

*Massachusetts Forensic League
Individual Events*

*Judge's
Handbook*

Last updated October 5, 2009

Thank You

On behalf of the Massachusetts Forensic League and all member schools, we would like to thank you for judging today. Without you, this tournament could not function. We hope that you enjoy the results of the hard work that these competitors have put into preparing their performances.

Contents

Instructions for Judges – p. 3
Questions & Answers for Judges – p. 5
Massachusetts Forensic League Event Rules – p. 8
What to Expect on Tournament Days – p. 12
Glossary of Speech Team Terms – p. 14
Sample Ballot – p. 17

Instructions for Judges

General Instructions

1. All judges should familiarize themselves with the description of the categories offered at the tournament.
2. If you have any students in your round with whom you have worked or whom you know personally, contact the TAB room before starting the round. They will make any necessary adjustments.
3. Do not carry on a personal conversation with a contestant that could cause another contestant to feel you might be biased.
4. Judges are not to change individual rounds with other judges. If changes in scheduling need to be done, notify the Tab Room personnel or the Tournament Director.
5. Some singing is permissible in interpretation and reading events. However, it should be of a limited nature. The story should be the focus of the presentation, not the student's singing voice.
6. League rules dictate that standard rules of etiquette and professionalism will be abided by at all times. Breaches of those guidelines MAY affect your ranking of the round. It is also appropriate for you to ask a student to stop doing something that you feel is unacceptable during a round (reading, sleeping, eating, drinking, tapping a pencil on the table etc.) Report seriously inappropriate behavior to the TAB room and the student's coach will be informed. Any repetition of the behavior will result in disciplinary action by the MFL board and could mean disqualification from future competition.
7. Judges are not to confer with other judges while ranking or rating students seen. Avoid talking between rounds with other judges. You may prejudice a future judge of those students.

Conducting a Round

8. Remind all people in the room to turn off cell phones and beepers before the round begins.
9. Students should speak in an order randomly determined in the round. Usually judges take small slips of paper and write the numbers 1-6 on them. Students then draw a number to determine the speaker order. The order posted on the schematic is NOT random and should not be used to establish speaker order. In draw events (extemp, radio) students are sent from the prep room in the appropriate speaking order. Listen to them in the order that they arrive.
10. It is common courtesy to listen with interest to all students. No eating or drinking should take place during a round of competition.
11. Do not stop a student during a presentation unless there is an emergency (e.g. fire alarm) or a significant disruption to the performance that clearly impacts the contestant's ability to proceed. In that case, please allow the contestant to start again (from the beginning) once the disruption ceases.

Timing

12. It is the judge's responsibility to time the selection and record the time on the critique sheet. Time limits are listed on the ballots. Students who exceed those time limits will be penalized IN THE TAB ROOM by a reduction of one rank in the round. Time violations should be noted at the top of

the ballot, with the exact elapsed time of the performance indicated. The tabulation personnel will adjust the score. The judge should rank the round without consideration of that reduction. Obviously, a breach of the time requirement may be cause for distinction between performances of otherwise equal caliber. No student will be moved up because of a violation charge.

13. Judges should give students hand signals for time where requested by the student. In Extemporaneous Speaking and Radio Broadcasting judges **MUST provide time signals**. Judges should time accurately and do everything possible to inform the students of their timing systems. Students may waive the right to see time signals.

Traditionally, time signals in Extemp and Radio are provided at the following time intervals:

Time Remaining: 5 4 3 2 1 1/2 Stop

If a student would prefer time signals at different places, you should do your best to accommodate that request if it is reasonable.

If a student exceeds the time limit and grace period, it is a courtesy to inform him/her discreetly after the round.

