

# De La Salle World Affairs Debate and Public Speaking Competition

## De La Salle College "Oaklands"

Friday, December 7, 2012

### A Crash Course for Judges\*

1. You are eminently qualified to carry out your role as a judge today! At debate tournaments students aim to persuade a representative audience, not a group of experts.
2. Your two main duties on the day of the tournament are to evaluate the debaters-public speakers and to provide constructive criticism.
3. People disagree about speeches all the time. Mark independently—don't worry about the other judges and their marks. Do not discuss your scores with the other judges in your room.
4. Be unbiased (as best as you can). Leave your expertise and your personal opinions at the door.
5. Rank the debaters and public speakers. Who was the best in the room? Who was the weakest? Your scores should reflect those differences.
6. The standard range of marks should be between 70 and 95. No marks below 65 may be given at this tournament. Debaters receive 59 for showing up and 65 for making sounds. The median score will be about 82. No scores over 95 should be given.
7. If you wish, you may ignore the categories on the judging sheet. The score that matters for those tabulating final results is the mark you give out of 100.
8. Debate is an interactive sport. Above all else, there must be CLASH in the debate and an ENGAGED audience during the public speaking rounds. Students must show that they have listened to each other, they must respond to each other's arguments and they must demonstrate "agility of thought" when delivering extemporaneous speeches.
9. While listening to each individual speech, ask yourself: Can I follow this argument? When the speech is over, do I know and understand the debater's/ public speaker's main message? Was there an overriding theme? A barrage of facts alone is not a good argument. Was the speech delivered well?
10. Was this a really good speech? If it was, the student should get high marks.

\*A few judging tips from Aija Zommers, Branksome Hall, Debate Coach

### Extemporaneous Speaking

Each participant will draw three topics and choose one, 30 minutes before speaking. Topics will be based on major and international stories covered in news magazines during the three months prior to the tournament. Topics will be framed in question form.

- The host school will provide an isolated facility for the competitors to use as a preparation room. Competitors may not bring in any research material nor will the host school provide any research material. Their speeches must be based on their own knowledge of the subject.
- During the speech, a competitor may refer only to notes prepared during the preparation period. These notes must be on a 3 x 5 index card. The host school will provide the card.
- The speaker will have 3 to 5 minutes to speak. There will be a time penalty of 2 points for speeches which are up to 30 seconds under 3 minutes or up to 30 seconds over 5 minutes. There will be a time penalty of 10 points for speeches under 2 minutes and 30 seconds or over 5 minutes and 30 seconds.

## General Tips for Judging Extemporaneous Speaking

**Knowledge of Topic and Awareness of Issue (30 Marks):** Speakers quickly choose which of the three topics to speak on and then, starting with an attention-getter or “hook”, establish a problem-solution focus or some other structure for the speech. They take into consideration their audience, usually made up of adults from the school community hosting the tournament and coaches. The speech assumes they are educated, well-read adults with a vested interest in these topics. This requires that speakers keep their insights grounded in “newspaper content”.

**Use of Evidence (20 Marks):** Speakers pre-prepare an outline that will incorporate historical facts, current events and/ or details such as anecdotes, memorable statistics and literary references. They will also “road-map” the speech for the benefit of the audience. Speakers often choose a specific illustration, experience or example as their recurrent motif, using it throughout the course of the speech to create a sense of structure. They also consider all possible sources of information to draw from. Speakers must demonstrate a broad knowledge of current events and other sources of information such as philosophic, historical and literary contextual material and personal anecdotes. Speakers do not try to cover too much ground in the 5 minutes. Supporting evidence should never sound like a legal defense for the observations made. Often, judges will give some latitude here so that speakers can supplement insights with style and a compelling rhetorical approach.

**Logical Argument and Strength of Conclusions (20 Marks):** Speakers use sound logic to treat their topic. For example, they often consider “common wisdom” and counter-arguments, the opposite points raised as a way of suggesting careful thought. It often sounds like this: “...some might have you believe that...but this is far from the truth...” Speakers also finish conclusively, usually with the same memorable phrase, image or “hook” from the introduction bringing the speech to a satisfying close.

**Effective Delivery (20 Marks):** Speeches are held together by strong transitions from one point to the other as in, “On the other hand...” “Moreover...” or “Consequently...” Speakers demonstrate effective pacing usually with a slower than normal conversational rate, especially when dealing with complex topics. Speakers should not peddle the same anecdotes from one round to the next because it creates the impression of a pre-formulated speech. Every round offers a new opportunity to connect with an audience. Speakers present a confident demeanour, never apologizing even if they draw a blank or bring the speech to an abrupt end. Humour should never be crude, flippant or tasteless.

**Clarity of Thought (10 Marks):** This translates into the quality experienced judges look for that takes them through the topic in interesting and unexpected ways, clearly indicating a superior intellect because speakers chose to avoid the traditional, conventional approaches to the topic.