



# 2019-2020

Updated January 28, 2020

## Middle School Unified Manual Tournament Procedures, Rules, and Judging Instructions

The **National Speech & Debate Association** is the largest interscholastic speech and debate organization serving middle school and high school students in the United States. The Association provides competitive speech and debate activities, high-quality resources, comprehensive training, scholarship opportunities, and advanced recognition to more than 150,000 students and coaches every year. For more than 90 years, the National Speech & Debate Association has empowered more than 1.5 million members to become engaged citizens, skilled professionals, and honorable leaders in our society.

**OUR MISSION:** We believe communication skills are essential for empowering youth to become engaged citizens, skilled professionals, and honorable leaders in our global society. We connect, support, and inspire a diverse community of honor society members committed to fostering excellence in young people through competitive speech and debate activities.

**OUR VISION:** We envision a world in which every student has access to competitive speech and debate activities. We are the leading voice in the development of resources, competitive and ethical standards, curricular and co-curricular opportunities, and recognition systems for our vast network of student, coach, and alumni members.

***Editor's Note:** For quick reference throughout this document, new changes for the current year are highlighted in **yellow**. Other recent changes made within the past one or two years remain highlighted in **gray**.*

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## SECTION 1: Middle School Tournament Procedures

### Overview

This manual offers an overview of competition procedures at the **Middle School National Speech & Debate Tournament**. Coaches must be familiar with the tournament information posted at [www.speechanddebate.org/nationals](http://www.speechanddebate.org/nationals). The following document serves as a guide to help you understand the tournament's structure; however, the deadlines and requirements found on the National Tournament website (not included here) are expectations that must be followed by all participants.

Please refer to the *Middle School Competition Event Rules* section for specific rules of the various events offered at the tournament. Also see *Middle School Judging Instructions* as additional guidance for judges.

### 2020 Release and Updates

**Note:** New changes for the current year are highlighted in **yellow**. Other recent changes made within the past one or two years remain highlighted in **gray**.

**World Schools Debate Pilot:** World Schools Debate began to be piloted at the 2018 Middle School National Tournament and will be piloted again in **2020**. All judges must attend the on-site judge training. The only exception that will be made is for high school students who competed in elimination rounds on Wednesday morning at the National Tournament and, as a result, could not attend training.

### Harassment and Discrimination Policy

The National Speech & Debate Association is committed to providing its participants, judges, coaches, and staff the opportunity to pursue excellence in their endeavors. This opportunity can exist only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. The NSDA prohibits all forms of harassment and discrimination. Accordingly, all forms of harassment and discrimination, whether written or oral, based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, citizenship, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by any applicable federal, state, or local law are prohibited, whether committed by participants, judges, coaches, or observers. Individuals who are found to have violated this policy will be subject to the full range of sanctions, up to and including removal from the tournament premises. Any individual or group of individuals who believes they have been a victim of harassment and/or discrimination should report it to the ombudsperson immediately.

*(Updated February 3, 2019)*

## I. Tournament Entry

- A. **Eligibility:** Students must have been in the sixth, seventh, or eighth grade during the 2019-2020 school year, or graduated from the fifth grade by June 13, 2020. There is no qualification process; this is an open tournament.
1. Students involved with non-school clubs must instead be registered with the school at which they are enrolled if that school enters the tournament. Contestants found to be violating this rule will be disqualified.
  2. **Membership Notice:** The Board of Directors affirms the creation, support, and development of speech and debate programs at the middle and secondary levels through accredited public and private schools. All members of the Association must be school-based. For any club or organization that does not currently have a school-based membership, the NSDA is eager to work with you to create school-based speech and debate teams. Students who are currently members through their area non-school-based clubs and organizations may request to have their memberships transferred to their accredited public and private schools. Homeschools and virtual schools that are recognized by the state in which those schools compete may join the National Speech & Debate Association. Please contact [info@speechanddebate.org](mailto:info@speechanddebate.org) for more information.
- B. **Entry Limits:**
1. Entries are due May 1. If payment or registration materials are not received by May 8, a school's entries may be forfeit. Any information missing after the May 1 deadline will incur a \$200 late registration fee.
  2. Speech and debate events are separate. Debate entries (LD, PF, Policy, Congress, World Schools) may not enter any main event speech events.
  3. In speech events (except Extemp), students can enter two events per pattern (A or B).
  4. Please note that each school is limited to six (6) entries per event. There is no waitlist for additional entries. Coaches will be notified if additional space remains in the tournament prior to June 1.
  5. **Once we reach capacity, we will close registration in applicable competition events.** This may happen before the entry deadline.
- C. **Judging:** We wish to encourage only those who are *genuinely interested* in providing an educational experience to judge at this tournament. **Middle schools are required to bring judges for each division** in which they have students (Policy, LD, PF, Speech, World Schools, and Congress) as a condition of registering.
1. Judge requirements by event group:
    - a. Policy Debate: For every 2 teams or fraction thereof – at least one judge must be provided by the school\*\*
    - b. LD Debate: For every 3 entries or fraction thereof – at least one judge must be provided by the school\*\*
    - c. PF Debate: For every 3 teams or fraction thereof – at least one judge must be provided by the school\*\*
    - d. Speech: For every 5 entries or fraction thereof – at least one judge must be provided by the school\*\*
    - e. Congress: 1 per school – at least one judge must be provided by the school, who may also serve as a Policy, PF or LD judge
    - f. World Schools: For every 2 teams or fraction thereof – at least one judge must be provided by the school\*\*

\*\* Schools that do not provide these judges may not be allowed to have contestants in those divisions. At a minimum, they will forfeit their judge bond, in addition to the judging fees that would apply.
  2. Judging paradigms for Policy and Lincoln-Douglas Debate judges must be entered on the registration site

by May 1. Paradigms that are completed after the May 1 deadline will incur a \$200 fee. When judges are drawn from the field of high school National Tournament contestants, we will have them complete paradigm forms online at [Tabroom.com](http://Tabroom.com).

3. You may not register high school students who are entered in the High School National Tournament to judge.
4. All judges are committed through the end of the tournament and are expected to judge any round assigned within their event group. Judges who are parent chaperones should not escort their own children to rounds and show up late for the judge call. Schools whose judges, including parent chaperone judges, do not report for assignments ON TIME will forfeit their judge bond.
5. Instructional guides for judging are available on the website; coaches are expected to share these materials with judges they bring to the tournament.
6. If a school brings high school students to judge, they must have been juniors or seniors with at least 250 Honor Society points **in the last academic year**. No underclassmen or upper classmen without 250 Honor Society points will be permitted to judge. A rising junior does not meet these criteria.
7. All judges must be registered on the registration site by **May 1**. All judge paradigms are due by **May 1**. Failure to meet this deadline will result in a \$200 fee and/or forfeiture of entry to the National Tournament.

#### D. Fees:

1. **School Membership Fee: \$75.** Every school registered in the Middle School National Tournament must first be registered as a paid NSDA member school. School membership costs \$75, and the school will remain a member until the end of the current school year. Sign up for membership at [www.speechanddebate.org/join](http://www.speechanddebate.org/join).
2. **Student Membership Fee: \$10.** Every student registered in the Middle School National Tournament must first be registered as a paid NSDA member student. Each student membership costs \$10, and students will remain members until they enter high school. Sign up for membership at [www.speechanddebate.org/join](http://www.speechanddebate.org/join).
3. **Entry Fee:** If your team stays OUTSIDE the National Tournament hotel block, there will be a \$25 fee per student added to your invoice.
  - a. Each debate entry is **\$25 per student**. A partner event is \$50. (Note: If your team stays outside the tournament block, the entry fee per student is \$50.)
  - b. For each speech event a student enters, the fee is **\$20 per event**. For example, if entered in four events, it would be \$80 total for the student. (Note: If your team stays outside the tournament block, the entry fee per student per event is \$45.)
  - c. A World Schools entry is **\$75** regardless of the number of students per team. (Note: If your team stays outside the tournament block, the entry fee per WSD entry is \$100.)
4. Each school must post a judge bond of \$200. This bond is in addition to entry fees and judge fees. If all judges from a school complete all judging assignments, the \$200 will be returned after July 1. **Overpayment of National Tournament fees will be refunded by check.** Failure to report for a judging assignment or pooling assignment will forfeit your judge bond of \$200 for the first round missed, and a \$100 per judge per round penalty will be assessed thereafter. A school will not be permitted to gain membership or compete the following year unless all outstanding fees have been paid. NOTE: TO ENSURE FINANCIAL SECURITY AND APPROPRIATE AUDITING PRACTICES, JUDGE BONDS WILL NO LONGER BE RETURNED AT THE NATIONAL TOURNAMENT.
5. Schools must pay a **\$160 fee** for each uncovered judge as per requirements above.
6. Schools will be assessed a \$200 fee if they do not provide their title, author, and ISBN information for Interpretation events, title and topic for Original Oratory and Informative Speaking, and title for

Declamation, by May 1.

7. All fees are non-refundable after registration closes on May 1.

**E. Entry Requirements and Deadlines:**

1. Coaches can register online at **MSNats.tabroom.com**. Entries are due **May 1**.
2. Congressional Debate legislation is due **April 24**.
3. Title, author, and ISBN information for Interpretation events, title **and topic** for Original Oratory and Informative Speaking, and title for Declamation, must be posted on the registration website by **May 1**.
4. Judge names, judge paradigms, and judge conflicts are due **May 1**.
5. Media release forms, signed by each student's parent/guardian, must be submitted by **May 1**.
6. **Entry agreement forms, signed by each school's principal and coach, must be submitted by May 1.**
7. All fees, including judge bond, must be **postmarked or** received by the national office by **May 1**.
8. A late fee of \$200 will be assessed for late fees, forms, **piece info, and entry changes after their respective deadlines**. A school risks forfeiting participation if this information is not received by **May 8**.

**F. Supervision and Logistics Information:**

1. Each student shall be under the supervision of an adult speech coach, parent, or other adult approved by the school principal. Coaches with entries from their school may not also supervise students from another school district, without written permission of both district superintendents.
2. Students are not allowed to enter competition rooms without judges present. Students are required to wait outside the room until judge(s) arrive.
3. The tournament may limit spectators in accordance with fire safety codes and room capacities.
4. All rounds at the Middle School National Tournament are open to any spectator.
5. **No one may record students at the National Tournament. This is for the privacy and safety of all concerned. No exceptions will be granted to this rule; rounds may be recorded by NSDA officials for instructional purposes.**

## II. Competition Event Procedures

- A. **Judges:** One judge evaluates each preliminary round; at least three evaluate elimination rounds.
- B. **Judging Conflicts:** Contestants scheduled to be judged by someone who has, at any point in time, coached or taught them or with whom they have a close personal relationship are responsible for reporting that conflict on [Tabroom.com](http://Tabroom.com) prior to May 1. If they are scheduled to judge a student that is a conflict, they must report that fact to the ombudsperson immediately. Failure to comply may result in disqualification from the tournament.
- C. **Advancement:** Contestant scores in preliminary rounds will not carry into elimination rounds, except as tie-breaks. Once elimination rounds begin, scores will again reset prior to the start of each subsequent round.
- D. **Policy Debate**
  - 1. **Policy Debate Affirmative Plans:** Middle school students in Policy Debate must follow the case limits as outlined here: [www.speechanddebate.org/topics](http://www.speechanddebate.org/topics). Students do not have to disclose prior to the tournament any plan texts. Students are not limited in the number of cases they may read in Policy Debate. They are only limited by the case list. Reading cases outside of the case list carries a penalty of losing the round in question.
- E. **Public Forum, Lincoln-Douglas, Policy Debate, and World Schools Debate:**
  - 1. If fewer than 18 participants sign up for a particular debate event, that event may be cancelled.
  - 2. Preliminary Round Pairing Procedures
    - a. There shall be no fewer than five preliminary rounds for each debate category in which all entries are guaranteed participation (except in the event of a bye), unless there are under 40 entries, where at least four preliminary rounds will be held.
    - b. In the event of an odd number of entries in a given debate format one entry in each round will be awarded a bye. That bye will be tabulated as a win, and entry receiving the bye will be awarded speaker points equal to their speaker point average in the other four rounds of competition. The bye will be assigned randomly in rounds one and two. In subsequent rounds the bye will go to the lowest seed. In the event that the lowest seed has already received a bye the bye will advance to next lowest seed as no entry will receive more than one bye.
    - c. Entries will be constrained from meeting other entries from their school, and other entries they have previously met in prelims. Where possible, entries will be constrained from meeting entries from the same state or region in pre-sets. This cannot be guaranteed.
    - d. Rounds one and two of all debate divisions will be paired randomly with exception of the previous mentioned constraints. All rounds following round two will be paired using a high-low within the brackets method of powering.
    - e. For Public Forum, a coin toss will be used to determine sides and speaker order.
    - f. Scheduling judges for preliminary rounds:
      - i. All preliminary rounds of debate will be decided by one judge.
      - ii. No school-affiliated judge shall be scheduled to judge their own entry.
      - iii. A judge will not be scheduled to judge an entry more than once.
  - 3. Pairing Procedures for Elimination Rounds
    - a. The number of entries in each debate event will determine the number of teams in that division break to elimination rounds. Events with fewer than 24 entries break directly to semifinals (top four entries); events with more than 24 entries but fewer than 40 break to quarterfinals (top eight entries); and events with more than 40 entries break to octafinals (top 16 entries). In the event that clearing the required number of entries results in entries without winning records advancing, the tournament will hold a partial elimination round. The

tournament may break to a partial or full double-octafinals. Under no circumstances will the tournament break more than 32 entries in a given division of debate.

