKSHEET

Remember: A short quality speech should be rated more highly than a long, ineffective one.

Procedure: Fill in the contestant's number as per the draw in the dark boxes below. In each box below the contestant's number write one of the following.

- 1 – for did not do
- 2 – for poor
- 3 – For Average
- 4- for good
- 5- for Excellent

CRITERIA

Participant's Code No.									
Achivement of Purpose									

Did the speaker have sufficient impact to inform, entertain or persuade? Additional Comments:

Organization									
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- Did the candidate provide an effective introduction?
- Did the candidate arrange his/her ideas in a logical order?
- Did the candidate link his/her ideas coherently?
- Did the candidate conclude effectively?

Delivery									
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- Did the candidate establish direct eye contact with his/her audience?
- Did the candidate make effective use of body language?
- Did the candidate achieve fluency?
- Did the candidate display enthusiasm in his/her presentation?
- Did the candidate exhibit clear, distinct diction?
- Did the candidate vary his/her tone effectively?
- Did the candidate show poise?

Content									
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- Did the candidate choose ideas that demonstrated his/her understanding of the topic?
- Did the candidate use rationale, believable or persuasive statements?
- Did the candidate limit the topic to ideas that could be developed adequately in the time available?
- Did the candidate make use of one or more statistics, examples, anecdotes, common knowledge, and expert opinion to inform, entertain or persuade?

Audience Appeal									
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Did the speaker capture and hold your interest?

Oral
Presentation
(Prose & Poetry)

ORAL INTERPRETATION OF PROSE

RULES:

- a) Contestants will present an effective reading of good literature (prose, poetry, drama) (serious or humorous) so that the audience can experience the ideas and feelings which inspired the author.
- b) In each round, the contestant must read a selection from a published work.
- c) The selection may be drama or prose. Two or more separate selections may be read if they are from an integrated theme.
- d) A brief introduction must be given, but must not exceed two hundred words.
- e) Two or more selections may be joined with a transition.
- f) The manuscript must be held in hand during the delivery of the selection and the contestants must give the illusion of reading from the manuscript.
- g) A student may sit or stand.
- h) Maximum speaking time will be seven (7) minutes. There is no minimum.
- i) All speech activities will have a 15 second grace period commencing from the moment the stop signal is given. At the end of the 15 seconds the Chairperson will verbally interrupt the speaker and the judge shall disregard anything further that is said.

INTRODUCTION:

A spoken introduction not exceeding 200 words is required. The introduction and/or commentary during the performance must include the name of the writer and the selection to be performed and should prepare the audience to listen to the selection. Content of introductions should be informative, relevant to the selection, and fulfill any category obligations. Introductions should be delivered utilizing the skills of good public speaking: they should be direct, personal, and informal in style with the student speaking as himself or herself. The introduction should reflect spontaneity, though it should be prepared ahead of time.

STYLE AND DELIVERY:

The speaker must hold the manuscript and give the illusion of reading from it. Responsive use of the body (i.e., spontaneous changes in posture, gesture, and place-to-place movement) is permissible. However, this active use of the body should:

- be appropriate to the demands of the selection
- be a natural outgrowth from the literature to be performed;
- not call attention to oneself
- be limited in scope

STANDARDS:

In selecting material to be read in the contest, the teacher and student are challenged to explore literature of high quality and are encouraged to prepare selections of literary merit. Selections are to be read in English translation; however, incidental use of foreign language, words and phrases in any selection may be used as in the original. Sponsors will revise or reject all selections which in any way fail to meet these qualifications, as not all material by an author is appropriate for contest material.

TIME LIMIT:

The time limit for each performance including introductions and Transitional materials may not exceed seven (7) minutes.

SPEAKING ORDER:

Speaking order shall be determined by the contest director by chance.

ROOMS:

In conducting this contest, two rooms are recommended: a performance room and a rehearsal room.

AUDIENCES:

Students should be offered the educational opportunity to experience that variety of literature and performances available through ADSA participation. Therefore, it is permissible for contestants to listen to each other. Additionally, sponsors of the contestants, and anyone else interested in listening to the performers, are allowed to be in the contest room.

TIMEKEEPER AND SIGNAL STANDARDS:

A timekeeper should be provided for each contest to notify the contestants of the amount of time remaining from their total allotted time. He/she should demonstrate to the contestants the type of time signals he/she will use. The major responsibility for keeping within the seven minute time limit rests with the contestant.

The Alberta Debate and Speech Association

ORAL INTERPRETATION OF PROSE BALLOT

ROUND _____ ROOM _____ JR./SR. _____

Judge's Name: _____ Chairperson/Timer: _____

The evaluation of an effective speaker in a formal competition is identical to the daily assessment of speakers who communicate views to the public. The major criteria for evaluation are:

(Did the speaker have sufficient impact to inform, entertain, and/or persuade?)

In formal competition, we ask the judges to apply these criteria to presentations and to evaluate speakers in the same manner as they would in a real life situation. We do, however, expect a higher standard of presentation in formal competition and have added a number of specific areas which should be examined.

RULES (ADSA Policy & Rules Manual)

- a) Contestants will present an effective reading of good literature (prose, poetry, drama) (serious or humorous) so that the audience can experience the ideas and feelings which inspired the author.
- b) In each round, the contestant must read a selection from a published work.
- c) The selection may be drama or prose. Two or more separate selections may be read if they are from an integrated theme.
- d) A brief introduction must be given, but must not exceed two hundred words.
- e) Two or more selections may be joined with a transition.
- f) The manuscript must be held in hand during the delivery of the selection and the contestants must give the illusion of reading from the manuscript.
- g) A student may sit or stand.
- h) Maximum speaking time will be seven (7) minutes. There is no minimum.
- i) All speech activities will have a 15 second grace period commencing from the moment the stop signal is given. At the end of the 15 seconds the Chairperson will verbally interrupt the speaker and the judge shall disregard anything further that is said.

RANKING PROCEDURE

The **Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Second Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Third Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Fourth Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Fifth Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Sixth Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Seventh Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Eighth Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

Judge's Signature _____

Please complete and sign this sheet. Tear off and give to Chairperson/Timer at the end of the round. Then proceed to give comments to all competitors.

ORAL INTERPRETATION OF PROSE WORKSHEET

Remember: A short quality speech should be rated more highly than a long, ineffective one.

Procedure: Fill in the contestant's number as per the draw in the dark boxes below. In each box below the contestant's number write one of the following.

1 – for did not do
 2 – for poor
 3 – For Average
 4- for good
 5- for Excellent

CRITERIA

Participant's Code No.									
Selection									

Appropriate for reader and audience
 Appropriate cutting

Introduction									
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Conversational Delivery
 Appropriate information

Meaning									
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Accurate phrasing to convey meaning
 Appropriate emphasis to convey meaning

Emotion									
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Mood Communicated
 Climax Communicated

Voice									
-------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Appropriate Expression
 Adequate Volume
 Appropriate Rate
 Clear articulation
 Correct pronunciation

Body									
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Expressive Face
 Responsive Body
 Adequate eye contact

ORAL INTERPRETATION OF POETRY

RULES:

- a) Contestants will present an effective reading of good literature (prose, poetry, drama) (serious or humorous) so that the audience can experience the ideas and feelings which inspired the author.
- b) In each round, the contestant must read a selection from a published work.
- c) The selection may be drama or prose. Two or more separate selections may be read if they are from an integrated theme.
- d) A brief introduction must be given, but must not exceed two hundred words.
- e) Two or more selections may be joined with a transition.
- f) The manuscript must be held in hand during the delivery of the selection and the contestants must give the illusion of reading from the manuscript.
- g) A student may sit or stand.
- h) Maximum speaking time will be seven (7) minutes. There is no minimum.
- i) All speech activities will have a 15 second grace period commencing from the moment the stop signal is given. At the end of the 15 seconds the Chairperson will verbally interrupt the speaker and the judge shall disregard anything further that is said.