Filling out the Ballots

14. The critique sheets are the only feedback that the student will receive from you at the end of the day. **BE CONSTRUCTIVE and SUPPORTIVE**. Give a balance of both positive aspects and areas in need of improvement. If the round was difficult to judge because of the high caliber, tell the student. **Give each student a pat on the back and something to work on.**
15. All events in speech (other than Congress) use the same ranking system. That means after you hear all contestants in a round you decide who did the best job and rank the students 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. There can be no ties.
16. Quality points must also be assigned to each performance. The range is 70%-100%. Be consistent throughout the day. It is customary to award between 80-100 points unless a student is clearly unprepared (has not memorized the piece in a memorized event etc.) 100 points should only be awarded to a performance that is extraordinary. Avoid 'ties' by giving each performance a different number of quality points.
17. If you have any question about the suitability of a student's material, if you feel there may have been a rule or time violation, or you question whether or not a student's dress may constitute a costume, **DO NOT MARK THE STUDENT DOWN**. Base your score on the performance given. After the round, report your concern to the TAB room. The MFL director in charge will check and make a determination on the possible violation. If it is a **TIME** violation, mark that on the ballot as well.
18. Judges must clearly identify themselves on the critique sheet by listing name and school for which they are judging.

Questions and Answers for Judges

Question: Is there anything I should bring to the tournament?

Answer: You should bring a stop watch or watch with a second hand so you can accurately time performances. You will also need a pen so you can write comments. Lunch is generally for sale at the tournament, but if you have special dietary concerns you might want to pack a lunch. There is quite a bit of 'down' time during the day between rounds. You may want to bring a book to read or some work to do when you are not in rounds.

Question: What should I do when I first arrive at the tournament site?

Answer: Find the head coach from your school to get your judge code and your judging assignment for the day. If you can't find him/her, check in at the registration table and the tournament staff will help you locate someone who can help you. Your assignment will generally include 3 different rounds, in 3 different events and possibly a final round. Review the rules in your judge's handbook so you are familiar with the judging criteria for those events. Most tournaments also have a judges' briefing at 8:30 am during which they review the rules and answer questions. It is particularly important that you attend this meeting if you are relatively new to judging.

Question: How do I fill out the ballots?

Answer: When you arrive in the competition room the contestants will write their competition number, the name of their piece and the author (if it's not an original speech) on the classroom white/blackboard. Copy this information onto the judging sheets. You should also sign each form and put the name of the school you represent on the line that says "School" at the bottom of the page. Write your judge code at the top of the page in the space provided.

As the students speak, write comments in the space provided. Remember to include positive comments as well as suggestions for improvement. This is the only feedback a student will receive about his/her performance, and students are eager to know what they did well and how they can do better next time. If a student does not get 'first place' he/she will be particularly interested in what you think could have been done better. In order to keep the round moving, judges should write comments while the students are speaking.

Time the performance and write down how long it took on the line that says "Time elapsed." If there is a time violation, remember to bring that to the attention of the folks in the Tab room when you turn in your ballots.

Question: Is there anything I need to know to run a round of competition?

Answer: In most cases there will be 5-6 students in the room with you. Observers are permitted as long as they are respectful and do not disrupt the round. The first thing you should do is establish speaker order if it has not been predetermined. You can write the numbers 1-6 on little slips of paper, mix them up and have students draw a number. They should then write the number on the board next to their piece title and competitor number. Call students up to do their pieces one at a time in that order.

Remind everyone in the room to turn off their cell phones and beepers before the round begins.

Do everything you can to make the competitors feel at ease in the round. It is fine to smile, laugh, etc. at appropriate moments during presentations. This will do a lot to make competitors feel that you are engaged in their performance. Students who get no response from their judges often leave rounds feeling like they must have done a terrible job.

Offer to give students time signals. Many will politely decline the offer. However, students doing extemp and radio will depend upon them in order to properly pace their speeches. Clarify how you will give your time signals so that there are no surprises during the round.

Question: Is it O.K. for me to judge a student whom I judged at a competition earlier this year?

Answer: Yes. If you have judged or seen the student's performance at a previous tournament, please do your best to judge him/her as if you have never seen the performance before. However, you should not judge a student from the school with which you are affiliated.

Question: What do I do if there is a fire alarm during a round?

Answer: If an emergency arises, like a fire alarm or building evacuation announcement, have the students exit the building immediately. They are used to fire drills at school, so this will probably be more disconcerting to you than it is to them. Students should find their coaches once they are outside the building. When the alarm is over, if it is safe to return to the building, you will receive instructions about how to continue the round.