- b. Once elimination rounds begin, school constraints no longer apply. An entry may be paired to debate another entry from the same school. In such situations, the coach of record for entries involved may opt to advance either entry without holding the actual debate, or the coach may decide to require the debaters to debate, in which case the tournament will provide necessary judges for the round to take place. NOTE: the final round must be debated for students to earn the awards, and they will be crowned co-champions. This is to ensure a public showcase of the tournament's best talent, as well as to complete the video archive.
- c. For elimination rounds all entries will be seeded and paired, ranked based on the following:
  - i. Total number of wins.
  - ii. Single adjusted speaker points with highest and lowest single-ballot points dropped.
  - iii. Opposition win-loss record.
  - iv. Unadjusted speaker points.
  - v. Double adjusted speaker points with first and second highest and lowest single-ballot points dropped. At this point if the tie is still unbroken, speaker points will continue to be adjusted to triple adjusted then quadruple adjusted if necessary.
  - vi. Judge Variance
  - vii. Opposition Points
  - viii. In the event of an unbreakable tie, the seeding of the teams in questions will be determined by a coin toss.
- d. The following guidelines will be used to pair elimination rounds.
  - i. In the first elimination round the highest seed will debate the lowest seed, the second seed will debate the second lowest seed, so on. For example, in octafinals the 1st seed would debate the 16th seed, the 2nd seed would debate the 15th seed, the 3rd seed would debate the 14th seed, the 4th seed would debate the 13th seed, and so on ending with the 8th seed debating the 9th seed.
  - ii. Elimination round brackets are not reseeded following each round. This means if the 16th seed defeats the 1st seed in octafinals, then they assume the 1st seed.
  - iii. For Policy and LD - If the entries paired to debate in out rounds met in prelims then they will debate on opposite sides in the elimination round. If the two entries have not met previously at the National Tournament, then they will flip a coin for sides. In elimination rounds of World Schools Debate, teams will flip a coin to determine sides. Sides in Public Forum will always be determined by coin toss.
- e. Scheduling judges for elimination rounds
  - i. All elimination rounds of debate will be judged by a minimum of three judges.
  - ii. No coach shall be scheduled to judge their own entry.
  - iii. When possible, a judge will not be scheduled to judge an entry more than once.

#### F. Congressional Debate:

1. There must be at least 18 entries registered, or Congressional Debate will be cancelled.
2. Preliminary Round Sectioning
  - a. Students will be assigned to chambers of 18-24 students a piece.
  - b. Students from the same school will be separated, except to allow for an affiliated judge to



score in a chamber without students from her/his school.

- c. Preliminary sessions will be evaluated and ranked by two judges, who will score individual speeches and answers to questions, as well as preferentially rank the students in each session. The parliamentarian's ballot will break any otherwise unbreakable ties.
  - i. A parliamentarian will be assigned to each chamber (or one of the judges will be designated as "parliamentarian"). They will supervise each chamber: to call roll and ensure students are in assigned seats, to intervene in case a chamber becomes too deeply involved in parliamentary rules, and correct gross errors in procedure. They should remain in the background, but step forward firmly when her/his presence is required. The purpose of the Congress is to debate legislation, and it is the parliamentarian's duty to see that this is done.
  - ii. Interested students may run for election as presiding officer. If no students step forward, the parliamentarian assigned to the chamber shall preside. The presiding officer shall call contestants to speak, serve as timekeeper, and ensure that tournament rules and parliamentary procedure are adhered to. The parliamentarian will assist the presiding officer as necessary.
3. Agenda: To facilitate maximum time for debate, the agenda will be set in the order legislation appears in the docket packet. Students may move to *Suspend the Rules* and alter the agenda in individual chambers, but the parliamentarian may step in and overrule this, if they believe this motion is being used abusively or excessively.
4. Elimination Rounds:
  - a. If there are fewer than 19 contestants in the preliminary session, no final session will be held. If there are 20-40 students, the top 10-14 will advance straight to finals; if there are 41 or more, at least the top 24 will advance to semifinals and 12 will advance to finals. The following priorities determine advancement and placing:
    - i. Low cumulative rank total
    - ii. Judge Preference
    - iii. Sum of Reciprocal Fractions
    - iv. Low adjusted rank total, after high and low ranks are dropped
    - v. Judge preference of adjusted ranks
    - vi. Reciprocal Fractions of adjusted ranks
    - vii. Parliamentarian's ballot
  - b. If held, semifinal sections will seed entries into sections of approximately equivalent strength, based on preliminary rounds performance, protecting for school constraints *first*.
  - c. Presiding Officer: if the final session is split into multiple segments, two separate elections may be held for presiding officer; both will be recognized with a gavel on stage.
  - d. Judges: The Final Congress will feature a panel of 3 or 5 judges. No school-affiliated judge shall be scheduled to judge a student from their school.
  - e. Awards: The top placing six students will be recognized; remaining students will be designated as "finalists." The final session presiding officer(s) also will be recognized.
- G. **Speech Events:** This tournament will offer competition in 12 speech events, which include Informative Speaking (INF), Program Oral Interpretation (POI), Declamation (DEC), Dramatic Interpretation (DI), Duo Interpretation (DUO), Extemporaneous Speaking (EXT), Humorous Interpretation (HI), Impromptu (IMP), Original Oratory (OO), Poetry (POE), Prose (PRO), and Storytelling (ST). For scheduling purposes, these events will be divided into two patterns: **Pattern A** (PRO, POE, INF, EXT, DUO, DEC) and **Pattern B** (STO, POI, OO, DI, HI, IMP).

1. Students may not enter more than two speech events per pattern and may not enter a debate event. Extemporaneous Speaking contestants may not enter other events in its designated pattern.
2. If fewer than 18 participants enter a particular event, the event will be cancelled, unless that event is Prose, Poetry, Humorous Interpretation, or Dramatic Interpretation. In the case that either Prose or Poetry (or both) fail to attract the minimum number of entries, the events will be collapsed into one event. The same is true for Humorous and Dramatic Interpretation.
3. Material: students may not use speeches or literary selections they used in a previous academic year. They also may not duplicate same material in different events. Costumes or props may not be used.
4. Preliminary Round Sectioning
  - a. Each contestant is guaranteed three randomly sectioned preliminary rounds.
  - b. When possible, no student should be placed in a section with another student from their school.
  - c. Each student should meet a variety of opposition in each round.
  - d. Each student should be assigned a variety of speaker positions in preliminary rounds, with adjustments made to accommodate cross-entry. Judges may move students' order to accommodate for cross-entry.
  - e. Scheduling judges for preliminary rounds
    - i. Preliminary rounds of speech events will be evaluated and ranked by one judge.
    - ii. No school-affiliated judge shall be scheduled to judge a student from their school.
    - iii. No judge shall judge the same student in the same event more than once during prelims.
5. Elimination Rounds
  - a. The number of entries in each speech event will determine the number of individuals that can advance to elimination round competition in that event. If an event has fewer than 24 entries then the event will break directly to a final round of six contestants. If an event has more than 24 but fewer than 60 entries that event will break to semifinals, and any event with more than 60 entries will break to a quarterfinal round.
  - b. Prelim scores will not carry over to elimination rounds except that for the purpose of scheduling the first elimination round. From that point on scores reset after each round.
  - c. Scheduling judges: elimination rounds of speech events will be judged by at least three judges. No school-affiliated judge shall be scheduled to judge a student from their school. When possible, a judge will not see a student more than once.
  - d. Quarterfinals
    - i. In the event that a quarterfinal round is necessary, the top 24 contestants after prelims will advance to a quarterfinal round, using the following priorities:
      01. Lowest cumulative ranks
      02. Reciprocal fractions
      03. Number of firsts, then seconds, then thirds, etc. if needed.
      04. If a tie is unbreakable by this formula, all tied contestants shall advance.
    - ii. Quarterfinals will consist of four sections with six contestants in each section. Sectioning will be done as follows, protecting school constraints *before* seeding (speaker order will not necessarily follow the seed strength listed):

Section x	Section y	Section z	Section n
24 <sup>th</sup> seed	23 <sup>rd</sup> seed	22 <sup>nd</sup> seed	21 <sup>st</sup> seed
17 <sup>th</sup> seed	18 <sup>th</sup> seed	19 <sup>th</sup> seed	20 <sup>th</sup> seed
16 <sup>th</sup> seed	15 <sup>th</sup> seed	14 <sup>th</sup> seed	13 <sup>th</sup> seed
9 <sup>th</sup> seed	10 <sup>th</sup> seed	11 <sup>th</sup> seed	12 <sup>th</sup> seed
8 <sup>th</sup> seed	7 <sup>th</sup> seed	6 <sup>th</sup> seed	5 <sup>th</sup> seed
1 <sup>st</sup> seed	2 <sup>nd</sup> seed	3 <sup>rd</sup> seed	4 <sup>th</sup> seed

e. Semifinals

- i. When a quarterfinal round is held, the top 3 participants from each section will advance to semifinals. Placement in each section will be determined by the priority below (01-06). Once the top three from each section are determined they will be seeded 1-12 using the same formula used to determine top three in each section.
  01. Lowest round rank total
  02. Judge preference of ranks in round
  03. Reciprocal fractions of round ranks
  04. Majority of 1s
  05. Prior cumulative rank total
  06. If a tie is unbreakable by this formula, all tied contestants shall advance.
- ii. If no quarterfinal round is held, the top 12 contestants after prelims will advance to semifinals, using the same priorities for advancement in II.D.5.d.i.
- iii. Semifinals will consist of two sections with six contestants in each. Sectioning will be completed as follows (school constraints, speaker order same as d.ii. above):

Section x	Section y
12 <sup>th</sup> seed	11 <sup>th</sup> seed
9 <sup>th</sup> seed	10 <sup>th</sup> seed
8 <sup>th</sup> seed	7 <sup>th</sup> seed
5 <sup>th</sup> seed	6 <sup>th</sup> seed
4 <sup>th</sup> seed	3 <sup>rd</sup> seed
1 <sup>st</sup> seed	2 <sup>nd</sup> seed

f. Finals

- i. After semifinals, the top six contestants (3 from each section) will advance to the final round. The process for determining these contestants will be determined by the priorities outlined above in II.D.5.e.i.
- ii. Tournament placement will be determined with the priorities outlined in II.D.5.e.i.

H. **Supplemental Events:** As of 2019-2020, supplemental events will no longer be offered at the Middle School National Tournament.

### III. Protests and Disqualification

- A. **Forfeits:** A contestant who does not appear at the scheduled time to speak shall be marked last. A debate team more than 15 minutes late shall forfeit the decision. The ombudsperson may waive these penalties for valid reasons such as students who are cross-entered.
- B. **Wrong Room/Section:** If an entry competes in the wrong section of a speech event or against the wrong opponent in a debate round—at no fault of their opponent or the tournament—that student/team will automatically receive last in the section in which they were assigned and zero speaker points for that round. Debaters will receive a loss for that particular round and zero speaker points.
- C. **Protest Process:**
  - 1. An ombudsperson will investigate and adjudicate protests of alleged violations of tournament rules and standards.
  - 2. Protests must be presented by a school’s designated adult or “coach of record”—student complaints and protests will not be acknowledged.
  - 3. Protests must be presented in writing in a timely manner and include:
    - a. The Complaint
    - b. Identification of judge and school affiliation
    - c. Signature of coach presenting the complaint
    - d. Details of the event violation including: Event, Round Number, Section, Room Number, Student Contestant Code and the Time of the alleged infraction.
  - 4. Ombudsperson decisions are final and may only be appealed by the coach of the accused (not the coach initiating the protest). Another protest may be filed if a perceived violation occurs in a subsequent round.
  - 5. When there is disagreement with the ombudsperson’s decisions regarding protests, a committee of at least three disinterested parties, appointed by tournament officials, will make the final ruling on the protest.
  - 6. In case of a disqualification of a contestant, all previous ranks and decisions of other contestants stand and no revision of past round ranks will occur.

### IV. Awards

- A. **Individual Awards:** Awards will be given to all students advancing to elimination rounds.
  - 1. In Lincoln-Douglas, Policy, **World Schools**, and Public Forum Debate, the top 10 speakers will be recognized.
  - 2. In Congressional Debate, the final session presiding officers will be recognized.
- B. **School of Excellence Awards:**
  - 1. Contestants reaching elimination rounds will count toward School of Excellence Awards.
    - a. A contestant earns their school one point per round they advance.
    - b. In Congressional Debate, students who place 1-6 receive an additional point in addition to one for breaking to the final session.
  - 2. Debate: Presented to the top five point earning schools with at least one entry in debate and/or Congressional Debate.
  - 3. Speech: Presented to the top five point earning schools with at least one entry in a speech event.
  - 4. Overall: Presented to the top three point earning schools with at least one entry in both debate and speech. **The winner of the overall School of Excellence Awards will not also be eligible to win the Speech**

and Debate School of Excellence Awards.



## SECTION 2: Middle School Competition Event Rules

### Overview

This manual provides official rules for events offered at the **Middle School National Speech & Debate Tournament**. Rules are mostly modeled after high school events, rules, and standards, but have been modified in some cases to more appropriately suit middle school students.

Please refer to the *Middle School Tournament Procedures* section for information on how the competition is operated. Also see *Middle School Judging Instructions* as additional guidance for judges. For other tournament logistics, visit [www.speechanddebate.org/nationals](http://www.speechanddebate.org/nationals).

### 2019 Release and Updates

**Note:** New changes for the current year are highlighted in **yellow**. Other recent changes made within the past one or two years remain highlighted in **gray**.

**Policy Debate case limits can be found at [www.speechanddebate.org/topics](http://www.speechanddebate.org/topics).**

### Time Limits

Declamation	10 min + 30-sec grace	Congress: Sponsor Speech	3 min + 2-min questioning
Dramatic Interpretation	10 min + 30-sec grace	Congress: First Negative	3 min + 2-min questioning
Duo Interpretation	10 min + 30-sec grace	Congress: Other Speeches	3 min + 1-min questioning
Extemporaneous Speaking	7 min + 30-sec grace		
Humorous Interpretation	10 min + 30-sec grace	Lincoln-Douglas Debate	Varies – see LD page
Impromptu Speaking	7 min + 30-sec grace	Policy Debate	Varies – see Policy page
Original Oratory	10 min + 30-sec grace	Public Forum	Varies – see PF page
Poetry Interpretation	7 min + 30-sec grace	World Schools Debate	Varies – see WSD page
Prose Interpretation	7 min + 30-sec grace		
Storytelling	5 min + 30-sec grace		
<b>Informative Speaking</b>	<b>10 min + 30-sec grace</b>		
<b>Program Oral Interpretation</b>	<b>10 min + 30-sec grace</b>		

## Topics

See [www.speechanddebate.org/topics](http://www.speechanddebate.org/topics) for National Tournament topics, available by May 1.