INTRODUCTION:

A spoken introduction not exceeding 200 words is required. The introduction and/or commentary during the performance must include the name of the poet and the selection(s) to be performed and should prepare the audience to listen to the selection(s). Content of introductions should be informative, relevant to the selection(s) and fulfill any category obligations. Introductions should be delivered utilizing the skills of good public speaking as himself or herself. The introduction should reflect spontaneity, though it should be prepared ahead of time.

Your introduction is important in that it will set a tone for the reading.

You will introduce the work you have chosen, the title and author. Your introduction must include this information.

In your introduction you will set up the reading. Providing a loose summary of the plot if you need to or describe the setting or just talk about the author or perhaps describe the type of poem you are reading.

If your selected piece is shorter, you may wish to spend some more time in the introduction and include other information about the piece or the author or the setting or about the reasons that you have selected this particular item from the book or this particular poem instead of other works by the author. You may wish to tell the audience to listen for a particularly descriptive phrase or a beautiful allusion. The introduction is your free space and provides you with an opportunity to use up some time if you need to or to give the audience a greater understanding of the piece.

Some other information you may want to give in the introduction would be:

- Some information on the major characters.
- Information on the setting.
- Explain the themes present in your selection.
- The typical style of the author and how your selection fits into that.
- Tell the story, in your own words up to the point where you will be reading from.

Do not give the audience any more information than is necessary. Give them only the essential information if you are going to give a summary of the events up to the point where you will be reading from. You do not want to confuse the issue with many superfluous details that they will not hear in your selection. If you do so, they may be listening for the wrong things in your reading or the judges may feel that they have been denied some important information if it is in your introduction and you do not read it.

STYLE AND DELIVERY:

The speaker must hold the manuscript and give the illusion of reading from it. Responsive use of the body (i.e., spontaneous changes in posture, gesture and place-to-place movement) is permissible. However, this active use of the body should:

- be appropriate to the demands of the selection(s);
- be a natural outgrowth from the literature to be performed;
- not call attention to itself
- be limited in scope

(The rules stated that the student be challenged to explore literature of high quality and prepare selections of literary merit. Though not expressly stated, the implication is that the work be published.)

STANDARDS:

In selecting the material to be read in the contest, the teacher and student are challenged to explore literature of high quality and are encouraged to prepare selections of literary merit. Selections are to be read in English translation; however, incidental use of foreign language words and phrases in any selection may be used as in the original. Sponsors will revise or reject all selections which in any way fail to meet these qualifications, as not all material by a poet is appropriate for contest material.

(In the past there has been some contention over this and students have interpreted works of their own composition that have not been published.)

TIME LIMIT:

The time limit for each performance including introduction and transitional material may not exceed seven (7) minutes.

(In the past there has been some contention over this and students have interpreted works of their own composition that have not been published.)

SELECTION OF A PIECE:

The interpretation you are doing is not from one language to another - instead you are interpreting the way that the work was written into the way you feel it should be read.

Your piece has to be a published work.

Because it is you that will be doing the reading, you should choose something that interests you and suits you and that you feel comfortable with.

The piece you select should be one that you understand. If you don't understand it - you cannot hope to make the audience understand it.

The piece should be deemed appropriate. The rules are quite vague about this, saying that the work should have literary merit etc. I was at a speech tournament where one competitor read a short story by Stephen King. She did well despite Stephen King not being considered an author of classics. The rule is really very subjective and depends on the sponsors and the organizers of the tournament. Instead of worrying if your piece is readable or not, just use some common sense in selection of subject matter. You should avoid materials that may be offensive, lewd or full of graphic language and content.

If you are interpreting poetry, you may choose a number of shorter verses that have a common theme or just one verse. Perhaps two verses that contrast one another very well.

It may be a good idea to approach your English instructor with some ideas that you may have and see if he considers it to be appropriate. He may even have some suggestions of works for you.

(When selecting a piece, choose something that is interesting to you. This interest will be conveyed to the audience)

Your work should, above all, appeal to, and interest you. Even if you choose something that the judges may normally find boring, if you are interested and enthusiastic in your reading, this will be felt by the audience.

Whether you choose a poem or a short story, you will need to be aware of the time constraints put on you. You have 7 minutes for your recitation and that means that you should select something that will fill that time frame in a logical way. That is, the audience should have some feeling of satisfaction or interest in the work. If you pick a poem, begin reading it and run out of time and don't finish it, the judges are apt to say ' what's the point?' If you choose a story or section of a book to read from, there should be some apparent resolution in the situation or thought or emotion you have selected.

(You may want to experiment with the feelings you will be conveying. A cliffhanger type of reading could work to your advantage if done well.) It should not appear that the only reason that you have stopped reading is because your time was up.

(Be aware of the context of your piece. What is the larger picture in which your selection takes place? What events surround what you are reading?)

When you are choosing something to read and it is going to be longer than the time allotted - if you choose to read from a novel or from a long poem like 'Ulysses', for example, you will have to do some cropping of the piece - that is cutting it down in a way that preserves the intent and feeling of the work. Don't hack it beyond recognition. Bear this in mind when you are looking or reading for a piece - that you have the ability - to a certain extent - to control it's length.

CROPPING OR PADDING YOUR PIECE:

Your ability to control the length of your piece rests in the cropping and padding procedure

The cropping of a piece is the trimming of material from it. The part of a book that you would like to read could lie in the middle of the work - cropping would involve removing anything before the incident and anything after the incident. This is the most basic cropping - cutting off the materials around the event you have chosen. It is possible that you may wish to leave out sentences or an unnecessary paragraph in your selection. Be careful with this practice. You must make sure that it does not detract from the work or leave out some important detail necessary to understanding the selection.

Don't crop the piece without knowing what it is that you are taking out. When you are reading something, the context may be important to your interpretation and therefore it is something that you should be aware of. A solid understanding of the whole work will allow you to read it more effectively.

In the item you have selected, prose or poetry, identify the theme that you are going to convey. From the theme, you can then determine what belongs in your reading and what does not. Take out the things that do not belong.

In poetry, particularly short poems, most every word and syllable will contribute to the theme of the poem. You must take care in choosing the things you wish to leave out and make sure that what you are removing does not interrupt the flow of the poem. When trimming from poetry - trim from longer items, trim from obvious breaks in thought, narrative or description and read the piece aloud after you have trimmed it. If it sounds strange or does not flow well, consider reading the whole section of the poem. My advice to you is to avoid cutting lines out of shorter poems and in longer poems, do so carefully and be positive that you are not destroying the piece itself.

(When you are cropping your work, make sure that you do not destroy the meaning of the piece or detract from the flow of the work.)

If you are reading prose, after you have found the theme or point of your piece, look for the climax. After you have located it, work backward, removing anything that does not logically take you to the climax. Again, when removing sentences or paragraphs from your selection, make sure you are leaving the theme in tact. The words and sentences were placed there by the author for a reason and if they contribute to the journey to the climax of your selection, consider not taking them out.

When you are padding your selection, you are adding to it for the sake of understanding. You are not writing new stuff, you are providing information - in your own words - about the work, the setting or perhaps the author. You would do this if your selected piece was not long enough, or there is some important fact alluded to in the section you are reading that you need to explain. Most of the padding, if not all of it, should come at the beginning of the piece in your introduction. To stop reading and break into your explanation will destroy the flow of the piece and lose the audience's understanding and attention.

