New Jersey Drama and Forensics League Handbook

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*What is the New Jersey Drama and Forensics League (NJDFL)?*

Everyone knows what drama is, but for most people “forensics” is what they use on the TV show CSI to catch the criminals. Well, that’s actually not far off the mark. The actual definition of forensics is: *the art of public speaking and formal debate; argumentation*. If you think about it, studying the breakdown of language and how we use it to solve the puzzle of communicating with each other is very similar to what crime investigators do.

The NJDFL is comprised of schools from all over the state of New Jersey that host competitions in which students compete in acting and public speaking categories. An NJDFL tournament usually consists of twelve events: both theatre events and public speaking events. There are two rounds: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The scores are tallied and the five best entries in each event perform one more time in a finals round. At the end of the day awards are given for the top five in each category, and the schools with the most points win sweepstakes trophies for their team. Any student who makes it to the finals in any tournament is invited to compete at the end of the season in the State Championship Tournament.

The NJDFL seeks to foster a competitive and creative outlet for high school students in the areas of theatre and speech for the purpose of networking these students, while providing a forum for constructive feedback as well as encouraging their growth and development as performers.

*An Invitation to Educators*

If you are interested in providing opportunities for your students to:

improve their acting and public speaking skills,

have access to professional feedback,

make friends from other schools,

increase their self-confidence,

become more independent,

have their time in the spotlight, and

have fun,

then you should consider starting an NJDFL team at your school.

NJDFL competitions aren’t just for the students who always get the lead in the musical or are captain of the debate team. Students who compete in the NJDFL get positive feedback and constructive criticism from peers and professionals, and everyone ends the season with increased skill and confidence.

*An Invitation to Students*

If you love acting or public speaking, then the NJDFL is definitely for you, because you will get to do your favorite activity, and meet lots of other people as enthusiastic as you are. If you hate acting or public speaking, then the NJDFL still might be for you. You will perform in front of the most supportive audience you can imagine. You will get specific feedback to help you improve, you will meet other students who are as nervous as you are, and you will see student performances that will inspire you! Students who compete in the NJDFL have a great time, and make friends that last a lifetime. Consider trying one category at one competition, and you will be hooked!

**Part I: Coaches’ Information**

**How to start a team**

*Getting the word out*: When looking for students for your team, the best place to start is the classroom. If your school has acting classes, speech classes or drama classes, those students will be interested in the NJDFL. English classes are another place to advertise your new activity. Talk to your colleagues to get names of students who are outgoing or need an outlet – the “class clowns.” Set up a meeting date and create flyers for the interested kids to have something to hang onto (sample in Appendix A).

*At the first meeting*: Students will have a lot of questions, many of which can be answered at the NJDFL website. Explain the basic structure of a tournament, and provide a brief overview of the categories (see Part II). Have dates set up for auditions, but provide time for the students to practice with you first.

*Finding material*: You can provide material for the students, but your life will be easier,

and the experience will be richer for the students if they find their own material. Keep in

mind that it is the coach’s responsibility to view all material for appropriateness and to

make sure that it stays within the guidelines for the particular category. For theatre events

full length plays are the best place to find scenes and monologues. Monologue and scene

books can be used, but the students should be encouraged to read the entire play from

which their piece is taken for context. Remind students that all theatre pieces must be

from plays published by professional publishing houses (see Appendix B for a partial

list), regardless of whether they found the piece online or not. Self-published works, by

the student or anyone else, are not eligible for theatre competition. For speech events

such as poetry and prose, students should choose material that they enjoy, connect with,

and understand thoroughly. In addition, care should be taken to choose material that will

entertain, enlighten and even potentially move an audience. With the exception of events

where the students generate the material (such as persuasive speaking) pieces must be

from published works. Theatre pieces such as monologues and scenes will usually be

cuttings from plays, but should function as a meaningful unit of drama.

Students must choose new material each year.

# *A Few Words About Questionable Material*

In a free society, where do we draw the line about what is acceptable and what is not? Much of the modern work in theatre features content that would get most drama teachers fired, and at NJDFL competitions the team coach is responsible for all material presented by his or her team. So how do we decide what we do and what we don’t? The NJDFL has employed a blanket disqualification for the use of the F-word in any piece. Anytime it is used, it is an automatic 5/70. Beyond that, if the material is mature, ask the students to question it themselves. Are they choosing a piece for the shock value, or is this a piece which they feel says something that needs to be said? Remind the students that the piece is for a competition and that a judge alienated by a piece that they feel is questionable will not give them a high score; many schools will have teachers and administrators as judges. Ultimately the coach can decide to let a student use a controversial piece, but the tournament director can disqualify a student who uses a piece that he or she deems inappropriate.

*Auditions*: Should you have auditions or take everyone who is interested? This is the coach’s decision, but here are a few things to consider.

* What is a “team?” For scheduling purposes, a team is no more than five entries per category (three entries in Reader’s Theatre), however, a school can have more than one team. The more teams and entries you have, the more you will pay in fees, but the more kids you will have involved.

* How many students are interested? If you are starting with a small team and have the money, you may want to take everyone. Even students with weak skills will improve the more they compete, and you may see a huge improvement from the first tournament to the last. Plus, this is a great activity for the kids who don’t make the musical or the winter show at your school. On the other hand, if you have enough kids to fill three teams, but only enough money for one team, you may want to either hold auditions to take the best kids, or limit the students to one category each to involve as many as possible.
* What can I afford? Each piece is charged a $5.00 slot fee, and an additional $4.00 judge fee. You can offset your costs by recruiting judges (see “*Finding Judges*”), but if you cannot find judges, each piece will cost you $9.00. In Appendix C, there are eight students competing, and they have fifteen pieces between them. With no judges, this will cost the team $160.00. This does not include the cost for the bus.

15 pieces x $5.00 slot fee = $75.00

15 pieces x $4.00 judge fee = $60.00

TOTAL = $135.00

*Rehearsals*: Just as with a play or a musical, students need to rehearse their pieces to get them ready for the performance they will be giving at competition. How often they rehearse depends on how much time you have to work with them, how many pieces there are to rehearse, and how much time the students are willing to devote to their piece(s). Students should be strongly encouraged to rehearse as much as possible on their own. Some coaches have the students use a rehearsal journal (Appendix D) that they bring when they rehearse with the coach. This can give the coach insight into what the student is struggling with and how much time the student is putting into the piece. Coaches with larger teams appoint captains. The captains are usually students with competition experience who can also rehearse with teammates and provide feedback. Requiring students to rehearse a minimum number of times throughout the season, or before each competition, is a good way to gauge the students’ commitment, as well as fostering a sense of team spirit and responsibility. At a minimum, it is advisable to have one rehearsal shortly before the competition to make sure that everyone’s piece is ready (theatre pieces memorized, speech pieces rehearsed, introductions written and memorized).

Some things to look for at rehearsal include: piece meets time limitations and is not too long or too short, theatre pieces are memorized, speech pieces are rehearsed, words are pronounced correctly, pacing is appropriate for content, piece can be heard, blocking is appropriate (remember the 3 foot rule in some forensics events) introductions are brief, interesting and presented with confidence.

