

2021 KO Public Speaking Tournament Event Guidelines

After-Dinner Speaking

1. Each speaker must deliver an original humorous address to a group (real or imaginary) with a common interest at a formal dinner (e.g. a male nurse may speak at a convention of men in traditionally female jobs, the Bowdlerizers of America may have a lecture on cleaning up Shakespeare, or an anger management expert may address parents of Little Leaguers).
2. The intent of the speech is to entertain *as well as* to inform. The speaker must deliver some new and relevant insights. Wit and satire are desirable; stand-up comedy acts will not suffice.
3. The speech should be five to seven minutes long. Time penalties will be assessed as follows:
 - 2 point penalty for being 1-30 seconds before or beyond the time limits
 - 10 point penalty for being 31+ seconds before or beyond the time limits
4. Notes must be limited to one 3x5 index card, and should be used as little as possible.
5. Props may not be used.

Persuasive Speaking

1. Each speaker must deliver an original speech on a serious topic. Speeches must contain credible documented research.
2. A problem/solution approach must be taken. However, equal time need not be given to the problem and the solution. For example, the speaker may choose to spend the lion's share of the speech convincing the audience that a problem exists (or that a seemingly trivial issue is actually a serious problem). Alternatively, he or she may outline an acknowledged weighty problem more briefly and then delve into a longer solution.
3. Speeches should be seven to ten minutes long. Time penalties will be assessed as follows:
 - 2 point penalty for being 1-30 seconds before or beyond the time limits
 - 10 point penalty for being 31+ seconds before or beyond the time limits
4. Notes must be limited to one 3x5 index card, and should be used as little as possible.
5. Props may not be used.

Impromptu Speaking

1. Each speaker will draw a card with three topics, which may be a words, quotations or phrases—anything not related to current events. The speaker then has two minutes to select one of the three topics and prepare his or her speech.
2. Competitors may sit or stand when preparing but must remain in the room. Competitors may take notes while they are preparing but may **not** use any notes when speaking.
3. Competitors may speak in favor of the topic, against it, or about it. They may interpret within reason. They must, however, deal with the topic that they have been given and may not use a previously prepared speech or barely related theme. Wit, humor, philosophy, sentiment and absurdity are all equally welcome. Judges will be looking for agility of thought, for “meat on the bones,” for organizational ability, and—above all—for the ability of each speaker to communicate with style and originality.
4. Speeches must be three to five minutes long (with fifteen seconds grace on either side). A time penalty of ten points will be assessed for going under two minutes forty-five seconds or over five minutes fifteen seconds.
5. At the end of the speech the topic must be handed back to the moderator who will announce the topic to the room.

Ethical Dilemmas

1. Each contestant will draw a card with a brief description of an ethical problem or situation that invites resolution.
2. The contestant will have ten minutes of preparation time to analyze the problem and make notes on an index card that will be provided. Contestants may refer to their notes on the index card as they are speaking.
3. Responses should be three to five minutes long (with fifteen seconds grace on either side). A time penalty of ten points will be assessed for going under two minutes forty-five seconds or over five minutes fifteen seconds.
4. Each speech must:
 - Briefly outline the situation.
 - Clearly delineate the conflict of interests and values that must be taken into consideration before reaching a solution.
 - Present a solution along with the reason(s) that would make that particular solution preferable to other solutions.
5. Judges will be looking for a serious examination of the central ethical issue(s) in each situation regardless of how plausible or preposterous the situation given may be.

Sample Ethical Dilemma

Sam, a strong swimmer trained in Red Cross life saving, is the sole remaining passenger on a rapidly sinking ship bound for Stratford on Avon. As he prepares to leap into his handy lifeboat, he realizes that just within his grasp are an old woman (of no relation to him) and the only existing copies of two Shakespearean plays that have just been discovered. The old woman is struggling mightily to stay afloat, and the plays are about to sink to the murky depths forever. If Sam does not save the old woman, she will certainly drown. If Sam does not save the plays, they will be lost to humanity forever.

Sam only has time to save one, alas. Which should he save?