Question: What do I do if the round is interrupted in some other way?

Answer: If there is a significant disruption during a student's performance that clearly impacts the ability of the student to proceed, please allow the student to stop if he/she requests to do so. The student should take the lead in such circumstances. Don't interrupt the student if he/she decides to continue unless you feel it is unsafe to proceed. Such interruptions may include someone opening the door and entering/talking while the student is performing, an emergency that the performer experiences such as a bloody nose, coughing fit, insulin pump alarm sounding etc. Once the disruption ceases, please allow the student to start again (from the beginning) if it is possible for him/her to proceed. Sometimes noise from adjacent rooms can be heard through the walls. This is unavoidable and students should continue without stopping in these cases.

Question: What do I do if I find a student's piece to be offensive or profoundly in conflict with my views or beliefs?

Answer: In certain events, such as original oratory and extemp, it is the job of the student to present a plausible argument, backed up by reliable sources and/or thoughtful analysis. You may not agree with the student's perspective, but the rank you assign should reflect the quality of the analysis, how well he/she supports the position, and the quality of the delivery of the speech.

With interpretive events it is a little murkier. Some students consciously choose to perform material that they find thought provoking and challenging. You may find this decision makes you uncomfortable. However, we ask that you do your best to rank the student based upon the quality of his/her performance rather than the content of the piece. Please keep in mind that students come from a variety of backgrounds and may not share your values. Try to respect their choices and to be as objective as possible.

You may bring your concerns to the attention of the Tab personnel when you return your ballots if you feel strongly that a piece is inappropriate.

Question: What do I do if I think a competitor has broken a rule or is behaving inappropriately?

Answer: If you suspect a rule violation, fill out the ballot and rank the student anyway. Then, alert the Tab staff when you turn in your ballots. They will look into the matter and make a ruling about it.

League rules dictate that standard rules of etiquette and professionalism will be abided by at all times. Breaches of those guidelines MAY affect your ranking of the round and you can write a note on the student's ballot if you wish. It is also appropriate for you to ask a student to stop doing something that you feel is unacceptable during a round (texting, reading, sleeping, eating, drinking, tapping a pencil on the table etc.) If the student is an observer, you may ask him/her to leave the room. Report seriously inappropriate behavior to the TAB room and the student's coach will be informed. Any repetition of the behavior will result in disciplinary action by the MFL board and could mean disqualification from future competition.

Question: What do I do at the end of the round?

Answer: Thank all the competitors for their fine performances and allow them to leave the room. Then, rank the students and fill in the quality points. Remember that a "1" is given to the performance that you feel is best. Read over your comments and be sure that there is at least one comment about what you liked and at least one constructive bit of advice for improvement on each ballot. Then take all of your ballots to the Tab Room and hand them in. If there were time violations, inform the staff when they collect your ballots. They will give you your next set of ballots at that time. Ballots should be handed in within 15 minutes of the end of the round. If you need more time to write comments and you are 'free' for a while before your next round starts, check in at the ballot table so they know where the ballots are. When people disappear with ballots, the Tab personnel have a tendency to panic.

Massachusetts Forensic League Event Rules

Note: Some singing is permissible in interpretation and reading events. However, it should be of a limited nature. The story should be the focus of the presentation, not the student's singing voice.

Children's Literature

Time: 10 minute maximum including introduction [30 second grace]; no minimum.

This event requires the use of a manuscript. The student should present material designed to read to children so that it may be understood and appreciated by a young child or children. (Note: This does not mean the literature must fall under nursery level only). The selection must be from a single published fictional or non-fictional story, play, a single long poem or a program of poetry. Material from more than one source is not allowed. The author's words as published in the literature may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. The student may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character/s. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author. The cutting should provide a cohesive scene or storyline (containing a definite beginning, middle and end). No costumes or props may be used in the presentation.