## Main Events: Overview

### Overarching Rules for Debate

- A. Oral prompting, except for time signals, by a speaker's debate partner is *not prohibited*. Individual judges may determine their comfort with this practice and handle it in-round. No protests will be heard by the ombudsperson regarding this issue.
- B. **Judging Conflicts:** Contestants in any debate event who are scheduled to be judged by someone who has, at any point in time, coached or taught them or with whom they have a close personal relationship are responsible for reporting that fact to the ombudsperson immediately. Failure to comply may result in disqualification from the tournament.

### Evidence Rules for Policy, Public Forum, and Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Evidence is one of the important components of arguments in debate rounds. All debaters involved are expected to act in an ethical manner that is in accordance with the rules. In keeping with the National Speech & Debate Association Code of Honor, all participants are expected to use and interpret evidence, evidence rules, and procedures in good faith.

#### 7.1. Responsibilities of Contestants Reading Evidence

- A. **Evidence defined.** Debaters are responsible for the validity of all evidence they introduce in the debate. Evidence includes, but is not limited to: facts, statistics, or examples attributable to a specific, identifiable, authoritative source used to support a claim. Unattributed ideas are the opinion of the student competitor and are not evidence.
- B. **Oral source citation.** In all debate events, contestants are expected to, at a minimum, orally deliver the following when introducing evidence in a debate round: primary author(s)' name (last) and year of publication. **Any other information such as source, author's qualifications, etc., may be given, but is not required.** Should two or more quotations be used from the same source, the author and year must be given orally only for the first piece of evidence from that source. Subsequently, only the author's name is required. Oral citations do not substitute for the written source citation. The full written citation must be provided if requested by an opponent or judge.
- C. **Written source citation.** To the extent provided by the original source, a written source citation must include:
  1. Full name of primary author and/or editor
  2. Publication date
  3. Source
  4. Title of article
  5. Date accessed for digital evidence
  6. Full URL, if applicable
  7. Author qualifications
  8. Page number(s)
- D. **Paraphrasing, authoritative source versus general understanding.** If paraphrasing is used in a debate, the debater will be held to the same standard of citation and accuracy as if the entire text of the evidence were read. Paraphrasing may be used to shorten or clarify one specific portion of an original source. It should not be confused with general summary of an entire book, chapter, study, etc., which may only be used for information that is widely considered to be common knowledge. Paraphrasing focuses on a single idea, while summary focuses on a general concept. For example, if a debater references a specific theory by a specific author, the debater must also be able to provide an original source as well as the specific text from the original source which is being paraphrased. If a debater were to reference social contract theory in general, that would not be an authoritative source that would require citation. However, if the debater references "John Locke's Social Contract," evidence would need to be available.
- E. **Ellipses prohibited.** In all debate events, the use of internal ellipsis (...) is prohibited unless it is a replication of the original document. Debaters may omit the reading of certain words; however, the text that is verbally omitted must



be present in the text of what was read for opposing debaters and/or judges to examine. The portions of the evidence read including where the debater begins and ends must be clearly marked as outlined in 7.1(G)(2).

**F. Availability of evidence.**

1. In all debate events, for reference, any material (evidence, cases, written citations, etc.) that is presented during the round must be made available to the opponent and/or judge during the round if requested. When requested, the original source or copy of the relevant (as outlined in 7.2) pages of evidence read in the round must be available to the opponent in a timely fashion during the round and/or judge at the conclusion of the round.
2. **Original source(s) defined.** Understanding that teams/individuals obtain their evidence in multiple ways, the original source for evidence may include, but is not limited solely to, one of the following:
  - a. Accessing the live or displaying a copy of a web page (teams/individuals may access the Internet to provide this information if requested).
  - b. A copy of the page(s) the evidence is on, the page preceding, and the page following, or the actual printed (book, periodical, pamphlet, etc.) source.
  - c. Copies or electronic versions of published handbooks (i.e., Baylor Briefs; Planet Debate, etc.).
  - d. Electronic or printed versions or the webpage for a debate institute or the NDCA sponsored Open Evidence Project or similar sites.
3. Regardless of the form of material used to satisfy the original source requirement, debaters are responsible for the content and accuracy of all evidence they present and/or read.

**G. Distinguishing between which parts of each piece of evidence are and are not read in a particular round.** In all debate events, debaters must mark their evidence in two ways:

1. Oral delivery of each piece of evidence must be identified by a clear oral pause or by saying phrases such as “quote/unquote” or “mark the card.” The use of a phrase is definitive and may be preferable to debaters. Clear, oral pauses are left solely to the discretion of the judge.
2. The written text must be marked to clearly indicate the portions read or paraphrased in the debate. See 7.2.B.3 for the penalty for failing to clearly indicate paraphrased text. In the written text the standard practices of underlining what is read, or highlighting what is read, and/or minimizing what is unread, is definitive and may be preferable to debaters. The clarity of other means of marking evidence is left to the discretion of the judge.

**H. Private communication prohibited** Private, personal correspondence, or communication between an author and the debater is inadmissible as evidence.

**7.2. Definitions of Evidence Violations**

- A. “Distortion” exists when the textual evidence itself contains added and/or deleted word(s), which significantly alters the conclusion of the author (e.g., **deleting ‘not’**; **adding** the word **‘not’**). Additionally, failure to bracket added words would be considered distortion of evidence.
- B. “Non-existent evidence” means one or more of the following:
1. The debater citing the evidence is unable to provide the original source or copy of the relevant pages when requested by their opponent, judge, or tournament official.
  2. The original source provided does not contain the evidence cited.
  3. The evidence is paraphrased but lacks an original source to verify the accuracy of the paraphrasing. If a student paraphrases from a book, study, or any other source, the specific lines or section from which the paraphrase is taken must be highlighted or otherwise formatted for identification in the round.

4. The debater is in possession of the original source but declines to provide it to their opponent upon request in a timely fashion (as outlined in 7.4.C).
- C. “Clipping” occurs when the debater claims to have read the complete text of highlighted and/or underlined evidence when, in fact, the contestant skips or omits portions of evidence.
- D. “Straw argument”  
A “straw argument” is a position or argumentative claim introduced by an author for the purpose of refuting, discrediting or characterizing it. Reliance on a straw argument occurs in a debate round when a debater asserts incorrectly that the author supports or endorses the straw argument as their own position.

Note: A debater who acknowledges using a “straw argument” when verbally first read in the round, would **not** be misrepresenting evidence. However, if the debater fails to acknowledge the use of a “straw argument” and their opponent questions the use of such an argument, then that debater has committed an evidence violation.

### 7.3. Procedures for Resolving Evidence Violations

- A. Judges are responsible for resolving disputes between debaters regarding oral citations (7.1(B)); written source citations (7.1(C)); distinguishing between what parts of each piece of evidence are and are not read in a particular round (7.1(G)). When the judge(s) have such a dispute in the round, they must make a written note on the ballot or inform the tabulation committee of the dispute. They must do so particularly if it impacts the decision in the debate. **These decisions may not be appealed.**
- B. An appeal can only be made if the issue has been raised in the round with the exception of the issues listed in 7.3(C). Appeals may only be made if judge(s) have misapplied, misinterpreted, or ignored a rule.
- C. A formal allegation of violation of the evidence rules is permitted during the round only if the debater(s) allege a violation of 7.2(A) (distortion); 7.2(B) (nonexistent evidence); 7.2(C) (clipping). If a formal allegation of violation of these rules is made during a round, the following procedures must be followed: (see section 7.3(D) for procedures for making a formal allegation after the conclusion of the round):
  1. The team/individual alleging a violation must make a definitive indication that they are formally alleging a violation of an evidence rule.
  2. The team/individual alleging the violation of the evidence must articulate the specific violation as defined in 7.2(A); 7.2(B) and/or 7.2(C).
  3. The judge should stop the round at that time to examine the evidence from both teams/individuals and render a decision about the credibility of the evidence.
    - a. If the judge determines that the allegation is legitimate and an evidence violation has occurred, the team/individual committing the violation will be given the loss in the round. Other sanctions may apply as well as articulated in 7.3(E).
    - b. If the judge determines that the allegation is not legitimate and that there is no violation, the team/individual making the challenge will receive the loss in the round.

Note: Teams/individuals may question the credibility and/or efficacy of the evidence without a formal allegation that requires the round to end. Teams/debaters may make in-round arguments regarding the credibility of evidence without making a formal allegation or violation of these rules. Such informal arguments about the evidence will not automatically end the round and will be treated by the judge in the same fashion as any other argument.
- D. The tabulation committee is authorized to hear: (1) appeals, pursuant to 7.3(B), claiming that a judge ignored, misinterpreted or misapplied rules other than those from which no appeal is permitted pursuant to 7.3(A); (2) appeals from a judge’s decision, pursuant to 7.3(C), on a formal in-round allegation of distortion or non-existent evidence (note: **judge decisions regarding clipping may not be appealed**); and (3) a formal allegation of distortion or nonexistent evidence that is made for the first time after conclusion of the debate.

- E. The procedures for making an appeal or post-round formal allegation are as follows:
1. A coach or school-affiliated adult representative from the school(s) competing in the debate or a judge for the round must notify the tabulation committee of intent to submit an appeal or formal post-round allegation within 20 minutes of the end of the debate round. The 20-minute time period begins once the last ballot from all rounds (if flighted, both flights) has been submitted.
  2. The coach must submit the post-round formal allegation to the tabulation committee within 10 minutes of the formal notification of the intent to appeal. The allegation must be in writing and articulate the specific evidence violation that is being challenged. The challenged contestant and coach will then be notified.
  3. If the tabulation committee determines that the original protest has merit, the coach or school-affiliated adult and contestant(s) being challenged will be given 20 minutes to provide evidence denying, or to the contrary of the claim. If such evidence cannot be offered, the challenged debater(s) will be given the loss in the round and may be subject to additional penalties. If the tabulation committee determines that the allegation is not legitimate and that there is no violation, the team/individual making the challenge will receive the loss in the round.
  4. The tabulation committee has the discretion of extending the time limits for these actions if circumstances do not allow a coach or school-affiliated adult to be available within the prescribed time limits.
- F. The tabulation committee's decision to disqualify a student can be appealed by the coach or school-affiliated adult. The following procedure should be followed:
1. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the tabulation committee within 10 minutes of the notification to disqualify.
  2. The tabulation committee will then submit the appeal to the national office referee(s). The committee will contact the national office referee once the written appeal has been received. Both sides will be able to provide written explanations and supporting evidence to defend their individual side.
  3. A decision will be rendered in a timely manner. The decision of the national office shall be final and cannot be appealed.
  4. No more than one round may occur between the round being protested and the decision of the national office referee.
  5. If the appeal is successful and the contestant(s) may now continue in the tournament, they will be put into the appropriate bracket for pairing the debates.
- G. If appeals are made in rounds in which multiple judges are being used, normal procedures should be followed to ensure each judge reaches their decision as independently as possible. Judges will be instructed not to confer or discuss the charge and/or answer to the potential violation. It will be possible for one judge to determine that an evidence violation has occurred and the other judge(s) to determine no violation has occurred. The tabulation committee will record the panel's decision in the same fashion as a normal win or loss; the outcome is thus tabulated in the same fashion as a round in which an evidence violation has not occurred. If the majority of the panel finds an evidence violation did not occur, no sanction may be applied to the team/individual charged with the violation. If the majority finds a violation has occurred, the appropriate penalties will be administered.

#### **7.4. Penalties for Evidence Violations**

- A. If the judge determines that an entry has violated one of the rules listed in 7.3(A) and 7.1(H) (oral citation, written citation, indication of parts of card read or not read, use of private communication), the judge may at their discretion disregard the evidence, diminish the credibility given to the evidence, take the violation into account (solely or partially) in deciding the winner of the debate, or take no action.

- B. If a debater(s) commits an evidence violation for “clipping” (7.2(C), the use of a “straw argument” (7.2(D)) or the use of “ellipses” (7.1(E)) will result in a loss for the debater(s) committing the evidence violation. The judge should award zero speaker points (if applicable) and indicate the reason for decision on the ballot.
- C. If debater(s) commits an evidence violation of “distortion” (7.2(A)) or have used “nonexistent evidence” (as defined by 7.2(B)) the offending debater(s) will lose the debate and be disqualified from the tournament. However, if a debater(s) loses a round due to “non-existent evidence” (7.2(B)) violation during an in-round formal allegation, but can produce it after the round within 20 minutes to the tabulation committee, the committee may decide not to disqualify the entry. The loss that was recorded by the judge may not be changed. If a post-round protest is levied against a debater for not providing evidence or an original source in round (non-existent evidence), and the judge confirms they in fact did not provide the evidence in a timely fashion when requested in round, the debater(s) will lose the round and be disqualified from the tournament. However, if a debater(s) produces the evidence within the post-round challenge period, that debater(s) may avoid disqualification.
- D. Evidence infractions violate the Code of Honor. Depending on the severity, an offense may result in notification of said offense to the contestant’s middle school administration and chapter sponsor, loss of all National Tournament merit points, including trophy and sweepstakes points for the offending student(s), and/or revocation of Association membership. These decisions would be left to the national office.

### **7.5. Tournament Adjustments**

- A. Under no circumstance will a tournament or part of a tournament be re-run because of a violation of these rules.
- B. In the case of a disqualification of a debater(s), all ranks and decisions of other debater(s) made prior to the start of the round being protested stand and no revision of past round ranks will take place. Penalties listed in 7.4 will be applied.
- C. When a round has been held between the round being protested and a final decision regarding the protest, the result of that round will be recorded as follows:
  - 1. If the protest is upheld, and a debater is disqualified, the opponent of the disqualified debater will receive a forfeit win.
  - 2. If the protest is overruled, and the protesting debater won the protested round, no revision of the result on the ballot will take place.
  - 3. If the protest is overruled, the protesting debater lost the protested round, and had no previous losses, no revision of the result on the ballot will take place.
  - 4. If the protest is overruled, the protesting debater lost the protested round, and had a previous loss, the opponent will receive a forfeit win regardless of the result on the ballot.

