

# Spirit Lake High School Contest Speech "Handbook"

*Contest Speech allows students the opportunity to pursue their interest in public speaking or "stage" performance. In Large Group Speech, participants work in small or large groups to rehearse a piece, then perform it at contest in front of judges and an audience. Participants in Individual Speech also perform at a contest but prepare for and perform their piece on their own. In both Lg Grp and Indiv., students have a variety of categories to choose from.*

## BASIC INFO TO KNOW

### LARGE GROUP SPEECH

- Season: November-February
- You are allowed to participate in a max of 2 categories.
- Includes: regular practices, prep on your own (memorizing lines, small group practices), performances
- Practices will usually begin the week AFTER the Fall musical.
- Meetings and/or tryouts may take place prior to then.
- Plan on two practices per week for each group you are in (approx. 45-60 min per rehearsal).
- It is important that participants be at all scheduled practices. All members of the cast need to be present to get the full benefit out of the rehearsals.
- There may be times when the director is not able to be there for scheduled practices .... It is important to make the best use of your time and practice without her.
- More practices may be needed as contest approaches and there may be practices scheduled on days off or Saturdays.
- Practices will be scheduled around the conflicts you have provided. Once you receive the schedule please do not add other activities that will conflict with your practices.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *While preferences and suggestions from students are considered, the coach has the final say in what categories we will compete in, who will perform in each group or category, and what material will be used. Try-outs may be needed to help with this process. Students are asked to respect the coach's assignments and embrace the opportunity to participate.*

### INDIVIDUAL SPEECH

- Season: End of January-March
- Students are allowed to participate in a max. of 2 categories.
- The coach will assist the student in determining what category(s) best suits their interests and abilities and will help with the selection and preparation of the material.
- Includes: regular practices with coach, prep on your own (selecting/preparing/writing material, memorization, practicing on your own), performances
- A meeting will be held in mid-January to confirm interest.
- Practices will officially begin the last week in January, however, individuals may begin working on their pieces prior to that time or may be able to schedule individual rehearsals with the coach.
- Plan on two practices per week (with the coach or with other students) for each category you are in (approx. 30-45 min per rehearsal). Additional rehearsal time on your own will also be needed.
- The amount of time you put into the prep and rehearsals the better your performance will be.

# GROUP SPEECH EVENTS

## Group A – most performers/event and/or most complicated logistically (costumes, set, music, etc.)

Short Film (2-15 students) – taped

One-Act Play (any number) – memorized

Choral Reading (2-15 students) – use script

TV news (any number) – taped

## Group B – less people/event and/or less complicated logistically (costumes, set, music, etc.)

Musical Theatre (2-6 students) – memorized

Group Mime (2-6 students)

Readers' Theatre (2-15 students) – use script

Radio Broadcasting (2-8 students) – taped

## Group C – least people/event and/or least complicated logistically (costumes, set, music, etc.)

Ensemble Acting (2-6 students) – memorized

Group Improvisation (2-5 students)

Solo Mime (1 student)

## DESCRIPTION OF LARGE GROUP SPEECH EVENTS

### READERS' THEATRE (1 entry)

- Material can be adapted from prose, poetry and/or drama
- No costumes, make-up, special effects or mechanical or instrumental sound effects
- Read from scripts held by cast members (however, memorization will still be beneficial)
- May use chairs, stools, boxes, crates, benches, ladders, risers or music stands
- Movement and blocking optional
- Interpretation and facial and vocal expression are important.
- Length – 25 minutes

### CHORAL READING (1 entry)

- A collection of material drawn from any form of literature or parts of more than one selection
- May use props, uniforms, costumes, and/or make up which supports the selection
- Involves group and solo lines. May use singing, dancing, musical instruments, sound effects and blocking to support the selection
- Read from scripts, but some portions may be memorized.
- Vocal/ensemble blend, articulation, tone, interpretation, and energy are very important.
- Eye contact, facial expression, and movement are considered.
- Length – 15 minutes