Declamation (Oratorical)

Time: 10 min maximum [30 second grace]; no minimum

Declamation is a memorized event in which the student delivers a speech written by some other person. The speech must have been presented as a public address and found in print, on video, DVD or on an audio recording. Speeches that have been used only for forensic competition are not acceptable, even if they can be found in print. The presentation should include an introduction that provides the title of the speech and the author, and should include relevant information about the theme and date of the oration or its historical significance. Dialects of the original speaker need not be mimicked. No scripts, costumes, or props may be used in the presentation.

Duo Interpretation

Time: 10 minute maximum including introduction [30 second grace]; no minimum.

Duo is a unique, memorized event challenging two performers to render a dynamic moment utilizing appropriate vocal expression, gesture, and interaction between partners. As a unit, the two performers will vocally and physically respond to each other's verbal and non-verbal cues while maintaining an off-stage focus. Thus, the scene requiring disciplined interplay between partners and the environment is created in the minds of the audience. The students may only touch and make eye contact during their own written introduction. If lines from the selection are used in the introduction, the contestants must adhere to the rules of the event. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author. The selection must be from a single published play, a fictional or non-fictional work, or a poem. Material from more than one source is not allowed. The author's words as published in the literature may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. Speakers may not take lines belonging to one character and apply them to a different character in the performance. The material may be humorous or dramatic, or may combine both tones, depending on the work selected. Performers may play more than one character if they choose, but it is not required. No scripts, costumes or props may be used in the presentation.

Dramatic Performance

Time: 10 minute maximum including introduction [30 second grace]; no minimum.

This is a memorized event in which the student presents a memorized selection of literature. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author, and should develop the narrative and/or character(s) via vocal and physical techniques. The selection must be from a single published play, a fictional or non-fictional work, or a poem or program of poetry. The author's words as published in the literature may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. No scripts, costumes, or props may be used in the presentation.

Extemporaneous Speaking

(Novice Extemporaneous Speaking is the same as Extemporaneous Speaking, but is limited to first year competitors.)

Time: 7 min. maximum [30 second grace]; no minimum.

The students will draw three topics of current interest from the material prepared by the tournament director. Usually topics are based on articles taken from recent issues of publications from major media outlets. The student must pick one of the three topics to prepare for a presentation. The students will have a 30 minute preparation period during which personal information files of books, magazines, and/or newspapers may be used to put together the presentation. After the preparation period, the student should deliver a speech to be evaluated for content and delivery. A single note-card with no more than 50 written words is permitted. If a note-card is to be used, the judge must review it prior to the presentation. Any note-card violation should be brought to the attention of the prep room coordinator prior to the speech; or, the student may choose to proceed without the use of the note-card. The topic slip must be presented to the judge in the round. No visual aids are allowed.

Finals in Extemp:

In the final round of Extemporaneous Speaking, a 3 minute cross examination period will follow each speech. *This will not occur in Novice Extemporaneous Speaking.*

Each speaker will be cross examined by the speaker who spoke before him/her in the round, with the first speaker being cross examined by the student scheduled to speak last in the round. As a student speaks, the student who will ask him/her questions will watch. Immediately following the speech, the questioner will engage the speaker in cross examination for a three minute period. The judge or timer should keep time and give time signals to both speakers during cross examination; at the close of the 3 minute period no further questions may be asked, but a speaker may finish the answer to a question past the 3 minute period. The purpose of cross examination is to expand upon important points in a speaker's speech and test their full knowledge of the subject. Cross examination periods should be cordial and concentrate solely on the topic of the speech. Speakers should not talk over each other, nor should they monopolize the time; they must permit one another time to answer or ask questions. Judges should consider each speaker's answers and the questions they ask in their final ranking of the round. Neither student may refer to notes during the cross-examination period.

A note about time signals:

In extemporaneous speaking, time signals are extremely important. Because students are composing their speeches 'on the spot', they depend upon clear and accurate time signals in order to pace their speeches. Typically, students will expect to see 5 fingers when they have 5 minutes left, 4 when they have four minutes left, 3 when they have three minutes left etc. At 7 minutes they expect to see a fist. Under no circumstances should you interrupt a student who is speaking by yelling out how much time s/he has left. A student has the right to request time signals at different intervals and you should do your best to accommodate them if the request is reasonable.