*Choosing captains*: Having team captains is not mandatory, but some coaches find having them to be helpful in maintaining team records and fostering team spirit. Captains should be chosen by the coach and not the students, to insure that the person(s) selected is responsible, hard working and up to the task. Some duties that can be assumed by the captain(s) are: holding “captain’s practices” (practices run by captains in addition to those run by the coach; captains and team mates provide feedback), organizing buddy systems for new team members (pairing each new person with a returning competitor so they learn the ropes), checking the roster before it is submitted to the tournament director, helping new students find material, decorating the travel bus on the morning of the tournament, giving out codes at the competitions, running fundraisers, recruiting new members.

**Entering a tournament**

So you have your team, the students have rehearsed their pieces and you are ready to compete! Now the fun begins!

*How to register:* The dates for tournaments are posted on the NJDFL website. In addition, many schools send out registration packets four to six weeks before their tournaments. Based on your school’s policies for field trips, be sure to get board approval before registering for a tournament. You can attend as many tournaments as you like; there is no minimum number required for a school to attend to be eligible for the state championships. If you do not receive a registration packet for a tournament that you want to enter, contact the tournament director, using the contact information on the NJDFL website. The registration packet will consist of the following forms: Entry Grid (appendix E), and the Registration Form (appendix F), both of which can be submitted via email. Approximately two weeks before the tournament, you will get an email with a link to a Google document. The Google document will assign your school a number. Using the tabs at the bottom of the page, you will enter your students’ names into each category that they are competing. The deadline for entries is 3:00 on the Monday the week of the tournament (5 days prior). Any additions to your registration must be made by 3:00 on the Wednesday before the tournament. However, if you have students that contact you at the last minute to say they can’t go to the tournament, (and it *will* happen!) don’t worry. Drops can be made even on the day of the tournament. Contact the tournament director as soon as you know of a drop, even if it is 8 AM on the day of the tournament. The tournament director will make the change. Once you enter a tournament you should get a confirmation email back from the director. If you do not get a response within 24 hours of your entry, contact the director by phone to make sure your information was received.

*At the tournament*: When you arrive at the school there will be a check-in desk near the entrance. You will check in and report any drops for your team. You will also get school maps and check your roster, including any changes you sent. Either before or soon after the team gets off the bus, review each competitor’s code, and send everyone to the opening meeting (usually this will be held in the school auditorium). You, and any judges you have brought, will report to the Control room (sometimes called the Tab room). The judges’ meeting will begin at 8:30, and the first round begins promptly at 9:00. The tournament director will hang the schematics for the students to locate their competition rooms (see example below). If you are not judging, you can watch your kids compete, to provide moral support and feedback.

Dramatic Monologue

Round 1: 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Room: A-14  Judge: Smith | Room: 223  Judge: Feldman |
| 1A  2B  8C  4E  5E | 1B  2A  3D  7C  5A |

Students will find their code and report to the room listed at the top. If they are not on the schematic but are supposed to be in the event, tell them not to panic. They should go to the Control Room and ask someone check into it; it’s just an oversight. Before you send them to the Control room however, check and make sure they have the right code.

Once the student gets to the classroom, they write the following on the blackboard:

1. Their name
2. Their code
3. The name of their piece \*
4. The author/playwright \*

\*If their event is impromptu or improv, they only need their name and code.

# *Codes:* For each event they have entered, students have to have a speaker code. The code is a combination of a number (the team number you got when you arrived) and a letter (from their placement on the roster). The reason codes are used has to do with anonymity - students are not supposed to be asked what school they are from by any judge. For example, if your team is team number 7, and the student is listed third in the event, their code would be 7C. It is incredibly important that students entered in more than one event do NOT forget their codes or use the wrong code for their events. If they are 7A for Poetry and 7D for Persuasion, they have to remember each. If the student performs in the wrong room they will be disqualified from the event. Coaches are encouraged to provide their students with an accurate copy of the roster for each competition.

# *Double Entered:* Students are allowed to enter up to two categories each hour, for a maximum of six the entire day. This means that a student has to be in two places at once; this is called being “double-entered” or “DE.” Students who are “DE” MUST sign in to each room at the beginning of the hour in which they are DE. Once the hour has started, they go to the event they want to do SECOND and sign in; they also write “DE will return” next to their code. If they do not sign in to both rooms within the first 15 minutes of the hour, they may be disqualified.

Example:

John Smith 7A (DE) Will return

By writing this, they eliminate any doubt whether the judge should wait for them if they run late in the other event. In the event room they want to do FIRST, they will write the above with DE only – that will tell the judge that they are ready to go and should go first.

*Proper room etiquette*: Encourage your students to stay in the room and watch other people they are competing against. They can learn a lot from watching their fellow performers. If they need to leave the room because they are double entered, make sure they do it quietly before anyone else starts to perform. Also, if they have to enter a room that has already started, they should wait quietly outside the door until the performer is finished their piece, then quietly enter the room and have a seat.

# *The Rest of the Day*: As the day progresses, the students will do each event twice – once in the morning and once in the afternoon. After that, the best five or six competitors, as scored that day, will be posted and will then go against each other in a final round. These are very exciting and you should make every attempt to go and watch these events. After that, everyone reports to the main meeting room for the awards ceremony.

One of the awards presented is for sweepstakes, which is calculated by each participant’s events throughout the day. For every 3rd place finish in any event, the team gets 1 point. For every second place, the team gets 2 points. And for every first place finish, the team gets 3 points. For finals, every fifth place gets 1 point on up to first place gaining 5 points for the team. Every event counts! Even if a student doesn’t final, a 3rd or better in any event gets the team points. Every student can contribute to the sweepstakes total, even those who don’t final.

After the individual and team trophies are awarded the tournament director will make a few closing remarks and then it is time to go home. Encourage your team to thank the tournament director on their way out, as well as any parent volunteers or student helpers from the hosting team. Remind students to gather all of their gear, including costumes, props, binders, backpacks and jackets, as well as pick up trash around their area. Before you leave you will need to see the tournament director to get your envelope – this will be a large envelope with the judging sheets for each of your kids (see Appendix G), as well as copies of the event scores. The students will want their score sheets as soon as they get on the bus, but that is the coaches’ choice. Some coaches give the judging sheets out right away, others look over them first for tips on how to help their team, still others give them out, but then re-collect them to use at rehearsals. The event scores are for the coach only. These sheets will show you where your students placed in each event in relationship to everyone else. This information is to be treated with care. Although for some students being told that they were in sixth place overall, and just out of the “finalists’ five”, will encourage them to work harder, nothing can be gained by telling a student they were 20th out of 25 or dead last.

**How are we going to pay for this?**

*Raising money*: The best fundraisers are ones that require little cash outlay, a minimal amount of your time, and make the most money! Below is a list of ideas that have been used by coaches in the past, but it is by no means exhaustive.

* Showcase night: Invite parents, friends and the community to see the pieces your kids are presenting at competition. This is a great way to raise awareness for your program and give the students some extra rehearsal. The students each bring a dessert, and for the price of a ticket the audience members get a show and dessert.
* Dinner theatre: A variation on Showcase night, students present competition pieces interspersed with karaoke songs, and the audience has dinner. Local organizations that want to help the community will often donate food, facilities or resources to help your event.
* Halloween costume contest: Students are charged an entry fee to participate, and prizes can be offered for a variety of types of costumes. Schools with television facilities can broadcast the costume contest to the school and/or the community.
* Acting workshops: Team members can run workshops for local grade school students in subjects such as improvisation, theatre games, voice and movement. Kids are charged a flat fee for a three hour workshop.
* 24 hour theatre: Under the supervision of teacher-facilitators (you and a few of your colleagues), students work together to write, direct and produce short plays. This event traditionally begins on a Friday night, and ends with a 7 PM show the next night. Kids are charged a fee to participate.
* Host a tournament: This is a lot of work, but you can make a lot of money. See Section Three of this handbook for a complete guide.