### ENSEMBLE ACTING (3 entries)

- Acting out a scene/cuttings from a play or other literature
- May use up to six chairs and a table.
- No costumes or makeup or music.
- Lines are memorized.
- Length – 15 minutes

### GROUP IMPROV (3 entries)

- Objective is to create a scene using the drawn situation which progresses from a beginning to an end with a definite storyline and character development. Creativity, working together, and character development are important.
- Performers report five minutes before performing. They draw 3 situations, and then have two minutes to select one of the three situations to perform. They then set up acting area and begin.
- Up to five chairs may be used.
- No costumes or props may be used. May adjust/use normal wearing apparel.
- Length – 5 minutes

# MORE GROUP SPEECH EVENTS

## GROUP MIME (3 entries)

- Participants will develop and perform an original mime expressing a feeling/situation or telling a story.
- Concentrate on precise movement, facial expressions, gestures, and staging to make sure the audience can see you and your expressions.
- Title of mime is placed on a placard.
- Use music without words; clothing should allow for freedom for movement
- Up to five chairs may be used.
- Length – 7 minutes

## SOLO MIME (3 entries)

- Involves only 1 student
- Length – 5 minutes
- All else is the same as Group Mime

## TELEVISION NEWSCASTING (1 entry) – RADIO NEWS BROADCASTING (2 entries)

- Students gather, edit, organize, prepare, and record a video or audio presentation of a newscast before the contest.
- Need individuals for the position of anchor(s), sports, weather, feature, and commercial. Need off camera people to run cameras/tape recorder, help design set and help write copy.
- News team will gather own copy materials for news stories consisting of national, international, and state news, weather, and sports. Copy should be developed within the SCHOOL year.
- Presentation will include an original 'special news feature' – a written copy of that must be available at contest. A commercial written by the team must be included.
- Some costuming is permitted and audio/visual aids may be used.
- Eye contact, articulation, rate, tone, and pronunciation are important.
- Length – TV News 12-15 minutes; Radio Broadcasting 5 minutes

## SHORT FILM (2 entries)

- Students gather, edit, organize, prepare, and present a short film.
- Need off-camera people to run cameras/tape recorder, help design set and help write.
- May remake a popular story, do a movie trailer, music video, series of commercials, or other original material. May have human, animal, claymation, or animation actors.
- Storyline, editing, and acting are important.
- Length – 5 minutes

## MUSICAL THEATRE (3 entries)

- Perform a memorized scene with singing
- Music recorded ahead of time or use of CD
- May use 6 chairs and a table
- No costumes.
- Judging: effective acting and singing, ability to convey musical theatre
- Length: up to 10 minutes

## ONE-ACT PLAY (1 entry)

- Students perform a cutting of a play. This would be exactly like a regular play, only shortened.
- Props, costumes, scenery, and makeup are used
- Length: up to 35 minutes

**Non performers are also needed to assist behind the scenes: filming, film editing,**

# INDIVIDUAL SPEECH EVENTS

## Memorized Events

Acting/Solo Musical Theatre (6 entries; up to 3 of which can be SMT)

Public Address (3 entries)

Storytelling (3 entries)

## Events Written by the Student; Presented Memorized with Notes

Expository address (3 entries)

Original oratory (3 entries)

Reviewing (3 entries)

After-dinner speaking (3 entries)

## Events Not Memorized; Read Interpretively

Poetry (3 entries)

Prose (3 entries)

Literary Program (3 entries)

## Events Requiring Practice with the Final Performance Developed at Contest

Radio News Announcing (3 entries)

Spontaneous Speaking (3 entries)

Improvisation (3 entries)

## DESCRIPTION OF INDIVIDUAL SPEECH EVENTS

### ACTING (up to 6 entries)

- Serious and/or humorous material taken from a book, story, play or can be original; may have more than one source
- Memorized with the part/parts in the scene acted out. May be a monologue.
- Development of character(s) through facial expression, articulation, tone, physical movement, and energy.
- Introduction with title/author/insight - counts in time limit.
- No make up or props. One chair may be used.
- Length - 8 minutes.