Group Discussion

Group Discussion is an event in which students discuss and argue a topic set at the beginning of the round. The topics will present an issue, designed to introduce a variety of conflicting opinions. Students will be given the generic nature of the issue in the invitation, with a specific focus to be discussed at the start of the round. Students should research the topic in advance and may bring notes and outside resources into the competition. After the topic is revealed, students will be given 5 minutes to formulate their argument, draw for speaking order, and then each shall be given 2 minutes to deliver an opening statement. Then an open discussion period of up to 15 minutes shall follow in which the issue is discussed and criteria for a resolution or recommendation are established, followed by another period of open discussion of up to 15 minutes to present and discuss possible solutions that meet those criteria. The students will then have 1 minute to prepare their final arguments and 2 minutes to present their final argument in the reverse order of their opening.

Multiple Reading

Time: 12 minute maximum including introduction [30 second grace]; no minimum.

This event requires the use of a manuscript. A group of 3-8 students will present a scene or scenes from published material (play(s), work(s) of prose, and/or work(s) of poetry. The material may be either serious or humorous in nature. The students may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character/s; however, the focus of the performers should be off-stage. The students may only touch and make eye contact during their own written introduction. If lines from the selection are used in the introduction, the contestants must adhere to the rules of the event. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name(s) of the piece(s) and the author(s). The cutting should provide a cohesive scene or storyline (containing a definite beginning, middle and end). The material must be found in printed literature. Props, costumes, and other theatrical devices are prohibited; however, reader's stands or stools may be used.

Novice Reading

Time: 10 minute maximum including introduction [30 second grace]; no minimum.

This event is limited to first year forensic competitors ONLY and requires the use of a manuscript. The student will present material either from prose, poetry, or drama. Children's literature is acceptable in this category. The student may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character/s. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author. The selection must be from a single published play, a fictional or non-fictional work, or a poem. Material from more than one source is not allowed. The author's words as published in the literature may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. No costumes or props may be used in the presentation.

Original Oratory

Time: 10 min. maximum [30 second grace]; no minimum.

Oratory is a memorized event in which the student presents original thought and commentary on a topic of his/her choice. Generally, but not always, the speech is of a persuasive nature. No manuscripts may be used during the presentation. A maximum of 150 directly quoted words is allowed in the oration. Students will be judged on their delivery skills and ability to discuss the topic effectively and intelligently. No scripts, costumes, or props may be used in the presentation.

Play Reading

Time: 10 minute maximum including introduction [30 second grace]; no minimum.

This event requires the use of a manuscript. The student should present a scene or scenes from a published play. The material may be either serious or humorous in nature. The student may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character or characters. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author. The selection must be from a single published play. Material from more than one source is not allowed. The author's words as published in the play may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. No costumes or props may be used in the presentation.

Poetry Reading

Time: 10 minute maximum including introduction [30 second grace]; no minimum.

This event requires the use of a manuscript. The student will present material chosen from published poetry. Students may present either a single, long poem or several shorter poems connected either by theme or by author. The student may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character/s. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece(s) and the author(s). The poetry need not have a rhyming pattern. Free verse poetry is acceptable in this event. Verse dramas such as *For Colored Girls . . .*, including the plays of Shakespeare, are not classified as poetry. The material must be found in printed literature. No costumes or props may be used in the presentation.

Prose Reading

Time: 10 minute maximum including introduction [30 second grace]; no minimum.

This event requires the use of a manuscript. The student will present material chosen from a single published short story, novel, or essay, fictive or non-fictive. The material may be either serious or humorous in nature. The student may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character/s. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author. No costumes or props may be used in the presentation.

Radio Broadcasting

Time: 5 minutes; 5 second grace over or under time. (So they have between 4:55-5:05)

Radio broadcasting is a public address event in which a student presents a classic "top-of-the-hour" news broadcast in the voice of a single professional broadcaster. In this event, each student will receive a packet of news-copy or a newspaper. The student will report to a preparation room where s/he will have 30 minutes to select and organize the material into a 5 minute radio news broadcast. Judges will listen to (not watch) the presentation. Throughout the broadcast, the timekeeper or judge will keep the student informed of time. Students may use minimal introductory remarks and transitional material. Advertising, including sponsorship taglines, is not allowed even if it is included in the copy provided by the tournament staff.