## Guidelines for Laptop Use in Debate Events at the National Tournament

Below are the guidelines for laptop use in debate events at the National Speech & Debate Association National Tournament. The pilot internet rules, found in the High School Unified Manual, will be used for the 2021 National Tournament.

### Guidelines for Laptop Use in Debate Events

A. Students may use computers with built-in wireless capability. There are only two reasons that the internet may be used during round. First, partner-to-partner communication using the internet is permitted. Second, debaters may access the internet to make evidence available to the opponent and/or judge during the round if requested (see Evidence Rules on page 29). Internet may not be used for any other purpose during the round.

B. Computers or other electronic devices may not be used to receive information from any source (coaches or assistants included) inside or outside of the room in which the competition occurs. Internet access, use of email, instant messaging with anyone but their partner, or other means of receiving information from sources inside or outside of the competition room are prohibited. (This does not prohibit non-electronic communication between debate partners during prep time.)

C. Penalty: Contestants found to have violated provision A will forfeit the round of competition and receive zero merit points. Contestants found to have violated provision B (above) will be disqualified from the tournament and will forfeit all rounds and merit points.

D. Availability of Evidence: Contestants electing to use computers have the responsibility to promptly provide a copy of any evidence read in a speech for inspection by the judge or opponent. Printers may be used. Evidence may be printed in the round or produced electronically, but must be provided in a format readable by the opposing team and the judge.

E. Contestants electing to use computers are responsible for providing their own computers, batteries, extension cords, and all other necessary accessories. Tournament hosts will not be responsible for providing computers, printers, software, paper, or extension cords for contestants.

F. Because public speaking decorum remains an important element of debate, all debaters are expected to speak from the front of the room facing the judge.

G. Contestants choosing to use laptop computers and related equipment accept the risk of equipment failure. Judges and/or contest directors will give no special consideration or accommodation, including no additional speech time or prep time, should equipment failure occur.

H. By choosing to use laptop computers in the round, debaters are consenting to give tournament officials the right to search their files. Debaters who do not wish to consent should not use computers in the round.

## Policy Debate

1. **Resolution:** The resolution will be one requiring a policy judgment. The current national question will be used and will be published online at [www.speechanddebate.org/topics](http://www.speechanddebate.org/topics).

**NOTE:** The 2020 Middle School National Speech & Debate Tournament will institute case limits for Policy Debate. All middle school teams participating must adhere to these limits to avoid forfeiture. View the case limits at [www.speechanddebate.org/topics](http://www.speechanddebate.org/topics).

2. **Entries:** An entry is comprised of two students from the same school; each debating both sides of the resolution and advancing on its own record. No substitution is permitted once the tournament has begun.
3. **Order of Speeches:** Each debater must give one and only one constructive speech, one period of questioning, one period of answering, and one rebuttal speech, in the following order:

Affirmative Constructive Speech	8 minutes
Negative Cross-Examines Affirmative	3 minutes
Negative Constructive Speech	8 minutes
Affirmative Cross-Examines Negative	3 minutes
Affirmative Constructive Speech	8 minutes
Negative Cross-Examines Affirmative	3 minutes
Negative Constructive Speech	8 minutes
Affirmative Cross-Examines Negative	3 minutes
Negative Rebuttal	5 minutes
Affirmative Rebuttal	5 minutes
Negative Rebuttal	5 minutes
Affirmative Rebuttal	5 minutes
Prep time	5 minutes per team

4. **Prompting Philosophy:** Oral prompting, except time signals, either by the speaker's colleague or by any other person while the debater has the floor, is discouraged though not prohibited and may be penalized by some judges. Debaters may, however, refer to their notes and materials and may consult with their teammate while they do not have the floor.
5. **Use of Electronic Devices:** The use of laptop computers is permitted at the National Tournament. Laptop use must comply with the *Guidelines for Laptop Use in Debate Events*.
6. **Timing:** Timekeepers are an option but not required. If no timekeeper is used, debaters may time for their partners or the judge may keep time. Prep time for each team is five minutes.

## Public Forum Debate

1. **Resolution:** Public Forum Debate focuses on advocacy of a position derived from the issues presented in the resolution, not a prescribed set of burdens. The National Tournament topic will be published online at [www.speechanddebate.org/topics](http://www.speechanddebate.org/topics).
2. **Entries:** An entry is comprised of two students from the same school; each debating both sides of the resolution and advancing on its own record. No substitution is permitted once the tournament has begun.
3. **Procedure and Order of Speeches:** Prior to EVERY round and in the presence of the judge(s), a coin is tossed by one team and called by the other team. The team that wins the flip may choose one of two options: EITHER the SIDE of the topic they wish to defend (pro or con) OR the SPEAKING POSITION they wish to have (begin the debate or end the debate). The remaining option (SIDE OR SPEAKING POSITION) is the choice of the team that loses the flip. Once speaking positions and sides has been determined, the debate begins (the con team may lead, depending on the coin flip results). Following the first two constructive speeches, the two debaters who have just given speeches will stand and participate in a three-minute “crossfire”. In “crossfire” both debaters “hold the floor.” However, the speaker who spoke first must ask the first question. After that question, either debater may question and/or answer at will. At the conclusion of the summary speeches, all four debaters will remain seated and participate in a three-minute “Grand Crossfire” in which all four debaters are allowed to cross-examine one another. The speaker who gave the first summary speech must ask the first question. **The speakers from each team will continue to ask and answer questions. Teams should alternate asking and answering questions rather than allowing one team to dominate so that a balance between teams is achieved. All speakers are encouraged to participate in the Grand Crossfire. Speakers should listen respectfully to opponents’ questions and answers.**

**Note: In 2019, the Board of Directors voted to pilot adding one additional minute to each summary speech and one additional minute to each team’s preparation time. This new format will be used for the 2020 National Tournament.**

First Speaker – Team A	4 minutes
First Speaker – Team B	4 minutes
Crossfire	3 minutes
Second Speaker – Team A	4 minutes
Second Speaker – Team B	4 minutes
Crossfire	3 minutes
<b>Summary – First Speaker – Team A</b>	<b>3 minutes</b>
<b>Summary – First Speaker – Team B</b>	<b>3 minutes</b>
Grand Crossfire	3 minutes
Final Focus – Second Speaker – Team A	2 minutes
Final Focus – Second Speaker – Team B	2 minutes
<b>Prep Time</b>	<b>3 minutes per team</b>

4. **Plans/Counterplans:** In Public Forum Debate, the Association defines a plan or counterplan as a formalized, comprehensive proposal for implementation. Neither the pro or con side is permitted to offer a plan or counterplan; rather, they should offer reasoning to support a position of advocacy. Debaters may offer generalized, practical solutions.
5. **Prompting Philosophy:** Oral prompting, except time signals, either by the speaker’s colleague or by any other person while the debater has the floor, is discouraged though not prohibited and may be penalized by some judges. Debaters may, however, refer to their notes and materials and may consult with their teammate while they do not have the floor and during the Grand Crossfire.
6. **Use of Electronic Devices:** The use of laptop computers is permitted at the National Tournament. Laptop use must comply with the *Guidelines for Laptop Use in Debate Events*.

7. **Timing:** Timekeepers are an option but not required. If no timekeeper is used, debaters may time for their partners or the judge may keep time. Prep time for each team is three minutes.



## Lincoln-Douglas Debate

1. **Resolution:** The resolution will be one requiring a value judgment. Refer to [www.speechanddebate.org/topics](http://www.speechanddebate.org/topics) for the current topic.
2. **Entries:** Each contestant will debate both sides. No substitution is permitted once the tournament has begun.
3. **Order of Speeches:**

Affirmative Constructive	6 minutes
Negative Cross-Examination	3 minutes
Negative Constructive	7 minutes
Affirmative Cross-Examination	3 minutes
Affirmative Rebuttal	4 minutes
Negative Rebuttal	6 minutes
Affirmative Rebuttal	3 minutes
Prep Time	4 minutes per debater

4. **Timing:** A timekeeper is an option but isn't required. If no timekeeper is used, debaters may time for their opponent or the judge may keep time. Prep time for each debater is four minutes.
5. **Use of Electronic Devices:** The use of laptop computers is permitted at the National Tournament. Laptop use must comply with the *Guidelines for Laptop Use in Debate Events*.

## Congressional Debate

1. A **session** is defined as including:
  - A. Minimum of three hours.
  - B. 18-20 students as the optimum number for a three-hour session; otherwise, a session should be lengthened by ten minutes per each additional student beyond 20. Chambers may not be larger than 30 students.
  - C. Election of a presiding officer. The presiding officer must be elected with a majority of the vote- if one candidate does not receive a majority of votes, eliminate the candidate with the fewest votes and vote again. If candidates are tied for the fewest number of votes, vote to determine which of the tied candidates should remain in contention. Repeat this process until one candidate receives a majority of votes.
  - D. New seating chart (necessary accommodations for students with special needs may be made).
  - E. Resetting of precedence/recency. See ‘Recognizing Speakers’ below.
  - F. New legislation that has not been debated in a previous session at that tournament.
2. **Recognizing Speakers**
  - A. When more than one speaker seeks the floor, the presiding officer must follow the precedence/recency method:
    - 1) First recognize students who have not spoken during the session.
    - 2) Next recognize students who have spoken fewer times.
    - 3) Then recognize students who spoke earlier (least recently).
  - B. Before precedence is established, the presiding officer should recognize speakers fairly and consistently. They may not link recognition of speakers to previous recognition of students asking questions, moving motions, or longest standing (standing time).
  - C. During any session, precedence/recency should not reset, to ensure that all students in a chamber have an equal opportunity to speak and receive evaluation from scorers. When a new session begins, precedence/recency will be reset along with a new seating chart, and election of a presiding officer.
  - D. Before precedence is established, the presiding officer should explain their recognition process and it must be fair, consistent and justifiable.
  - E. Scorers will include answers to questions when evaluating speeches.
  - F. A speaker may yield time on the floor during debate (for questions or clarifications) but that speaker will remain in control of their three minutes (see #6 below regarding questioning).
3. **Speeches introducing legislation** are allotted up to three minutes, followed by two minutes of questioning by other delegates. A student from the school who wrote the legislation gets the privilege of recognition (called *authorship*), regardless of precedence; otherwise the presiding officer may recognize a “sponsor” from the chamber, provided this recognition follows the precedence guidelines above. Regardless, this speech of introduction must be followed by two minutes of questions. Should no student seek recognition for the authorship/sponsorship, the chamber will move to lay the legislation on the table until such time that a student is prepared to introduce it.
4. **The first negative speech** must be followed by two minutes of questions.
5. **Following the first two speeches** on legislation, the presiding officer will alternately recognize affirmative and negative speakers, who will address the chamber for up to three minutes, followed by one minute of questioning by other delegates. If no one wishes to oppose the preceding speaker, the presiding officer may recognize a speaker upholding the same side. When no one seeks the floor for debate, the presiding officer may ask the chamber if they are “ready for the question,” at which point, if there is no objection, voting may commence on the legislation itself. There is no “minimum cycle” rule, however, if debate gets “one-sided,” the chamber may decide to move the previous question.
  - A. In the event a student speaks on the wrong side called for by the presiding officer and the error is not caught, the speaker shall be scored and the speech shall count in precedence, but the speaker must be penalized at least three points for not paying close attention to the flow of debate.
  - B. In the event a student speaks on an item of legislation *not currently* being debated, said speech shall count in precedence, but zero points shall be awarded.

6. **The presiding officer fairly and equitably recognizes members to ask questions** following each speech. The presiding officer starts timing questioning periods when they have recognized the first questioner, and keeps the clock running continuously until the time has lapsed. Speakers are encouraged to ask brief questions, and may only ask one question at a time. Two-part/multiple-part questions are not allowed, **unless piloting the direct questioning method (see below)**. There is no formal “permission to preface;” however; presiding officers should discourage students from making statements as part of questioning, since that is an abusive use of the limited time available.
7. The presiding officer will pause briefly between speeches to recognize any motions from the floor; however, they **should not** call for motions (at the beginning of a session, the presiding officer should remind members to seek their attention between speeches).
8. **Amendments** must be presented to the presiding officer in writing with specific references to lines and clauses that change. This must be done in advance of moving to amend.
  - A. The parliamentarian will recommend whether the amendment is “germane” —that is, it upholds the original intent of the legislation—otherwise, it is considered “dilatary.” The title of the legislation may be changed.
  - B. A legislator may move to amend between floor speeches. Once that motion is made, the presiding officer will read the proposed amendment aloud and call for a second by one-third of those members present, unless he/she rules it dilatary.
  - C. Should students wish to speak on the proposed amendment, the presiding officer will recognize them as per the standing precedence and recency, and the speech will be counted toward their totals, accordingly.
  - D. Simply proposing an amendment does not guarantee an “author/sponsor” speech, and any speeches on amendments are followed by the normal one minute of questioning.
  - E. Amendments are considered neutral and do not constitute an affirmative or negative speech on the original legislation.
  - F. If there are no speakers or the previous question is moved, the chamber may vote on a proposed amendment without debating it.
9. **All major voting** (such as the main motion/legislation) which a Congressperson’s constituents should have a record of, shall be done with a counted vote. Secret balloting is used when voting for presiding officer.
9. At the **2020** National Tournament, direct questioning will be piloted in the semifinal and final congressional sessions. The presiding officer will open the floor for questions following each speech. The presiding officer will recognize questioners for a cross-examination period of no more than 30 seconds. **Questioners will be chosen according to a separate questioning recency.**
10. Student should ask permission to leave and enter the chamber when it is in session (move a personal privilege). However, do not interrupt a speaker who is addressing the chamber.
11. **Use of Evidence (also see the section on Congressional Debate Evidence Rules)**
  - A. Visual aids are permitted in Congressional Debate, provided they do not require electronic retrieval devices in the chamber.
  - B. All evidence used is subject to verification. Honesty and integrity are of utmost importance in legislative debate. Falsification or deliberate misuse of evidence may result in the legislator being suspended by tournament officials.
  - C. The use of laptop computers is permitted at the National Tournament. Laptop use must comply with the *Guidelines for Laptop Use in Debate Events*.
12. Since the rules above ensure fairness for competition, they may **not** be suspended; the presiding officer should rule such motions *out of order*; except to extend questioning and allow for open chambers provided the tournament staff permits doing so.

