



THE AMERICAN LEGION

Judges Briefing

*The American Legion
High School Oratorical
Scholarship Program*



Contest Purpose

- The contest was developed primarily to instill a better knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States among high school students
- Other objectives include the development of:
 - Leadership qualities
 - The ability to think and speak clearly
 - The preparation for acceptance of the duties, responsibilities and privileges of American citizenship



Contestants

Each contestant will appear two times and will be introduced by number only.

- **Prepared Oration**
- **Assigned Topic**
 - Each speaker will speak on the same assigned topic, which will be drawn just before the last contestant delivers the prepared oration.



Contestants

- The two appearances permit an opportunity to re-evaluate and reconsider first impressions and compare the contestants.
- Pencils with erasers are provided so adjustments can be made as speeches unfold and for proper scoring.
- This allows judges to evaluate their impressions of each speaker and to compare speakers.



Timing

- Each contestant will speak 8 - 10 minutes on their prepared oration.
- Each contestant will speak 3 - 5 minutes on the assigned topic selected randomly for their contest.



Timing

- A **penalty** of **ONE POINT** is given to any contestant who speaks over or under the prescribed time for each minute or fraction thereof.
- This penalty is determined by timers with stop watches.
- Judges will be told if there is any penalty and the number of points.



Prepared Oration

- The Prepared Oration must be on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States with emphasis on the duties and obligations of a citizen to our government.
- Lack of emphasis in the prepared oration and the assigned topic on the duties and obligations of a citizen to our government **must result in the judges downgrading the contestant involved.**
- A **penalty** of **1 to 10 points** for failure to speak on the Constitution may be given by a judge if the judge feels the contestant did not speak on the Constitution.



Props

- Props are not permitted
- **Discussion:** Is saluting the flag a prop?



Scratch Tally Sheets

There are two scratch tally sheets for each contestant.

Prepared Oration

contains two parts:

- A - Content - four items
- B - Speaking skills - three items
- **Total 70 points**

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges		
No.1	Prepared Oration	
A. Content	SCORE	
1. Originality	(12)	
2. Skill in data, examples	(12)	
3. Logic	(12)	
4. Knowledge	(16)	
	TOTAL 52	
A. Speaking Skills	SCORE	
1. Voice	(6)	
2. Style, language	(6)	
3. Body action	(6)	
	TOTAL 18	



Scratch Tally Sheets

There are two scratch tally sheets for each contestant.

Assigned Topic

contains two parts:

- A - Content - four items
- B - Speaking skills - three items
- **Total 30 points**

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges		
No.1	Assigned Topic	
A. Content	SCORE	
1. Originality	(4)	
2. Skill in data, examples	(4)	
3. Logic	(4)	
4. Knowledge	(6)	
	TOTAL 18	
B. Speaking Skills	SCORE	
1. Voice	(4)	
2. Style, language	(4)	
3. Body action	(4)	
	TOTAL 12	



Scoring System

Prepared Oration

PART A – CONTENT

- Four items
- **Highest possible score: 52 points**

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges	
No.1	Prepared Oration
A. Content	SCORE
1. Was the speech original, fresh and direct, applying the contestant's knowledge?	(12)
2. Did the contestant skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies and specific data?	(12)
3. Was the speech logical, well organized and developed?	(12)
4. Did the contestant show a comprehensiveness of knowledge of the subject matter?	(16)



Scoring System

Assigned Topic

PART A – CONTENT

- Four items
- **Highest possible score:
18 points**

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges	
No.1	Assigned Topic
A. Content	
	SCORE
1. Was the speech original, fresh and direct, applying the contestant's knowledge?	(4)
2. Did the contestant skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies and specific data?	(4)
3. Was the speech logical, well organized and developed?	(4)
4. Did the contestant show a comprehensiveness of knowledge of the subject matter?	(6)



Content Item 1

- 12 points Prepared Oration
- 4 points Assigned Topic
 - Originality
 - Freshness
 - Directness
 - Application of knowledge on topic



Content Item 2

- 12 points Prepared Oration
- 4 points Assigned Topic
 - Skill in Selecting
 - Examples
 - Description
 - Analogies
 - Specific data



Content Item 3

- 12 points Prepared Oration
- 4 points Assigned Topic
 - Logic – correctness of inference



Content Item 4

- 16 points Prepared Oration
- 6 points Assigned Topic
 - Comprehensiveness of knowledge
 - The contestant knows the subject matter



Scoring System

- Judge should rate first speaker at 9 or 10 points max.
- Other speakers will be better or worse - the first speaker sets a standard for the rest.

EXAMPLE		
A. Content	SCORE	
1. Originality, knowledge of topic	(12)	
	9	Quotation - no author given



Scoring System

- All quotations are to be indicated as such and if the quotation is more than 10 words, the author's name must be given.
- It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases of a foreign language into the Prepared Oration and/or Assigned Topic in order to develop the argument, establish a point, etc.

