

BCFL JUDGING GUIDE



**A Compilation
Prepared by the BCFL Executive Committee**



“LEADERSHIP THROUGH SPEECH”

Welcome!

The students and coaches of the Baltimore Catholic Forensics League thank you for your willingness to volunteer and judge at our tournaments. We simply could not operate our tournaments without your support. We recognize the sacrifice of time and energy that your commitment involves, and we are grateful.

Whether you are a seasoned competitor who is making the transition to judging, or are at your very first forensics tournament, this handbook has been designed for you. It contains information that will help you navigate BCFL tournaments, and judge each of our events. Judging requires no special background or experience other than an open mind, and a willingness to watch and listen.

If you have any questions, there are many coaches and other judges at the tournament that would be glad to offer their help. Remember, we all were new judges at some point! You can also stop by the tab room and we will be glad to answer your question.

Forensics offers so many benefits and opportunities for growth to our students, and we are glad that you will have the chance to help them refine their skills and develop into leaders. We think you'll really enjoy what our students have prepared for you.

JUDGING FORENSICS TOURNAMENTS – AN OVERVIEW

(Adapted from the NYCFL Judging Manual)

This guide is designed to help you become an effective judge at Baltimore Catholic Forensic League tournaments. We hope that it will answer many of your questions about:

1. The operation of our contests
2. The effective evaluation of competitors in contest rounds
3. The rules and practices in each event

Our students are serious about their work. They put a great deal of time, energy, and care into the preparation of their events. We want, of course, for them to have positive and successful experiences in forensics.

To this end, we hope that each of you will take the time to read this guide thoroughly before arriving at your first tournament as a judge or observer. It does not take special talent or expertise to become an effective judge. It does, however, take time, energy and care. It takes a positive and supportive outlook. It takes a willingness to “fine tune” your critical listening skills and apply them to the contest setting.

We hope that this information will help to make your judging experience a positive one – for you and for the students you hear as well. We know that you will enjoy hearing them. These talented and motivated students truly are the future leaders of our society, and we can help prepare them assume these leadership roles by helping them improve their communication skills. We are grateful to you for your time and hope to see a good deal of you in the contests to come.

Overview of the Day

Plan to arrive at the tournament between 8:00 and 8:30 AM. When you arrive, you should head to the registration table, which will be set up somewhere near the entrance or in the student cafeteria. Look for your name on the judge list and check it off – that way we know that you are here, and we can assign you to rounds! You should also let your team’s coach know that you have arrived. From there, you can head to the judges’ lounge for some hospitality.

At around 8:45, the day begins with an opening assembly for all students and judges. Following that, students are dismissed to their rooms, and a short judge meeting will be held. The meeting is where last minute instructions will be given, and round 1 ballots will be distributed. After the meeting, the competition begins.

Each tournament offers three rounds of competition in each event. These rounds run consecutively from about 9:15 until about 4:30. A schedule (“schematic”) of when each of the events will run, what rooms they will be in, and who will judge them will be posted in the cafeteria and in the judges’ lounge. Judges should typically expect to receive two or three assignments throughout the course of the day. If you don’t receive an assignment for a particular round, you should remain in the judges’ lounge for a little while past the start of the round, in case we need to make a last-minute substitution. Periodically, coaches will offer workshops on

the different competition events; if you are free, you are welcome to attend one of those to learn more!

When you are assigned to judge a round, you will receive a ballot (or, if you missed the distribution in the judges' lounge, you will need to pick up your ballot at the tab table). The ballot will list what room you are judging in and what competitors you will be hearing. The ballot contains useful instructions on the event and judging the round, so read it carefully! After the round is over, you will need to fill out your ballot with your decision or ranking (more on that later), and then you should return the ballot promptly to the tab table.

Upon completion of the third round, there will be an awards assembly in the student cafeteria.

Specific Judging Responsibilities During the Round

When the judges' meeting comes to a close, you will be directed to proceed to your individual classrooms for the first round of competition. In general, the students involved are nervous, concerned about making a good impression upon you, and anxious to perform at the best of their abilities. It tends to make them even more nervous to hear a judge say, "I've never done this before, so just bear with me." They are not, in general, experienced or mature enough to realize that this does not automatically mean that you are incapable of making sound decisions. It is not our aim to impose any additional "stress factors" upon our students. It is our aim to draw what is best from each student. To help you to be as supportive of their efforts as possible, here is a list of guide of guidelines for you to follow in conducting a round of competition. Certainly many of the points made here are rooted in simple common sense and courtesy, but a friendly reminder is never harmful.

- Greet the students:

Greet them in a friendly and confident manner. Again it is not your aim to intimidate. Rather, you should encourage the students to function at the very best of their respective abilities

- Take "roll":

Just read through the list of codes on the schematic for the group so that you are certain that the right speakers are in the right place. If there is a question about a certain student, please bring it to the attention of the executive committee.

In debate, many rounds are "flighted", which means that you will be listening to two sets of student debates (A and B), back to back. Debaters in the A flight typically debate first, followed by those in the B flight. Make sure that the right students are debating each other! If both B flight competitors are present but the A flight competitors aren't, it's fine to start with B.

In speech, students may be entered in multiple events, so not all of them may be present when you are ready to begin the round. That is fine; just proceed with who you have, and the others should show up shortly. If a student is running very late or does not arrive by the end of the round, send a student to the tab room to check on their status.

- Choose a seat:

Although, this may, initially, seem a facetious remark, it is important to seat yourself in a comfortable and convenient place. It is often preferable to sit approximately $\frac{3}{4}$'s of the way back in the middle of the room where you will have an unobstructed view of the students and where the students can see you easily. You and the students in your group may wish to do a little shifting of furniture to establish a space for speaking which will make clear sight lines possible for all. Please make sure that all furniture is returned to its previous location at the conclusion of each round!

- Prepare your ballot / critique sheets.

In debate, make sure you have the names of the students written properly, in the right location (affirmative or negative). In speech, there will be a master ballot at the top of your packet. Make sure that it is filled out properly. Then, for each speaker, you should fill out one critique sheet. The critique sheet should include the students' code, selection, title, and author. Make sure your name and the school you are judging for is also included..