*Finding Judges*: The fees are designed to encourage teams to bring judges – the more judges you bring, the lower your fees! Judges are all *volunteers*, therefore there are a few logical places to find them. Teachers usually make great judges, as do graduates from your theatre program. However, with both of these groups you will have to guard against bias, or the appearance of bias. A graduate who greets a former classmate in a friendly way may look like he or she is showing favoritism to students from other school. Any judges you bring should be instructed to remain professionally detached from members of your team.

Another source for judges, often without the pitfalls of judges connected to the school, are members of the local community theatre group. Keep in mind however that all of your judges will be interacting extensively with students from you school and others. It is your responsibility to make sure the judges you bring are trustworthy as well as qualified. If any of your judges are familiar with your team members, alert the tournament director to any conflicts of interest your judges might face (judging relatives, etc).

Whenever possible, provide your judges with a copy of the Judge’s Prep Packet *before* the competition. That way, they have a chance to familiarize themselves with the rules and how the day will run. Judges will also need stopwatches; it is the coach’s responsibility to make sure all judges have a working stopwatch, or a phone with a timer.

How to host your own tournament

*Getting started*: Submit your request for a tournament date to the NJDFL. You should get all necessary approvals from your school district before you request the date. The date needs to fall between October 1st and the end of February. Keep in mind that Championships are the last Saturday in February.

Once approved, you must publicize your event. The date will automatically be listed on the NJDFL website, and you will provided with a list of NJDFL registered schools (snail mail and email addresses will be provided). If there are schools in your area that you think might be interested, you are encouraged to send them an invitation. The invitation should include the following information: location of tournament, date of tournament, deadline for registration (NJDFL recommends that the registration deadline be AT LEAST FIVE days prior to the competition), change information, contact information for the tournament director (including school address & phone number, email address and cell phone number), list of events. You are encouraged to invite as many area schools as you can. In order for your tournament to be an NJDFL sanctioned event, you must have at least three schools (including yours) compete. When schools register to attend your tournament they should send you the following information: Registration form and Tournament entry grid (see Appendix F and G).

Even though your tournament may be months away, it is never too early to start lining up judges (see *Finding Judges*, above). You will want to contact colleagues and local community theatre members as soon as possible so they can get the date on their calendar, and you can send them a Judge’s Prep Packet so they can start getting ready for the big day!

*Setting up the schematics*: When you register your tournament date with the NJDFL, you will be sent a Google document with the necessary formulas to calculate finalists. You will need to enter the names and codes of your competitors prior to the competition date. Coaches of the other schools that have signed up will be sent a link by the League Administrator to the Google document to record their entries. During the competition, the information from the Round Records (place and score), will be entered in the appropriate columns.

After the deadline for entries, you will go through each event (using the tabs at the bottom of the Google document) and add up the number of entries in each. This will determine how many judges and rooms you need. Divide the number of contestants by five. If you have extra entries, it is ok to have rooms of six. You should NEVER have more than 6 or fewer than 4 pieces in a room. Things to consider when assigning rooms: some categories (poetry, declamation, persuasive speaking) require less space so smaller classrooms may be used. Categories involving pairs need more space, and the biggest rooms should be used for improvisational pairs. Whenever possible avoid using classrooms with science or computer lab equipment, the auditorium and any room with highly specialized equipment. Keep in mind for acting categories that students will be expecting desks in the room, so a room with tables might not be appropriate. Assign the performers to the rooms, trying to make sure that they do not compete against others from their own school. Also make sure they are in rooms with different competitors in the afternoon session. Assigning the competitors to rooms should always be done by the tournament director, not students. When the assignments are made, students can help write up the schematics. Each schematic should have the following information prominently displayed at the top: Category, Room, Judge, Time (see appendix H)

*Assigning judges*: This should also be done by the tournament director. Judges should be scheduled to maximize their time. Judges who are volunteers should be assigned before assigning coaches to judge. If judges are only available for part of the day, you do not need to give them a break. When possible. a judge should not judge the same event twice in one day. When assigning the judges for the afternoon, look at what they judged during that hour in the first round, and assign them to something else. When assigning judges for finals, you need three for each event. Try to assign three judges that have NOT judged that event earlier in the day. Because former competitors can return to judge after graduation from high school, and coaches may have their own children on their team, you will have to make sure that you do not have relatives judging relatives. The coach should make you aware of any possible conflict, but you should ask if you are not sure.

Packets must be made for each judge, in each room for each event. Put six critique sheets with one round record and fold the papers in thirds, with the round record on the outside. On the outside of the packet, write the event, the judge’s name, the room number. If possible, color coordinate the round record sheets, i.e. yellow for the morning, blue for the afternoon and pink for finals.

*Prompts*: Some events (improvisational pairs, impromptu speaking, etc) require prompts. Prompts should be created by the tournament director. You need seven choices for each round (morning, afternoon and finals). You will make copies of the prompts for each room, and attach the prompts to the judges’ envelopes. Each room of the same category has the same prompts in each round! Sources for prompts are listed in Appendix I.

*Drops/adds*: Even if the schematics are done the night before the tournament, there will still be changes when the schools arrive. Students may drop out due to illness, coaches may have overlooked an entry, or names may have gotten registered in the wrong event. Adds are at the tournament director’s discretion, but remember that you may be in that same situation before you tell a coach you can’t get their kids into an event. The golden rule of changes is: whatever you do in the morning, you have to do in the afternoon! If you drop a student from DM in round one, you have to find them in the round 2 schematics and drop them there also. When you drop competitors, make sure that the rooms still have the right number remaining. You may have to switch people around. For example, if there are two drops in the same room for Dramatic Monologue and only three contestants remain, you will need to move another student (preferably from a room of six, if there is one) into that room to give it a minimum of four. When adding students, put them in the room with the fewest competitors. If that leaves you with five or more rooms of six, consider opening another room for that category. The first hour will be hectic, but if you make changes to both rounds as you go along, the afternoon should run more smoothly!

*Trophies*: There are two types of awards: individual event awards and sweepstakes trophies. You will need 1st through 5th place awards for all events; what type of award is up to the host school. Types of awards include trophies, medals, paperweights, plaques or certificates. You will also need 1st through 5th place for sweepstakes. The league specifies information on the awards be as follows:

**Category**

**Place**

**NJDFL at (school name)**

# Date of tournament

Sweepstakes trophies have the same information and are the following sizes:

First Place: 7 inches; Second Place: 6 inches; Third Place: 5 inches; Fourth Place: 4 inches; Fifth Place: 3 inches.

*Billing*: Because schools often register for a tournament at the last minute, it is usually not possible to send the school a bill before they arrive. Have each school’s bill ready at the check-in table in the morning, but be prepared to make changes for drops. When the bill is finalized, make a copy for the coach, and keep one for yourself. Schools are expected to pay all tournament fees within 30 days of the tournament, unless they have made different arrangements with the tournament director. A copy of the NJDFL Tournament Bill is in Appendix J.