### SOLO MUSICAL THEATRE (3 entries; take the place of 3 acting entries)

- One song, usually from a musical, sung and acted with recorded accompaniment
- Judged on effective acting and singing, ability of performer to convey material – must be acted, not just sung
- No intro, no makeup or props
- One chair may be used
- Length – 5 minutes

### IMPROVISATIONAL ACTING (3 entries)

- Two different character types and a situation are drawn in the Performance Room. Inanimate objects may be given as a 'character.' No note cards or outlines may be used. Create a story that is acted out and all three must be used.
- Imagination and creativity in developing the storyline and characters are important. Narration and characterization may be used. May be humorous or serious.
- No introduction - characters and situation are announced by room chair.
- One chair may be used, but no props. Can utilize normal wearing apparel.
- Preparation time - 3 minutes; performance time - up to 5 minutes.

### AFTER DINNER SPEAKING (3 entries)

- An original humorous or inspirational speech aimed at a particular audience.
- May be informative, inspirational or impressive, but basically entertaining. Should have a main theme or point. Should be an upbeat speech, which may include spontaneous and impromptu thoughts.
- Creativity, writing and delivery skills are important. Stories, anecdotes, quotations, puns, witty remarks, and humorous local and personal references can be used.
- Eye contact, facial expression, articulation, tone, and energy are all very important.
- Memorized or notes not to exceed 50 words may be used.
- Length - up to 5 minutes.

# MORE INDIVIDUAL SPEECH EVENTS

## STORYTELLING (3 entries)

- Re-telling any story in own words, using actions and character voices along with facial and vocal expression.
- May be a familiar children's story or a lesser-known tale, science fiction, classical literature, fables, myth, etc.
- Introduction with title/author may give insight into story and establish audience age.
- Eye contact, facial expression, different voices or gestures, articulation, tone, and energy are all very important.
- Story is 'told' to the audience while seated on a stool.
- Usually partially or completely memorized. No notes.
- Length - up to 5 minutes.

## EXPOSITORY ADDRESS (3 entries)

- An original informative speech on a topic of interest written by the student.
- May use props, posters, or other audio/visual aids. May wear appropriate outfit to complement the speech (tennis outfit for a speech on tennis). May use a PowerPoint presentation.
- Organization of ideas and clarity in delivery are important.
- Memorized or notes not to exceed 50 words may be used. Speech is not to be read.
- Length - up to 6 minutes. (plus 2 minute set-up time)

## Original Oratory (3 entries)

- Original persuasive speech on a topic of interest/concern to speaker. Must have a manuscript at contest.
- Organization of ideas and clarity in delivery are important. No separate introduction.
- Eye contact, facial expression, articulation, tone, and energy are all very important.
- Memorized or notes not to exceed 50 words may be used. A lectern may be used.
- Length - up to 8 minutes.

## Review (3 entries)

- An original critical analysis of a book or play read, or a movie/play seen or a made for TV movie or combination.
- Comments on the strengths or weakness of theme, style, characters, staging, and author/director may be included or may compare a book/play to the movie, etc. Quotes may be read from the book/script.
- Visual aids including books, video sleeves, playbills, production script may be used and placed on a small table provided.
- Memorized or notes not to exceed 50 words may be used.
- Length - up to 8 minutes. (Two minute setup time)

## Poetry (3 entries)

- One or more poetry selections, original or not.
- Need an introduction with title/author/insight and transitions if more than one selection. These count in time limit and should be 'said,' not 'read.'
- Read actual selection(s) from a manuscript - not memorized, but very familiar with script.
- Both facial and vocal expression are used to interpret the material including character differentiation with voice and focal placement. Interpretative changes through volume, pitch, pacing, facial expression and eye contact are important to convey the feeling of the selection.
- Length - up to 6 minutes.