- Begin the round:

Once your ballots are ready, ask the first speaker how he/she would like to be made aware of the passage of time. Try to do so in a relaxed, friendly, and comfortable way. Accurate time keeping is your responsibility. Even if the speaker does not wish to see time signals, you must keep track of the time of the presentation. If you do not keep careful track of the time or fail to provide time signals if the speaker requested them, you may not penalize the speaker. Debaters may choose to time themselves, which is fine, but you should still use your own timer to back them up, to prevent misunderstanding.

- Write your critical comments on the ballot:

In speech, write comments while the speaker is performing. Although it is desirable for you to make eye contact with the speaker fairly frequently, it is not necessary for you to be "glued" to the speaker throughout the entire speech. Simply try to maintain a reasonable balance in your focal attention. In debate, you will find it helpful to keep track of each debaters' main points and responses on a sheet of paper (the "flow"). That way, you'll have something to refer to at the end of the debate when you need to make your decision.

- Thank the group for their efforts:

At the end of the last speaker's presentation, you may excuse the speakers to move onto their next rooms.

- Fill out your ballot

In speech, the speaker you feel performed the best should be ranked 1st; the next best should be ranked 2nd; and so on. No ties may be given in rank. In debate, one side must be given the win and the other the loss, and points should be awarded (more on that later). These are hard decisions to make, but they need to be made quickly because speakers will be waiting for the room and the executive committee is waiting for the results of your decision.

- Overtime penalty:

In speech, if a speaker exceeds the time limit for the category and the allowed 30 second grace period, then that speaker may not be ranked first. You do not need to penalize the speaker any farther. However, if you feel the excessive length of the presentation detracted from the performance, you may take that into account in your ranking. Please keep in mind that there is no required minimum time in any of the events.

- Check everything:

In speech;

- Did you rank the best person first?
- Does everyone have a rank?
- Do the ranks on the master ballot match those on the critique sheet?
- Do your critique sheets explain the reason for your decision?

In debate:

- Did you give one side the win and the other the loss?
- Did you award points to each side? (In policy debate, each student gets a rank and points)
- Does the ballot explain the reason for your decision?

- Immediately turn in your ballots and go to the next round:

This helps to keep the tournament running smoothly.

General Comments and Suggestions

- Try to find a way to have a speaker that may get flustered or upset to finish the round:

This may mean letting them sit for a while, get a copy of their manuscript, or take a deep breath. This should be reflected in the speaker's rank, but the student will have at least completed the round.

- Quietly correct behavior that is inappropriate:

Remind students that it is as important to be good audience members as it is to be good speakers. Mention it on the student's ballot and bring it to the attention of the executive committee if you believe the behavior warrants it.

- Do not give oral critiques, and do not disclose your decision:

The ballot is the place for your comments about the speaker's presentation. That performance is the result of much concentrated work on the part of both the student and the coach. A "helpful hint" (no matter how noble the intent) might actually do a student a disservice. If you feel that you want to clarify or further explain your comments or decisions, speak to the student's coach or moderator at some point.

- Read the ballot:

The criteria for each category is given on the ballot. Rules about materials permitted, time limits, and evaluation criteria are detailed on the ballot. Read it thoroughly and become familiar with the requirements for the category that you are judging.

- Personal biases have no place in your evaluation:

Speakers may take positions that are contrary to beliefs that you feel strongly about and may perform speeches with content that you feel is questionable. Allow the speaker as much freedom as possible and evaluate their performance rather than their beliefs. In debate, leave your personal opinions out of your decision -- make your decision on the merits of the students' arguments rather than who you personally believe is "right". If material is questionable or in conflict with what you believe the league stands for, then rate the round based on performance and bring the objection to the executive committee.

- Judge the performance as a whole;

Do not take the easy way out and rank a person or team last simply because they were too loud or too fast. Evaluate their performance against the performances of the other speakers in the round.

- Please make your comments on the ballot as supportive and helpful as possible:

This does not mean that all of your comments should be glowing, but neither does it mean that all should be negative. Provide both. Give speakers a specific indication of why you ranked them as you did. "Tough round" or "good job" comments are too general; the more detail you can provide about what they did well or not so well, the better. It is important for you to remember that you are the adult and that your comments should be written as if the speaker were your student, or son/daughter. Criticism should be constructive, never demeaning. Remember, our goal is to make the students better, not drive them away.

- Try to look interested in each speaker's presentation

It should not be necessary to ask that you do not read the newspaper, surf the Internet, or wander about looking at work on the walls, etc. while a student is speaking. All cell phones, your own and the students', should be turned off. When possible doors should be closed. These are basic courtesies, but strange things have been known to occur during rounds of competition.

- Cell Phone Use is **STRICTLY** Prohibited in all rounds.

Make every effort to ensure that your cell phone is OFF and put away. If you must use your cell phone for timing purposes (strongly discouraged – borrow a timer from the tab room if needed), then make absolutely sure that the phone has been silenced. There's nothing worse than to have a phone go off right at the height or someone's performance or main argument.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION???

National Catholic Forensics League : www.ncfl.org (Our parent organization)

National Forensic League: www.speechanddebate.org (Many resources on forensics)

National Forensic League TV: www.nfltv.org (Videos of various events)

Forensics Online: www.forensicsonline.net (Student forums and blogs)

SPEECH CATEGORY SUMMARIES AND BALLOTS

YOU MAY BE JUDGING PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE BUT SOMETIMES THE OFFICIALS ASSIGNED PUBLIC FORUM JUDGE TO JUDGE A SPEECH EVENT. YOU SHOULD ONLY BE JUDGING ONE OF THE SPEECH EVENTS BELOW.

Specific Speech Event Summaries

Extemporaneous Speaking: Student speaking on some topic of current events.