*Food*: This is important. Do NOT try to coordinate this and the tournament by yourself. If you have a booster club, let them do all of the labor. If you don’t have a booster club, then find a well-meaning booster club or organization to assist with this. Many schools get the parents of the competing students to take over the refreshment responsibilities. Most tournaments have food available for sale throughout the day, starting with breakfast items, and including lunch, and continuing to sell snacks until finals are over. You will need to get a number of the total contestants to whoever sells your food for you, and you should probably have each visiting school give you a count of pizza, hot dogs, subs, or whatever you plan on selling. Also, you want to make sure that whoever is selling your food understands that judges are volunteers and should be taken care of. Give coupons to your judges in their packets for breakfast, coffee, lunch, etc. (See appendix K). This will make your judges happy and will consequently make your day go better.

*The day of the tournament*:

* Plan to arrive at the school no later than 7AM.
* Check to make sure the bells have been turned off. (Contact your school administrator if turning off the school bells will be necessary. This should be done at least a week before your tournament date.)
* Choose a room to serve as the “Judges’ room” where the judges will meet and report between assignments throughout the day.
* Choose a room to serve as the “Tab Room” where the completed evaluation forms will be dropped off, and scores will be tabulated.
* Set up a table near the door as a welcome/check-in area. The runner who mans the table should have copies of each team’s roster, the bills for each team and a stack of change forms. It is also a good idea to have copies of a school map and the schedule for the day.
* If your team has a team shirt, all runners should be wearing one to identify them as members of the school and people who can help visitors find their way around. If you do not have shirts, name tags that say “runner” will serve the same purpose.
* Even if your school has good signage, it is a good idea to hang additional signs to let visitors know where the bathrooms, auditorium and cafeteria are.
* Even though the competition does not officially begin until 9 AM, have the first hour schematics posted when the schools arrive. Post the schematics as high on the wall as possible; this will make them easier for a group to view (especially important when finals are posted).
* As the schools arrive, the coach should go directly to check in. He or she will fill out a change form, get a copy of their bill, and find out their code(s). After checking in, direct the students to the auditorium, and the coaches and judges to wherever you have set up as a judges’ room (a library or media center works well).
* As close to 8:30 as possible, begin the student meeting in the theatre and the judges’ meeting in the judges’ room. You will not be able to be in two places at once, so assign the student meeting to be run by some of your more trustworthy students.
* Students’ meeting: welcome everyone to your school; go over the rules of the school; remind students of courteous behavior; be clear about areas of the school that may be “off limits.”
* Judges’ meeting: be aware that even though you may have some experienced judges, you have to run the meeting as if they are all new, because many will be. After welcoming and thanking the judges, explain:
  + How the hour will run, from the students signing in, to filling out the paperwork
  + What to look for in dramatic pieces
  + What to look for in forensic pieces
  + How to fill out the round record
  + How to fill out the critique sheets
  + How to time an event (when applicable)
  + Grounds for disqualifying contestants
  + Where to pick up and drop off judge packets
  + Controlling the classroom and surrounding environment

This is a lot to cover in twenty minutes, so it is important to begin on time and keep the meeting moving. Encourage judges with questions to hold them until the end, as many of their questions will be answered by your presentation.

Each judge should be given an envelope containing the following: school map, nametag, Judge’s Prep Packet (see Part III), pen and food tickets. Have stopwatches available for judges to sign out if they did not bring their own. Judges should be advised to use a stopwatch or their cell phone to time the events, for accuracy.

* Post the schematics for each subsequent hour halfway through the current hour, i.e. the schematics for hour two (10-11) are posted at 9:30. Put the judge packets for this hour out at this time as well.
* As the tournament director, you should remain in the tab room all day, leaving only to go to the bathroom. You should not schedule yourself to judge. If problems arise (and they will) you will need to be on hand to fix them. If a competitor is disqualified, the judge has to clear it with you.
* As the judge packets are turned in, they need to be checked. Select a coach from another school who is not judging and assign them to check paperwork. Check for:
  + All forms bear the judge’s name and affiliation
  + Ranks correspond with scores, i.e. 1st place has the highest score in the room
  + All critique forms have students’ names and codes on them
  + Names, codes, ranks and scores have been transposed to the round record accurately
  + There are NO TIES!!
* Round records, after they are checked, go to the person doing the tabbing. Rank (1-5) is entered in the R1R column for the morning round, and score is entered in the R1S column. The rank and score for round 2 go in the R2R and R2S columns, respectively. After the second round information is entered, the person doing the tabbing will sort the information to determine the five finalists. Go to the Data menu and select “Sort”
* Critique sheets, after they are checked, are separated by team code. Each team gets an envelope and their critique sheets are placed in the envelope as the day goes on; they will be given the envelope at the conclusion of the awards ceremony.
* As soon as possible after the second round of each category is completed, the tab person will determine the five finalists and they will be posted for the competitors to see. The finalists sheets are similar to the schematics, but they will have the students’ names (in no particular order) as well as their codes (see Appendix L).
* As the finals sheets come in the information will be added to the score sheets. When each category is complete, the tab person will print a copy for each school, and for the tournament director. When all of the sheets are printed the tournament director will use his or her copies to announce the winners at the awards ceremony. Usually, each category is announced, the finalists called to the stage, and the winners are announced from 5th to 1st place, each one presented with their award. As part of the ceremony (usually before announcing the Sweepstakes winners) the tournament director calls for a round of applause for the judges, the parent boosters and the coaches.

Part II: Competitors’ Information

Getting started

*Choosing a category*: Overall, there are two types of categories: dramatic and forensic. If you enjoy acting and don’t mind memorizing lines, then a dramatic category might suit you. If you are more interested in public speaking, and relying solely on your words to connect with the audience, then a forensic category might be better. Each year the NJDFL Board convenes to select the twelve categories for the upcoming year; what follows is a list of the most common categories.

*Dramatic (acting) categories:*

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE:  Each contestant will present a cutting of a scene (or   
scenes) from any published play or monologue book, after 1920\*, classified as a drama or tragedy (no screenplays or television scripts).  The scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of drama.  The cutting presented must involve one character.  The contestant may use props, costumes, make-up, and/or background music (live or recorded).  The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed seven minutes, including set-up and strike time.  No scripts or prompters are to be used.

COMEDY MONOLOGUE:  Each contestant will present a cutting of a scene (or scenes)   
from any published play or monologue book, after 1920\*[[1]](#footnote-1)\*, classified as a comedy (no screenplays or television scripts).  The scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of drama.  The cutting presented must involve one character.  The contestant may use props, costumes, make-up and/or background music (live or recorded).  The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed seven minutes, including set-up and strike time.  No scripts or prompters are to be used.

CLASSIC MONOLOGUE: Each contestant will present a cutting of a scene (or scenes) from any published play classified as a classic drama or tragedy (no screenplays or television scripts AND no plays published after 1920.) The scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of drama. The cutting presented must involve one character. The contestant may use props, costumes, make-up and/or background music (live or recorded). The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed seven minutes, including set-up and strike time.  No scripts or prompters are to be used. All contests are held in regular classrooms or meeting rooms.

DRAMATIC PAIRS: Each dramatic pair will present a cutting of a scene (or scenes) from any published play classified as a drama (no screenplays or television scripts).  The   
scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of   
drama.  The cutting presented must involve two characters.  The actors may use props,   
costumes, make-up, and/or background music (live or recorded).  The scene, with an   
appropriate introduction, must not exceed ten minutes, including set-up and strike time. No scripts or prompters are to be used.  A contestant may enter only one (1) dramatic pair.