Student Congress

In this event, students simulate a working House of Representatives or Senate of the US Congress. Students debate legislation they have written, conduct the rules and regulations of the chambers, and vote on enacting bills and resolutions. Students do not pretend to be members of the real US Congress, but instead speak for themselves and debate their own viewpoints. Students should debate the issues with eloquence and strong analysis and research on the legislation, as well as answering and countering the arguments of the opposing side where appropriate. Students should also conduct themselves fairly and responsibly in the workings of the chamber, and may be penalized for inappropriate or disruptive actions therein. The Student Congress will be run under the direction of a league official called the Parliamentarian. The Congress Chair will maintain guidelines and rules of conduct for the Student Congress.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON TOURNAMENT DAYS

Arrival

Find your team in the cafeteria (or wherever the host school designates as the location for teams to gather.) Be sure to get your judge number from your head coach if you don't already have it. There will usually be a brief judge meeting between 8:30-9:00 am. Ballots for the first round are generally handed out at the end of the meeting.

Opening Meeting

At most tournaments there will be a brief opening meeting around 9:00 am. At this time the tournament hosts will explain about any building rules you must follow. They may announce changes to the schedule and they will often explain how to navigate their building. It is very important that all students attend this meeting and that they listen carefully to all information presented.

Ballots

You will receive a pack of 6 ballots for the event you are judging and a label with a list of the competitors affixed to the top right corner of the top ballot. The room number will also be listed. Only the students on your label should be permitted to speak in your room unless they come with a message from TAB saying that there has been a change. If a student that is not on your list shows up to speak in your room, send them to re-check the postings. They probably got mixed up. *This is extremely important because students who speak in the wrong room will automatically be ranked last. They will not be given the opportunity to go to the correct room and speak again.*

After the round is over, return your ballots to the TAB table and pick up your ballots for the next round.

Preliminary Rounds

Students will compete in three preliminary rounds at three different times in individual events. Once the opening meeting is over, students and judges should go to their first rounds.

Between rounds, talk with students and other judges and have fun.

There is often a lot of down-time between rounds, especially between the last prelim round and finals. Bring something to do and encourage the students to do the same.

Food

Food is usually available throughout the competition day. Host sites usually sell breakfast foods (coffee, bagels, donuts etc.) in the morning and pizza, sandwiches, and snacks etc. later in the day. Most host sites provide a good selection of foods and beverages that students and adults can purchase when they get hungry. Many students and judges grab lunch between rounds. Some prefer to wait until their preliminary rounds are over.

Breaks to Finals

After the preliminary rounds are over, there will be a break while the TAB room determines who will advance to finals. (Many students eat lunch during this break.) Judges are assigned after all preliminary rounds are over, so you won't know if you have a final round until just before finals start. This is because judges cannot judge students from their own school, so they cannot be assigned until the TAB room knows who is in finals in each event.

The Awards Ceremony

After finals there will be an awards ceremony where final placements are announced and trophies are presented to the winners. In the MFL, all students who advance to finals will receive some sort of tangible recognition, usually a trophy. The "top novice" in each non-novice event usually receives an award as well. At many tournaments 'sweepstakes' awards are given. These recognize entire teams for doing well.

The final awards ceremony is a time when good-sportsmanship is important and mature behavior is expected. Cat calls, booing, wild screaming etc. is not appropriate. Students should applaud the student receiving an award. For example, when the 2nd place winner is announced it is time to applaud that student, not the one who is 1st but has not yet been announced. There is a tradition in the MFL that we stand and applaud to recognize the 1st place winner in each event.