## Prose (3 entries)

- One or more prose selections, original or not. (Prose is anything not poetry-short stories, or cuttings from novels, short stories, plays, etc.)
- Need an introduction with title/author/insight and transitions. These count in time limit and should be 'said,' not 'read.'
- Read actual selection(s) from a manuscript - not memorized, but very familiar with script.
- Both facial and vocal expression are used to interpret the material including character differentiation with voice and focal placement. Interpretative changes through volume, pitch, pacing, facial expression and eye contact are important to convey the feeling of the selection.
- Length - up to 6 minutes.

# MORE INDIVIDUAL SPEECH EVENTS

## Literary Program (3 entries)

- Minimum of one poetry and one prose selection on a central theme.
- Need an introduction and transitions to develop how the selections relate to the theme. Identify title/author of selections. These count in time limit and should be 'said,' not 'read.'
- Read the actual selections from a manuscript - not memorized, but very familiar with script.
- Both facial and vocal expressions are used to interpret the material including character differentiation with voice and focal placement. Interpretative changes through volume, pitch, pacing, facial expression and eye contact are important to convey the feeling of the selection.
- Length - up to 8 minutes.

## Public Address (3 entries)

- Presentation of another person's material that argues, persuades, moves, or attempts to convey understanding of the human experience. (a speech, a column, a nonfiction selection)
- Communicate the author's ideas and feelings. Not an impersonation of the original speaker, but your interpretation of the intent and emotion of the selection.
- Eye contact, facial expression, articulation, tone, and energy are all very important.
- Memorized or notes not to exceed 50 words may be used. A lectern may be used.
- Length - up to 8 minutes.

## Radio News Announcing (3 entries)

- Develops a 4-5 minute newscast to present during thirty minutes of preparation time at contest.
- Receives a packet of wire copy at contest containing international, national, and local news, weather, sports to edit and arrange into a 4-5 minute radio broadcast. A commercial is included and must be read exactly as written.
- A news 'flash' is handed to the speaker during the broadcast and must be read "cold."
- Broadcast is delivered over a speaker system without an audience in the room.
- Selection and editing of wire copy, articulation, pronunciation, tone, and energy are all very important.
- Preparation time - 30 minutes; performance time - must be between 4-5 minutes.

## Spontaneous Speaking (3 entries per team)

- Topics are based on a list of contemporary issues supplied by IHSSA before contest. Topics will be of a nature to encourage speaker to take a stand or position. Preparation time – 3 minutes; Length - up to 5 minutes.
- At contest, draw three questions based on those issues. Select one question and have 3 minutes to prepare a short persuasive speech on the selected question. Notes written during preparation time may be used.
- Statement of the issue and position as well as organization, knowledge, and directness of delivery are important.

# DETAILS ABOUT SPEECH CONTESTS

- To participate in speech, **participants MUST be available for all contest/performance dates.** While we can make special requests for performance times, these are not guaranteed and are usually NOT an option for non-school related conflicts. Please let your coach know ASAP of any conflicts you have.
- Official contest site locations come out in early December.
- Contest schedule and location details will be sent on the Monday before contest.
- We love spectators at speech contests so please invite family and friends to come!!!
- Spectators should NOT wear their school colors or clothing that refers to our school name or mascot. It is in the best interest of the performers that the judges do not know which school they are from.
- As per the IHSSA guidelines, there will be a \$3 admission charge at the door for those planning to attend the speech contest as a spectator. Programs will be available to purchase at the door but may not be needed if you print off the schedule the coach provides in advance.
- It is recommended that parents arrive an hour early to find parking and get acclimated to the center locations.
- There is usually NO WI-FI access at the school.
- There is NO photography or recording during any of the performances without written permission from the Iowa High School Speech Association. Please don't attempt it as it may disqualify the performing group.
- Home Base for the students is usually located in the school gymnasium. Except during their performance times, this or the cafeteria would be a good place to start when looking for your child or anyone from our school. The gym is also usually where the ratings will be posted (don't expect this to happen right away – it could take some time for the ratings to appear).
- Concessions will be available for breakfast and lunch. Students are encouraged to eat at the concession stand as this is the school's way of raising funds to support their program. We would expect/hope for the same.
- **Unless there are legitimate conflicts I ask that ALL students view each other's performances and remain at the contest until the final performance is completed. As a team, we need to support each and every one of our groups. At the end of our performances, if you wish to have your child ride home with you instead of riding the bus: I will need a written note with your signature or locate the coach to sign the very important clip board.**
- **Parents are encouraged to watch our other performances as well. It's much easier to perform to a group of people whom you know rather than an empty room or one filled with strangers. You are welcome to watch performances by other schools too.**

## ***What are the qualifications of the judges?***

ALL IHSSA judges have gone through training and certification. Please accept your student's ratings with pride and dignity. Adhere to proper sportsmanship at all times.

