

# Speech Adjudicator Guidelines



## Before You Adjudicate:

- Familiarize yourself with specific rules and evaluation criteria of categories you will evaluate.
- Attend adjudicator meeting for specific instructions; ask questions when unsure.
- Make sure you're not adjudicating any students you know personally; immediately report conflicts to officials.
- Position yourself so your view and hearing for evaluation are unobstructed.

## Common Issues:

- **Prompting** is not allowed except for students with special needs as noted on the master ballot. Accommodate contestants with disabilities as noted on the ballot, without drawing undue attention. Evaluate each contestant on their own merits.
- **Disqualification** - If you believe a student is violating WHSFA rules, please listen to the entire presentation and evaluate the best you can, but report the matter to the contest officials, who will investigate and render a decision. Never announce disqualification, except *Demonstration Speech, RULE 4, may require disqualification prior to the student's performance.*
- **Implicit Bias** - We are all influenced by implicit bias, or the stereotypes that unconsciously affect our decisions. When judging, our implicit biases negatively impact students who are traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised. Before writing comments or making a decision, please take a moment to reflect on any biases that may impact your decision-making process.
- **Virtual Video** - Please remember video quality of a student's performance or speech may be impacted by lighting, internet, access to equipment, and other family members' presence. To ensure a more equitable experience, please be sure your decision-making process and comments are related only to the content and quality of the presentation or speech itself.

**Written Comments:** Make specific written comments apply to criteria for evaluation - leave no area blank. Any rating less than A+ should have justification, citing specific examples of what a student did or said. Be honest, positive, supportive and helpful with suggestions for improvement. See rubric below for ratings:

Level 1		Level 2	
<b>A+</b>	Represents a practically flawless presentation, where contestant(s) may have only one or two "fine tuning" comments, or there is little to nothing the contestant(s) should do to improve the presentation.		
<b>A</b>	Performance meets expectations for category well and contestant(s) should definitely have an opportunity to perform again.	<b>A</b>	Outstanding example of what a performance in this category should be. It exceeds the mere expectations for the category.
<b>A-</b>	Performance indicated enough potential to give contestant(s) an opportunity to continue work and perform again.	<b>A-</b>	Excellent presentation with only minor flaws, and meets expectations for the category.
<b>B+</b>	Presentation has potential, but needs improvements and does not display quality necessary to advance to the next level.	<b>B+</b>	Solid, but a few major areas need more polish.
<b>B</b>	The presentation shows evidence of effort and attempt to meet evaluation criteria.	<b>B</b>	Adequate, yet still developing, only fulfilling basic requirements.
<b>B-</b>	The contestant(s) should evaluation criteria more closely, and more thoroughly prepare.	<b>B-</b>	Efforts are appreciated and hope you continue your forensic participation.

Need assistance for what to say? See the *Descriptive Words/Phrases List for Middle Level Adjudicators*.

## Return of Forms:

- At the conclusion of each section, record points from signed student evaluation sheets on the ballot provided, making sure points on the ballot are the same as those on the evaluation sheet.
- Sign the ballot and return it, along with the student evaluation sheet (unless otherwise instructed by the festival host) to the festival headquarters.

# Descriptive Words/Phrases List for Middle Level Adjudicators



Content	Effective Presentation	Developing/Improving
levels of meaning	effective tactic(s)	artificial
stirs emotion	executed thoughtfully	awkward
stirs thought	drew me in	broad / vague
persuasive arguments	expressive	faulty
credible evidence	articulate	flawed
balanced perspective	believable	interfered with
timely source	characterized	confused
organization	credible performance	disconnected
flow of ideas	committed character	misguided
ideas connect	energetic	monotonous
detailed	lively	repetitive
cutting/passage	animated	absent
explain central idea	honest	incomplete
plot	genuine	lacks
range	realistic	rethink structure
clever	authentic	requires
combination	natural	potential
collection	understated	pulled me out
unified	whimsical	distracted
convincing	rhetorical	unnecessary
accomplished	passion	lacked purpose
developing	spirited	identify purpose
mastered	determined	inappropriate
insightful	intimate	lacks depth

**Avoid vague terms:** *good • great • weak • needs work • practice more*  
**Instead, tell them:** *exactly what they did well; how they should improve;*  
*specific ineffective aspects of their presentation*