Padding can also consist of transitional dialogue if you are reading more than one piece or skipping from one portion of an event to another portion and there is a separation in time or place.

After you have padded and cropped and you feel that you have an acceptable amount of material, read it aloud, to another person or a tape recorder. At this point you will have to check and make sure the piece could stand on its own, with no introduction - does it have the unity and substance and is it understandable the way the original work was?

PREPARING FOR A COMPETITION:

As with all other categories in speech, there is nothing at the competition that will calm you or allow you to perform better than being sure of your material.

You must know your piece by memory - word for word. Though you will have the book or text in front of you, it is only an illusion and there for reference. You cannot appear like you are simply reading to the audience.

If you know your piece this will free you from having to rely on the book. It will allow you to concentrate on your poise and your voice and provide confidence.

When you rehearse, hold the script before you, placing one hand under the book and one hand on the lower portion of the pages open to you. Concentrate on eye contact and being able to look at the audience as well as down to your book to pick up your place. The better you know the material, the more easily you will be able to cast your eyes down for reference, find the place and then look back up to your audience.

As you read, visualize what is taking place in the story. How would they react, what are you describing, where are you in the story - a passive onlooker or someone in the middle of the action.

When you are practicing reading, pay close attention to the punctuation. Use the punctuation to place pauses, to catch your breath, to increase tension or to provide emphasis. That is why they are there.

(Know your piece well. Know the themes, the allusions, the language and the meanings of all the words. This will help you to make the audience understand.)

Learn where the pauses are in your piece and know them. When you are comfortable with where they are, it is like having landmarks to go by in your journey through the piece. They will remind you where you are, they may help you remember what comes next.

Each character in your piece should have a different voice. That voice should be consistent and you should be able to go in and out of it with ease. If you are unable to maintain a voice, experiment with other voices until you find one that you are comfortable with.

Extravagant gestures, dramatic motions should be avoided at all costs. A slight flourish of the book may be acceptable, but let your voice create the emphasis you would be seeking with gesture and let the narrative create the mood you are wishing to create with body language.

Know your piece as well as you possibly can. Know the meanings of every word. Know the allusions and figures of speech and know where the pauses take place.

Put single sheet copies of your work into a black duotang of something similar. To have loose-leaf fluttering about is distracting for everyone involved - especially you.

In poetry, know that you do not always stop at the end of a line. Look for the punctuation and use it as marking for stops and pauses.

Stops are:

. ; : ! ?

Pauses - meaning that there is something to follow that is part of the thought you are reading:

:, - ...

Don't read too rapidly - let the language create the images.

JUDGING:

There are copies of ballots at the end of this section for both types of Oral Interpretation - Prose and Poetry.

On them are the requirements that you must fulfill when you compete in this category. Know them well and keep them in mind when you are practicing. This will help you to fulfill them come competition time.

You are being marked on the different areas of your presentation. The introduction is a criterion all by itself. Note the things that the judges are instructed to look for in your presentation.

The Alberta Debate and Speech Association

ORAL INTERPRETATION OF POETRY BALLOT

ROUND _____ ROOM _____ JR./SR. _____

Judge's Name: _____ Chairperson/Timer: _____

The evaluation of an effective speaker in a formal competition is identical to the daily assessment of speakers who communicate views to the public. The major criteria for evaluation are:

(Did the speaker have sufficient impact to inform, entertain, and/or persuade?)

In formal competition, we ask the judges to apply these criteria to presentations and to evaluate speakers in the same manner as they would in a real life situation. We do, however, expect a higher standard of presentation in formal competition and have added a number of specific areas which should be examined.

RULES (*ADSA Policy & Rules Manual*)

- a) Contestants will present an effective reading of good literature (prose, poetry, drama) (serious or humorous) so that the audience can experience the ideas and feelings which inspired the author.
- b) In each round, the contestant must read a selection from a published work.
- c) The selection may be drama or prose. Two or more separate selections may be read if they are from an integrated theme.
- d) A brief introduction must be given, but must not exceed two hundred words.
- e) Two or more selections may be joined with a transition.
- f) The manuscript must be held in hand during the delivery of the selection and the contestants must give the illusion of reading from the manuscript.
- g) A student may sit or stand.
- h) Maximum speaking time will be seven (7) minutes. There is no minimum.
- i) All speech activities will have a 15 second grace period commencing from the moment the stop signal is given. At the end of the 15 seconds the Chairperson will verbally interrupt the speaker and the judge shall disregard anything further that is said.

RANKING PROCEDURE

The **Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Second Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Third Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Fourth Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Fifth Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Sixth Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Seventh Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

The **Eighth Best Speaker** was Contestant No. _____

Judge's Signature _____

Please complete and sign this sheet. Tear off and give to Chairperson/Timer at the end of the round. Then proceed to give comments to all competitors.

ORAL INTERPRETATION OF POETRY WORKSHEET

Remember: A short quality speech should be rated more highly than a long, ineffective one.

Procedure: Fill in the contestant's number as per the draw in the dark boxes below. In each box below the contestant's number write one of the following.

- 1 – for did not do
- 2 – for poor
- 3 – For Average
- 4- for good
- 5- for Excellent

CRITERIA

Participant's Code No.									
Selection									

Choose Appropriate material

Introduction									
--------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Conversational Delivery
Appropriate information

Meaning									
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Accurate phrasing to convey meaning
Appropriate emphasis to convey meaning

Emotion									
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Suggested the images
Savoured connotative words
Responded to sound repetition
Communicated appropriate mood
Communicated climax

Voice									
-------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Adequate Volume
Appropriate Rate
Clear articulation
Correct pronunciation

Body									
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Expressive Face
Responsive Body
Adequate eye contact
Handled script unobtrusively

Acting

(Solo & Duet)

SOLO & DUET ACTING

SOLO ACTING RULES:

- a) Contestants will perform a monologue or dramatic piece that creates audience belief throughout the performance.
- b) The selection must be taken from a published play or a literary work that has been adapted into a published play.
- c) The selection must be memorized and acted rather than recited. No prompting is allowed.
- d) Suggested dress may be worn. Contestants may use simple props to be furnished by the performer. However, costumes and props will not be directly considered in the ballot.
- e) An introduction is mandatory.
- f) Maximum speaking time will be eight (8) minutes. There is no minimum.
- g) All speech activities will have a 15 second grace period commencing from the moment the stop signal is given. Violation of rule (f) shall result in being penalized in the round by the judge when visible time signals have been given by the judge or by the authorized timekeeper.

DUET ACTING RULES:

- a) Selections used in Duet Acting shall be cuttings from a published play. Violation of this rule will result in disqualification. Proof that material is printed and published shall be available to the tournament director upon request.
- b) The selections shall be serious or humorous works.
- c) Time for presentation shall not be more than twelve (12) minutes, with a fifteen (15) seconds grace.
- d) Each selection shall include an introduction which shall set the scene and mood and include the title and author of the work. Time for the introduction shall be included in the time limit.
- e) The selection **must** be memorized and presented with **no** or **limited** props or costumes, although two chairs and a table will be allowed.
- f) No prompting will be allowed.
- g) No portion of a work used by either student prior to the current school year or during the current year in another ADSA event shall be used in ADSA competition. Violation of this rule will result in disqualification.
- h) Violations of Rules (a) and (f) will result in disqualification. Violation of Rules (d) and (e) shall result in an adverse effect on the student's ranking in the round. Violation of Rule (c) shall result in being ranked last in the round by the judge when visible time signals have been given by the judge or by the authorized timekeeper.

You will probably be more aware of your abilities as an actor or as a pair of performers than any others - so in that way your selection will have more to do with you and your tastes than anything else.

The piece you select will have to be published. Monologues and scenes from a published play.