## ***How are ratings given?***

At DISTRICTS, one judge critiques the performance with a I, II, III or a Disqualification IV rating. The judge also gives an oral critique directly following the performance. Only those performances receiving a I rating advance to State. One Act Plays will have three judges at districts. At STATE, three judges critique the performance. No oral critique is given. Only those performances that receive at least two All-State nominations AND also are in the upper percentages of point ratings will advance to All-State. At ALL-STATE FESTIVAL, a professional artist adjudicates the performance. All-State is not a competition, but a celebration of excellence.

## ***If I have a questions/concern about my child's rating, what should I do?***

Visit with the head coach of your own school in person.

Important: Because performances are taking place in many classrooms in the school building, conversation in the hallways should be kept to minimum.

# SPEECH CONTEST DOs AND DON'Ts

When we are at contests, please remember that we are representing our school.  
Please conduct yourself in a manner that is respectful and represents our school in a positive way.

## Students, when we arrive at contest sites...

- Assist with unloading the bus.
- Go with the group to our home base.
- Acclimate yourself to the layout of the school.
- Find your center and determine how you will set up and use the space.
  - \* Do this BEFORE the performances begin!
- Prepare yourselves for your performances.

## How to Dress for Contest:

- Dress appropriately (for your performance and as a spectator): Keep it classy. Do not call attention to yourselves, judges want to give their focus to your performance. Tops should not be low cut and should cover navels and arm pits. They should be tucked in if appropriate. Make sure your skirt or dress is long enough. Consider your performance... should you be wearing a skirt or dress? Wear the proper undergarments. Avoid jeans..keep slacks at waistline and wear a belt. No yoga pants. No flip flops, high heels or sandals (start practicing now with the shoes you will perform in). Take care of your fellow ensemble members....you may need to loan them something on contest day.
- Other: don't wear colored nail polish, remove all jewelry, no big bows or ribbons, be conservative with make-up – **PULL HAIR BACK!**
- For the Large Group performances, wear what is decided by the group.
- Do not wear any school identifying clothing into the performance centers.

## Your Performances:

- Your coach will do her best to make it to most of our performances although the schedule may prevent her from doing so. If it is possible, you may request that another group perform before you while you wait for your coach (or your parents) to arrive. If the center is running ahead of schedule and want you to perform early, you are allowed to wait until your spectators arrive as long as it's not beyond your scheduled time.
- You or one performer from each group (for large group) will be responsible for taking a comment sheet with you to your performance and handing it to the room chairperson when you are invited into the room.
  - At Districts – there will be one form for all groups/indiv except One Act who will have three.
  - At State – all groups will have three.
- Upon entering the room, adjust where you stand/sit according to the layout of the room you are in and make sure you're not too close or far away from the judge.
- **Wait for the judges** to signal that they are ready for you to begin.
- Remember to stop IMMEDIATELY when the whistle blows to tell you your time is up (if not you can be disqualified). The only event that gives a countdown at Large Group is Improv. For Indiv. Events there will be more rooms with a count down.
- At the conclusion of your presentation, the judge will give you oral comments (at Districts) so listen carefully, nod, smile and say thank you (One Act will not receive oral comments). Do not argue or justify something you did in your performance unless the judge specifically ask you to reply and if they do, be short and sweet. Note: there may be times when oral comments are not given at Districts (this is usually due to weather or rescheduled contests).

Remember we are not only at this contest to let our own gifts shine but also to support and encourage the other groups from our school. I also encourage our students to watch other schools and see their style and skills and to simply enjoy their performances.

