

How to be a Contest Judge

Good Judging leaves the contestants and the audience feeling that the contest was fair and that the right choice was made. You must know how to judge so that the best speaker is indeed the person announced as winner.

- Judges must be members in good standing and have completed at least six C&L manual projects.
- A judge must be fair and impartial.
- A judge's duty is not to evaluate the speaker.
- A judge's duty is only to pick a winner.

QUALITIES OF A JUDGE

Good judges are:

- Accurate (filling out judging forms), Fair (impartial), Trustworthy (select the best speaker), knowledgeable (know the rules, judging form and how to judge), Good listeners (listen carefully to each speaker).

HOW TO JUDGE A CONTEST

- Judging is a subjective process which we try to make objective.

BARRIERS TO OBJECTIVITY

- First or last speaker is best: Pay close attention to all speakers.
- Let's help the underdog: Judge only by the criteria on the judging form.
- Halo Effect: Evaluate the speaker against the criteria.
- Reverse Halo Effect: Downgrade a score in one area because you are unhappy with a score in another area.
- Second Time Around: Judge as if it was the first time you heard the speech and the speaker.
- Give Someone Else a Chance: Past performance must not influence current performance.
- Not the Norm: Do not allow a narrow view of what is good or bad to influence your decision.
- Prejudices and Personal Preferences: The things that make us unique, likes and dislikes, prevent us from being objective.
- The Unknown Judging Form: Study the form before the contest.
- If you cannot eliminate barriers to objectivity or be fair and unbiased at all times, then do the speaker a favor.....don't judge.

HOW TO JUDGE

- Use the Judge's Guide and Ballot to choose the winner of a speech contest.
- The Format of the Ballot: The top part of the ballot is to help in decision-making. The bottom portion is the official ballot. No ties are allowed.
- The Process of Making a Decision: Use the ballot to enter the point value for each category after the speech is completed, not during the delivery. When the points are totaled for each speaker, you can easily determine first, second and third places.

THE JUDGE'S GUIDE AND BALLOT

There are three basic judging categories: Content, delivery and language.

- **CONTENT**: Gives substance, meaning and purpose to a speaker's message. You determine how well a speaker communicated a message.
- **SPEECH DEVELOPMENT**: Was there a well defined opening, body and conclusion. Was the speech organized and easy to follow, flowed smoothly from point to point with a clear purpose, well paced with good support material?
- **SPEECH EFFECTIVENESS**: How did the audience react? What was the purpose of the speech and was it achieved?
- **SPEECH VALUE**: Was there a clearly defined message with substance, logic and original thoughts presented in good taste?
- **DELIVERY**: The mechanics of delivering the message....
- **PHYSICAL**: looks, dress, stance, gestures, facial expression, eye contact and body movements.
- **VOICE**: Is quality pleasing, confident, warm and able to show emotions. Is the rate and volume adequate with correct word usage and enthusiasm?
- **LANGUAGE**: The speaker's word choice and grammatical skill....
- **APPROPRIATENESS**: Words must fit the occasion and audience, convey and sell the message.
- **CORRECTNESS**: Did the speaker use correct grammar, pronunciation, enunciation and effective diction?
- **TIMING** is not the judge's responsibility and should never be a consideration.
- **PROTESTS**: Any judge can and must protest to the Chief Judge if that judge suspect or believes that the speech is not substantially original. Must protest before the winner is announced.
- **BEFORE YOU JUDGE A CONTEST**: Review the judging criteria on the back of the ballot. Study the Judges Code of Ethics at the bottom. Attend the orientation session held by the chief judge. Judge according to the given contest rules and judging standards. Don't make up your own rules and judging standards