1. Students have a 30 minute “prep” time before speaking. These rounds may have a delay until the first competitor arrives. Check with the prep room if you have questions.
2. Speakers have a 7 minute time limit (30 second grace period). **Competitors rely heavily on time signals by the judge.** Use hand signals from 5 minutes, 4 minutes, 3 minutes...etc. A fist indicates to the student that 7 minutes have expired. Continue timing until the student is done. Record the time on the ballot.
3. ***Students should hand you a copy of the question they have been assigned along with their code.***
4. The student is judged on how thoroughly they answer the question (not if you agree with the position or not) and the style in which he/she speaks. He/She MUST present citations or evidence from current newspapers, magazines, or other literature to support their answer to the question.
5. The student may NOT have notes in any form while speaking.

Original Oratory: A student presents a speech which he/she has written on any topic.

1. Students have a 10 minute (30 second grace period)
2. Student has written and memorized (no scripts) a speech about any topic of their choice.
3. The purpose of the speech may be to inspire, to persuade, to eulogize, or to inform. There can be an overlapping of these styles within the oration.
4. The judge should not allow their personal bias to influence their decision.
5. Critique both the speech (how it conveys the message) and the style of the speaker-use of voice tone, emotional tenor, change in voice, use of gestures, eye contact, etc.

Oratorical Declamation: (Limited to Frosh and Sophs) A student presents a memorized speech written by another orator.

1. Students have a 10 minute (30 second grace period)
2. An introduction is memorized and must contain information about the author and original setting for the speech. It lasts no longer than 60 seconds.
3. The student has chosen a speech previously given by another person and memorized it. The competitor’s presentation is an interpretation of the meaning of the message of the original speech.
4. The judge should critique the delivery of the speech not its content.

Impromptu: Student speaking on a quote drawn during the round.

1. Students choose one quote from the slip and must prepare a speech about the quote. The prep time should not exceed 2 minutes. (Give them 30 second warnings.)
2. Speakers have a 7 minute time limit (30 second grace period) to both prepare and speak. **Competitors rely heavily on time signals by the judge.** Use hand signals from 5 minutes, 4 minutes, 3 minutes...etc. A fist indicates to the student that 7 minutes have expired. Continue timing until the student is done. Record the time on the ballot.
3. ***Students should indicate which to you which quote they have chosen.***
4. The student is judged on how he/she organizes the speech being creative in response to the quote and the presentation skills.
5. The student may have notes while speaking.

Children’s Literature: A student presents poetry or prose selection for children.

1. Students have a 10 minute (30 second grace period)
2. An introduction is **memorized** and not lasting more than 60seconds.
3. The student has chosen appropriate to children between the ages of kindergarten and six grade. The introduction should state the age group and the presentation should appeal to that group.
4. A text is required and therefore limits movement so the voice and facial reactions should be used in judging the presentation. **NO** props or costumes.
5. The student should maintain a balance of eye contact between the script and the audience.

YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE TO JUDGE THESE EVENTS BUT YOU MAY BE ASSIGNED THEM. LET MR. DAY KNOW IF YOU ARE ASSIGNED ONE OF THESE EVENTS. THE BALLOTS ARE INCLUDED HERE JUST IN CASE.

Duo Interpretation of Literature: Two students perform a portion of a published piece of literature.

1. Students have a 10 minute (30 second grace period)
2. An introduction is memorized and not lasting more than 60 seconds. (Students may choose to begin their presentation then interject the introduction. This is known as a teaser.) It MUST be made obvious when the teaser stops and the introduction begins!
3. This event is made up of a two person team. They each may do multiple characters. The same ranking is given to both students.
4. Selections can be from a story, play, or cutting from a novel that has each student cast as different characters. A narrator should not dominate the cutting.
5. **The students should have the cutting memorized and NOT have a script.** The illusion of actions should be seen but not acting out their parts.
6. The students should not have eye contact with each other during the selection and physical movement should be restricted to pivoting from side to side, turning around completely, moving around each other, or switching places. Students may NOT touch during the presentation.
7. Singing is restricted to 30 seconds or less.

Oral Interpretation of Literature: A student presents both a poetry or prose selection of their choice.

1. Students have a 10 minute (30 second grace period)
2. An introduction is **memorized** and not lasting more than 60 seconds.
3. POETRY ROUND—The student has chosen one or several poems all united by a connecting theme; he/she will be reading from a script with an emphasis on interpreting the meaning of each piece.
4. PROSE ROUND—The student has chosen a short story or cutting from prose writing; he/she will be reading from a script with an emphasis on character development and climax in the selection.
5. The student should maintain a balance of eye contact between the script and the audience.

Dramatic Performance: A student performs a portion of a published play or movie.

1. Students have a 10 minute (30 second grace period)
2. An introduction is **memorized** and not lasting more than 60 seconds. (Students may choose to begin their presentation then interject the introduction. This is known as a teaser.) It MUST be made obvious when the teaser stops and the introduction begins!
3. The student shall have selected a scene (or scenes) from a published play and have it memorized. There may be multiple characters. The performance is judged on character distinction, and development of the scene to a climax.
4. Changes from character to character within the presentation should be clean and crisp.
5. Singing is restricted to 30 seconds or less.

PLEASE NOTE THE MASTER BALLOT FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND IMPROMPTU ARE SHOWN BELOW. THE MASTER BALLOT FOR ALL THE OTHER EVENTS WILL BE THE SAME EXCEPT FOR MATERIAL ASSOCIATED WITH THAT EVENT. THE MASTER BALLOT FOR THOSE EVENTS ARE NOT SHOWN WITH THE BALLOT FOR THOSE EVENTS.

THE MASTER BALLOT IS USED FOR YOU TO INDICATE THE RANKING YOU GIVE EACH STUDENT NO MATTER IN WHAT ORDER THEY SPOKE.

