

PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon

“How to Judge a Speech Contestant”

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CONTENT

Speech Development is the way the speaker puts ideas together so the audience can understand them. The speech is structured around a purpose and must include an opening, body and conclusion. A good speech immediately engages the audience’s attention and then moves forward through the body toward a significant conclusion. This development of the speech structure is supported by relevant examples and illustrations, facts and figures. The speech should be delivered with a smoothness which blends framework of the speech into a unified whole.

Effectiveness is measured by the audience’s reception of the speech. Speech judges should ask themselves questions such as: “Was I able to determine the speaker’s purpose?” “Did the speech relate directly to that purpose?” “Was my interest held by the speaker?” “Was this subject appropriate for the particular event?”

Speech Value justifies the act of speaking. The speaker has a responsibility to say something meaningful and original to the audience. The listeners should feel the speaker has made a contribution to their thinking. The ideas should be important, although this does not preclude a humorous presentation.

DELIVERY

Physical presentation of a speech carries part of the responsibility for effective communication. The speaker’s appearance should reinforce the speech, whether profound, sad, humorous or instructional. Body language should support points through gestures, expressions and body positioning.

Voice is the sound that carries the message. It should be flexible, moving from one pitch level to another for emphasis and should have a variety of rate and volume. A good voice can be clearly heard and the words easily understood.

Manner is the indirect revelation of the speaker’s real self as the speech is delivered. The speaker should speak with enthusiasm and assurance, showing interest in those judging and confidence in their reactions.

LANGUAGE

Appropriateness of language refers to the choice of words that relate to the speech purpose and to the particular audience hearing the speech. Language should promote clear understanding of thoughts and should fit the occasion precisely.

Correctness of language ensures attention will be directed toward what the speaker says, not how it is said. Proper use of grammar and correct pronunciation will show the speaker is the master of the words being used.