Glossary of Speech League Terms

ballot	While competitors are performing, judges make notes on ballots . Each judge fills out one ballot for each student in each round. Judges are supposed to give constructive criticism as well as note where performers have done well. Judges' comments can be of varying quality, but can often be very helpful as students strive to improve their performances. In addition to comments, the judge will record the rank in the round and quality points (at tournaments which use them) on the ballot. You will get your ballots at the end of a tournament.
break	After preliminary rounds are completed, the TAB room determines which students will advance to the next round, based upon their ranks. Those who advance are said to " break " into the next round. The breaks are sometimes announced and sometimes posted on the wall. So, while it sounds like you wouldn't want it to happen, breaking is good at a speech tournament. Students who do not break to finals will benefit from attending a final round. This is one of the best ways to learn about what it takes to get to finals.
car talk (aka: van talk or bus talk)	If you have anything to say about your competitors, your judge, your own performance etc. that should not be heard by others, you should wait until you are on your way home from the tournament. We call those things that should not be said in public " car talk " because we wait to talk about them until we are in a car with the doors closed, driving away from a tournament so there is no possibility of being overheard.
NCFL	National Catholic Forensic League . They hold a national tournament each year over Memorial Day Weekend. In order to attend this tournament students have to enter a special qualifying tournament. The top competitors in each of these events at qualifiers get to go to CFL Nationals: OO, DUO, DEC, VX, OI, DP and Congress as well as debate events.
competition number	When a student competes at a tournament, s/he is assigned a competition number , which is used to identify them throughout the tournament. This ensures that they are anonymous to their judge so that their opinion is as objective as possible (no "you have my best friend's name", "You're from our rival school", etc.). Students get a different number for each event they enter and at each tournament they attend. It is very important that they remember their number(s) accurately so they can check the schematics (postings) and go to the correct competition rooms.
cume	Short for cumulatives. Each time a student competes his/her ranks are recorded on a cume sheet by the TAB room. After the tournament is over, you can look at the cumes and see how your students did relative to everyone else in their events.
drops	After registration is complete, a student may need to drop from the tournament. Sometimes students become ill at the last minute or a family emergency arises. Often there is a fine attached for drops that occur very close to the start of the tournament because it creates extra work and can delay the start of competition while last-minute changes must be made.
double entry	Many tournaments allow students to enter more than one event. Sometimes they may enter any two events and are responsible for competing in one event early in the round, leaving and then going to their other event. Some tournaments split the events in half and call each half a 'platoon' or 'flight.' At these tournaments students can enter one (or sometimes two) event in each platoon. The platoons alternate through the day, so students usually do not have to leave one round in order to get to another one.

event abbreviations	DEC = Declamation DI = Dramatic Interpretation DP = Dramatic Performance DUO = Duo Interpretation GD = Group Discussion HI = Humorous Interpretation KL = Children's Literature (aka: Kiddie Lit) MULT = Multiple Reading LD = Lincoln Douglas Debate	NR = Novice Reading NX = Novice Extemp OO = Original Oratory PFD = Public Forum Debate PL = Play Reading PO = Poetry Reading PR = Prose Reading RB = Radio Broadcasting VX = Varsity Extemporaneous Speaking
focal point	In interp events, competitors often use focal points to help differentiate characters. A focal point is an imaginary point in the air. An interper may chose a different point for each character and turn his/her body and head slightly to look at the focal point when speaking for that character. It's subtle and it takes practice. If there is only one character in a piece, the performer may use a focal point or talk directly to the audience. Different pieces call for different methods of presentation.	
forensics	You're probably thinking "dead bodies." But <i>forensics</i> has more than one meaning. In this case, forensics refers to "the art or study of formal argumentation." In other words, people on a speech or debate team participate in forensics.	
MFL	Massachusetts Forensic League. This is our local organization. They sponsor almost all of the tournaments we attend within the state of MA as well as "States." The MFL website is: www.massforensics.org	
NFL	National Forensic League. The NFL is a national Speech Honor Society. Prominent NFL alumni include President Lyndon Johnson, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, actress Shelly Long, television host Oprah Winfrey, news anchor Jane Pauley, Justice Stephen Breyer and thousands of other leaders in politics, business, education, law and public service. Members may attend the NFL National qualifier in March. The top two students from New England in each event qualify to attend a week-long tournament in June. The NFL website is: nflonline.org NFL events include: OO, DI, HI, DUO, DX, FX and Congress as well as LD, PFD and Policy Debate.	
NFL points	Students may earn NFL points when they compete in forensics. These points are earned based upon ranks in competition. In most events a "1" is worth 5 points, a "2" is worth 4 points and so on. Debates are awarded a "6" for a win and "3" for a loss. Congress students earn points for each speech they give on a scale of 1-6. A student who earns 25 points qualifies to become an NFL member. They continue to earn points and advance to higher degree levels as they compete. The coach is responsible for reporting points to the NFL through an on-line system.	
novice	A novice is a first year high school competitor in speech in the MFL. Novices are eligible for "Top Novice" awards in non-novice events. They can also enter all-novice events such as "Novice Reading", "Novice LD" and "Novice Extemp." A student who reaches finals twice in Novice Reading may not enter that event again. A student is considered a novice in extemp and/or debate if s/he has not competed in that event in any previous season.	
one clap rule	Awards ceremonies sometimes seem endless. In order to move things along, we often use the ' one clap rule. ' This is just what it sounds like. After someone's name is announced, clap once. We always stand and give full applause to the 1 st place finisher in each event even if we are using the one clap rule for everyone else.	
pop	In interp events, pieces may have several characters. In order to differentiate them, performers may adopt different stances, mannerisms and focal points for each. The rapid switch from one character to another is called a pop.	