One thing you may be able to do is find a book containing only monologues and short scenes for you to look through. This will give you some idea of what it is that is out there for you to choose from.

One thing that you must remember is how long that you have, you must stay within your time limits. (8 minutes for monologues and 12 minutes for the scenes)

Choose something that you are enthusiastic about and something that suits you or you and your partner. The work can be serious or humorous - it is up to you.

CUTTING AND PADDING:

If you have to cut a play or rewrite a story to create a monologue or scene, cut out the subplots and minor past incidents, cut out the stage directions and the actor directions, and cut out long descriptive passages - all of these come with the heavy warning that they should be cut only if they don't affect the play's purpose.

If you find that your scene is too short - include some extra words in your introduction of the scene.

If you do cut out information from the scene or take a scene from a larger work, include the necessary background information and only the necessary information.

The introduction is where you will provide the judges with the author, the theme, the mood, the setting and the nature of any conflict; it will also allow you to smooth out any rough spots that may have been created by eliminating parts of the scene when cutting it.

REHEARSING:

As an actor, you must become the character. Different actors have different ways of doing this. It is up to you to find your own way of doing this because it is a largely personal thing. There are some pointers that you can follow though.

You have to get to know your character. Analyze his or her personality and try to get a good concept as to how the character's behaviour is motivated.

You must analyze not only the situation that your character is in as far as the scene is concerned, but try to apply some deeper motivation than just what the other person has said or the next line in your monologue. If you have taken a scene from a larger work, look at how your character behaves in other situations. If it is only a short scene, try to get as much of the background as you can from the scene and then create the rest. What do you feel your character is like - where did the character grow up and how was his/her home life. What was the house like?

Try to get a clear picture of the character's mental characteristics - smart, clever, slow, dull...

Spiritual qualities are important as well when you are looking for motivation. Belief systems, religious beliefs, ideals, attitudes toward life. All of these things will give you a good picture of your character and allow bringing that character out in front of an audience.

If you do not have all this information or are having trouble inventing it, write a short biography of your character. Age, sex, home town, mental characteristics, brothers and sisters, spiritual qualities, emotional characteristics, confidence level, happy, sullen, sulky... Put as many of these qualities down and get to know your character.

When you have this concept of the character, you will understand what it is that motivates the character's behaviour in the scene.

Once you have a clear internal picture of the character, get an external picture. Does your character have good posture or bad posture, any nervous habits like twisting hair or biting lip, confident gestures and mannerisms or meek behaviour, the type of voice - a pleasant voice to listen to or a whiny voice and finally dress - tidy dress or slob dress, fashionable dress or comfortable dress.

Now that you have your character's inside and outside in mind, you can work on getting your props together. Two chairs and a table are allowed - a fairly minimal set but you can work with it.

What you should do next is place the props on the set - in the area where you will be performing. After this, you should block out your scene. As you recite your lines, decide where your character would go or what your character would do.

For example, when she yells at you, do you walk away and then turn to say something as an afterthought or do you bristle and stand up to face her?

Your movement should be imaginative, refreshing but at the same time suitable. Everyone slams their fist on the table but if you can come up with a different way of expressing or showing that emotion, you will stand out in the mind of the judges.

Any activity on the stage should be appropriate. If the scene is casual, are you sitting and thumbing through a magazine or looking at a newspaper. Perhaps you are making tea or stirring a cup of coffee. The action should not be inconsistent with the dialogue in the scene. Would you be clipping your nails in the middle of a fight and if so, what does that say about your character? It should say what your character is like.

When choosing props, avoid trite, cliché props. The sunglasses on the big Hollywood star are getting tiresome. You should be able to develop mannerisms and ways of talking that suggest it, instead.

This reliance on your ability to create a setting and mood using your character cannot be overstated. Keep your set minimal and your dress simple but in character. If you are able to deliver the scene convincingly without the flowery set, then the judges will be that much more impressed.

When you have decided what your set will look like and mapped out your character's movements during the scene, practice it in front of a small audience. Get them to time you and keep track of the time. This will help you to pace the scene come competitions time.

Introduce the scene - providing the title, the author and a bit about the scene and perhaps some applicable information about the characters involved - but only information that they may not gather from your portrayal. Like occupation, or where he/she has just been. Let the scene give the details - the introduction is only allowing you to give some loose details that are vague due to the scene itself or the cutting.

Take a few seconds to get into character. Imagine him/her and get a picture in your head of anything that occurs before the scene so that you can get a good idea of the frame of mind of the character when the first line is delivered.

When you are comfortable, begin.

After the scene, ask your audience if they understood the scene. What parts of the scene were they confused by, if any? Be sure to ask if they believed the scene because that is what the judges will be looking for.

Some other information that you may want to get from your audience would be things like consistent characterization. Did your character seem to be the same person throughout the whole scene? Was the action on the stage consistent with the scene?

Ensure that they were able to hear you the whole time. Find out if your speaking was clear and projected.

Also, get them to comment on your delivery of lines. Did you fumble or fluster because you forgot the lines? As you get to know the scene well, you will be able to deliver your lines - even if they are not exact - so that the spirit behind the line is there. It is possible to convey the same basic information and feelings without getting the line exactly right.

If you happen to forget a line, get used to having to move on or fudge the line. Keeping up the flow of the scene going is more important than getting your line out exactly right. If you cannot remember at all - move on to the next line you do remember or if your partner gets that blank look - move on to your next line. You will know yourself and your partner and the pace of your scene well enough to know if there is something wrong. If this happens, move on to the next line that you do know. Do it quickly and don't say 'oops'. Move on and don't make a big deal of it.

JUDGING:

At the end of this section are ballots for the categories of Solo Acting and Duet Acting. Look them over and learn what it is that the judges are looking for. If you can satisfy the elements of the performance that the judges want you to satisfy, then you will do well.

The Alberta Debate and Speech Association

SOLO ACTING BALLOT

ROUND _____ ROOM _____ JR./SR. _____

Judge's Name: _____ Chairperson/Timer: _____

The evaluation of an effective speaker in a formal competition includes the following major question:

Did the performer have sufficient impact to make us believe the character?

In formal competition, we ask the judges to apply the following criteria to presentations. We do, however, expect a higher standard of presentation in formal competition and have added a number of specific areas which should be examined.

RULES (*ADSA Policy & Rules Manual*)

- a) Contestants will perform a monologue or dramatic piece that creates audience belief throughout the performance.
- b) The selection must be taken from a published literary work.
- c) The selection must be memorized and acted rather than recited. No prompting is allowed.
- d) Suggested dress may be worn. Contestants may use simple props to be furnished by the performer. However, costumes and props will not be directly considered in the ballot.
- e) An introduction is mandatory.
- f) Maximum speaking time will be eight (8) minutes. There is no minimum.
- g) All speech activities will have a 15 second grace period commencing from the moment the stop signal is given. At the end of the 15 seconds the Chairperson will verbally interrupt the speaker and the judge shall disregard anything further that is said.

RANKING PROCEDURE

The *Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Second Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Third Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Fourth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Fifth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Sixth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Seventh Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

The *Eighth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

Judge's Signature _____

Please complete and sign this sheet. Tear off and give to Chairperson/Timer at the end of the round. Then proceed to give comments to all competitors.

SOLO ACTING WORKSHEET

Remember: A short quality scene, which meets the time rule, should be rated more highly than a long, ineffective one.

Procedure: Fill in the contestant's number as per the draw in the dark boxes below. In each box below the contestant's number write one of the following.

- 1 – for did not do
 - 2 – for poor
 - 3 – For Average
 - 4- for good
 - 5- for Excellent

CRITERIA

Participant's Code No.									
Achivement of Purpose									

Did the performer achieve a credible performance which captured the mood and meaning of the selection?