COMEDIC PAIRS: Each comedic pair will present a cutting of a scene (or scenes) from any published play classified as a drama (no screenplays or television scripts).  The  
scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of   
drama.  The cutting presented must involve two characters.  The actors may use props,   
costumes, make-up and/or background music (live or recorded).  The scene, with an   
appropriate introduction, must not exceed ten minutes, including set-up and strike time. No scripts or prompters are to be used. A contestant may enter only one (1) comedic pair.

MUSICAL THEATRE PAIR: The performers must present one selection drawn from **published** musicals written for the theatre. No original works, medleys, or screenplays will be allowed. The selection may contain dialogue, but must be at least 50% singing. Both participants must be actively involved in the piece. The performers may use props, costumes, and make-up. Performers may use non-vocal musical accompaniment, which can be live or electronically produced. Students using tape or CD must bring their own equipment and be able to operate it themselves or provide an operator. Criteria for evaluating shall include characterization and interpretation of roles, staging, delivery, interaction, communication, and balance. The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed seven minutes, including set-up and strike time. No scripts or prompters are to be used. All contests are held in regular classrooms or meeting rooms.

IMPROVISATIONAL PAIRS:  Each improvisational pair will present a scene created

from a situation card to be selected from the judge's envelope. Situations are selected as a blind draw – no choices will be given. The preparation and presentation of the improvised scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed 7 minutes.  No notes, scripts, or props (doors, walls and clothes are considered props) are to be used (student chairs/desks in classroom are permitted).  An introduction by one or both students is **REQUIRED**to set the scene, and a resolution of the conflict must be evident at the end of the scene. Excessive profanity, sexual innuendo, or excessive physicality (i.e. pushing, shoving, and striking) will not be tolerated. All contests are held in regular classrooms or meeting rooms.

SCENE: Each drama group will present a cutting of a scene (or scenes) from any **published** play classified as a comedy or drama/tragedy (no screenplays or television scripts). The scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of drama. The cutting presented must involve three to six actors. The actors may use props, costumes, make-up, and background music (live or recorded). The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed twelve minutes, including set-up and strike time. No scripts or prompters are to be used. All contests are held in regular classrooms or meeting rooms. A contestant may enter only one (1) group. Only the top three scenes will place and be eligible for States. There are no finals in Scene.

*Forensic (public speaking) categories*

AFTER DINNER SPEAKING:  Each contestant will present an **original** speech to entertain an audience about an important topic and make greater sense of it through the use of humor.  The speech may be either informative or thought-provoking in nature, but it must have a serious thesis and cannot merely represent a "stand-up" comedy routine. All humor during the speech should be in good taste.  The speech should be memorized but may be presented from note cards.  No manuscripts may be used.  Visual aids are **not allowed**.  Time limit for the speech is 7 minutes.   Speakers are not confined to the three-foot circle of interpretation events but are reminded that this is NOT an acting category; all speeches should reflect appropriate public speaking etiquette and delivery.

DECLAMATION:  Each contestant will deliver an oral interpretation of a famous speech. Students will pick their own speech between 4-6 minutes long (600 and 750 words).  This is not an acting category, as the student is not being judged on imitation. The speech may be cut to adhere to word limit.  As a forensic interpretation event, all contestants must stay within a three foot circle from original speaking location and should not sit, kneel, etc. The use of a manuscript is required.

DRAMATIC DUO INTERPRETATION: A cutting from one or more serious published texts of literary merit, involving the portrayal of two or more characters presented by two individuals. The material may be drawn from any genre of literature. This is not an acting event; thus, no costumes, props, lighting, etc. are to be used. Physical use of space is allowed and encouraged. Presentation is from the manuscript and focus must be off-stage and not to each other. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING:  Each contestant shall draw a random quote or topic from the judge’s envelope and will present a speech based on that quote or topic.  Contestant   
may use a note card, but should not have a manuscript or prepared notes of any kind.     
Total event time will be seven minutes including an appropriate introduction and   
preparation time.    
  
PERSUASIVE SPEAKING:  Each contestant will present an original speech to persuade,   
convince, stimulate, or activate the audience about a certain topic or idea.  The speech   
should be memorized but may be presented from note cards.  Visual aids are not allowed to be used.  Time limit, with an appropriate introduction, is seven minutes.      
  
POETRY INTERPRETATION:  Each contestant will orally present a selection of poetry   
from a published work or online source (a complete poem, a segment of a whole poem or several poems based on the same theme or poet).  Students may NOT read their own poetry. Contestants must have a manuscript and must use an introduction and relevant transitions. As a forensic interpretation event, all contestants must stay within a three foot circle from original speaking location and should not sit kneel, etc.  Time limit is seven minutes including introduction.     
  
PROSE INTERPRETATION:  Each contestant will deliver an oral interpretation of a   
program of published prose, with appropriate introductory and transitional material.  As a   
forensic interpretation event, all contestants must stay within a three foot circle from   
original speaking location and should not sit, kneel, etc.  Time limit is seven minutes. Selections may be single or multiple.  The use of a manuscript is required.

CHILDREN’S LITERATURE: Each contestant will orally present a selection of poetry or prose from a published work. The selection may be single or multiple; if multiple, from either prose or poetry or both, but no drama. The piece must be written for the elementary level or under (meaning the content, themes and word choice are suitable for the elementary level or younger). No visual aids may be used (including the use of the book’s pictures for demonstration). Contestants must have a manuscript and should have an introduction and relevant transitions. This is not an acting category—no costumes, props or music allowed. As a forensic interpretation event, all contestants must stay within a three foot circle from original speaking location and should not sit kneel, etc. Time limit is seven minutes.

RADIO BROADCASTING: Each contestant will report directly to the performance room and sign-in. The contestants will then return to the hallway or designated waiting area and wait to be called. When it is their time to perform, each contestant will return to the room individually and be given a “broadcast short” **approximately 45 sec- 1 min** in length. They will be allotted exactly **1 min** to read over the material. The short will be a typical radio announcement consisting of formal news, pop-culture news, product advertisement, weather report, traffic update, etc. **The report may be real news or mock*.*** When the 1 min is up, the student will read the speech from the front of the room. The judge will follow along with a copy of the exact speech. (Each student will receive the same short) Remember, **this is not an interpretation** event. The news should be read with the level of professionalism that one would hear on the radio.

READER’S THEATRE:Each group will present a cutting of a reader’s theatre piece,   
novel, or short story from any published venue.  The piece need not be a complete   
scene or act, but should function as a meaningful narrative.  The cutting presented   
must involve three to six actors. All actors must have lines and may play more than   
one character.  The actors may use props for sound effects only and background   
music/sounds (must be live).  The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not   
exceed ten minutes, including set-up and strike time. Scripts must be used.  All group   
members must be sitting or standing in place as consistent with reader’s theatre   
rules.  All contests are held in regular classrooms or meeting rooms.  A contestant   
may enter only one (1) group.  (Please list actors’ names when completing the   
registration from.)

*Choosing a partner*: When choosing a category, an important consideration is whether you will work alone or with a partner (or in the case of the scene and reader’s theatre categories, with many partners). Working with a partner has many advantages: someone to share the work, someone to bounce ideas off of, learning from another person’s process. However, the advantages can be liabilities with the wrong partner. You have to rely on someone else to do their share, you have to trust that your partner will learn their lines and blocking, you have to count on another person to show up for rehearsals and competitions. If you decide to work with someone else, choose wisely. Don’t just pick your best friend; look for someone with the same work ethic and enthusiasm that you have. The league has a “Married Rule” – if you final with a pairs piece and subsequently want to change your partner, you have to final again to be eligible for Championships.