Time: _____
10 min. w/ 30 sec. grace period

NATIONAL CATHOLIC FORENSIC LEAGUE
Critique Sheet for
ORATORICAL DECLAMATION

Do Not Write in this Space

Round _____ Room _____ Student's Name: _____ Code _____ Rank _____ of _____

Selection Title: _____ Author: _____

Judge's Name: _____ Judge's Code: _____

Judge's School /League: _____

Criteria for judging:

- **Introduction:** The introduction must name the work and author, provide necessary background information and establish the mood. If using a teaser, or if lines from the selection are used in the introduction, the speakers must adhere to the rules of the event.
- **Presentation Style:** The speaker should convey the message in a sincere, honest and realistic attempt to recreate the spirit of the original presentation. Although the style of delivery chosen by the speaker should be judged in light of the purpose of the speech, artificiality is to be discredited. The message should be conveyed credibly and convincingly as if the words were the speaker's own. This event is an interpretation, not an impersonation.
- **Vocal Delivery:** The speaker should be articulate and fluent. The speaker should make use of contrast, making use of the elements of vocal variety: pitch, volume, rate, pausing, phrasing, stress, tone. The speaker should be conversational and concerned, passionate and pleasing. The speaker should be in control of the words and the emotions. The speaker should sound confident and self-assured, and seem eager to enlighten the audience. The speaker should convey the message in a sincere, honest, and realistic style in an attempt to recreate the spirit of the original presentation.
- **Physical Delivery:** The speaker should be physically open to the audience and use body language that invites the audience into the world of the declaimer. The speaker should vary facial expression to accentuate the natural flow of thoughts and feelings. The speaker should make eye contact with the audience. The speaker's stance should be erect and controlled, without distracting movements. Movement, if used, should be motivated by transitions in thought or mood. Gestures should be visible, effectively used for emphasis, and varied.
- **Overall Effect:** The speaker should project an understanding of the speech's message. The speaker should instill in the audience a concern for the speech's content. The original speaker's message should not be overshadowed by the delivery. Consideration should be given to the oratorical merit of the selection.

PLEASE USE THE REVERSE TO COMMENT ON POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE PERFORMANCE, AND TO PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS. BE CERTAIN TO INCLUDE JUSTIFICATION FOR YOUR RANKING.

NATIONAL CATHOLIC FORENSIC LEAGUE

Critique Sheet for

DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE

Time: _____
10 min. w/ 30 sec. grace period

Do Not Write in this Space

Round _____ Room _____ Student's Name: _____ Code _____ Rank _____ of _____

Selection Title: _____ Author: _____

Judge's Name: _____ Judge's Code: _____

Judge's School /League: _____

Criteria for judging:

- Introduction: The introduction must name the work and author, provide necessary background information and establish the mood. If using a teaser, or if lines from the selection are used in the introduction, the speaker must adhere to the rules of the event.
- Material: Single or multiple character cuttings should be considered equally. The student should be able to capture and convey the emotional and intellectual depths of the characters, as well as the development of both the characterization and plot. Consideration should be given to the literary merit of the selection.
- Characterization: Each character should be interesting, engaging and lifelike. The performer should create a physical, vocal and temperamental existence suited for each character. The performer should keep these choices consistent. The performer should use his or her face, eyes and body to create the characters effectively. Each character should show the intent of what he/she is wanting, thinking, feeling and remembering when speaking and reacting. Characters should appropriately develop and/ or deepen as the plot or story line progresses.
- Multiple Characterizations (if used): The transitions when moving from one character to another should be clean and crisp. The pacing of transition should reflect the tempo of the interaction.
- Environment: Each character should create a world around him or her. Movement should be used to create a three-dimensional environment in which the characters exist. Pantomime, if used, should be accurate and realistic. Gestures should be fully realized, creating in just the right way what the performer intends the audience to see. When doing a multiple character selection, the performer should create effective interaction between the characters.
- Overall Effect: The overall performance should build to various moments and have a climax. The story should be complete and easy to follow. The performance should display another world outside of the performance space.

PLEASE USE THE REVERSE TO COMMENT ON POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE PERFORMANCE, AND TO PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS. BE CERTAIN TO INCLUDE JUSTIFICATION FOR YOUR RANKING.

NATIONAL CATHOLIC FORENSIC LEAGUE
Critique Sheet for
DUO INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE

Time: _____
10 min. w/ 30 sec. grace period

Do Not Write in this Space

Round _____ Room _____ Students' Names: _____ Code _____ Rank _____ of _____

Selection Title: _____ Author: _____

Judge's Name: _____ Judge's Code: _____

Judge's School/League: _____

Criteria for judging:

- **Introduction:** The introduction must name the work and author, provide necessary background information and establish the mood. If using a teaser, or if lines from the selection are used in the introduction, the speakers must adhere to the rules of the event.
- **Material:** The material being presented should allow for interesting character choices and reasonable plot structure. The material should be appropriate for the students. Consideration should be given to the literary merit of the selection.
- **Interaction and environment:** The performers should convince you that they truly *see* the other character(s). Each character should listen and react, with face and body especially as the other is talking. What one character says or does should provoke a fitting vocal, physical and emotional response from the other character. The characters should see and respond to what is around them. They should take the audience into the physical world of their story. The interpreters will vocally and physically respond to each other's verbal and non-verbal cues while maintaining an off stage focus.
- **Characterization:** Each character should convey a distinct, consistent personality, stance, and manner of gesturing. Each character should be sufficiently developed and should interact meaningfully with the other characters.
- **Physicality:** The physical movement and portrayal should contribute to the overall aesthetics of the presentation. A realistic environment should be established by the performers. Pantomime, if used, should be accurate and realistic.
- **Vocal Quality:** The interpreters, within character, should appropriately vary pitch, volume, rate, emphasis, quality, phrasing and intensity to convey the various moods and messages in the story.
- **Overall Effect:** The overall performance should build to various moments and have a climax. The performance should be complete and easy to follow. The performance should display another world outside of the performancespace.

PLEASE USE THE REVERSE TO COMMENT ON POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE PERFORMANCE, AND TO PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS. BE CERTAIN TO INCLUDE JUSTIFICATION FOR YOUR RANKING.