## Congressional Debate Legislation Guidelines

Most legislation should have a national/domestic focus that the U.S. Congress would have *jurisdiction* over, taking the form of a bill. A bill establishes details behind *how* a particular law must work, including when it takes effect, how much tax levy would be appropriated (if applicable), how infractions/violations will be dealt with, etc. A bill may answer the who, what, when, where—and most specifically how—but it will never answer “why.” Legislators explain rationale behind bills in their speeches, and how a bill implements its solution can spark deeper, more meaningful debate.

Students should consider what the U.S. Congress has jurisdiction over. Since the Executive Branch runs most of the agencies that enforce federal laws, understanding those helps; for more information, visit [www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/Executive.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/Executive.shtml). While foreign affairs often fall under the jurisdiction of the Executive Branch, funding efforts such as USAID can have an impact on the success or failure of United States involvement in other countries, and therefore, can be framed as a bill. Inspiration for legislative ideas can be found at [thomas.loc.gov](http://thomas.loc.gov).

Writing an effective bill involves more time and research than researching one written by someone else. A student must ask her/himself what the legislation does, who is involved (government agencies), where it happens, when it is feasible to take place and how much time is needed for implementation, and how it should be carried out (a plan of action). All of these questions must be answered in writing the sections of the bill, with thoughtful consideration as to how thoroughly each section explains its plank of implementing the overall bill’s plan of action.

**Resolutions** are simply position statements on issues Congress does not have jurisdiction over (such as a foreign issue, although a bill can suggest foreign aid), or further action (such as amending the Constitution). Resolutions lack the force of law, and never establish enforcement.

Appropriate **topics** exhibit seriousness of purpose. The action proposed should be feasible, and such that the actual United States Congress might debate it. Topics should be debatable, meaning substantive argumentation exists on both sides. Legislation should be typed and double-spaced with line numbers, **not exceeding one page**. Capitalizing the words “WHEREAS” and “RESOLVED” in resolutions, and “SECTION” in bills, as well as inverse-indenting each clause or section helps to distinguish between ideas and concepts.

The samples above show proper formatting. In the resolution, note the semicolon, and how it precedes the word “and” at the end of each “whereas” clause, and the phrase “now, therefore, be it” at the end of the last “whereas” clause.

**Note: Legislation that is submitted for consideration at the National Tournament may be rejected if serious issues exist with the guidelines.**

### A Bill to Establish a Specific Policy

BE IT ENACTED BY THIS CONGRESS THAT:

1. **SECTION 1.** State the new policy in a brief declarative sentence, or in as few sentences as possible.
- 2.
- 3.
4. **SECTION 2.** Define any ambiguous terms inherent in the first section.
- 5.
6. **SECTION 3.** Name the government agency that will oversee the enforcement of the bill along with the specific enforcement mechanism.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
10. **SECTION 4.** Indicate the implementation date/timeframe.
- 11.
12. **SECTION 5.** State that all other laws that are in conflict with this new policy shall hereby be declared null and void.
- 13.
- 14.

*Introduced by Name of School*

### A Resolution to Urge Further Action on a Specific Issue

1. **WHEREAS,** State the current problem (this needs to be accomplished in one brief sentence); and
- 2.
- 3.
4. **WHEREAS,** Describe the scope of the problem cited in the first whereas clause (this clause needs to flow logically from the first); and
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
8. **WHEREAS,** Explain the impact and harms allowed by the current problem (once again, the clause needs to flow in a logical sequence); now, therefore, be it
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
12. **RESOLVED,** By this Congress that: state your recommendation for dealing with the problem (the resolution should be a clear call for action); and, be it
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
16. **FURTHER RESOLVED,** That (an *optional* additional recommendation; if not used, end the previous clause with a period).
- 17.
- 18.

*Introduced by Name of School*

**adherence to these**

Templates for bills, resolutions, and resolutions to amend the Constitution are available online at [www.speechanddebate.org](http://www.speechanddebate.org).

## Congressional Debate Evidence Rules

Based on recommendations from the Congress Evidence Committee, the Board of Directors had a discussion of how evidence is currently used in Congressional Debate and the concerns surrounding students' appropriate, substantiated, and ethical use of evidence in Congressional Debate speeches. The Board of Directors officially voted to adopt these Congressional Debate evidence rules for use during the 2017-2018 competition season.

### 7.1. Responsibilities of Contestants Reading Evidence in Congressional Debate

- A. **Evidence defined.** Debaters are responsible for the validity of all evidence they introduce in the debate. Evidence includes, but is not limited to: facts, statistics, or examples attributable to a specific, identifiable, authoritative source used to support a claim. Unattributed ideas are the opinion of the student competitor and are not evidence.
- B. **Oral source citation.** In all debate events, contestants are expected to, at a minimum, orally deliver the following when introducing evidence in a debate round: primary author(s)' name (last) and year of publication. **Any other information such as source, author's qualifications, etc., may be given, but is not required.** Should two or more quotations be used from the same source, the author and year must be given orally only for the first piece of evidence from that source. Subsequently, only the author's name is required. Oral citations do not substitute for the written source citation. The full written citation must be provided if requested by an opponent or judge.
- C. **Written source citation.** To the extent provided by the original source, a written source citation must include:
1. Full name of primary author and/or editor
  2. Publication date
  3. Source
  4. Title of article
  5. Date accessed for digital evidence
  6. Full URL, if applicable
  7. Author qualifications
  8. Page number(s)
- D. **Paraphrasing, authoritative source versus general understanding.** If paraphrasing is used in a debate, the debater will be held to the same standard of citation and accuracy as if the entire text of the evidence were read. Paraphrasing may be used to shorten or clarify one specific portion of an original source. It should not be confused with general summary of an entire book, chapter, study, etc., which may only be used for information that is widely considered to be common knowledge. Paraphrasing focuses on a single idea, while summary focuses on a general concept. For example, if a debater references a specific theory by a specific author, the debater must also be able to provide an original source **as well as the specific text from the original source which is being paraphrased.** If a debater were to reference social contract theory in general, that would not be an authoritative source that would require citation. However, if the debater references "John Locke's Social Contract," evidence would need to be available.
- E. **Ellipses prohibited.** In all debate events, the use of internal ellipsis (...) is prohibited **unless it is a replication of the original document.** Debaters may omit the reading of certain words; however, the text that is verbally omitted must be present in the text of what was read for opposing debaters and/or judges to examine. The portions of the evidence read including where the debater begins and ends must be clearly marked (as outlined in 7.1.G.2.).
- F. **Availability of original source.**
1. When challenged, the original source or copy of the relevant (as outlined in 7.1.F.2.) pages of evidence read in round must be available to the student making the challenge within two speeches. In all debate events, for reference, any evidence that is presented during the round must be made available to the opponent during the round if requested.

2. **Original source(s) defined.** Understanding that teams/individuals obtain their evidence in multiple ways, the original source for evidence may include, but is not limited solely to, one of the following:
    - a. Accessing the live or displaying a copy of a web page (teams/individuals may access the Internet to provide this information if requested).
    - b. A copy of the page(s) the evidence is on, the page preceding, and the page following, or the actual printed (book, periodical, pamphlet, etc.) source.
    - c. Copies or electronic versions of published handbooks (i.e., Baylor Briefs; Planet Debate, etc.).
    - d. Electronic or printed versions or the webpage for a debate institute or the NDCA sponsored Open Evidence Project or similar sites.
  3. Debaters, even if they have acquired the evidence other than by original research, are still responsible for the content and accuracy of the evidence they present and/or read.
- G. **Distinguishing between which parts of each piece of evidence are and are not read in a particular round.** In all debate events, debaters must mark their evidence in two ways:
1. Oral delivery of each piece of evidence must be identified by a clear oral pause or by saying phrases such as “quote/unquote” or “mark the card.” The use of a phrase is definitive and may be preferable to debaters. Clear, oral pauses are left solely to the discretion of the judge(s) and parliamentarian.
  2. The written text must be marked to clearly indicate the portions read **or paraphrased** in the debate. **See 7.2.B.3 for the penalty for failing to clearly indicate paraphrased text.** In the written text the standard practices of underlining what is read, or highlighting what is read, and/or minimizing what is unread, is definitive and may be preferable to debaters. The clarity of other means of marking evidence is left to the discretion of the judge.
- H. **Private communication prohibited.** Private, personal correspondence or communication between an author and the debater is inadmissible as evidence.

## 7.2. Definitions of Evidence Violations in Congressional Debate

- A. “Distortion” exists when the textual evidence itself contains added and/or deleted word(s), which significantly alters the conclusion of the author (e.g., **deleting ‘not’**; **adding** the word **‘not’**). Additionally, failure to bracket added words would be considered distortion of evidence.
- B. “Non-existent evidence” means one or more of the following:
  1. The debater citing the evidence is unable to provide the original source or copy of the relevant pages when requested by their opponent, judge, or tournament official.
  2. The original source provided does not contain the evidence cited.
  3. The evidence is paraphrased but lacks an original source to verify the accuracy of the paraphrasing. **If a student paraphrases from a book, study, or any other source, the specific lines or section from which the paraphrase is taken must be highlighted or otherwise formatted for identification in the round.**
  4. The debater is in possession of the original source but declines to provide it to a student who challenges, the chair, or the parliamentarian upon request.
- C. “Clipping” occurs when the debater claims to have read the complete text of highlighted and/or underlined evidence when, in fact, the contestant skips or omits portions of evidence.
- D. “Straw argument”
 

A “straw argument” is a position or argumentative claim introduced by an author for the purpose of refuting, discrediting or characterizing it. Reliance on a straw argument occurs in a debate round when a debater asserts incorrectly that the author supports or endorses the straw argument as their own position.

Note: A debater who acknowledges using a “straw argument” when verbally first read in the round, would **not** be misrepresenting evidence. However, if the debater fails to acknowledge the use of a “straw argument” and their opponent questions the use of such an argument, then that debater has committed an evidence violation.

### **7.3. Procedures for Raising Evidence Questions During a Congressional Debate Session**

The procedures for making an In-round evidence question are as follows:

- A. Congressional Debate entries must rise to a point of information after a speech to formally request a copy of the evidence cited, the citation, or the original source of evidence. When requested during the point of information, the presiding officer will instruct the debater being challenged to produce the copy of the evidence, citation, or original source. The debater being challenged must produce the requested materials in a timely fashion. Should a debater feel they are not receiving the information they requested in a timely fashion, they may rise to another point of information for the presiding officer and parliamentarian to address the situation.
- B. Debaters who request the information may receive the evidence from the presiding officer within a period of two speeches. The round would not be put on hold for the request to be completed. For example, if a debater rises to a point of order after speech #4, then by the conclusion of speech #6, the requested evidence should be presented to the presiding officer.
- C. If after reviewing the evidence in question, a debater feels that an evidence violation has occurred, they may submit a formal allegation by completing an evidence challenge form (see Appendix) and, after making a motion to approach the chair, the debater will present the form to the presiding officer and parliamentarian.

### **7.4. Penalties for Resolving Evidence Violations During Congressional Debate**

- A. All evidence challenges must occur during the session of Congressional Debate where an alleged violation took place, and should happen before a vote on the pending legislation. If the concern arises during the last cycle of speeches, the parliamentarian may grant a challenge after the vote, prior to the first speech on a new piece of legislation.
- B. Parliamentarians are responsible for resolving disputes between debaters regarding oral citations (7.1.B.); and written source citations (7.1.C.). When the parliamentarian has such a dispute in the round, the parliamentarian must submit the protest form to the tabulation committee. All protest forms will be submitted to the tabulation committee.
  1. The parliamentarian will determine the legitimacy of the challenge, and if the parliamentarian considers the request justified, the debater making the allegation will move a point of order to address the allegation to the chamber.
  2. The debater being challenged will be recognized by the presiding officer for a response to the evidence violation.
  3. The parliamentarian will evaluate the legitimacy and severity of the charge and make a recommendation to the presiding officer for action. The recommendation may be charged against either student involved in the dispute. Depending upon the severity of the offense, the parliamentarian may opt to censure the debater(s). Refer to section 7.5. for an outline of the severity of offenses and corresponding actions.
  4. The presiding officer will announce the parliamentarian’s decision and recognize either/both debaters for consequent action.
- C. Procedures for Appealing the Parliamentarian’s Decision
  1. An appeal can only be made if the issue-in-question has been raised, by a student, in the round. Appeals may only be made if the parliamentarian has misapplied, misinterpreted, or ignored a rule.
  2. A coach or school-affiliated adult representative must notify the tabulation committee of intent to submit an appeal of the parliamentarian’s ruling within 20 minutes of the end of session as recorded by the Parliamentarian for that chamber.

- a. The coach must submit the post-round appeal to the tabulation committee within 10 minutes of the formal notification of the intent to appeal. The allegation must be in writing and articulate the specific evidence violation and ruling that is being challenged.
  - b. If the tabulation committee determines the appeal has merit, both parties involved in the original dispute will be given 20 minutes to respond.
  - c. The tabulation committee will make a decision and has the discretion of extending the time limits for these actions if circumstances do not allow a coach or school-affiliated adult to be available within the prescribed time limits.
3. At the district tournament level, the tabulation committee’s decision to disqualify a student’s rankings for that session can be appealed by the coach or school-affiliated adult. The following procedure should be followed:
- a. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the tabulation committee within 10 minutes of the notification to disqualify.
  - b. The tabulation committee will then submit the appeal to the national office representative(s). The committee will contact the national office representative once the written appeal has been received. Both sides will be able to provide written explanations and supporting evidence to defend their individual side.
  - c. A decision will be rendered in a timely manner. The decision of the national office representative shall be final and cannot be appealed.
  - d. No elimination session may occur before a ruling is made by the national office.
  - e. If the appeal is successful, any student(s) involved will receive the appropriate rank as if the evidence challenge was never called into question.
  - f. At the National Tournament, the appeal will go directly to the ombudsperson, and accepted procedures and practices will be followed.