Characterization									
------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

- Did the performer develop the role into a distinct, convincing personality?
- Did the performer maintain character while on stage?
- Did the performer listen and respond in character?
- Did the performer motivate all movement?
- Did the performer project emotions effectively?
- Did the performer maintain spontaneity?

Voice									
-------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

- Did the performer use appropriate diction and pronunciation for the character?
- Did the performer demonstrate proper phrasing and use of pause for the character?
- Did the performer use appropriate inflection for line meaning for the character?
- Did the performer use appropriate voice projection for the character?

Body									
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

- Did the performer use appropriate posture and walk for the character?
- Did the performer use appropriate gestures and business for the character?
- Did the performer use appropriate facial expression for the piece?

Audience Appeal									
-----------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Did the speaker capture and hold your interest?

The Alberta Debate and Speech Association

DUET ACTING BALLOT

ROUND _____ ROOM _____ JR./SR. _____

Judge's Name: _____ Chairperson/Timer: _____

The evaluation of an effective speaker in a formal competition is identical to the daily assessment of speakers who communicate views to the public. The major criteria for evaluation are:

(Did the performers have sufficient impact to make us believe the characters?)

In formal competition, we ask the judges to apply these criteria to presentations and to evaluate speakers in the same manner as they would in a real life situation. We do, however, expect a higher standard of presentation in formal competition and have added a number of specific areas which should be examined.

RULES (ADSA Policy & Rules Manual)

- a) Selections used in Duet Acting shall be cuttings from a published play. Violation of this rule will result in disqualification. Proof that material is printed and published shall be available to the tournament director upon request.
- b) The selections shall be serious or humorous works.
- c) Time for presentation shall not be more than twelve (12) minutes, with a fifteen (15) seconds grace.
- d) Each selection shall include an introduction which shall set the scene and mood and include the title and author of the work. Time for the introduction shall be included in the time limit.
- e) The selection **must** be memorized and presented with **no**, or **limited** props or costumes, although two chairs and a table will be allowed.
- f) No prompting will be allowed.
- g) No portion of a work used by either student prior to the current school year or during the current year in another ADSA event shall be used in ADSA competition. Violation of this rule will result in disqualification.
- h) Violations of Rules 1 and 6 will result in disqualification. Violations of rules d and e shall result in an adverse effect on the student's ranking on the round. Violation of rule c shall result in being ranked last in the round by the judge when visible time signals have been given by the judge or by the authorized timekeeper.

RANKING PROCEDURE

The *Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____
The *Second Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____
The *Third Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____
The *Fourth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____
The *Fifth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____
The *Sixth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____
The *Seventh Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____
The *Eighth Best Speaker* was Contestant No. _____

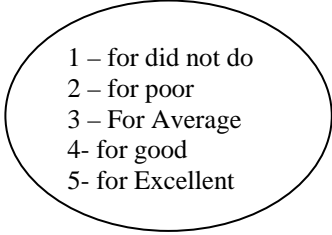
Judge's Signature _____

Please complete and sign this sheet. Tear off and give to Chairperson/Timer at the end of the round. Then proceed to give comments to all competitors.

DUET ACTING WORKSHEET

Remember: A short quality scene, which meets the time rule, should be rated more highly than a long, ineffective one.

Procedure: Fill in the contestant's number as per the draw in the dark boxes below. In each box below the contestant's number write one of the following.



CRITERIA

Participant's Code No.									
Characterization									

Developed role into a distinct, convincing personality?
 Maintained character while on stage?
 Listened and responded in character?
 Projected emotions effectively?
 Maintained spontaneity?

Voice									
-------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Good diction?
 Correct pronunciation?
 Proper phrasing and use of pause?
 Appropriate inflection for line meaning?
 Good voice projection?

Body									
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Appropriate posture and walk for character?
 Appropriate gestures and business?
 Appropriate facial expression?

Relationship to the other Actor									
---------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Shared scenes?
 Picked up cues?
 Did not distract from focal point on stage?

Contrast									
----------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Were there clearly contrasting moods in the dialogues?
 Were emotional transitions natural and effective?
 Were the lines delivered in a manner which seemed natural to the characters?

Ensemble									
----------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Did you feel a smoothness of action which indicates adequate rehearsal and close cooperation and understanding between the actors?
 Was it a closely knit, rhythmically correct scene?

Motivation									
------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Was there a logical reason for all business and movement by the actors which was consistent and in keeping with the characters in the scene?

Delivery /

Manner /

Style

DELIVERY / MANNER / STYLE

There are many guidelines for delivery that apply to all categories of speech. As I have stated before, there are no hard and fast rules and tastes differ from judge to judge and competitor to competitor - here are some that you may wish to take under consideration.

Some of these may not apply to your particular category. Things like appearance and posture may be contrary to your character if you are acting.

BEING YOURSELF:

All of us have a natural speaking style, whether we realize it or not. Each of us has our individual style, which has been evolving since our very first words. This is our natural style of speaking, our most comfortable way of communicating, *and our most effective way of persuading*. Unfortunately, a few speakers do not trust their natural style. Instead, they adopt a 'speaking persona' – a completely different speaking style that emerges only for tournaments. Usually, this involves forced gestures, an uncomfortably rigid stance and a painfully careful pronunciation of almost every word. Ultimately, however, this approach is weak – rather than being persuasive, it simply appears insincere.

Instead, you must be yourself. Of course, you can always try to make your style more convincing and engaging. The ideas and pointers in this chapter are designed to help you do that. However, the aim of coaching manner is never to change a speaker's entire style – rather, it is to mould that style to be more effective. Naturally, this does not mean that a speaker can legitimately say, "Of course I mumble quickly and make no eye contact – that's my natural style!". However, it *does* mean that you should use these techniques in a way that feels natural and sincere *to you*.

VISUAL PRESENTATION:

Visual presentation is a vital part of a speaker's overall presentation, and hence a vital part of speech. This is because a speaker's visual presentation is an important aspect of a speaker's *credibility*, and a speaker who seems more credible will be a speaker who is more convincing.

The first issue relating to visual presentation is one that very few speakers think to ask: "When does it begin?". The simple answer is that your manner begins from the moment you reach the middle of 'the floor', and start to speak. However, judges are entitled to penalize a speaker who delays in taking the floor, after having been introduced. More importantly, once you are introduced, your audience's eyes will immediately focus on you. If you spend the next 30 seconds writing a few notes and arranging your palm cards, you are hardly likely to exude credibility! Therefore, strictly speaking, your manner begins from the moment that you are called by the chairperson.

However, given the importance of visual presentation, the *best* answer is that your manner begins from the moment that you enter the room. For example, it is common for many speakers to gesture wildly, shake their heads viciously, and speak audibly while their opponents are speaking. This is not merely unsporting behavior; it is likely to detract from the overall credibility of your presentation.

Eye Contact:

Eye contact (or lack of it, to be more precise!) is a significant problem among many speakers, particularly young speakers. As humans, we are generally accustomed to looking into each other's eyes as we converse. It is nearly impossible to be an effective speaker without maintaining effective eye contact.

This means making eye contact with specific individuals in the audience, and holding that contact for a time (as a general guide, from 5 to 30 seconds). There are a number of ways that a speaker can *fail* to make effective eye contact:

- A speaker can simply read his or her notes. Among young speakers, this is usually the biggest cause of failure to make adequate eye contact.
- A speaker can 'flicker' his or her eyes between notes and audience. Many speakers *think* that they are making adequate eye contact when, in fact, they are constantly 'flickering' their eyes between notes and audience. Audience members may be left with the impression that the speaker looked *at* them, but will not feel that the speaker spoke *to* them.
- A speaker can look elsewhere in the room. Some speakers are sufficiently confident that they do not constantly read their notes; however, they are not confident enough to look the audience in the eye. Therefore, they address inanimate parts of the room – such as the door, a window, or a chair. A more sophisticated variant on this theme is for speakers to deliberately stare just over the heads of their audience, trying to give the impression of eye contact without *actually* making eye contact. You audience will not be fooled!