NATIONAL CATHOLIC FORENSIC LEAGUE

Critique Sheet for

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

Time: _____
7 min. w/ 30 sec. grace period

Do Not Write in this Space

Round _____ Room _____ Student's Name: _____ Code _____ Rank _____ of _____

Topic: _____

Judge's Name: _____ Judge's Code: _____

Judge's School /League: _____

Criteria for judging:

- **Topicality:** The speaker should state and answer the question accurately. The speech should be organized so that all content contained therein is relevant to the question's answer. The speaker should be held accountable to the strict adherence to the precise statement of the topic selected and should be penalized for any obvious shifting to a different topic. Speakers must not be penalized for expressing views with which the judge happens to disagree.
- **Structure:** The introduction should gain attention, lead to the question, provide an answer to the question, and/or justify the importance of the topic, and give some direction as to how the speech will unfold or develop. The body should be organized to best answer the question. Transitional words/devices should help to move the speech from point to point. The conclusion should restate the question and answer, succinctly summarize the speech's main points highlighting how they led to the question's answer, and end interestingly.
- **Content:** This presentation should be an original speech developing the issue(s) raised by the selected topic. It should be a synthesis of current facts and opinions on the subject, not a mere listing of current data. The information presented in the speech should be accurate and timely. Sources consulted by the speaker during the preparation time should be cited effectively in the speech. These sources should be varied and credible. The speaker should make clear and reasonable use of the research, and provide explanation of the issues that is easy to follow.
- **Language:** The word choice should be clear and precise, interesting and easy to understand. If employed, creative devices, analogies, metaphors, alliteration, word plays, and the like should be effectively used and advance the purpose of the speech.
- **Vocal Delivery:** The speaker should be audible, articulate and fluent. The speaker should make use of contrast, making use of the elements of vocal variety: pitch, volume, rate, pausing, phrasing, stress, tone. The speaker should stress words to enhance meaning. The speaker should be conversational and concerned, passionate and pleasing. The speaker should be in control of the words and the emotions. The speaker should sound confident throughout the presentation.
- **Physical Delivery:** The speaker should vary facial expression to accentuate the natural flow of thoughts and feelings. The speaker's eyes should show thinking and feeling. The speaker should make eye contact with the audience. The speaker's stance should be erect and controlled, without distracting movements. Movement, if used, should be motivated by transitions in thought or mood. Gestures should be visible, effectively used for emphasis, and varied.

PLEASE USE THIS SIDE AND THE REVERSE TO COMMENT ON POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND TO PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS. BE CERTAIN TO INCLUDE JUSTIFICATION FOR YOUR RANKING.

Time: _____
10 min. w/ 30 sec. grace period

NATIONAL CATHOLIC FORENSIC LEAGUE
Critique Sheet for
ORAL INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE

Do Not Write in this Space

Round _____ Room _____ Student's Name: _____ Code _____ Rank _____ of _____

Selection Title: _____ Author: _____

Judge's Name: _____ Judge's Code: _____

Judge's School /League: _____

Criteria for judging:

- **Introduction:** The introduction must name the work and author, provide necessary background information and establish the mood. If using a teaser, or if lines from the selection are used in the introduction, the speakers must adhere to the rules of the event.
- **Projection of Literature:** The interpreter should demonstrate a clear understanding of the literature and project its meaning, message and tone. The speaker should capture and convey the plot and/or development. Imagery should be carefully colored so as to promote audience understanding and appreciation. In a presentation of a collection, there should be a unity to the program as a whole, made clear by the introduction and transitional material. Consideration should be given to the literary merit of the selection.
- **Narrator/Character Creation:** The narrator should be believable and conversational. The narrator should be able to lead the audience through the details of the literature, keeping a consistent and clear attitude toward people, objects and events within the literature. In collections, the interpreter should develop and maintain unique and distinct narrative voices for each selection within the program. If they are utilized, character voices should be distinctive, consistent and appropriate to the character. The interpreter should be able to demonstrate the characters' feelings and thoughts through the use of vocal inflections, facial expressions including visualization, and appropriate intensity.
- **Visualization:** The interpreter should help the audience to *see* the particular world of the narrator. The interpreter should establish a strong sense of environment. The interpreter should be able to see and replay the events described or recalled in the literature. The interpreter should use facial expressions and gestures appropriately to bring the script to life.
- **Vocal Variety:** The interpreter should appropriately vary pitch, volume, rate, and intensity to convey the various moods and messages in the literature. Appropriate words should be stressed for clarity and understanding. The interpreter should appropriately play with sound devices such as alliteration, and attend to the sound and meaning of every word. For poetry, the interpreter should capture and effectively vary existing poetic rhythm, making use of rhyme when necessary and avoiding it when not.
- **Audience and Script Contact:** The interpreter should invite the audience into the presentation, directing eye contact and expressing his or her feelings to individual audience members when appropriate and necessary and consulting the script when it is not. The interpreter should focus away from the audience and the script effectively during moments of internal and private thoughts. There should be a natural balance between the audience and script where one does not take precedence over the other. The interpreter should stay in the moment, with facial expression and emotional consistency, when making contact with the manuscript.
- **Overall Effect:** The overall performance should build to various moments and have a climax. The performance should be easy to follow and complete. The performance should display another world outside of the performance space.

PLEASE USE THE REVERSE TO COMMENT ON POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE PERFORMANCE, AND TO PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS. BE CERTAIN TO INCLUDE JUSTIFICATION FOR YOUR RANKING.