postings	See schematics .
prelims/ finals	At every tournament you attend there are a certain number of rounds in which everyone will compete. These rounds are called preliminary rounds, or “ prelims .” In the MFL there are generally 3 prelim rounds; at national tournaments there are often more. After prelims are done, the TAB room will determine who did well enough to continue to “out rounds.” Depending upon the size of the tournament, students may advance straight to finals. If it is a big tournament, there may be a number of break rounds such as octo-final, quarter-final, and semi-final rounds.
quality points	In the MFL, quality points range from 70-100, though it is rare for a judge to give a score less than 80. They are used as tiebreakers for calculating breaks. Quality points are a way a judge can let a student know how strong a round was. A rank of ‘5’ with quality points of ‘95’ tells a student that the judge thought highly of his/her performance, but thought that others were better. A rank of ‘1’ with quality points of ‘89’ would indicate that while a student was best in the room, the judge felt that there was a lot of room for improvement in the performance.
rankings or ranks	When students compete, the job of the judge is to decide who is best in the round, who is 2 nd best, who is 3 rd best etc. Judges assign ranks of 1-6 (or 5 or 7, depending on how many people are in the round) to indicate their preferences. A rank of 1 is better than a 2, but it is important that students keep in mind, that they are ranked against the competitors in the room. Some rooms are harder than others. When students get their ballots back, they will see the rank each judge gave them for each round. These ranks are also recorded on the cume sheets which are usually posted on-line or included with your team’s packet at the end of the tournament.
schematic	Schematics are used by tournaments to inform competitors which sections of which events they are going to. Students find the schematic for their event and then look for their competitor number to determine which section they are in. They go to the room listed for their section at the appropriate time. Schematics are generally taped to walls around the school where competition takes place. It is a good idea for students to take a pencil with them when they check the schematics so they can record which rooms they will be competing in during prelims. Some people call schematics ‘ postings ’, especially when they are for final rounds.
TAB room	There is a room at every tournament where coaches hand out and collect ballots from judges and record the ranks. This is called the TAB room (short for tabulation). It is the control center for the entire tournament. If you need the answer to a question that your coach can’t answer, the TAB room is the place to go. This is also the place to go to report an emergency (after you call 911 if necessary.)
warm-ups	After teams arrive at a competition site, they usually put their things down in the cafeteria and head to a classroom for warm-ups. The purpose of warm-ups is four-fold: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To stretch muscles and wake up the body and mind. 2. To prepare each student’s vocal instrument so that s/he can speak clearly and well. 3. To help students to focus so they are ready to compete. 4. To build team unity.