Gesture:

Gesture is a natural part of most people's everyday conversation. Watch people talking, particularly when they are standing, and you will often see them gesturing constantly – even if they are speaking on the phone! So what? As speakers, we should strive to appear credible and sincere – in other words, *to look natural*. Gesturing in conversation is natural, so it should be natural to gesture while speaking in a tournament.

This is the most important point about good gesture – *allow your natural gestures to occur*. It can often be very tempting to grip your palm cards with both hands, particularly if you are nervous. However, this serves only to limit your natural tendency to gesture. *Free your hands if you can, and let the gestures happen!*

Some speakers, coaches and judges worry about fine details of how you should gesture – for example, a downward gesture is sometimes said to provide a sense of authority. However, paying excessive attention to your gestures – whatever those gestures may be – usually serves only to make those gestures seem artificial. In everyday conversation, we do not deliberately choreograph gestures to match our words (for example, by sweeping your hands outwards above your head when discussing ‘the whole world!’). It therefore seems unnatural and insincere to pay significant attention to specific gestures during your speech. You are much better thinking about your arguments, and merely keeping the issue of gesture in the back of your mind.

Brush Up Your Gestures! (Some Humorous Advice to Speakers)

Wagging the Forefinger:

Any free citizen confronted by a wagging finger, especially if it is accompanied by the words “I tell you this,” is entitled to ask: “Who is this jerk presuming to caution or admonish me? Is he my father? Is he my old headmaster? If he is not, let him keep his finger to himself. Let him prate if he will about the dangers of nuclear holocaust. I will not have a finger wagged at me.”

Pointing the Forefinger:

This suggests that you wish to call up your audience for cannon-fodder. If you do, go right ahead.

Stabbing the Forefinger:

This unseemly usage, punctuating every half-dozen words, gives the audience the feeling that you would like (a) to prod them in the chest; (b) to poke them in the eye.

Raising the Forefinger Aloft:

Though not necessarily offensive, this gesture suggests that you are (a) trying to detect the wind; (b) leading a pack of tourists through a cathedral; (c) directing attention to a High Power; (d) requesting permission to leave the room.

Sawing the Air:

“Do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus,” said Hamlet. We do not know what Shakespeare meant by “thus” or “too much”. Just don't saw the air at all. Or cleave it. Or rend it. Or chop it. Or pummel it. Or part it. Or grasp it. Or knead it. Or compress it. Or mold it. Or tie knots in it. Or lift it. Or smooth it. Leave the air alone!

Clenching (or “Balling”) the Fist:

Today this gesture is no more than a mechanical response to the sight of television cameras. It may mean any of the following: (a) Roll on the Revolution; (b) Imperialists out; (c) Down with the CIA; (d) No more education cuts; (e) A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle.

Raising Both Fists:

Lincoln used this gesture to express execration of slavery. Southerners used it to express execration of **** Yankees. Do not devalue it by using it to demand mustard on your hamburger.

Stretching the Arms Wide:

A gesture sometimes used to suggest that the speaker's heart encompasses all humanity. Unfortunately, it is also the fisherman's gesture for the one that got away.

Folding the Arms:

This means you do not greatly care what happens when North Sea oil runs out and that it is time people got used to the idea of dying by hypothermia. It shows you are not a person to be stampeded by sentiment.

Gripping the Rostrum:

By doing this you will be able to retract your head into your chest and assume a look of defiance. It is a good attitude for defending the indefensible, especially if your eyes are ablaze with sincerity.

Pounding the Rostrum:

This will merely spill water and send shock waves through the microphones, stunning your audience, but go ahead if it makes you feel better.

Putting Hands in Pockets:

A traditional way of expressing healthy contempt for bourgeois and military taboos; also of expressing healthy contempt for your audience.

Removing the Spectacles:

Doing this will set your audience speculating as to whether you look better with or without glasses. It is a useful trick when you wish to divert attention from a weak argument. Remember that spectacles often give an illusion of maturity.

Finally, here are some more gestures to avoid at all costs:

1. Any movement suggestive of a general blessing (unless you want to be mistaken for the Pope);
2. Laying the right hand on the heart (unless you want to be mistaken for an American president);
3. Slackening the tie-knot (unless you want to be mistaken for a third-rate media man);
4. Scratching the top of the head (unless you want to be mistaken for Stan Laurel);
5. The “thumbs-up” sign (unless you want to be mistaken for a patient with a new heart);
6. Any erective jerk of the forearm (unless you want to be mistaken for an Italian bravo);
7. Touching the nose (unless you want to be suspected of a desire to explore it);
8. Any gesture involving the use of two fingers (unless you want to be duffed up on the spot).

Stance:

As with gesture, the most important aspect of an effective stance is that you are natural. Many speakers worry about fine details of their stance, such as the position of their feet, the distribution of their weight, or the straightness of their back. However, the most effective way to have a natural stance is not to worry about your stance at all!

The only exception is the issue of movement. There is no rule that requires you to stand rooted to one spot as you speak – you are welcome to move around the floor. Indeed, as long as it does not seem contrived, it can be quite effective to take a few deliberate paces between sentences. *However, you must avoid movement that is repetitive or distracting.* For example, many speakers ‘rock’ on the spot, by taking small steps forwards and then backwards, or left and then right. Similarly, many speakers wander around the floor without purpose, often in repetitive patterns. Pacing back and forth will not endear you to an audience who has to watch you for six minutes! The principle of movement is simple: *by all means move, but be aware of what you’re doing and move with a purpose.*

Mannerisms:

In speech, a mannerism is understood as a distinctive or idiosyncratic trait of visual presentation. For example, a speaker may have a particular unique gesture or way of moving.

Of themselves, mannerisms pose no problem – every speaker will understandably have his or her own way of speaking. However, they become a problem when they are repetitive. In some cases, audience members who notice a speaker’s mannerism will pay attention to little else! For example, you might have a tendency to look at a particular part of the room on a regular basis, to continually fiddle with your hair or (as we discussed earlier) to make the same gesture repetitively.

It is impossible to set out any kind of complete list of mannerisms, precisely because they are so idiosyncratic. However, you must nonetheless be aware of the dangers of mannerisms, and be alert to any elements of your visual presentation that could become repetitive and distracting.

VOCAL PRESENTATION:

Vocal presentation concerns the way that you enunciate and deliver your words to the audience.

Unquestionably, the biggest issue concerning vocal presentation is speed – and the biggest problem is going too fast. Inexplicably, speaking before an audience can create a time dilation that relativity theory is only now beginning to recognize! That is, what may seem a perfectly normal speed to you, the speaker, can in fact be unbearably fast to your audience and judges. Initially, it can be difficult to recognize this as a speaker, so it is important to pay attention to what judges or audience members say about your speed of delivery. If you *do* need to slow down, there are at least two good ways of doing it. First, remember to start slowly, to reinforce the feeling of speaking at a measured pace to your audience. Second, many speakers like to write ‘SLOW DOWN’ on their palm cards. This can be a useful technique, as long as you don’t read those words out!

It is possible to have a speed problem by going too slowly, but this is unlikely. Usually, this is simply the result of not having enough to say, or not properly understanding those things that you do have to say. From a speaker’s perspective (though not a judge’s), this is really a matter issue – you need to ensure that you have enough to discuss, and that you understand it in sufficient detail.