NATIONAL CATHOLIC FORENSIC LEAGUE

Time: _____
10 min. w/ 30 sec. grace period

Critique Sheet for
ORIGINAL ORATORY

Do Not Write in this Space

Round _____ Room _____ Student's Name: _____ Code _____ Rank _____ of _____

Title: _____

Judge's Name: _____ Judge's Code: _____

Judge's School /League: _____

Criteria for judging:

- Topic: The topic should be interesting, stimulating, and of some importance. The purpose of the oration may be to inspire, to persuade, to eulogize, or to inform. These purposes may overlap in the same oration. Speakers must not be penalized for expressing views with which the judge happens to disagree.
- Structure: The introduction should gain attention, specify a clear thesis, and give some direction as to how the speech will unfold or develop. The body should be organized for easy understanding. Transitional words/devices should help to move the speech from point to point. The conclusion should recap, make you want to think more about the topic, and end interestingly.
- Development: The speaker should be held accountable for substantiating and supporting main positions. There should be a variety of effective supporting material from qualified sources. There should be clear explanation that helps the listener follow the speech's flow and appreciate the use of supporting material.
- Language: The word choice should be clear and potent. Figures of speech and rhetorical devices should be used effectively.
- Vocal Delivery: The speaker should be articulate and fluent. The speaker should make use of contrast, and make use of the elements of vocal variety: pitch, volume, rate, pausing, phrasing, stress, tone. The speaker should stress words to enhance meaning. The speaker should be conversational and concerned, passionate and pleasing. The speaker should be in control of the words and the emotions.
- Physical Delivery: The speaker should vary facial expression to accentuate the natural flow of thoughts and feelings. The speaker's eyes should show thinking and feeling. The speaker should make eye contact with the audience. The speaker's stance should be erect and controlled, without distracting movements. Movement, if used, should be motivated by transitions in thought or mood. Gestures should be visible, effectively used for emphasis, and varied.
- Delivery and content should be evaluated equally.

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BALTIMORE CATHOLIC FORENSICS LEAGUE AUXILIARY SPEECH BALLOT

Children's Literature

Code: _____ Round: _____ Room: _____ Rank: _____ out of _____

Speaker's Name: _____

Topic: _____

Judge: _____ School: _____

Criteria for judging:

- Presentation: use of vocal variety, good pitch, projection, articulation and pace used to convey the ideas, mood, and argument.
Is the material enhanced by the use of character development? Is the language used to the fullest potential?
Are the characters distinct? Would the presentation appeal to the children in the age group?
Is there a balance of eye contact with the script and the audience
- Content: Is the selection appropriate for the age group? Is the language clear to the audience of age group children for which it is chosen?
- Body Language: Does the gestures enhance the presentation? Do the facial expressions reinforce the selection?
Does the movement enhance the characterization?
- Overall Effect: Is the presentation an effective interpretation?

PLEASE USE THE REVERSE TO COMMENT AND EXPLAIN YOUR RANKING THROUGH SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

BALTIMORE CATHOLIC FORENSICS LEAGUE AUXILIARY SPEECH BALLOT

Children's Literature Master Ballot

Rules of Procedures:

1. The student will choose a selection published as prose or poetry.
 2. The selection must have been written especially for children (K through grade 6).
The presentation will assume that the audience is of an age appropriate for the selection.
 3. No props or costumes are allowed.
 4. The presentation including the preparation should not exceed ten(10) minutes with a thirty second grace period.
 5. A manuscript or text must be physically present. Students are to prepare an appropriate introduction to set the mood of the selection.
The introduction should not exceed one minute and will count as part of the ten minute presentation.
-

Round: _____ Room: _____ Judge: _____

Order	Code#	Student Name	Title	Rank
1	_____	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____	_____
5	_____	_____	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	_____	_____
7	_____	_____	_____	_____

BALTIMORE CATHOLIC FORENSICS LEAGUE AUXILIARY SPEECH BALLOT

Impromptu

Code: _____ Round: _____ Room: _____ Rank: _____ out of _____

Speaker's Name: _____

Topic: _____

Judge: _____ School: _____

Criteria for judging:

- Presentation: use of vocal variety, good pitch, projection, articulation and pace used to convey the ideas, mood, and argument. The manner of speaking should be relaxed and assured. Notes, if used, should not infringe on the speaking style and flow of the presentation.
- Content: exhibit the ability to be original and fresh with little preparation time, contestant is expected to stay with the topic and have an organized approach to the presentation. This is not unrelated stand up jokes.
- Audience Response: the speech should entertain or inform, and contestant should show sensitivity to the mood of the audience in the conclusion.

PLEASE USE THE REVERSE TO COMMENT AND EXPLAIN YOUR RANKING THROUGH SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

**BALTIMORE CATHOLIC FORENSICS LEAGUE
AUXILIARY SPEECH BALLOT**

Impromptu Master Ballot

Rules of Procedures:

1. The student will choose a slip which contains three quotes and takes no more than two minutes to prepare a speech which addresses the quote. No notes or previously prepared materials are used in the preparation. The event calls for creativity and organizational ability.
2. Speakers may read the quote aloud or incorporate it into the introduction of the speech.
3. Speakers will not be invited into the room until their code is called by the judge in the order prepared by the tabulation staff. Contestants may remain in the room after they have spoken.
4. The presentation including the preparation should not exceed seven (7) minutes with a thirty second grace period. Time signals should be given during the five minute speech which will respond to the speaker's choice of quote.
5. The presentation may be humorous or serious. Facts are not required nor must any evidence be substantiated in the content of the performance.

Round: _____ Room: _____ Judge: _____

Order	Code#	Student Name	Title	Rank
1	_____	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____	_____
5	_____	_____	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	_____	_____
7	_____	_____	_____	_____

Guide to Public Forum Debate

Public Forum Debate (PFD) is a team event that advocates or rejects a position posed by the monthly resolution topic (announced online at www.speechanddebate.org). The clash of ideas must be communicated in a manner persuasive to the non-specialist or “citizen judge”, i.e. a member of the American jury. The debate should:

- ❖ Display solid logic, lucid reasoning, and depth of analysis
- ❖ Utilize evidence without being driven by it
- ❖ Present a clash of ideas by countering/refuting arguments of the opposing team (rebuttal)
- ❖ Communicate ideas with clarity, organization, eloquence, and professional decorum



The Topic ~ Topics are worded as **resolutions**, meaning they advocate *solving* a problem by establishing a *position*. Teams must understand the meaning of terminology in a consistent manner so debates have a *clash* of ideas. If the topic were “Resolved: Free trade benefits all nations,” it would be vital to understand the concept of *free trade*. An expert definition from an economics or legal dictionary or encyclopedia would be preferable to a standard dictionary. If the topic, “Resolved: NATO countries should act together on international matters,” the more common terms ‘act’ and ‘together’ could be appropriately defined by a standard dictionary. Given the limited time of a round, debate should not center on obscure claims of minutia.

