

HOW TO JUDGE EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

1. Check Tabroom.com
2. Settle into assigned room at least 5 minutes before round starts.
3. Hit the “start” button on tabroom.
4. Check your timer (phone, watch, laptop) – **EXTEMPERS HAVE 7 MINUTES (SEVEN!). Once they reach that point, they then have a 30 SECOND *GRACE PERIOD*.**
 - a. **THEY MUST GET TIME SIGNALS! This is critical for extempers.**
 - b. If they go 7:31 (one second overtime) **AND** you gave them good time signals, that student cannot be ranked first in that round). However, alert tournament officials when that happens.
 - c. Students will usually want “5-down” – That means at 2 minutes into the speech, they have 5 minutes left, so show them a card or hand signal for five minutes...and so countdown for 4,3,2,1 minute left.
 - d. At 30 seconds left (that is 6:30 into the speech) show a “C” with your hand, or the 30 second card. At 7 they get a fist, or the “you have started your grace period” card. It is up to the student to stop before 7:30.
5. Students will arrive one at a time with just a few minutes between them.
6. Greet the students as they enter and confirm their code numbers.
7. Take the topic slip from each student and read it.
8. Before the student begins to speak, discuss time signals with each student — expect them to demonstrate hand signals (as above) that they expect to see for time, if hand signals are used but, if possible, use time signal cards (which may be provided at the tournament).
9. Give the student a nod when you are ready to listen. The room is now theirs. Don’t forget to start your timer.
10. As they speak, take notes and draft critiques as you listen.
 - a. Does the student answer the question (that is, the question actually asked, not what the student perhaps wishes that they had been asked!)?
 - b. Does the student make a well-organized, well-documented, well-argued case for their answer?
 - i. The speech should be clear, well-organized, and easy to follow.
 - ii. The speech should include “evidence” – quotes, statistics, expert opinions, facts – cited from reliable sources.
 - iii. The speech should present a logical, cogent, clear argument.
 - iv. Ideally, the speech should be interesting, clever, thought-provoking.

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- c. Does the student speak effectively?
 - i. Does the student present the speech using well the aspects of their voice as an instrument? Are volume, speed, articulation, vocal variety, tone, used to punctuate the speech?
 - ii. Is the student's use of gesture and movement controlled, and helpful as visual punctuation, or is it distracting?
 - iii. Note for the critique:
 - What the student did well (often, they do not realize what they are doing right or what was actually helpful to you as a listener!)
 - What you question – a logical leap, an unclear reference, a misuse of a fact, etc.
 - What they could do to improve – how could they have made the speech just a bit better in either presentation or argument
 - **Try to find at least one item of encouragement** no matter how weak they are (“Your volume was good throughout your speech!,” “Your explanation of this statistic was good and clear!”) **but also give them something specific to work on** no matter how good they are (“You have great facts, but they went by pretty quickly – try consciously slowing down your delivery a little bit, particularly at key points,” or, “You used the statistics well, but Wikipedia is not really a usable ‘source’ – see if you can find a better citation.”)
11. The student will usually end with a “Thank you,” and may ask for their time – this you should tell them, as many are still learning how to pace themselves.
12. Thank the student and then *say nothing more* – a good judge is a silent judge!
13. Any problems, or questions about rules violations, should go to the tournament staff and should not be mentioned to or discussed with the student.
14. Rank students as you go -- compare each to those who came before.
 - a. After the 2nd speaker, who was better, speaker A or B?
 - b. After the 3rd, where does C now fit in? Best, worst, or between the two previous? And so on.
 - c. This way, by the last speaker, you have them all ranked and need not try to remember what that student said half an hour and five speeches ago said.
15. After last student has spoken:
 - a. See that you have now ranked each student
 - b. Trust your instinct to set a rating out of 100 – evaluate your top student, and your bottom, and then fit the others in between (super-terrific is high 90s, pretty bad is low 80s...so set your and worst numbers, and then space out the kids between these two extremes –based on ranks)

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- c. RELAX: **you must work fairly quickly**, and get those RANKS into the system right away, but you have some time to finish typing up and editing critiques
- i. we know that none of this is easy, and you should realize that you are just one rank for the day, so trust your gut, base your decision on the *gestalt*, pull the trigger on rankings, and then hit the submit button...then...
 - ii. forget it, and move on to the next round.
- d. REMEMBER: The criterion that is MOST IMPORTANT in Extemp is how clearly and compelling the student uses logic and evidence to make a convincing case for a relevant response to the question. Second to that (but still important) is their fluency, control of delivery, presentation.
- i. YOU NEED NOT BE AN EXPERT ON THE SUBJECT – it is the student’s job to educate you sufficiently to understand the argument
 - ii. IF YOU DO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THE SUBJECT OR EVIDENCE – carefully correct students in the critique (if they misuse the math of a statistic or misread a line of the constitution or misname a world leader, etc.)
 - iii. JUDGES LEAVE THEIR OWN OPINIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OUTSIDE THE ROOM – If (for instance) a matter of constitutional law is debatable, the question is never whether you agree with the student, or even if your mind was changed by the student’s argument, but whether they did a good job laying out their case. Love or loathe Trump, boost or bash Biden, whatever your own opinion is, you must always be the neutral evaluator of the effort.