EXAMPLE OF A SCORE ON A SCRATCH TALLY SHEET		
A. Content	SCORE	
1. Originality, knowledge of topic	(12)	
	8	Quotation - no author given



Scoring System

Prepared Oration

PART B – SPEAKING SKILLS

- Three items
- **Highest possible score:
18 points**

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges	
No.1	Prepared Oration
B. Speaking Skills	SCORE
1. Did the contestant use volume, rate, pitch and diction effectively?	(6)
2. Rate the contestant's style: language use, word arrangement and selection, transitions	(6)
3. Were body actions — poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions — appropriate?	(6)



Scoring System

Assigned Topic

PART B: SPEAKING SKILLS

- Three items
- **Highest possible score:
12 points**

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges	
No.1	Assigned Topic
B. Speaking Skills	
	SCORE
1. Did the contestant use volume, rate, pitch and diction effectively?	(4)
2. Rate the contestant's style: language use, word arrangement and selection, transitions	(4)
3. Were body actions — poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions — appropriate?	(4)



Speaking Skills Item 1

- 6 points Prepared Oration
- 4 points Assigned Topic
 - Voice and diction – pronunciation, enunciation, articulation, delivery, projection



Speaking Skills Item 2

- 6 points Prepared Oration
- 4 points Assigned Topic
 - Style – language use, word arrangement, transition, word selection



Speaking Skills Item 3

- 6 points Prepared Oration
- 4 points Assigned Topic
 - Body actions – poise, eye contact, posture, gestures



Assigned Topic

The purpose of the Assigned Topic discourse is to test

- The contestant's knowledge of the subject
- The extent of the contestant's research
- The ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution



Scratch Tally Sheets

Prepared Oration Scratch Tally Sheet:

- A - Content - four items
- B - Speaking skills - three items
- **Total 70 points**

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges		
No.1	Prepared Oration	
A. Content	SCORE	
1. Originality	(12)	
2. Skill in data, examples	(12)	
3. Logic	(12)	
4. Knowledge	(16)	
	TOTAL 52	
A. Speaking Skills	SCORE	
1. Voice	(6)	
2. Style, language	(6)	
3. Body action	(6)	
	TOTAL 18	



Scratch Tally Sheets

Assigned Topic Scratch Tally Sheet

- A - Content - four items
- B - Speaking skills - three items
- **Total 30 points**

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges		
No.1	Assigned Topic	
A. Content	SCORE	
1. Originality	(4)	
2. Skill in data, examples	(4)	
3. Logic	(4)	
4. Knowledge	(6)	
	TOTAL 18	
B. Speaking Skills	SCORE	
1. Voice	(4)	
2. Style, language	(4)	
3. Body action	(4)	
	TOTAL 12	



Scratch Tally Sheets

SCRATCH TALLY SHEET FOR JUDGES

PREPARED ORATION

QUARTER FINAL / SEMI FINAL / FINALS (CIRCLE ONE)
 NO. _____
CONTESTANT
 NO. _____

DOES THE CONTESTANT'S ORATION RELATE TO SOME ASPECT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES WITH EMPHASIS ON THE DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF A CITIZEN TO OUR GOVERNMENT?
 _____ Yes _____ No

SCORE	A. CONTENT	REMARKS OR NOTES
(12)	1. Was the speech original, fresh and direct, applying the contestant's knowledge?	
(12)	2. Did the contestant skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies and specific data?	
(12)	3. Was the speech logical, well organized and developed?	
(16)	4. Did the contestant show a comprehensiveness of knowledge of the subject matter?	
SUBTOTAL		
B. SPEAKING SKILLS		REMARKS OR NOTES
(6)	1. Did the contestant use volume, rate, pitch and diction effectively?	
(6)	2. Rate the contestant's style: language use, word arrangement and selection; transitions	
(6)	3. Were body actions — poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions— appropriate?	
SUBTOTAL	ADDITIONAL NOTES OR COMMENTS	
PENALTY PTS		
TOTAL	FOR JUDGES USE ONLY FOR ADDITIONAL SCORING	

SCRATCH TALLY SHEET FOR JUDGES

ASSIGNED TOPIC

QUARTER FINAL / SEMI FINAL / FINALS (CIRCLE ONE)
 NO. _____
CONTESTANT
 NO. _____

DID THE CONTESTANT SPEAK ON THE SUBJECT OF THE ASSIGNED TOPIC?
 _____ Yes _____ No

SCORE	A. CONTENT	REMARKS OR NOTES
(4)	1. Was the speech original, fresh and direct, applying the contestant's knowledge?	
(4)	2. Did the contestant skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies and specific data?	
(4)	3. Was the speech logical, well organized and developed?	
(6)	4. Did the contestant show a comprehensiveness of knowledge of the subject matter?	
SUBTOTAL		
B. SPEAKING SKILLS		REMARKS OR NOTES
(4)	1. Did the contestant use volume, rate, pitch and diction effectively?	
(4)	2. Rate the contestant's style: language use, word arrangement and selection; transitions	
(4)	3. Were body actions — poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions— appropriate?	
SUBTOTAL	ADDITIONAL NOTES OR COMMENTS	
PENALTY PTS		
TOTAL	FOR JUDGES USE ONLY FOR ADDITIONAL SCORING	



Judging

- It is suggested a judge use the first two or three minutes of the contestant's speech to rate speaking skills.
- This allows the remainder of the time to listen for content.