Case Development & Evidence



A team must develop both a pro and con case, persuasively supported by evidence and reasoning. Given the short nature of a Public Forum round, cases should center on *a few quality* arguments. A team, however, should research *several* arguments on both sides of the issue, so it can *adapt* its case to the opposing team’s claims as necessary. Having arguments in direct contradiction with each other will enhance **clash** in rebuttals. Organization of speeches through effective communication and clear outlines is important so both judges and the opposing team can follow each of the arguments and their supporting evidence. Effective persuasion requires credible, unbiased, quality supporting evidence, which may include a mix of facts, statistics, expert quotations, studies, polls; but it may also be real-life examples, anecdotes, analogies, and personal experience. Since topics are based on current events, research should be accessible through periodicals, Web search engines and think tanks. Teams should not overwhelm their case with evidence; rather, they should *select* the *best* evidence to represent their claims.

Speeches and Time Limits

Speaker 1 (Team A, 1st speaker).....	4 min.
Speaker 2 (Team B, 1st speaker).....	4 min.
Crossfire (between speakers 1 & 2).....	3 min.
Speaker 3 (Team A, 2nd speaker)	4 min.
Speaker 4 (Team B, 2nd speaker).....	4 min.
Crossfire (between speakers 3 & 4).....	3 min.
Speaker 1 Summary.....	2 min.
Speaker 2 Summary.....	2 min.
Grand Crossfire (all speakers).....	3 min.
Speaker 3 Final Focus.....	2 min.
Speaker 4 Final Focus.....	2 min.

Each team may use up to two minutes of prep time.

First Pro Speech ~ This speech **constructs** arguments advocating the resolution’s worthiness. The key analysis will be to present major reasons why there is a problem. An underlying concept will always be the risk of change versus the risk of *not changing*. This speech should have a brief introduction to frame the team’s case for the judge. If a definition is important to understanding the case, it should be presented from the most appropriate source. A few reasons for adopting the topic should be presented with accompanying evidence. Each reason should be an independent reason to vote for the resolution, and should explain why it is pertinent. The speech should conclude with a summary of the arguments covered.

First Con Speech ~ This speech **constructs** arguments showing disadvantages of the resolution and why it should not be adopted. If the pro speech has the advantage of a changing future, the con speech has a *track record of experience* (status quo) and why change is ill-advised. The rest of the speech elements will be the same as the pro speech.

Strategies for the Second Team ~ If the team feels that the opponent's case is based on a faulty or unfair interpretation of the resolution, they should provide counter definitions and convincingly explain why their perspective is more appropriate. Whichever side speaks second may also choose to drop a reason from the prepared speech and spend time instead refuting claims presented by the other team. This strategy should be employed when one of the arguments *directly clashes* with the other team's or when the team believes one of the opponent's arguments is based on a false definition or assumption.

Third & Fourth Constructive Speeches

Both of these debaters have the primary burden of refuting the other team's arguments by analyzing and explaining flaws in the opponent's position. The debater should identify the opposition's key arguments and attack their legitimacy by: turning the analysis to the other side; presenting evidence that destroys or reduces the opposing position; presenting alternate causes that are not accounted for by the opposition argument; exposing argument inconsistencies between the speakers or between the opponents and their statements during crossfire. To best accomplish refutation, both members of a team should have a consistent approach and a unified view of what is important and less important. An argument format could be an introduction that links the team's second speech to the first speech, followed by an overview of the issue, which is frequently the opponent's argument, followed by reasons/evidence why the opponent is wrong, followed by what this argument clash now means for your side in the debate. In addition, some time in either of these speeches should be allocated to rebuilding the original case. It is important to have clarity that is seldom attained by an intricate outline. Speeches should conclude with a summary.

Summary Speeches ~ These are complicated speeches because each debater has to find a way to explain issues in the light of all that has happened so far – in just two minutes – without speaking too rapidly. New evidence, but not new arguments may be presented, except responses (refutation). This means that a limited number of issues can be addressed. For example, perhaps develop one to two issues from the debater's side on the resolution and one from the opponent's side of the resolution. The speech should have a brief overview. On each key argument, try to add a short original quotation, anecdote, or fact. Wrap up each argument by stressing its importance in arriving at a fair decision.



The Final Focus ~ This frames, with clarity, why your team has won the debate. Again, no new arguments may be presented, however, new evidence may be introduced to support an argument made earlier in the debate. Before the final focus, ask, "If I were judging this

round, what would I be voting on?" Strategies may include:

- ❖ Choose the most important argument you are winning, and summarize the analysis and evidence that make it so important.
- ❖ Turn a major argument from your opponent into the winning analysis and evidence of one of your important arguments; this technique **clinches** two arguments.
- ❖ Answer the *most important* argument you may be losing by summarizing the analysis and evidence that you believe takes out the opponent's argument.
- ❖ Choose an argument that you believe the community judge will most likely vote on.
- ❖ Expose a major inconsistency made by your opponent—two arguments that contradict each other—at least one of which the opponent is focusing on to win the debate.

Art of Argumentation

The *quantity* of arguments is less important than the *quality* of arguments, just as the quantity of evidence is less important than the quality of evidence. Thus we come to three important components of an argument: **claim**, **evidence**, and **warrant**. A claim is a major argument made on either side of the resolution. On the resolution, "Resolved that NATO countries should have acted together in Iraq," a claim could be that animosities would be reduced because one nation would not bear the brunt of the responsibility for the invasion. To prove this to be true, a debate must provide evidence, proving that the claim is valid. The debater chooses at least one type of evidence that will support the claim even when challenged. In the above example, much credible evidence exists that resistance is high because the United States for the most part acted alone. Perhaps the most crucial component of argumentation is the **warrant**. Warrants *connect* the claim and its support, sometime obviously, sometime subtly. Warrants emerge from the total sum of our experiences and personal observations. Thus it is entirely possible that the debater and the judge have a different set of experiences. The warrant for the claim used in the NATO example should connect the judge to the thesis, perhaps by making anecdotal comments about how everyone is much better satisfied when cooperation exists, whether among people or nations. On the other hand, the opposing team can counter that forcing nations to cooperate with each other when that is not their wish alienates allies and ruins alliances. Turn the evidence against the team and make the logical warrant that such a NATO policy for Iraq would have destroyed NATO, would have kept us operating in Iraq by ourselves, and would have destroyed the unity for future NATO missions. Warrants provide believable reasons why a claim and evidence are true. That is why evidence without analysis can result in an assertion without substance and an argument lost. Arguments and evidence without warrants are seldom persuasive.



