



FAQ for new judges

Q: Am I qualified to judge?

A: Yes! Without a doubt, you are. Even if you have never seen a speech round before, your tournament staff will help guide you through the process. Your presence makes the entire tournament possible.

Q: What questions should I ask the people running the tournament?

A: Please feel free to ask whatever you need. This might include where rooms are, how to address the room, or what specific events look like.

Q: What should I be looking for when I judge?

A: As there are a variety of events, and the criteria can differ, there will be specifics listed on your ballots. This is also something to ask the ballot table, when picking up ballots.

Q: What materials do I need?

A: You would do well to bring paper (for notes), writing utensil, and a stopwatch (or your phone, but make sure it is on silent otherwise). We also suggest some activity materials (books, gameboy, logic puzzles, etc..) to use between rounds, as there will be downtime!

Q: Where should I go if I have a round off/between rounds?

A: There is a judges' lounge where you can sit back, relax, have some food, and socialize with other judges. (You can even ask them questions, they won't mind!)

Q: What should I wear?

A: This is completely up to you. Some judges dress up, to the level of the competitors (they will be in suits and business attire) to feel more comfortable, while others are in jeans and hoodies. The important thing is that you're there, supporting forensics education, not what you're wearing. So, be comfortable!

Q: What time should I be there?

A: This is specific to each tournament. If you confirmed for a round at the tournament, the general rule-of-thumb is to be at the ballot table, picking up your ballots about 15 minutes before the start of round. This lets the tab staff know if there are any issues that might need to be addressed and keeps the tournament running on time.



Q: Why should I do this?

A: Chances are, if you're reading this, than you know someone involved in this activity. You might know how powerful speech and debate can be, and you might not. Either way, these tournaments simple cannot run without judges willing to donate their time. That's why you should do this, so that speech and debate and Forensics education can continue! (Thanks, by the way)

Q: What do I do when a round finishes?

A: You finish your rankings and get your ballots to the ballot table ASAP (this is usually the same as the place where you picked up your ballots). The tournament needs those to get to the next round!

Q: What do I do if a student on my list hasn't shown up?

A: First thing to do is to ask the room. "Does anyone know where student K12 is?" sometimes the students in the room can let you know. If no one knows, contact the tabroom, either via a phone call, text, or send a student in the room that you do have (preferably one that has already spoken) to the ballot table to report the situation. That way you can continue with the round while things get sorted out.

Q: What if I can't decide who was best?

A: Ah, this is a tough one, and unfortunately the answer is "just choose." There has to be something. It can be something as small as a stumble or two that separates your first place from your second, but review the performances in your mind and make a choice as to why one student was better than the other. Did one have a clearer message? Did one support their stance more clearly? Was one of them embodying the character more fully? Make a decision, and then tell the students why you made that choice. Feedback is key!

Q: How many notes on a ballot are too many?

A: That is not possible. Seriously. Use a second page if you have to. Students want to know how to improve.