*Finding material:* All theatre pieces must be from plays published by professional publishing houses (see Appendix B for a partial list), regardless of whether you found the piece online or not. All forensic pieces must also be from sources published by professional publishing houses. Self-published works, by you or anyone else, are not eligible for competition. The only events where you generate the material are persuasive speaking and improvisation. For theatre events full-length plays are the best place to find scenes and monologues. Theatre pieces such as monologues and scenes will usually be cuttings from plays, but should function as a meaningful unit of drama. Monologue and scene books can be used, but the pieces in the books must be from full-length plays. If you do find a piece in an anthology, you are strongly encouraged to read the entire play from which your piece is taken for context. For speech events such as poetry and prose, you should choose material that you enjoy, connect with, and understand thoroughly. In addition, care should be taken to choose material that will entertain, enlighten and even potentially move an audience. You must choose new material each year.

# *A Few Words About Questionable Material:* In a free society, where do we draw the line about what is acceptable and what is not? Much of the modern work in theatre features content that would get most drama students kicked out of class, and at NJDFL competitions the sanctions against questionable material can include disqualification. So how do you decide what you can do and what you shouldn’t? First, the NJDFL has employed a blanket disqualification for the use of the F-word in any piece. Anytime it is used, it is an automatic 5/70. Beyond that, if the material is mature, you should question it yourself. Are you choosing a piece for the shock value, or is this a piece which you connect with and feel says something that needs to be said? Remember that the piece is for a competition and that a judge alienated by a piece that they feel is questionable will not give you a high score; many schools will have teachers and administrators as judges. Ultimately your coach can decide to let a you use a controversial piece, but the tournament director can disqualify any student who uses a piece that he or she deems inappropriate.

**Getting ready**

*Preparing for auditions:* Depending on the size of your school and your team, your coach will decide whether or not to have auditions. If the team is small, the coach may decide to take everyone. More likely, however, is that there will be too many pieces for at least one category, and auditions will be held. As with any audition, you want to put your best foot forward. First impressions are key, and a good introduction will help set the tone for the audition. Your introduction should be brief, but interesting, and should include the following information: the name of your piece, the author’s name, and some context for the piece or a “hook” to get the audience interested. The introduction may contain your name, but does not have to. For example, if you are doing Juliet’s speech from Act 4, scene three, when she takes the sleeping potion, your introduction might be something like this: “Many people say they would do anything for love, but Juliet is about to show the audience that she really means it. I’m Liz O’Keefe and this is William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*.” Practice your intro until it rolls off of your tongue like your own name. If you are doing an acting piece, it is a good idea to have it memorized, even if the coach has not made it a requirement. Your piece will have to be memorized for competition, so you might as well show the coach that you are ready to go! If you are auditioning for a forensic event, practice reading the piece *aloud*. This is not the same as going over it in your head. Read it at the dinner table, to your friends, even to the dog!

No matter what the category, being well prepared will show the coach your commitment, and help him or her to overlook any mistakes you may make. Some things to focus on as you prepare for auditions include: piece meets time limitations and is not too long or too short, theatre pieces are memorized, speech pieces are rehearsed, words are pronounced correctly, pacing is appropriate for content, piece can be heard, blocking is appropriate (remember the 3 foot rule in forensics events) introductions are brief, interesting and presented with confidence.

*Rehearsals*: Once the list goes up and your name is next to one (or more) categories, the real work begins. Just as with a play or a musical, you need to rehearse your piece(s) to get them ready for the performance you will be giving at competition. How often you rehearse partially depends on how much time your coach has to work with you, but you are strongly encouraged to rehearse as much as possible on your own. A good idea is to use a rehearsal journal (Appendix E) that you can bring when you rehearse with the coach. This can give your coach insight into what you are struggling with and how much time you are putting into the piece. Coaches with larger teams may appoint captains. The captains are usually students with competition experience who can also rehearse with you and provide feedback. Your coach may require you to rehearse a minimum number of times throughout the season, or before each competition; it is important that you take the commitment seriously.

*Captains’ responsibilities*: Having team captains is not mandatory, but some coaches find having them to be helpful in maintaining team records and fostering team spirit. Captains should be responsible, hard working and enthusiastic; if you are considering applying for the position make sure you have the time to devote to the team. Some duties that can be assumed by the captain(s) are: holding “captain’s practices,” organizing buddy systems for new team members, checking the roster before it is submitted to the tournament director, helping new students find material, decorating the travel bus on the morning of the tournament, giving out codes at the competitions, running fundraisers, recruiting new members.

*Signing up for a tournament*: Although an NJDFL competition season can include up to eight competitions, not all teams attend all competitions. Your coach will let you know what competitions your team will be attending. As soon as the competitions are announced, it is your responsibility to check your calendar, check with your family, check with your partner, and let the coach know which dates you CAN and CANNOT attend (let your partner know too!). Find out where the competitions are being held, and remember to include travel time in your planning. If your team is attending a competition that is two hours away, chances are you will have to report to the school around 6 AM (or earlier!) and will not be back to the school until after 9 PM. A good rule of thumb is that your schedule must be completely clear on the day of a competition.

**At the tournament**

*The start of the day*: When you arrive at the school your coach will check in. He or she will go over the roster to give you your letter. Next everyone will go to the opening meeting (usually this will be held in the school auditorium). The opening meeting will begin at 8:30, and the first round begins promptly at 9:00. The tournament director will hang the schematics for you to locate your competition rooms (see example below). If you are not competing, you can watch your team mates compete, to provide moral support and feedback.

Dramatic Monologue

Round 1: 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Room: A-14  Judge: Smith | Room: 223  Judge: Feldman |
| 1A  2B  8C  4E  5E | 1B  2A  3D  7C  5A |

You will find your code and report to the room listed at the top. If you are not on the schematic but are supposed to be in the event, don’t panic. Go to the Control Room and tell your coach; he or she will check into it. Before you go to the Control room however, check and make sure you have the right code.

Once you get to the classroom, write the following on the blackboard:

1. your name
2. your code
3. The name of your piece \*
4. The author/playwright \*

\*If your event is impromptu or improv, you only need to write your name and code.

# *Codes:* For each event you have entered, you have to have a speaker code. The code is a combination of a number (the team number you got when you arrived) and a letter (from your placement on the roster). The reason codes are used has to do with anonymity - you are not supposed to be asked what school you are from by any judge. For example, if your team is team number 7, and you are listed third in the event, your code would be 7C. It is incredibly important that if you are entered in more than one event that you do NOT forget your codes or use the wrong code for your events. If you are 7A for Poetry and 7D for Persuasion, you have to remember each. If you perform in the wrong room you will be disqualified from the event.

# *Double Entered:* You are allowed to enter up to two categories each hour, for a maximum of six the entire day. This means that you have to be in two places at once; this is called being “double-entered” or “DE.” Students who are “DE” MUST sign in to each room at the beginning of the hour in which they are DE. Once the hour has started, they go to the event they want to do SECOND and sign in; they also write “DE will return” next to their code. If you do not sign in to both rooms within the first 15 minutes of the hour, you may be disqualified.

Example: John Smith 7A (DE) Will return

By writing (DE), you eliminate any doubt whether the judge should wait for you if you run late in the other event. In the event room you want to do FIRST, you will write the above with DE only – that will tell the judge that you are ready to go and should go first.