Volume is a significant component of vocal presentation. Perhaps the most important element of volume is that *your volume should be appropriate for the context of your speech.*

For example, if you are speaking to a large crowd in a big hall, it is important to project your voice loudly; if you are addressing a small group in a classroom, it is far more effective to adopt a conversational tone.

Some speakers feel that they always need to speak loudly and aggressively in order to appear confident and forceful. There is no question that this can be worthwhile, but if used continuously, it can have the opposite effect – the speaker can appear flustered and out of control. It is often more effective *not* to give the impression of taking your argument and “shoving it down your audience’s throat” – it is more effective to speak softly, almost as though letting your audience in on an important secret. This style has the advantage of forcing your audience to concentrate harder on what you are saying, and can itself give the impression of force and confidence, because you are comfortable enough to deliver your message in a more relaxed and subdued tone.

The ultimate goal with volume should be to present a confident speech that is appropriate to the context, and to be confident enough to vary your volume where appropriate.

Whether or not variety is indeed the spice of life, it can certainly help your manner mark! Of course, you can always have variety in your visual presentation – by using different kinds of gestures, for example. However, variety in manner is essentially an issue of vocal presentation. This is because, as a speaker, the monotone poses the greatest risk of monotony.

Perhaps the most important way to avoid a monotone is to use your palm cards effectively – simply reading your palm cards is the easiest way to fall into a comfortable (and boring!) monotone.

It is important, therefore, to vary your style of presentation throughout. For example, you can vary the pitch of your voice by speaking in an expressive and animated style, rather than in monotone. You can vary your natural speaking rhythm by pausing. Ironically, the best way to regain your audience’s attention on what you are saying is often to say nothing – to pause quite deliberately between sentences, arguments, or ideas. Finally, always remember variation in volume. There is no rule about how or when to do this, except that you should generally aim for sharp and noticeable changes, rather than subtle or gradual variation. For example, it can be very effective to finish one argument in a loud and aggressive style, take a significant pause, and then commence your next argument in a soft and analytical manner.

VERBAL PRESENTATION:

Matter and method (content and strategy) are often described as comprising “what you say”. This, however, is not strictly true – in reality, matter and method comprise the *ideas* behind what you say. The *way* that you actually use words to express those ideas and concepts is best understood as being a component of manner – verbal presentation.

It is impossible to teach people how to express their ideas in words – that is a natural skill learned from a young age! However, this expression can be refined and improved for speech purposes.

Clarity is by far the most important element of verbal presentation. For many public speakers, ‘clarity’ refers to the *way* that they enunciate their words. That, however, is not the point here – we should be far more concerned with the actual words used to enunciate ideas. Too many speakers use long words and convoluted sentences to sound impressive – even if that means making their speeches difficult to understand and painful to follow.

The opposite should be true. You should always aim to express your ideas as simply and clearly as possible, using simple language and short sentences wherever possible. The underlying principle should be clear: you should aim to present an impressive case, not to use ‘impressive’ words and phrases! Of course, this is *totally unrelated* to the content of your arguments itself – although arguments should be simple, there is no need to reduce your ideas to colloquial or banal concepts. Our concern here is the language used to *express* those concepts, however intricate they may (or may not) be. There are a number of important principles:

- **Avoid complex vocabulary wherever possible.** For example, there is no reason to accuse your opposition of ‘naïve inductionism’ – it is far simpler and hence more effective to say, ‘our opposition assumes that because [X] has occurred in the past, it will continue to occur in the future’.
- **Acronyms can cause great confusion to judges or audience members who don’t understand them.** Therefore, you should state what any acronym stands for the first time you use it. For example, it is not enough to simply refer to the ‘WHO’ – the first time you do so, you should say something like, ‘the WHO – the World Health Organization’.
- **There can sometimes be value in using technical terms, but these need to be explained.** For example, it is never enough simply to refer to ‘economies of scale’ – you need to explain the term as well (‘declining average costs as production increases’).
- **Answer any rhetorical question!** Rhetorical questions can be a useful way of directing your audience’s attention to the core of your argument. However, there is nothing worse than leaving a rhetorical question unanswered (for example, “How can we possibly justify having killed innocent Iraqi civilians?”). Your opponents will happily answer the question for you – or rather, for them.

Finally, this is as good a point as any to discuss the use of ‘clever’ verbal techniques. In other forms of public speaking, speakers are often encouraged to use various ‘devices’ when writing their speeches – for example, the frequent use of metaphors, ‘triplets’ or alliteration. There is nothing inherently wrong with these techniques, but they do understandably sound scripted. Therefore, in

speech, they should be confined to those areas of your speech where the audience expects to hear well-crafted prose – essentially, to your conclusion and your formal introduction. A speaker who presents arguments in cleverly crafted language will almost always suffer as a result, because these arguments will lack the sincerity and effectiveness of a more natural expression.

Humour:

Humour in speech is a double-edged sword. If used effectively, it can significantly improve your connection with an audience; if used poorly, it can distract, confuse and reduce your credibility. Humour is very difficult to teach, but easy to practice. We will therefore simply examine some general pointers as to the use of humour in speech.

- You don't need humour! It is often easy, particularly in the company of funny and entertaining speakers, to see humour as an essential part of speech. It is not – some of the great argumentative speeches in history were presented without any humour (can you imagine, "I have a dream ... in fact, I have lots of dreams ... what is it about dreams anyway ..."?). Usually a speaker's sense of humour – and sense of when to use that humour – develops slowly and over many years. There is no need to rush this process.
- If you are using humour, make sure that it is appropriate for your context. If, for example, you are speaking about sports or television, jokes are probably great. If, on the other hand, you are speaking about terrorism or domestic violence, jokes will almost certainly go down poorly – and even if they are well received by the audience, they will hardly improve your credibility on the issue of speech.
- Obviously, there is no point using isolated jokes. If your humour does not directly relate to the issue, it will hardly be amusing.
- Don't get personal or sarcastic – cracking personal jokes about your opponents is probably the easiest way to violate this principle.
- Keep it clean. Humour in speech is supposed to lighten the atmosphere and endear you and your arguments to your audience. Jokes that even *some* members of the audience may find lewd or rude will only harm your persuasive credibility as a speaker.
- Don't get distracted. It is very easy to become enthused because your audience is responding warmly to your jokes. At this point, you have a choice – either push on with your arguments (confident that your audience is responding well to your speech, and is listening carefully to what you say) or simply tell a few more jokes. Too many speakers in this situation choose the latter. Musicians sometimes say, "If you play for applause, that's all you'll ever get" – the same can be said of speakers who get carried away and manage to trade their arguments for a few more laughs.

Beating Nervousness:

As a speaker, remember to relax and be yourself. Being a little nervous is a good thing. It keeps you alert and is the impetus to prepare. If you are very nervous consider the following to help your "nerves":

- 1) Know your speech well; thorough preparation reduces nervousness.
- 2) Memorize your opening words. It is a good start, which is sometimes the hardest part.
- 3) Take a few deep breaths before standing to speak.
- 4) Size up the audience. Avoiding them can exacerbate nervous feelings. Once you take a look at them you'll see that they're just average people.
- 5) Talk to members of the audience before the round – if you are familiar with them you are less likely to become nervous.
- 6) Relax in the knowledge that all speakers experience nervousness. Most nervousness does not show as much as you think it does. Just keep talking as though it was not there!

Exercises

&

Warm-ups

EXERCISES AND WARM-UPS

A. Diaphragmatic Breathing

Chances are you are breathing incorrectly. In speech, there is a way of breathing called Diaphragmatic Breathing. This type of breathing is conducive to good speech and is actually just a good breathing habit to get into.