### **7.5. Penalties for Evidence Violations in Congressional Debate**

- A. If the parliamentarian determines that an entry has violated one of the rules listed in 7.1(A-D, F-H) (oral citation, written citation, indication of parts of card read or not read, use of private communication), the parliamentarian must notify the judge(s) of the violation. The judge(s) and parliamentarian may at their discretion disregard the evidence, diminish the credibility given to the evidence, take the violation into account (solely or partially) in the ranking of chamber participants, or take no action. These offenses are considered minor and a parliamentarian sanction is the only prescribed penalty.
- B. If a debater(s) commits an evidence violation of “distortion” (7.2.A.), uses “nonexistent evidence” (7.2.B.), uses a “straw argument” (7.2.C.) or the use of “ellipses” (7.1.E.) such action will result in the debater(s) committing the evidence violation not being ranked by the judge(s) and parliamentarian. These offenses are considered major and censure by the parliamentarian would be applied.
- C. Evidence infractions violate the Code of Honor. Depending on the severity, an offense may result in the notification of said offense to the contestant’s high school administration and chapter advisor, loss of all National Tournament merit points, including trophy and sweepstakes points for the offending student(s), and/or revocation of Association membership. These decisions would be left to the NSDA national office.

### **7.6. Tournament Adjustments in Congressional Debate**

- A. Under no circumstance will a tournament or part of a tournament be re-run because of a violation of these rules.
- B. In the case of censure, all ranks and decisions made prior to the start of the round being protested stand and no revision of past session ranks will take place. Penalties listed in 7.4. will be applied.



- C. When a session has been held between the session being appealed and a final decision regarding the protest, the result of that session will be recorded as follows:
1. If the protest is upheld, all ranks and scores will remain as recorded. The evidence violation would apply only to the session in which it occurred and not affect prior or subsequent sessions.
  2. If the appeal is upheld, the judge and/or parliamentarian will restore any ranks and scores that were earned by that debater.

## Extemporaneous Speaking

1. **Divisions:** One division of Extemp will be held at the Middle School Level. Students will be entered into a Mixed Extemporaneous Speaking division.
2. **Topics:** The tournament will have a set of topic areas announced in advance. The topic areas will cover questions of both domestic (United States) and international issues.
3. **Drawing:** Thirty minutes before the contest is to begin, the first speaker draws three questions, choose one, and return the other two. The other contestants draw in like manner, in the order of speaking, at intervals of seven minutes. The entire list of questions for that round must be used for each entry in each section. A contestant drawing a question on which they have spoken previously in the tournament must return it and draw again.
4. **Preparation:** As soon as a question is chosen, the contestant will prepare a speech without consultation and without references to prepared notes. Students may consult published books, magazines, newspapers and journals or articles, provided:
  - A. They are originals or copies of whole pages.
  - B. Provided those originals or copies are uncut.
  - C. There is no written material on that original or copy other than citation information.
  - D. Topical index without annotation may be present.

No other material will be allowed in the Extemp prep room other than stated above. Extemp speeches, handbooks, briefs and outlines are prohibited from the Extemp prep room. Underlining or highlighting in Extemp will be allowed if done in only one color on each article or copy. **Please see rules on the next page concerning use of electronic retrieval devices.** Printed copies of information from online computer services may be used. Electronically retrieved evidence used in any League Extemp competition must conform to the citation standard of the Modern Language Association [consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (7th edition)* or <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/05/>].

6. **Notes:** Contestants may make notes during the preparation time, but the use of notes, cards, briefs or other aids is prohibited during the speech.
7. **Time:** The time limit in both Extemporaneous Speaking events is seven minutes with a 30-second “grace period.” If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge’s discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.
8. **Recuse:** Contestants may not leave the preparation area until dismissed by the Extemp proctor. Consultation with any person other than the Extemp proctor between the time of drawing and time of speaking is prohibited.
10. **Observation:** Students in Extemporaneous Speaking are encouraged, but not required, to stay and watch the remaining speakers after they deliver their speech. Students who are double-entered may be able to observe as time permits.

## Laptop Use in Extemporaneous Speaking

The use of laptop computers in Extemporaneous Speaking is permitted.

1. Extemporaneous Speaking contestants may make use of electronic retrieval devices to store and to retrieve their subject files at the National Tournament. Students can retrieve extemporaneous files to read but cannot write speeches or organize their thoughts on the computers. **This rule in no way prevents students from still utilizing traditional paper copy files to enable the competitor to successfully compete in Extemporaneous Speaking. The Association takes no position on which form of file storage is preferable for use at tournaments.**
2. Electronic retrieval devices are defined as laptop computers, netbooks, iPads, or other portable electronic retrieval equipment. Secondary devices such as flash drives or external hard drives are allowed as well. **Cell phones or smart phones are prohibited from being used while preparing or before speaking at the National Tournament.**
3. **Source Materials:** Students may consult published books, periodical articles, newspaper articles, think tank articles, government reports or journal articles saved on their electronic retrieval device **or present in hard copy form** provided:
  - a. There are no notations made within or on the saved article other than citation information.
  - b. Any highlighting or underlining of the articles is done in only one color within each article. Bolding, italicizing, or any other manipulation of the original text of sources (other than highlighting or underlining as previously stipulated) is prohibited.
4. No other source materials will be allowed in the Extemporaneous prep room other than stated above. Pre-written Extemporaneous speeches, handbooks, briefs or outlines are prohibited from the prep room, **whether stored electronically or present in hard copy form.**
5. **Power Source:** Power plugs or outlets may not be used in the prep room at any time. All computers used in the prep room must be battery operated at all times.
6. Competitors are responsible for making certain their electronic retrieval devices are fully charged at the start of each competition day and for proper power management ensuring that their device remains functional throughout the competition day. Contestants may not use external power sources in the prep room, such as wall outlets and/or extension cords.
7. **Internet:** Extemporaneous Speaking contestants shall not access the Internet or communicate electronically with any other individual while in the prep room at any NSDA tournament. All computers must comply with the following provisions:
  - a. Computers equipped with removable wireless cards must have the cards removed before the beginning of any round of competition. It is the responsibility of the contestant to disengage the equipment.
  - b. Computers with built-in wireless capability may be used only if the wireless capability is disabled. It is the responsibility of the contestant to disable the equipment.
  - c. Wired connections (Ethernet or phone) during rounds of competition are not permitted.
  - d. Computers or other electronic devices may not be used to receive information from any source (coaches or assistants included) inside or outside of the room in which the competition occurs. Internet access, use of e-mail, instant messaging, or other means of receiving information from sources inside or outside of the competition room are prohibited.
  - e. **Penalty:** Contestants found to have violated provisions i through iii above will be ranked last in the round and receive zero points. Contestants found to have violated provision iv (above) will be disqualified from the tournament and will forfeit all round credits and points. At district tournaments, the district committee will make the final decision concerning disqualification. In case of a serious dispute or critical question, the acting tournament referee (representing the national office) may be contacted for a ruling.
8. **Liability:** Extemporaneous Speaking competitors accept full responsibility for the safety and security of their electronic retrieval devices throughout the entire course of any NSDA tournament. *The Association may put stickers and/or tape*

*on computers to ensure they are not opened or used, or to ensure appropriate owners take their own machines. The Association does not assume any liability for the computers. Students are welcome to use Kensington locks or other such devices to secure their computers in the prep room. Students, parents, and coaches should be aware that the students are bringing and using the computers at their own risk. The Association is not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken computers.*

9. **File Monitoring:** The Association retains the right to view and search any electronic retrieval devices to ensure compliance with any and all rules at any Association tournament.
10. Devices should be muted in the prep room. Contestants should not play games or engage in other distracting activities on their electronic devices in the prep room. Tournament officials may ask a student to power-off the device if it becomes distracting.
11. Students from the same school may share computers during preparation. However, communication among contestants during preparation time is strictly prohibited.

## Original Oratory

1. **Purpose:** The general purpose of the speech is to persuade. Any other purpose such as to inform or entertain shall be secondary.
2. **Contest:** This contest comprises only memorized orations actually composed by the contestants and not used by them during a previous contest season. No visual aids are permitted.
3. **Subject:** Any appropriate subject may be used, but the orator must be truthful. Any non-factual reference, especially a personal one, must be so identified.
4. **Length:** The time limit in Original Oratory is ten minutes with a 30-second “grace period.” If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge’s discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.
5. **Quotation:** Not more than 150 words of the oration may be direct quotation from any other speech or writing and such quotations must be identified in a printed copy of the oration supplied prior to registration. Extensive paraphrasing from other sources is prohibited.
6. **Script:** The orator’s script must identify the quoted materials, state the number of quoted words, include a work cited page in APA or MLA format, and both the orator and the coach must attest by signature that the oration is the original work of the contestant. It is the responsibility of the contestant to have a script ready upon request should the speech be challenged.
7. **Re-Use:** A student may not use an oration the student used in NSDA national competition in any previous contest year.
8. **Source Verification:** At the National Tournament, all quarterfinalists in Original Oratory are required to turn in a printed, typed copy of their manuscript and works cited page to the ombudsperson between 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Thursday. Any contestant failing to produce these materials to the ombudsmen by the aforementioned deadline will not qualify for the final round of competition.

## Informative Speaking

1. **Purpose:** An informative speech is an original speech designed to explain, define, describe, or illustrate a particular subject. The general purpose of the speech is for the audience to gain understanding and/or knowledge of a topic. Any other purpose such as to entertain or to convince shall be secondary. The use of audio/visual aids is optional. (See # 4 on Aids.)
2. **Contest:** This contest comprises only memorized speeches composed by the contestants and not used by them during a previous contest season.
3. **Subject:** Effective speeches provide new information or perspectives on a topic, including those that are widely known. The responsibility for choosing a worthwhile topic rests with the contestant. A fabricated topic may not be used. Any non-factual reference, including a personal reference, must be so identified.
4. **Aids:** Audio/visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. If used, the audio/visual aids should enhance or support the message rather than distract from the overall effectiveness of the presentation. During the presentation, no electronic equipment is permitted. Electronic equipment is defined as any object requiring an electrical cord, battery, or solar power to operate it (projectors, cell phones, radios, iPads, computers, etc.). The use of live animals or any additional people as visual aids is not allowed during the speech. Items of dress put on and/or removed for illustration during the course of the presentation are considered costumes and may not be part of the contestant’s presentation. Visual aids may not violate policies as dictated by local and state law (weapons, drugs, etc.) Contestants may not distribute items to the judges or audience before, during, or after the round. This includes but is not limited to food, objects, handouts, flyers, and promotional merchandise. The host

school is not responsible for providing any facilities, equipment, including tables, chairs, or easels, or assistance in a contestant's use of visual aids. In order to facilitate the video recording of the final round at the National Tournament, one table will be provided for use by the contestants. This provision is only for the final round. Expedient set up and take down of aids is expected. If a visual aid displays published pictorial material, the source must be included in the work-cited page but does not need to be cited orally.

5. **Length:** The time limit is 10 minutes with a 30-second "grace period." If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.
6. **Quotation:** Not more than 150 words of the speech may be direct quotation and such quotations must be identified orally and in a printed copy of the speech supplied prior to registration.
7. **Script:** The coach of record at the tournament should have a complete copy of the student's manuscript speech, should a question arise. The script must identify the quoted materials, state the number of quoted words, include a work-cited page in APA or MLA format, and both the speaker and the coach must attest by signature that the speech is the original work of the contestant.
8. **Re-Use:** A student may not use an informative speech the student used in national competition in any previous contest year.
9. **Source Verification:** At the National Tournament, all quarterfinalists in Informative Speaking are required to turn in a printed, typed copy of their manuscript and works cited page to the ombudsperson between 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Thursday. Any contestant failing to produce these materials to the ombudsmen by the aforementioned deadline will not qualify for the final round of competition.