*Proper tournament etiquette*: Whenever possible, you are encouraged to stay in the room and watch other people you are competing against. You can learn a lot from watching your fellow performers. If you need to leave the room because you are double entered, make sure you do it quietly before anyone else starts to perform. Also, if you have to enter a room that has already started, you should wait quietly outside the door until the performer is finished their piece, then quietly enter the room and have a seat. Remember that you are a guest in someone else’s school. Behave accordingly and show respect for the facility, as well as the other performers.

# *The Rest of the Day*: As the day progresses, you will do each event twice – once in the morning and once in the afternoon. After that, the best five or six competitors, as scored that day, will be posted and will then go against each other in a final round. After that, everyone reports to the main meeting room for the awards ceremony.

One of the awards presented is for sweepstakes, which is calculated by each participant’s events throughout the day. For every 3rd place finish in any event, the team gets 1 point. For every second place, the team gets 2 points. And for every first place finish, the team gets 3 points. For finals, every fifth place gets 1 point on up to first place gaining 5 points for the team. Every event counts! Even if you don’t final, a 3rd or better in any event gets the team points. Every student can contribute to the sweepstakes total, even those who don’t final.

After the individual and team trophies are awarded the tournament director will make a few closing remarks and then it is time to go home. Thank the tournament director on your way out, as well as any parent volunteers or student helpers from the hosting team. Remember to gather all of your gear, including costumes, props, binders, book bags and jackets, as well as pick up trash around your area (whether it is your trash or not). Before you leave your coach will see the tournament director to get your envelope – this will be a large envelope with the judging sheets for each of your events. When you get your judge sheets is the coach’s choice. Some coaches give the judging sheets out right away, others look over them first for tips on how to help their team, still others give them out, but then re-collect them to use at rehearsals. When you get your sheets, use the information to improve and grow.

Part III: Judges’ Information

If you are judging at an NJDFL tournament you meet one or more of the following criteria: you are a professional educator, you have a background in theatre (professional or amateur), or you are a former NJDFL competitor.

*How a tournament works*: There are twelve events throughout the day, four events each hour. The day is divided into two rounds: round 1 is in the morning and round 2 is in the afternoon. Students present their pieces twice for different judges, so you will not be judging the same event twice in one day. For the finals round the five best pieces are presented again for a panel of three judges to determine the overall winners for the day.

*How judging works*: Optimally you will see five pieces in a round. Sometimes, due to scheduling issues and last minute changes to team rosters, you may see four pieces or six pieces. After each performance you will fill out a critique sheet that the students will eventually receive (see Appendix G). The critique sheet has a rubric on the top to guide your evaluation and tell you what to look for. The bottom half is for your comments. The comment section is the part that is most important to the competitors. The more feedback you provide, the more the students can improve. Remember that the competitors are high school students, and your criticism should be specific and professional. After you have seen all of the pieces in your round, you will rank them: the best is 1st, second best is 2nd, etc. After the second round the ranks are added together, and the competitors with the *lowest* rank move on to the final round. The Round Record is Appendix M.

*Arriving at the tournament*: Please plan to arrive 30 minutes before your first judging round. If you are judging in the morning, this means arriving at 8:30; if you are judging in the afternoon, you should arrive by 12:00. When you arrive you will report to the Control Room and check in with the tournament director or his/her designee. You will get a Judges’ Prep Packet with a copy of the rules, a map of the school, a schedule for the day and a stopwatch (if you have not brought your own). If you arrive for the morning session there will be a judges’ meeting to go over the rules and any last minute changes and/or questions. By 9:00 you should be in your first room and the judging begins!

*Arriving at your first room*: Shortly before the start of each hour the judges’ packets will be placed out on a table for pick up. If your name is on a packet, then it is yours; you can take it and be on your way. Before heading to the room in which you will be judging, you must stop by the schematics and write down the codes of the students assigned to your room. The students are assigned to rooms randomly so they compete against different students throughout the day. Before the start of each hour the schematics will be posted in a central location. This lets the students know where they report to compete. The schematics will tell you the codes of the students you will be judging that hour (see example below). For each event they have entered, students will have a speaker code. The code is a combination of a number (their team number) and a letter (from their placement on the roster). The reason codes are used is to provide a measure of anonymity - students are not supposed to be asked what school they are from. When you get to the room where you will be judging, please sign in on the board, identifying yourself as a judge. Before the round begins, read the rules aloud to the students in the room; this helps refresh everyone’s memory.

Dramatic Monologue

Round 1: 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Room: A-14  Judge: Smith | Room: 223  Judge: Feldman |
| 1A  2B  8C  4E  5E | 1B  2A  3D  7C  5A |

If there are no envelopes with your name on them, then you are off for the hour. Before you head to the cafeteria for coffee, check with the tournament director to make sure you are not needed to fill in for a judge that is running late.

*How a round works*: Competitors report to their rooms and sign in on the board. Once the student gets to the classroom, they write the following on the blackboard:

1. Their name
2. Their code
3. The name of their piece \*
4. The author/playwright \*

\*If their event is impromptu or improv, they only need their name and code.

# You will have a critique sheet for each competitor (Appendix G). At the top of each critique sheet are spaces for you to fill in the student’s name, code, and the title of their piece, as well as the round (AM is round 1, PM is round 2, “F” for finals round). It is very important to copy the student’s name and code accurately on each critique sheet. At the bottom of the sheet is a space for your name and the school you are judging for (if you are a member of Actor’s Equity but are judging at the request of the Dumont High School coach, you write “Dumont”) – please print this information.

# As the judge you control the room. This means that you decide who goes first and when they begin. Keep in mind that some students are double entered and may need to go first. Students are allowed to enter up to two categories each hour; this is called being “double-entered” or “DE.” Students who are “DE” must sign in to each room at the beginning of the hour in which they are DE. They go to the event they want to do SECOND and sign in; they also write “DE will return” next to their code. Example:

John Smith 7A (DE) Will return

By writing this, they eliminate any doubt whether you should wait for them if they run late in the other event. In the event room they want to do FIRST, they will write the above with “DE” only – that will tell you that they are ready to go and should go first.

As soon as you are ready, and as soon as possible after the start of the hour, the first competitor should begin. If it is a timed event, remember that these times include set-up, strike times and the introduction. Begin timing as soon as the student starts their introduction or sets up the room. Stop timing when the student says “Thank you” or otherwise indicates they are finished (and room is put back to its original state). You can allow the contestants to exceed time, without stopping them, by one minute, but after that, you can stop them due to time. For improvisation and impromptu categories (and ONLY these categories) you must give warning signals as the competitor(s) reach the end of their time. When the competitor(s) has one minute left, raise your arm over your head and hold up one finger. After each presentation, take a minute to write some brief comments on the critique sheet, but remember to keep the round going. You have an hour to see all of the pieces assigned to your room. After all of the contestants have gone, you can go back and add more comments to the critique sheets.

*The Round Record*: This is the most important form as far as the Control Room is concerned, because the data from this sheet (Appendix M) determines who the finalists, and later, the winners are. At the top of the round record you will write the name of the event and the round (AM is round 1, PM is round 2, “F” for finals round). At the bottom of the sheet is a space for your name and the school you are judging for (if you are a member of Actor’s Equity but are judging at the request of the Dumont High School coach, you write “Dumont”) – please print this information. Now comes the hard part! You must rank each piece; the best piece is #1, the next best is #2, and so on. You will also assign a score to each piece. The rank is what is used to determine who goes to finals – the lowest ranked pieces move on. The scores are only used to break a tie, but must follow some guidelines. The best piece must get a score of at least a 90, and the worst piece cannot get lower than a 70. There can be NO TIES! EVER! UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!!