Scoring Method

- Second Column
 - Shows the maximum points for each category
- Empty box
 - For the judge's handwritten score

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges	
No.1	Assigned Topic
B. Speaking Skills	
1. Did the contestant use volume, rate, pitch and diction effectively?	(4)
	2
2. Rate the contestant's style: language use, word arrangement and selection, transitions	(4)
	3
3. Were body actions — poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions — appropriate?	(4)
	5



Judging

- To remember the individual speakers, judges should note for each contestant a color of clothing and/or gender of the contestant in order to recall the individual speaker when tallying the scores.



Scoring System Review

- How many scratch tally sheets are there for each contestant?
- Two scratch tally sheets per contestant
 - One for Prepared Oration
 - One for Assigned Topic

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges		
No.1	Prepared Oration	
A. Content	SCORE	
1. Originality	(12)	
2. Skill in data, examples	(12)	
3. Logic	(12)	
4. Knowledge	(16)	
	TOTAL 52	
A. Speaking Skills	SCORE	
1. Voice	(6)	
2. Style, language	(6)	
3. Body action	(6)	
	TOTAL 18	



Scoring System Review

- How many points can be given for the **Prepared Oration?**
- Content
 - Four items
 - Possible 52 Points
- Speaking Skills
 - Three items
 - Possible 18 Points
- **Total 70 Points**

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges		
No.1	Prepared Oration	
A. Content	SCORE	
1. Originality	(12)	
2. Skill in data, examples	(12)	
3. Logic	(12)	
4. Knowledge	(16)	
	TOTAL 52	
A. Speaking Skills	SCORE	
1. Voice	(6)	
2. Style, language	(6)	
3. Body action	(6)	
	TOTAL 18	



Scoring System Review

- How many points can be given for the **Assigned Topic?**
- Content
 - Four items
 - Possible 18 Points
- Speaking Skills
 - Three items
 - Possible 12 Points
- **Total 30 Points**

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges		
No.1	Assigned Topic	
A. Content	SCORE	
1. Originality	(4)	
2. Skill in data, examples	(4)	
3. Logic	(4)	
4. Knowledge	(6)	
	TOTAL 18	
A. Speaking Skills	SCORE	
1. Voice	(4)	
2. Style, language	(4)	
3. Body action	(4)	
	TOTAL 12	



Judging

What happens if a contestant fails to directly address the assigned topic?

- Penalty of 1 – 10 points for failure to speak on the Constitution
- Downgrade the content in all four areas:
 - Originality
 - Skill
 - Logic
 - Knowledge



Scoring Tabulation

- After the last speaker, judges will return here and transfer the data from the scratch tally sheets to their Tabroom account.
- Then tabulate the data for each contestant.
- The scratch tally sheets should be used for tabulation; however, they are not mandatory.
- If you are comfortable entering the raw scores directly into the Tabroom, this is permissible.



Scoring System Example

Scratch Tally Sheet for Judges		
No.1 Prepared Oration		
A. Content	SCORE	REMARKS
1. Originality	(12)	
	10	
2. Skill in data, examples	(12)	
	8	
3. Logic	(12)	
	9	
4. Knowledge	(16)	
	14	
TOTAL 41		

B. Speaking Skills	SCORE	REMARKS
1. Voice	(6)	
	5	
2. Style, language	(6)	
	4	
3. Body action	(6)	
	5	
TOTAL 14		

Prepared Oration Score 55



Scoring Tabulation

- Transfer any penalty points announced by the moderator to appropriate line.
- There can be no ties!** Judges are encouraged to review the overall scoring and adjust accordingly to break the tie.

Contestant			
	1	2	3
A. Content	41	40	45
B. Speaking Skills	14	16	18
Penalty Point Time		-1	
1-10 pts. Failure to speak on the Constitution	5	0	0



Scoring Tabulation

- Make sure the tallied points are what you think they should be!
- The highest score will determine the record of choice – 1st place and so on.
- Be sure to sign your name and date it.
- A tabulator will check your figures. Initial any errors and correct the figure.

Contestant			
	1	2	3
Final Points	88	81	83
Record of choice	1	3	2



Scoring Tabulation

- Do not leave the room until the moderator or chief tabulator dismisses you.
- The decision of the judge will be their own without consultation of others.
- Judges shall refrain from discussing any phase of the contest or their judging methods with other judges, contestants, coaches, chaperones or parents.



Contestant Feedback

- The contestants have been briefed that if they desire any feedback about their speech, that information will be provided to them after the weekend is over upon request.
- The names of the contest judges will not be released with the feedback.



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Questions?