## Impromptu Speaking

1. **Topics:** Topics will include proverbs, abstract words, events, quotations, and famous people.
2. **Drawing:** A judge in each section/room shall be provided an envelope containing a uniform set of topics, with a different subject area used for each round. Once the first speaker is called, the other speakers shall leave the room, and wait outside the door. Each speaker will draw three topics, choose one, and return the other two to the envelope.
3. **Preparation and Delivery:** The speaker has seven minutes in which to prepare a response and present a speech without consultation of prepared notes. Students may consult published books, magazines, newspapers and journals or articles therefrom, provided:
  - a. They are originals or photocopies of originals.
  - b. That original article or copy is intact and uncut.
  - c. There is no written material on original or copy.
  - d. Topical index without annotation is allowed.
4. No other material shall be allowed in the room other than stated above. Speeches, handbooks, briefs, and outlines shall be barred. Underlining or highlighting in materials will be allowed if done in one color on each article or copy. No electronic retrieval device may be used, but printed materials from online computer services may be used.
5. **Recuse:** Once a speaker has spoken, they may listen to other speakers in that round.
6. **Notes:** No notes shall be used during presentation.
7. **Time:** The maximum time limit is 7 minutes with a 30-second "grace period," which includes both preparation *and* speaking. If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

## Program Oral Interpretation

1. **Purpose:** POI is a program of oral interpretation of thematically-linked selections chosen from two or three genres: prose, poetry, drama (plays). At least two pieces of literature that represent at least two separate genres must be used. Unlike the other interpretation events, Program Oral Interpretation may use multiple sources for the program. The title or author of all selections must be verbally identified in either the introduction and/or transitional phrases. The title may identify the primary source (e.g., book, anthology, journal, magazine, newspaper, approved website, etc.) or the specific title within the primary source (e.g., a poem, a play, a short story, a journal/magazine article, a newspaper article, etc.). If more than one author is attributed to the source, at a minimum, the primary author should be verbally cited. A Works Cited of all sources must be available to tournament officials upon request. Competitors are encouraged to devote approximately equal times to each of the genres used in the program. This distinction pertains to these two or three genres as a whole, not types of literature within a genre (such as fiction/nonfiction). Prose expresses thought through language recorded in sentences and paragraphs: fiction (short stories, novels) and non-fiction (articles, essays, journals, biographies). Poetry is writing which expresses ideas, experience, or emotion through the creative arrangement of words according to their sound, their rhythm, their meaning. Poetry may rely on verse and stanza form.
2. **Contest:** The use of a manuscript during the performance is required. Common practices include the use of a binder or folder. Reading from a book or magazine is not permitted. The intact manuscript may be used by the contestant as a prop, so long as it is in the contestant's control by remaining in contact with the body at all times. No costumes or props other than the manuscript are permitted. Pictures, graphics, and/or illustrations are considered a visual aid, even if included in the original manuscript, and may not be displayed. The contestant must address the script; however, introduction and transitional material may be memorized.
3. **Length:** The time limit is 10 minutes with a 30-second "grace period." If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.
4. **Publication Rules:** All literature performed must meet the publication rules of the Association. All online material must first be vetted and approved through the NSDA national office. Approved material and/or sites will be listed on the NSDA website. Song lyrics may be used if the performer has an original, hard copy of the lyrics such as sheet music or a CD jacket. Lyrics may only be used from online sources that appear on the approved websites list.
5. **Adaptations** may be used only for the purpose of transition. Any word changes (to eliminate profane language) and/or additions (for transition) must be indicated clearly in ink. Failure to clearly indicate the addition of words will be subject to disqualification. Changes to the script may only be used for the purpose of transition or to eliminate profane language. Transitions may be used to clarify the logical sequence of ideas. They are not to be used for the purpose of embellishing the humorous or dramatic effect of the literature.

## Interpretation

This includes categories of individual (solo) performance of dramatic (serious) and humorous literature, as well as duo performance of either emotive appeal, with selections drawn from published, printed: novels, short stories, plays, poetry, or other printed, published works, PDFs, e-books, as well as limited online works as provided for in the rules below.

1. **Divisions:** Contests are conducted in Dramatic, Humorous, Duo, and Program Oral Interpretation.
2. **Length:** The time limit in Interpretation Main Events (Humorous, Dramatic, Duo, and Program Oral Interpretation) is ten minutes with a 30-second "grace period." If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual

judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

3. **Material:** Selections used in the oral interpretation main events of **Dramatic, Humorous, and Duo Interpretation** must be cuttings from a single work of literature (one short story, play, or novel), unless poetry is used, in which case cuttings may come from one or more poems from a single source. **If the source is an anthology collection of short stories, plays, or novels, each selection of literature is independent and only one selection can be used, even if it is from the same author.** If the source is an anthology which includes poetry, multiple poems may be used from this single source by one or a variety of authors. Unlike the other oral interpretation main events, Program Oral Interpretation may use multiple sources for the program. Song lyrics may be used if the performer has an original, hard copy of the lyrics such as sheet music or a CD jacket. Lyrics may only be used from online sources that appear on the approved websites list. See specific rules for Program Oral Interpretation and Prose and Poetry interpretation events.

A. **Print Publications:**

- 1) Print publications include novels, short stories, plays, or poetry, published in print as per 4A.
- 2) In addition, published, unaltered PDF documents that are commercially or professionally available are also eligible sources.
- 3) E-books (such as Kindle, Nook, etc.) may also serve as eligible sources. NOTE: In addition to these sources, certain online materials are allowed as per 3B.
- 4) Also, if a treatment of a movie script is ordered from a company that provides printed movie scripts, keep the original treatment. Please note that text of the treatment may differ from the actual film, so students are advised against transcribing directly from the film.

B. **Digital (Online) Publications:** Material is only allowed from pre-approved online publishing sources listed at [www.speechanddebate.org/approvedwebsites](http://www.speechanddebate.org/approvedwebsites). Online material must meet the **web page standards** outlined below:

- 1) If the website offers online material in a variety of formats, only material that can be printed directly from the web page is allowed.
- 2) The Association defines a web page as a document coded with hypertext markup language (HTML), displayed in a web browser.
- 3) The following guidelines determine digital (online) publication sources selected:
  - a. The literary material is from a website with strict editorial submission standards that include editorial review and acceptance. Also, websites that have editorial review for their own staff writers are permissible. In either case, the website must be on the NSDA Approved List. See submission guidelines below.
  - b. Unacceptable sites include:
    - i. Personal sites (social network content, such as Facebook posts, tweets, and unmoderated blogs)
    - ii. Personal professional sites (those where a writer who has their own site and can place their works for sale or view such as Wix or similar platforms)
    - iii. Publish it sites (those with one click upload or that accept submissions without a selection process)
  - c. Texts must come from a verifiable website that can be accessed universally by any user. The site and literary text needs to be verifiable on the web if challenged.
    - i. Unmarked or casual sites where individuals can easily post work either for performance or criticism will not be accepted.
    - ii. The website has been in existence for a minimum of two years prior to submission for consideration by the National Speech & Debate Association for the upcoming school year (several online tools allow for verification of the existence of a website).

C. **Prohibited Material:** not published in print or allowable online material as per above, including:

1. Recorded material (videotape, DVDs, audio tape, CDs, MP3s, or phonograph recordings).



2. Original material published in a high school publication such as a newspaper, literary magazine, or yearbook.
- D. **Source Verification:** It is the affirmative duty of each coach and each student entered in Interpretation contests to determine absolutely that the cutting being performed meets all rules for material. Interp source material must be available at all district tournament contests in the event of a protest. At the National Tournament, all quarterfinalists are required to turn in the following items to the ombudsperson between 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Thursday. Any contestant failing to produce the following items to the ombudsperson by the aforementioned deadline will not qualify for the final round of competition.
1. The original published source of any selection used must be immediately available at the tournament. When requested by tournament officials, access to the source material upon demand, either in electronic or print form, must be presented.
    - a. For print publications, the original source is the physical book. Photocopies of original literature are not acceptable.
    - b. For PDFs, an original, unaltered PDF via flash drive, email, or on an electronic device (e.g., laptop) must be presented. Manipulation of a PDF script outside the scope of the rules will be subject to disqualification.
    - c. PDF publications from an approved source and e-books are permitted. Competitors may turn in an ebook via flashdrive, email, or e-reader. For e-books, an original, unaltered e-pub or other recognized ebook format via flash drive or email must be presented; however, as some e-book formats are exclusive to their specific apps or electronic readers, students must provide the required technology and/or internet access to verify the material performed for tournament officials.
    - d. For a digital publication, a printed manuscript will be turned in as the original source. Only the printed manuscript shall be considered adequate proof of authenticity.
      - i. The material the competitor performs must presently appear on the website if questions arise in competition. The website and online version of the digital publication need to be available for comparison if challenged. Online access is the fundamental responsibility of tournament officials and/or individual filing the protest. NOTE: If tournament officials cannot gain online access and the above requirements have been met, the piece is considered legal for use.
      - ii. Manuscript items to be printed directly from the screen:
        1. The first page in the website (the home page)
        2. All other linked pages needed to navigate to the literary text selected for competition shall be printed out and the link must be highlighted in the manuscript
        3. All web pages upon which the cutting appears
      - iii. Each page must have printed in the header and/or footer including:
        1. Date the page was printed
        2. Web address
  2. A photocopy or printed screenshot of every page of the original source from which any line of the cutting was taken. The photocopy will be kept for evaluation during the semifinal round.
    - a. Pages are to be placed in the order in which they are performed (e.g., if text from one page is used more than once within the cutting, that page should be copied again with those words highlighted and reinserted where it is used in the cutting). Students are not required to photocopy or print pages that are not used in their cutting.

- b. All words used from the script should be highlighted (any words/lines not used should be left unmarked).
  - c. Any word changes (to eliminate profane language) and/or additions (for transition) must be indicated clearly in ink. Failure to clearly indicate the addition of words will be subject to disqualification. Changes to the script may only be used for the purpose of transition or to eliminate profane language. Transitions may be used to clarify the logical sequence of ideas. They are not to be used for the purpose of embellishing the humorous or dramatic effect of the literature.
3. A printed, typed copy of the cutting. This must be the final cutting that the student is using for the tournament, and it must match the copy of the cutting uploaded during registration.
4. Quarterfinalists in POI must also turn in a works cited page of all sources used. Please note that competitors in POI must turn in original sources and photocopies for every source used.
4. **Performance:** The presentation may not use physical objects or costuming. During the presentation the contestant/team must name the author and the book or magazine from which the cutting was made. Additionally:
  - A. Adaptations to material may only be used for the purpose of transition. The gender stated by the author must be honored. However, a female contestant may play a male role, and a male contestant may play a female role.
  - B. Humorous, Dramatic, and Duo Interpretation selections must be presented from memory.
  - C. In Duo Interpretation each of the two performers may play one or more characters so long as performance responsibility in the cutting remains as balanced as possible.
  - D. Monologues are acceptable in Dramatic and Humorous Interpretation. If the selection is prose or poetry and contains narration, either or both of the performers may present the narration.
  - E. Videos of previous final round performances are intended to provide educational examples for coaches and students. They are not intended to serve as a model to directly imitate or duplicate in performance. The wholesale impersonation of final round performances is strongly discouraged.
5. **Focus:** In Dramatic, Humorous, and **Program Oral** Interpretation, use of focal points and/or direct contact with the audience should be determined by the requirements of the literature being interpreted. In Duo Interpretation, focus may be direct during the introduction [the performers may look at each other] but must be indirect [off-stage] during the performance itself.
6. **Re-Use:** A student may not use a cutting from a work of literature the student used in district or national competition in any previous contest year. A student entered in two events may not use the same selection of literature in both events.

## Prose and Poetry

1. **Prose:** Prose expresses thought through language recorded in sentences and paragraphs: fiction (short stories, novels) and non-fiction (articles, essays, journals, biographies).
2. **Poetry:** Poetry is writing which expresses ideas, experience, or emotion through the creative arrangement of words according to their sound, their rhythm, their meaning. Poetry may rely on verse and stanza form. The cutting may consist of a collection of poems on a common theme.
3. **Selections: Only published, printed works may be used, unless the works meet the Interpretation Rules for PDFs, e-books, and online material.** No plays or other dramatic materials may be used. In Prose, if the source is an anthology collection of short stories or novels, each selection of literature is independent and only one selection can be used, even if it is from the same author. In Poetry, selections must be cuttings from a single source. If an anthology collection of poems is used as the single source, the cutting may incorporate multiple poems by an author or a variety of authors.
4. **Reuse:** In Prose and Poetry, a student **may not** use the same source they used in Duo, Dramatic, Humorous, or **Program Oral Interpretation** at any Association tournament. In the event of Poetry, if the source is an anthology collection of poems, the same anthology may be used; however, the same poems performed in another event or at a previous national Association tournament in the main events of Duo, Dramatic, Humorous, Program Oral Interpretation, or Poetry, may not be used. In the event of Prose, if the source is an anthology collection of short

stories or novels, the same anthology may be used; however, the same selection performed in another event or at a previous national Association tournament in the main events of Duo, Dramatic, Humorous, Program Oral Interpretation, or Prose, may not be used.

5. **Time:** The maximum time of presentation is 7 minutes with a 30-second “grace period.” If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge’s discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.
6. **Presentation:** Performances must be from a manuscript (which may be in a folder). Reading from a book or magazine is not permitted.
7. **Source Verification:** At the National Tournament, all quarterfinalists in Interpretation events are required to turn in the original source OR printed web manuscript (as outlined above under Source Verification) to the ombudsperson between 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Thursday. Photocopies are not acceptable. Additionally, contestants must turn in a photocopy or printed screenshot of every page of the original source from which any line of the cutting was taken, noting any additions for transitional purposes. Contestants must also turn in a printed, typed copy of the cutting. Any contestant failing to produce these materials to the ombudsmen by the aforementioned deadline will not qualify for the final round of competition.

## Declamation

1. **Length:** Declamation is a 10-minute event with a 30-second “grace period.” If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge’s discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.
2. **Source:** The speech must have been delivered in public and available in print (copies from a publicly available website will also be sufficient).
3. The speaker should present an introduction that states the title, author, and date of the speech they are reciting.

## Storytelling

1. **Length:** The maximum time of presentation is 5 minutes with a 30-second “grace period.” If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge’s discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.
4. A single published, printed story, anecdote, tale, myth, or legend must be *retold* without notes or props. Any theme/topic area may be used.
5. Any introduction must be included within the time limit (see below).
6. The student may not tell a story they have used previously in any Association tournaments.
7. The delivery must be extempore, not read. No book or script may be used. The story may be delivered standing or seated.
8. Gestures, pantomime and characterization, may be used with restraint but the focus must be on the narrative.
9. The retelling must be true to the original tale. The contestant may *not* add original material or materially change the content of the story.
10. **Source Verification:** At the National Tournament, all quarterfinalists in Interpretation events are required to turn in the original source OR printed web manuscript (as outlined above under Source Verification) to the ombudsperson between 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Thursday. Photocopies are not acceptable. Additionally, contestants must turn in a photocopy or printed screenshot of every page of the original source from which any line of the cutting was taken, noting any additions for transitional purposes. Contestants must also turn in a printed, typed copy of the cutting. Any

contestant failing to produce these materials to the ombudsmen by the aforementioned deadline will not qualify for the final round of competition.