Crossfire ~ Questioning periods give debate *interactivity* and a change to build *clash*. In crossfire, both debaters have equal access to the floor, but the first question must be asked to the debater who just finished speaking by a debater from the other team. After the initial question and answer, either debater may question or answer. A debater who attempts to dominate or be rude to his opponent will lose points. Good questions are brief and good answers must meet the question. In the first two crossfires, only the corresponding speakers may participate, and they stand next to each other.



Grand Crossfire ~ Seated, all debaters interact with one another. The first question is asked to the team that just ended its summary by the other team. After the initial question and answer, any debater may question or answer, and *all should participate*. The same guidelines for rudeness and stalling apply to the grand crossfire. Resist rushing questions or answers, or trying to do too much in crossfire; desperation is not persuasive.



Prep Time ~ Each team has two minutes of prep time. For very practical reasons, a team should not use prep time until their summary speech or final focus speech. Being prepared on the arguments is the best

way to avoid using prep time until it is vital to select the key arguments and issues.

Delivery ~ Effective delivery is critical to impact the arguments for a citizen judge. Practice delivery in front of ordinary people: teachers, parents, relatives, friends, non-debate classmates. Heed their advice. If they tell you to slow down, slow down; if they tell you to quit repeating yourself, start your sentences with the subject and avoid compound complex sentences; if they tell you to enunciate more clearly, practice with a pencil in your mouth; if they tell you to look up, make sure you remember everything about the person to whom you are talking; if they tell you to speak with variety, practice emphasizing key words, especially action verbs; if they tell you to speak louder, practice with cotton in your ears. In other words, do everything before a debate to cultivate a good delivery.

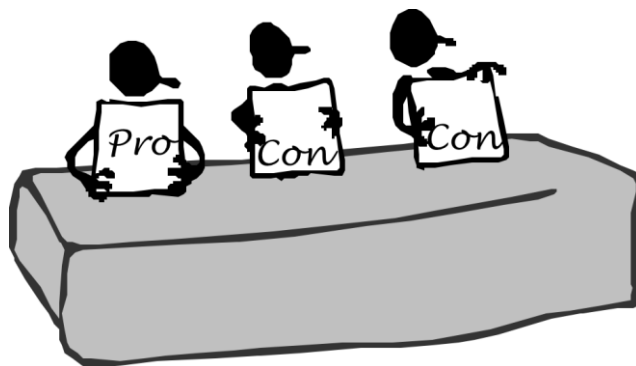
Working Knowledge ~ The more a debater knows about a topic, both arguments and evidence, both pro and con, the more one will be able to practice delivery and hence become truly skilled in the communication of arguments, evidence and analysis.

Evaluation & Judging ~ The judge is the chairperson of the round (facilitating the coin flip and giving time signals if requested), and may halt any crossfire lacking civility. S/he may not *interact* in the crossfire.

Judges evaluate teams on the quality of the arguments actually made, not on their own personal beliefs, and not on issues they think a particular side *should have covered*. Judges should assess the bearing of each argument on the truth or falsehood of the assigned resolution. The pro should prove that the resolution is true, and the con should prove that the resolution is not true. When deciding the round, judges should ask, “If I had no prior beliefs about this resolution, would the round as a whole have made me more likely to believe the resolution was true or not true?” Teams should strive to provide a straightforward perspective on the resolution; judges should discount unfair, obscure interpretations that only serve to confuse the opposing team. Plans (formalized, comprehensive proposals for implementation), counterplans and kritiks (off-topic arguments) are not allowed. Generalized, practical solutions should support a position of advocacy.

Quality, well-explained arguments should trump a mere quantity thereof. Debaters should use quoted evidence to support their claims, and well-chosen, relevant evidence may strengthen – *but not replace* – arguments.

Clear communication is a major consideration. Judges weigh arguments only to the extent that they are clearly explained, and they will discount arguments that are too fast, too garbled, or too jargon-laden to be understood by an intelligent high school student or a well-informed citizen. A team should not be penalized for failing to understand his or her opponent’s unclear arguments.



In short, Public Forum Debate stresses that speakers must appeal to the widest possible audience through sound reasoning, succinct organization, credible evidence, and clear delivery. Points provide a mechanism for evaluating the relative “quality of debating.”

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Revised July 2009 • NFL Programs/Education Office



NATIONAL CATHOLIC FORENSIC LEAGUE PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE BALLOT

Round _____ Room _____ Date _____ Judge Name _____ Judge Code _____

PRO TEAM	CON TEAM
Code # _____ Team Points: _____	Code # _____ Team Points: _____
1 st Debater _____	1 st Debater _____
2 nd Debater _____	2 nd Debater _____
TEAM POINTS: Outstanding = 27-30; Above Average = 25-27; Average = 22-25; Below Average = 18-22	
The team that won this debate is _____ representing the PRO / CON (circle one). No Low Point Wins!! (Code)	
Judge Signature: _____	Judge's School: _____

Order of debate: 1st Pro (4 min.),
1st Con (4 min.),
Crossfire (3 min.),
2nd Pro (4 min.),
2nd Con (4 min.),
Crossfire (3 min.),

1st Pro Summary (2 min.),
1st Con Summary (2 min.),
Grand Crossfire (3 min.),
2nd Pro Final Focus (2 min.),
2nd Con Final Focus (2 min.)

Preparation Time: 2 minutes per team.

Please note ... in NCFL, there is NO coin flip for sides or for speaker order. There is only a coin flip for sides in Round 3 and in any Elims when teams have not met before.

COMMENTS TO DEBATERS:

REASONS FOR MY DECISION