**When time allows, PLEASE WATCH OTHERS PERFORMING!**



# PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT

**Participants in contest speech agree to fulfill the following duties or responsibilities as a member of the Contest Speech Team.**

- As a member of my group(s), I understand my responsibility to be accountable to the other members of this team. If I know in advance that I have a family or church function that I must attend, I will let my coaches know. I understand it is my responsibility to tell the coaches rather than have a friend let them know. For a practice to be excused, the coach needs to be informed as far in advance as possible. Once the schedule is made available, work, getting my hair cut, too much homework, rescheduled lessons, helping with other school events, appointments, etc. are not excused absences. Family or church functions, sports practices/meets, illness, and college visits may be excused as long as the coach knows ahead of time. If I have any questions, I will talk with my coach. **Three unexcused practices may result in being dropped from the event.**
- I understand that practices held after District Contest are important and I am committed to being there.
- I will receive a calendar of practices and contest dates to which I know I need to follow. If I don't receive one, I will be sure to contact the coach to get one. I have checked the contest dates and know that I can and will be there. Work is not an excuse for missing contest. Even if I am involved in a pre-taped event I know that I am still expected to be at contest (although a few exceptions may apply such as wrestling or family emergencies).
- For each practice I will bring MY SCRIPT, a pencil, a positive attitude and a primed ear to listen. When the coach gives me important blocking or cues, I will take the time to write down directions. The notes that the coach gives are important and therefore I will listen.
- When the coach gives me suggestions and ideas to try, I will respect her judgment and will attempt to do what is asked of me.
- At all practices, I will turn off my cell phone. This means I will not call or text anyone unless it has been approved by the coach.
- If fundraising is necessary, I will help do my part.
- My attendance at team bonding activities is optional but I will consider attending because this is a good way form a community among my team.
- I understand that while I may be participating in small groups or as an individual this is a TEAM ACTIVITY. I will respect all of my team members and will support and encourage them.
- I agree that it is important for me to stay at contests until our final performer is done. This is an important part of being on a team. I also agree that while at contests, I should use my free time to practice for my event, watch my teammates perform or watch performances by other schools.
- While at contests I will behave respectfully, dress appropriately and clean up after myself.
- Since this is a school activity, I will follow the school's good conduct policy. If I violate the policy in any way, I know that I will be dropped from speech. I also know that grades are important. If during Large Group season I fail a class at semester, I know that I will be replaced and will not get my spot back.
- I understand that a local "Showcase" performance is scheduled for both contest seasons and I am expected to be there.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*(keep this copy for your records — another will be provided for you to sign during a meeting/practice)*

## **Contest Speech is also about the TEAM and the fun we can have together!**

During practices we will have times to work on our performance skills by playing a variety of theatre games. These are quite often the highlight of our practices.

Bonding Nights may be scheduled during the seasons and participants from both Large Group and Individual are welcome to attend any of them.

A Showcase will be scheduled for both Lg Group and Individual. This is an opportunity for the community, classmates and family to see the performances if they are unable to make it to the contests.

**Parent help will be requested for Bonding Nights, Speech Showcase and other needs as they arise.**

---

## **Coach's Contact Information**

Open and timely communication with the coach is important.  
Please contact her with any questions, conflicts, concerns, changes, ideas, etc.

**Amy Kueper**

akueper@spirit-lake.k12.ia.us

712-330-4841

Most communication will be done through REMIND.

If you haven't already done so, be sure to set up your account as soon as possible using the links below.

You can set your profile up to receive messages by text and email.

When receiving messages via text, be sure to check the message for attachments to download.

If you don't wish to download them on your phone, forward the message to your email.

Large Group STUDENT Link: <https://www.remind.com/join/act1ngup>

Large Group PARENT Link: <https://www.remind.com/join/act1ngup2>

Individuals STUDENT Link: <https://www.remind.com/join/b33hb7>

Individuals PARENT Link: <https://www.remind.com/join/hdgf46>