## Informative Speaking

1. **Purpose:** An informative speech is an original speech designed to explain, define, describe, or illustrate a particular subject. The general purpose of the speech is for the audience to gain understanding and/or knowledge of a topic. Any other purpose such as to entertain or to convince shall be secondary. The use of audio/visual aids is optional. (See # 4 on Aids.)
2. **Contest:** This contest comprises only memorized speeches composed by the contestants and not used by them during a previous contest season.
3. **Subject:** Effective speeches provide new information or perspectives on a topic, including those that are widely known. The responsibility for choosing a worthwhile topic rests with the contestant. A fabricated topic may not be used. Any non-factual reference, including a personal reference, must be so identified.
4. **Aids:** Audio/visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. If used, the audio/visual aids should enhance or support the message rather than distract from the overall effectiveness of the presentation. During the presentation, no electronic equipment is permitted. Electronic equipment is defined as any object requiring an electrical cord, battery, or solar power to operate it (projectors, cell phones, radios, iPads, computers, etc.). The use of live animals or any additional people as visual aids is not allowed during the speech. Items of dress put on and/or removed for illustration during the course of the presentation are considered costumes and may not be part of the contestant's presentation. Visual aids may not violate policies as dictated by local and state law (weapons, drugs, etc.) Contestants may not distribute items to the judges or audience before, during, or after the round. This includes but is not limited to food, objects, handouts, flyers, and promotional merchandise. The host school is not responsible for providing any facilities, equipment, including tables, chairs, or easels, or assistance in a contestant's use of visual aids. Expedient set up and take down of aids is expected. If a visual aid displays published pictorial material, the source must be included in the work-cited page but does not need to be cited orally.
5. **Length:** The time limit is 5 minutes with a 30-second "grace period." If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.
6. **Quotation:** Not more than 75 words of the speech may be direct quotation and such quotations must be identified orally and in a printed copy of the speech supplied prior to registration.
7. **Script:** The coach of record at the tournament should have a complete copy of the student's manuscript speech, should a question arise. The script must identify the quoted materials, state the number of quoted words, include a work-cited page in APA or MLA format, and both the speaker and the coach must attest by signature that the speech is the original work of the contestant.
8. **Re-Use:** A student may not use an informative speech the student used in national competition in any previous contest year.



## SECTION 3: Middle School Judging Instructions

### Overview

This is a general guide to assist judges in facilitating rounds at the **Middle School National Speech & Debate Tournament**. Judges are expected to understand event rules. Coaches are not able to levy protests to the ombudsperson based upon judging instructions. Whatever your background or experience, you bring unique perspective to providing *constructive criticism* toward guiding young people in their growth as communicators and performers.

Please refer to the *Middle School Competition Event Rules* section for specific rules of the various events offered at the tournament. Also see *Middle School Tournament Procedures* as an overview of competition. For additional tournament logistics, visit [www.speechanddebate.org/nationals](http://www.speechanddebate.org/nationals).

### 2020 Release and Updates

**Note:** New changes for the current year are highlighted in **yellow**. Other recent changes made within the past one or two years remain highlighted in **gray**.

**Reminder:** If a school brings high school students to judge the Middle School National Tournament, they must have been juniors or seniors with at least 250 Honor Society points in the last academic year. No underclassmen or upper classmen without 250 Honor Society points will be permitted to judge. A rising junior does not meet these criteria.

**A Note About Training:** All judges should be adequately trained in evaluating rounds of competition. Additional training videos, handouts, and other materials are available online at [www.speechanddebate.org/judge-training](http://www.speechanddebate.org/judge-training).

## General Guidelines for All Judges

Judges will receive a list of rounds for which they are in the judging pool during registration. For each round you are in the pool, arrive in the judge pooling room at least 15 minutes prior to each round. Judges that do not receive assignments during this time will remain in the pooling room until it has been confirmed that all rounds have started. Please do not swap/trade judging assignments with other judges. We track which judges have seen which students. Schools whose judges do not report on time or swap assignments will lose their \$200 judge bond for the first round missed and then be charged \$100 for each subsequent round. Judges who failed to report conflicts prior to the tournament deadline will also lose their judge bond if a conflict forces their judge assignment to be changed. All judges are committed through the end of the tournament. Please do not leave until the last final round has begun Friday.

**Standby:** If you are not called for a particular round, you are on standby and must remain until dismissed when tournament staff have verified that every room has judges. Failure to appear for standby assignments is the same as failing to appear to judge an assigned round. They can both disrupt and delay the tournament, and we will fine absentee standby judges' schools. Missing a standby assignment results in the same penalties as above.

**Timeliness:** Please report to rounds ASAP and do your best to keep the tournament on schedule. *Teams are eligible for a forfeit 15 minutes after the scheduled start time of the round.* If you arrive at your room and find contestants in another event are still speaking, please wait patiently for them to finish before attempting to start your round. If no students are presenting, alert the judge that the next round is starting to arrive. If contestants have finished speaking, and your round is scheduled to start, you may ask them to vacate the room or find logistics staff. Please vacate your room at the conclusion of your round so the next group can come in.

**Venues:** Contestants are not allowed to enter a room without a judge present. Please do not allow furniture to be moved from one room to another, and do not disturb items beyond tables and chairs in rooms you are judging in. Ask contestants to straighten the room before you leave. Remind students leaving to speak quietly in the corridors as other rounds may still be in session.

**Food:** Please do not bring food and drink (other than water) to competition rooms.

**Writing Evaluations:** It is important that you write a complete evaluation. Do not wait until the round is completed to begin writing constructive feedback! Writing during students' presentations is permitted. It is critical for the contestants and their coaches to have the educational feedback that justifies judges' decisions. Please be objective (don't let your own opinions on an idea predetermine your impression of a student's presentation/argument). Determine your evaluation independently of other judges, and never confer regarding decisions/rankings/ratings. Sharing of decisions/ranks with students is NOT PERMITTED.

**Demeanor:** Maintain impartiality (never ask students what school/state they are from). While oral critiques can be a valuable teaching tool, they are no substitute for documenting your observations in writing so that the student's coach can also read the feedback for a more lasting impact. If the round finishes early, you may give brief, general comments that apply universally to all participants in the room. Limit all verbal criticism to constructive comments designed to assist the student. Absolutely no profane or vulgar comments—orally or in writing—are tolerated. Judges removed from the pool for violating our expectations will result in a forfeiture of the judge bond, plus an additional fee of \$100 for each round the judge was assigned. Please give the contestants your undivided attention and respect. You're in the round to judge, not read books, play video games, text-message, etc. Please model appropriate, formal conduct. Please alert the ombudsperson with conflicts of interest, i.e., you personally know a student who's in a room you're assigned to judge (e.g., past teammate, student you've coached, family/relative, personal friend). At no point can a judge or coach come to the tab room.

**Disqualification:** Judges will not disqualify a student. Should you believe a student has violated rules, alert tournament officials to the situation with documentation (the tab table has a form you can complete). Evaluate the round as if there were no rules violations; tournament staff will adjust results as needed for disqualification.

## Guidelines for Judging Speech Events

1. Make sure you're familiar with rules for each event or obtain a copy before judging.
2. When using online ballots through Tabroom.com, please click "start round" when you begin the round so the tab room knows you are on time.
3. When you get to your room, you should find the same number of students as are listed on the ballot/schematic. You will generally follow the order of speakers as listed, but if students are cross-entered, they may need to go earlier before leaving for their other events, or they may come later (in which case they should have—but don't always remember to—written their code/name on the board).
4. Ask for the first speaker who is double-entered, and then the first speaker listed who is present. Before the speakers begin, ask them if and how they would like you to show them time signals. The speaker may ask you to show the amount of time remaining. Try to accommodate all speakers' requests for timing. (Time limits are on evaluation sheets. If the speaker does not wish it to be shown, you nevertheless keep time -- just don't show it. Please wait 10 minutes after the last speaker for any missing double-entered speakers and be sure to alert the **ombudsperson** if you had any no-shows.
5. The ballot should specify the title/topic of the speaker. During the speech, make comments on the ballot for each speaker. Try to make *constructive* suggestions on how the speaker can improve. Do not simply say "good" or "weak." Instead, explain HOW or WHY a student is doing well or poorly. If you give a student a poor score, make sure to indicate the problem with the presentation. It is better to focus on one or two specific ways a student could improve, than to give comments that are too general. *Begin writing evaluations during students' presentations*, so you are finished by the end of the round. If you spend a lot of time writing comments in between speakers, it makes the students nervous and delays the entire tournament. Where notes/manuscripts are allowed, you may weigh memorization and the effect that the use of notes has on the performance in your rank/scoring.
6. Please note the amount of time used by the speaker. If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

### Time Limits:

**10 minutes:** DEC, DI, DUO, HI, OO, **POI, INF**

**8 minutes** (to *both* prep *and* speak): IMP

**7 minutes:** POE, PRO, EXT

**5 minutes:** STO

7. After all speakers are finished, thank them (at which point, they should leave the room). Do not share any results with students.
8. On the ballot, write a rank (1-7) for each contestant. The best in the room receives a rank of "1," the second best a "2," etc. NO TIES.
9. Submit your ballot online. Make sure you have confirmed your decision is correct.

## Guidelines for Judging Debate Events

1. Judges influence how much success young people have, so debaters are concerned with your reactions. Therefore, please say nothing throughout the debate (including oral critiques or your decision). Since middle level students are deeply impressionable, and desire success, they will often translate your mannerisms negatively. Be as neutral as possible, saying nothing except a greeting, and appearing interested and supportive.
2. When using online ballots through Tabroom.com, please click "start round" when you begin the round so the tab room knows you are on time. Ballots must be submitted within 10 minutes of the end of the final speech in the round.
3. When the debaters arrive, explain if or how you are going to give time signals. Tell them that they may finish a sentence when time is up, but no more. If they continue, simply stop taking notes and politely say time.
4. During cross-examination (LD, CX), time belongs to the contestant asking questions, which should be brief and not attempt to refute answers provided by the opposition. The contestant answering questions also should be brief and not argue with the questioner. Note: in partner events, the appropriateness of "tag teaming" during cross-examination is up to the individual judge during a round. An ombudsperson will not hear any protest over this issue.
5. During crossfire (PF), time is shared by both sides; questions and answers should be brief and specific. The team speaking first asks the first question. Speakers stand during regular crossfire and sit for the grand crossfire.
6. No new arguments should be introduced in rebuttals. Certainly, new information (data, quotes, etc.) can be used. Additionally, arguments can be extended and developed (or else the debaters would be reduced to mere repetition). However, a totally new idea should not be offered.
7. Take notes to diagram the flow of arguments offered by each side. Notate each claim made, placing opposing arguments next to one another. That way you can see who "drops" an argument and who misinterprets another's argument; you can also check when a debater claims the opponent did not attack an argument.
8. During prep time, write criticisms on the ballot. At the end of the debate, determine the winner (Aff or Neg). Then assign points. No more than 30, no less than 20. Finally, fill out the *Reasons for decision*. Try to say something substantive, NOT "one was more persuasive," or "one spoke better." Try to list the winning or losing arguments. To aid in standardizing awarding of speaker/team points, please use the following as a guideline:

- 30 – Exceptional debating, with minor flaws
- 29 – Outstanding, with a few flaws
- 28 – Effective, perhaps with some overlooked details
- 27 – Effective, with more room for improvement
- 26 – Average, with some skills that need to be polished and developed
- 25 – Average, with a major flaw or two
- 24 – Below average or standards you would expect
- 23 – The debater spoke well, but had serious flaws in argumentation
- 22 – Debating, attitude, and/or delivery is lacking (please specify in written comments)
- 21 – Serious problems with debating, attitude and/or delivery (please specify in written comments)
- 20 – Performance was awful, or attitude was inexcusable

DO NOT AWARD LESS THAN 20 POINTS,  
EXCEPT FOR AN EVIDENCE VIOLATION

*Tenth-points and half-points are acceptable*

9. **Prep Time:** keep record of this and inform the debaters of the amount used/left. "Charge" it to the debater as follows: BEFORE the debater speaks, it is that person's prep time. If you have warned a debater that prep time has expired, and if they continue prepping, deduct that amount of time from the debater's next speech time.



## Code of Honor

*“As a member of the National Speech & Debate Association, I pledge to uphold the highest standards of integrity, humility, respect, leadership and service in the pursuit of excellence.”*

**Integrity:** An honor society member obeys the highest ethical standards and adheres to the rules of the organization. Members recognize that integrity is central to earning the trust, respect, and support of one’s peers. Integrity encompasses the highest regard for honesty, civility, justice, and fairness.

**Humility:** A member does not regard oneself more highly than others. Regardless of a person’s level of success, an individual always looks beyond oneself to appreciate the inherent value of others.

**Respect:** A member respects individual differences and fosters diversity. They promote tolerance, inclusion, and empowerment for people from a variety of backgrounds including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

**Leadership:** A member influences others to take positive action toward productive change. Members commit to thoughtful and responsible leadership that promotes the other core values in the Code of Honor.

**Service:** A member exercises their talents to provide service to peers, community, and the activity. At all times a member is prepared to work constructively to improve the lives of others.

*(Adopted September 23, 2007 | Updated December 6, 2017)*

## Coaches Code of Ethics

*The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in speech and debate. Students should be treated with the utmost respect, and their welfare should be considered in decisions by coaches at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the National Speech & Debate Association.*

**Coaches** shall be aware that they have a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of their students and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.

**Coaches** shall practice integrity by upholding the honor and dignity of our profession. In all personal contact with students, judges, tournament officials, activities directors, school administrators, other coaches, the media, and the public, coaches shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.

**Coaches** shall take an active role in the prevention of student drug, alcohol, and tobacco abuse.

**Coaches** shall be expected to uphold their school’s policy in regards to drug, alcohol, and tobacco use when in contact with students.

**Coaches** shall strive to understand the contest rules and to teach them to their students. Coaches shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.

**Coaches** shall exert their influence to enhance sportsmanship and fair-play by competitors and other coaches.

**Coaches** shall respect and support tournament officials. Coaches shall not indulge in conduct that would incite other coaches or students against tournament officials. Public criticism of tournament officials, other coaches, or students is unethical.

**Coaches** shall set the correct tone for a tournament or competition.

*(adopted December 14, 2016)*