Most North Americans have a bad habit of breathing shallow and not using the diaphragm when they are breathing. This limits how their voice is able to project, how loudly they can speak and the tone of the speech.

The diaphragm is the chief source of vocal power. It is the flat muscle that divides the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity. When you breathe in you are causing that muscle to flatten and air rushes into your lungs. When you exhale, the muscle rises and forces the lower chest to contract, pushing all the air out of your lungs.

1. Mechanics of Diaphragmatic Breathing

- Place the palm of your hand on the muscles in the solar plexus area
- Take a deep even breath. Feel the bellows move outward
- Blow air out in a smooth, even stream.
- As the hand moves inward, the diaphragm pushes up, and the stream of air moves out the top, smoothly and evenly.
- There should not be any movement in the upper chest.

This is how Diaphragmatic Breathing works. In order to practice this, place one hand on the upper abdominal muscles, and the other on the intercostal muscles in the solar plexus area. Inhale by expanding the abdominal and intercostal muscles. Hold breath for a count of 2. Purse your lips and exhale slowly, by blowing in a thin stream of air at a smooth, uniform rate.

(Diaphragmatic breathing is important to controlling your breathing and therefore the sounds you are able to produce. Practice it and use it.)

2. Exercises of Diaphragmatic Breathing

(Here are some exercises to help you with controlling your breathing.)

Place hands as before. Inhale slowly. Hold for a count of two. Exhale slowly making the sound 'on'. Do this until the air supply is exhausted

- hold the sound as long as possible. Do the same for the EE and OO sounds as well.

B. Posture

Posture is very important for controlling your breathing. When you slouch with your lower back bowed outward, you have very little control of the muscles needed to breathe. Sit forward on the chair, almost on the edge, and lean slightly forward. Keep middle back straight. Keep your feet flat on the floor. It is fine to bend, but pivot from the hips. This way you have full control over the breathing muscles.

When standing, lean slightly forward, putting weight on the balls of your feet. If your weight is on your heels, the abdominal wall will sag and you will not have the same control.

C. Neck and Jaw Muscles

Your neck muscles are very important in allowing you to control your breathing. Relax them by letting your head fall forward and touch your chin to your chest. Rotate your head slowly to the right, keeping your chin close to your collar bone. Then, point your chin at your shoulder, and stretch as far as you can. Roll your head backward, eyes on the ceiling, and finish by pointing the chin to the left shoulder then back into the central position.

D. Lips and Tongue

Your lower jaw should be relaxed as well. It should not have to be forced open when you speak but rather, it should fall open of its own accord. Open your mouth as wide as possible until it begins to stretch. Open your mouth halfway and wag your jaw from side to side. This will help to relax the muscles that control the jaw.

Your lips and your tongue have the greatest effect on clear speaking. Your ability to articulate is dependent on your mouth. Believe it or not, there are exercises you can do to strengthen your tongue and stretching your lips. They will help you to create sharp sounds, making your words clear and audible.

Point your tongue straight out, open the mouth wide and move the tip of the tongue in the widest possible circle. Change direction.

Point your tongue straight out as far as possible. Point the tip and stretch. Try to reach up and touch your nose with the tip of your tongue and then try to touch your chin.

Drop your lower jaw. Press the tip of the tongue against the hard palate, the roof of your mouth, just behind your front teeth. Push hard and bend the back of the tongue toward the front of the mouth.

Now your lips. Stretch them by hooking your fingers in the corners of the mouth. The two most extreme movements in the English language for the lips are when the EE sound is made and when the OO sound is made. Spend some time moving your lips back and forth, mouthing the two sounds EE OO EE OO EE OO.

(You must learn to enunciate every syllable in a word and not end the word weakly.)

Now that they are nimble, you can unlearn how you have learned to speak. Again, North Americans have a habit of speaking from the front of the mouth, moving the lips and tongue as little as possible. This impedes your ability to project, to speak clearly and to breathe. If you wish to speak and be heard, you have to unlearn the lazy mouth disease.

Here are some lines to recite. Enunciate them - that is move your mouth and tongue in an exaggerated fashion. Stretch your lips and move your tongue when you say them. You have to exaggerate the motions so that your mouth gains the ability that it has lost.

ROUND AND ROUND THE RUGGED ROCK THE RAGGED RASCAL RAN.

A BIG BLUE BUG BIT A BIG BLACK BEAR.

SINFUL CAESAR SIPPED HIS SNIFTER, SEIZED HIS KNEES AND SNEEZED.

HOW KIND OF YOU TO LET ME COME.

A TUTOR WHO TOOTED THE FLUTE TRIED TO TUTOR TWO TOOTERS TO TOOT, SAID THE TWO TO THE TUTOR, "IS IT HARDER TO TOOT OR TO TUTOR TWO TOOTERS TO TOOT?"

Here are some drills to go through to nimble up your mouth and tongue.

NINE, NINE, NINE TITTER, TITER, TAT
NINNY, NINNY, NINNY WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THAT?
NINE, NINE, NINE TITTER, TITTER, TAT

FE FI FO TE TE TE
FE FI FUM TOE TOE TOE
FE FI FO FUM TOO TOO TOO

BIT BIT BIT PITTER PITTER PITTER
BITE BITE BITE PATTER PATTER PATTER
BOUGHT BOUGHT BOUGHT PITTER PITTER PITTER

Now you are able to breathe, you can articulate your words, you should now work on tones.

E. Tone

Annunciation and tone are important qualities of good speech. They allow you to be heard and understood even when you are speaking softly. Practice getting tones to vibrate and moving your mouth to create words.

Try to make the following word ring. Put your fingers on your cheek bones and feel for vibrations. Try to avoid breathiness, but go for the ringing tones.

one home tone alone moan
rain plain mine lean soon
ring nine dong moon fine

Now read the following verses in clear and resonant tones. Open your mouth wide enough, articulate but use only enough air to make the tones vibrate. Do not force the tone. Keep going until any tension or harshness disappears.

From "The Ancient Mariner" by Samuel T. Coleridge

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity
on my soul in agony.

From 'Wind in the Pine'

Oh, I can hear you God, above the cry of the tossing trees -
Rolling you windy tides across the sky
And splashing your silver seas
Over the pine,
To the Water-line
Of the moon.

Oh, I can hear you, God, Above the wail of the lonely loon.
When the pine tips pitch and nod –
Chanting your melodies
Of ghostly waterfalls and avalanches,
Swashing your wind among the branches
To make them pure and white.

F. Relaxing

In order for you to perform well, you should relax before a round. Here are some ways of doing so.

One thing you will have to learn is to relax. Once you have your speech elements memorized and you are confident, you have to try to remember the confidence so that you are able to perform up to the standards that you were able to rehearse to. You will eventually have to find your own way to relax. If that means roaming the hallways until it is time for the round to start, so be it.

Here are some relaxation warm ups that you can do while you are roaming, they may help.

Stretch up tall - bend over by collapsing quickly and loosely from the waist - with arms and hands relaxed and dangling to the floor. Keep arms, hands and neck completely relaxed. Slowly raise up.

While arms are still relaxed, swing them in large circles.

Yawn, making an ahhh sound on exhalation - it is a relaxed sound and will help calm you.

Stand straight, arms at your sides. Raise your hands out in front of you and then above your head - slowly. Stretch them up and go onto your tiptoes and stretch. While your arms are going up inhale deeply through the mouth. After the stretch, lower your arms and come off your toes, exhaling through pursed lips until your hands are at your sides again.

Now you are ready to compete.

GOOD LUCK!