



Impromptu Speaking

2026-2027
Qual • Dist • State

GRADES: 7-8 | ENTRIES: 3 PER SECTION | TIME: 1 MIN (PICK TOPIC); 3 MIN (PREP); 5 MIN (SPEAK)

SECTIONS. Grades 7-8 compete together.

ENTRIES. As many as THREE students from each grade levels may be entered in the Impromptu Speaking District Contest from each school.

ADVANCING TO STATE. First and second place winners from each section will advance to State. Third place winners will be alternates.

NATURE OF THE CONTEST. The Impromptu Speaking Contest provides opportunities for students in grades 7 and 8 to evaluate speeches given by others; to explore the use of the voice and body in speaking situations; to examine the different purposes for speaking; to organize ideas; to prepare and deliver various speeches; and to develop self-confidence in speaking before a live audience. (Audiences are required for this contest.) The roster of contestants provides the speaking order for the contest, which **shall not be changed** without directive from the Meet Director only. Contestants will draw three topics and have three (3) minutes to prepare a speech, which must be presented without any notes and without any props (anything held in hand or touched as examples). The contest gives participants experience in thinking, organizing, formulating clear thoughts, and delivering those thoughts to an audience effectively.

The maximum time limit for each speech is **five (5)**

minutes. There is no minimum time limit. Students who exceed the allotted five minutes shall be disqualified. Better speeches are at least three minutes in length, however.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CONTEST. 1) The contest director will announce the time and place that contestants and one adult should report for evaluation pick-up and/or awards presentation. 2) As roll is called and substitutes OR alternates are checked in, each contestant will be given a card on which the letter of his/her speaking order is written, in accordance to the Contestant Roster; 3) The contest director will call **Speaker A, without stating the student's name or school**, to draw three topics from an envelope or other container. 4) Contestants **select one of the three topics within a 60-second period.** 5) **Contestants place other 2 topics back in container.** 6) **Contestant has up to 3 minutes to plan speech either with or without paper.** 7) **Contestant hands the topic slip back to the Contest Director who will then read the topic aloud to the audience, including the judges.** 8) **Contestants deliver their speeches WITHOUT notes or props within a 5-minute period.** Because the PSIA events are meant to be educational, the contestants will remain in the contest room and audiences should be welcomed, but no one may enter or exit the room once the contest has started without prior written permission from the Meet Director. The contestant will speak before a panel of three judges, or a single judge. All speech events are judged by an odd number of judges who rank contestants **without collaboration** with one another or the contest director. When the presentation reaches 4-1/2 minutes in length, the "30 seconds left" card should be held up by the contest director, who also serves as the timekeeper, in order to assist the contestant in stopping the speech prior to the end of the 5-minute time limit. **Judges will be given up to 1-1/2 minutes to complete their critiques after the speaker concludes. For the preferred panel judging, the Speech Ranking Procedure must be used.** The TWO Assistant Directors/Hall Monitors will assist in placing judges' ranks on the Ranking Sheet.

APPROPRIATE GESTURES

The Impromptu Speaking contest rules include the following instructions: Responsive use of the body (i.e., spontaneous changes in posture, gesture, and place-to-place movement) are permissible. This active use of the body should:

- (A) be appropriate to the demands of the speech;
- (B) be a NATURAL outgrowth from the oration;
- (C) not call attention to itself;
- (D) be limited in scope;

One or two steps are acceptable during presentation, but taking additional steps does not result in disqualification. Rather, excessive movement should be considered by the judge in evaluating the contestant's presentation.

THE JUDGE'S DECISION IN THIS MATTER IS FINAL.

ADVANCING TO THE FINAL ROUND. If there are more than 9 students in the competition, two or more sections of the contest (preliminary round) will be held. The top ranked contestants from each section (top 3 speakers if there are 2 sections / top 2 speakers if there are 3 sections) will advance to the final round. A different set of topics will be used in the final round, but all rules are the same for both rounds.

POSTING THE PRELIMINARY ROUND. After judges have made their decisions in the preliminary rounds, contestants pick up their evaluations at the time and place designated on the schedule. At this time the names of the contestants advancing to the final round will be announced in random order and posted at the designated location in a random speaking order for the final round.

MATERIALS. Additional practice topics are available in the PSIA Study Materials Packets (order online at the PSIA Store).

PREPARATION FOR CONTEST. Read and follow all instructions provided in the “Information Pertaining to All Contests” section of the *PSIA Academic Handbook*. Observe and practice with students all rules and procedures delineated in the “Instructions to the Contestant” and in the “Checklist for Contest Directors.” Preparation for the Impromptu Speaking Contest should include instruction in organizational speech delivery. Teachers may create as many practice impromptu topics as they need. The topics can be tailored to fit any learning situation. Request suggestions from your participants. Topics are provided by PSIA for District and State Meet competition.

DRESS CODE. Contestants should wear nice clothing without school logo or the appearance of a school uniform. (See page 11 for dress code guidelines.)

PERSONNEL NEEDED FOR CONTEST.

1. *Contest Director/Timekeeper.* The Contest Director may be a knowledgeable coach of contestants in the contest. **The Contest Director also serves as the Time Keeper for this contest.**

2. *Judge(s).* One OR three judges may judge a section of 9 or fewer contestants. Judges should be impartial adults (preferably a panel of 3) from no participating school.

3. *TWO Assistant Directors / Hall Monitor:* One person monitors the hall during the contest and both witness the posting of judges’ ballot rankings by the Contest Director when the contest has ended.

EVALUATIONS, JUDGES’ BALLOTS, and RANKING PROCEDURES. Coaches and teachers should use official PSIA Impromptu Speaking Evaluation Sheet and the Judge’s Ballot to assist in preparing contestants for competition. **Judges may use the blank sheet of paper found in their packets to jot down notes to help them remember contestants better.** The “Ranking Procedure for all Speech Contests” is used for this contest.

SECTIONING. Schools should enter their strongest student in the first position when registering for this contest. The meet program separates the strongest contestants into different sections. At District, contestants from the same school will be placed in different sections whenever possible. At State, contestants advancing from the same District will be assigned to different sections whenever possible. Once the speaking order has been set for a tournament, it may not be changed without permission from the District or State Meet Director.

Shall and Must List

Contestants **must not** use props, including the audience, during their speech.

Result: Disqualification.

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Contestants **must not** identify themselves or their school during their speech, orally or by wearing or displaying school identifying articles (e.g., school uniforms).

Result: Disqualification.

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Contestants **must not** use notes during the speech.

Result: Disqualification.

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Contestant **must not** go over the 5-minute time limit.

Result: Disqualification.