Write the names or the competitors, their codes, their ranks and scores on the round record. Please double-check and make sure all of the information on the critique sheets matches what you have written on the round record. When you are all finished, and as close to the end of the hour as possible, return your completed packet to the control room, and pick up the packet for your next judging assignment.

*Disqualification, or “The DQ”:* If a piece goes over time it must be ranked 5th and scored a 70, even if it is the best in the room. Do not tell the student that they are over or under time; no verbal feedback of any kind is to be given. This can throw the student’s concentration off, and be perceived as favoritism by other students. Alert the tournament director to any DQs when you turn in your paperwork. Judges are not allowed to disqualify any individual for any reason without first consulting the tournament director. Bring any other issues you might have to the tournament director and they will assist you and determine if the infraction is grounds for disqualification.

*Scoring Tips:* Overall, the piece that earns 1st place should be the one that you found the most entertaining, most professional, and most compelling. Pieces should have a well-written introduction. Students competing in acting categories should create a believable character, and the piece should have planned blocking that uses the space available. Students competing in forensic events should have a loud, clear speaking voice that conveys emotion that is appropriate to the piece. For comment suggestions, see below or Appendix M and for rules for each event: See pages 16-19 or Appendix L

Judges’ Comment Suggestions

**Non-constructive comments**

Non-constructive comments are brief, vague or mean; they do not help the performer learn and grow.

For example:

* Not my favorite piece (play, musical, whatever).
* Funny/Not funny.
* Bad.
* Good.
* Pick a new scene (piece, etc)
* There was something about it I didn’t like.
* Dated material.
* I’ve seen this piece before
* This piece finaled last year.
* I hate Neil Simon.
* That was awesome!
* This event is not for you.

Remember…

If you are familiar with the piece, try not to prejudge.

Don’t criticize choice of material based on your personal preference.

Do not prejudge pieces based on age and gender of the performer – students are encouraged to explore a variety of characters and situations in their pieces.

**Constructive comments**

Constructive comments are specific, professional and include both positive and constructive feedback. Constructive comments help the performer learn and grow.

For example:

* Character was well-rounded and believable.
* Character is clear, but movements are not justified.
* Vocals are good, but actions are not always motivated.
* If you make a mistake, don’t panic; try to keep going.
* Characters need to interact more; make eye contact with each other
* Volume was strong; work on enunciation
* The beginning was rushed; try to slow down.

NJDFL Code of Ethics for Judges

*Objectively evaluate all performances*. Everyone is capable of a great performance or an off day. Be sure you judge what is presented, not what the competitor ‘is capable of’ or ‘has done before.” Rank and score performances after everyone has competed and left the room. Review your written comments before ranking and scoring competitors. Be sure the relative closeness of performances is reflected in the scores you assign.

*Make participation a learning experience for each competitor.* While you are in the room to evaluate performance, you are also there to educate. Provide specific, constructive feedback on your score sheet. Compliment as much as you can, and suggest area(s) for improvement. The guidance you provide will help competitors become accomplished speakers and actors. NEVER provide verbal feedback to a competitor. This can throw the student’s concentration off, and be perceived as favoritism by other students.

*Promote a sense of fair play.* In any competitive activity, there are rules to which participants must adhere and penalties for infractions. At the start of each event you judge, confirm the rules for the competitors (read them aloud). Apply those rules equally to all competitors. Making exceptions leads to confusion, conflict or unfair advantage.

*Promote positive behavior.* In addition to filling the roles of evaluator, educator, and referee you must also act as ‘scout leader’. Foster consideration and support among the competitors in your room.

Appendix A: Meeting Flyer

What is the New Jersey Drama and Forensics League?

Are you a great actor ?

Are you a great public speaker?

Do you want to get better?

Come to an informational meeting and find out more about *YOUR SCHOOL’S* new NJDFL Team.

Date:

Time:

Place:

Appendix B: Sources for Competition Material

Sources for Theatre Pieces:

Samuel French [www.samuelfrench.com](http://www.samuelfrench.com)

Dramatic Publishing Company [www.dramaticpublishing.com](http://www.dramaticpublishing.com)

Baker’s Plays [www.bakersplays.com](http://www.bakersplays.com)

Dramatists Play Service [www.dramatists.com](http://www.dramatists.com)

Playscripts [www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com)

Eldridge Plays and Musicals www.histage.com

Heuer Publishing www.hitplays.com

Pioneer Drama Service www.pioneerdrama.com

Anchorage Press Plays www.applays.com

Tams-Witmark [www.tamswitmark.com](http://www.tamswitmark.com)

Music Theatre International [www.mtishows.com](http://www.mtishows.com)

Rodgers & Hammerstein Plays [www.rnh.com](http://www.rnh.com)

Sources for Impromptu Quotes:

[www.brainy**quote**.com](http://www.brainyquote.com)

[www.**quote**garden.com](http://www.quotegarden.com)

[www.quotationspage.com](http://www.quotationspage.com)

[www.great-quotes.com](http://www.great-quotes.com)

[www.famous-quotations.com](http://www.famous-quotations.com)

www.bartleby.com

Sources for Improv Prompts:

www.improvresourcecenter.com

Appendix C: Sample Rehearsal Journal

**Rehearsal Journal**

Category:

Piece:

Time parameters:

Initial notes/ideas for piece:

Rehearsals

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date: | Time spent: |
| Reflection: | |
| Date: | Time spent: |
| Reflection: | |
| Date: | Time spent: |
| Reflection: | |
| Date: | Time spent: |
| Reflection: | |

Appendix D: Registration Form

# REGISTRATION FORM

# DRAMA & FORENSICS TOURNAMENT

**DATE**

(affiliated with the NEW JERSEY DRAMA FORENSICS LEAGUE)

Please complete this registration form and return it by **,** 201-.

Telephone all entries and changes after this date.

Telephone number is . (Leave message.)

Fax number is . E-Mail is . Keep one copy for your records. No additions after 3:00 PM on , 201- will be allowed.

Please Send To: Drama Director, High School Name

NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_E MAIL \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTOR OF DRAMA\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the number of dramatic slots your school will enter. A school entry is five per event, per school, per division.

NUMBER OF ENTRIES

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ COMEDY PAIRS (CP)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE (DM)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ PERSUASIVE SPEAKING (PERS)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ POETRY INTERPRETATION (POE)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ IMPROVISATIONAL PAIRS (IP)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ AFTER DINNER SPEAKING (ADS)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ READERS’ THEATRE (RT)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ IMPROMPTU SPEAKING (IMP)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ COMEDY MONOLOGUE (CM)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ MUSICAL THEATRE PAIRS (MD)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DRAMATIC DUO (DD)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ PROSE INTERPRETATION (PR)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL SLOTS X $5.00 PER SLOT = $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL SLOTS NOT COVERED BY JUDGES X $5.00 JUDGE FEE =$

**TOTAL DUE** $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

We will be bringing \_\_\_\_\_ judges (including coach) X 12 SLOTS PER JUDGE.

NAMES OF JUDGES: 1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix E: Entry Grid/Team Roster

School Name: Team Name:

Hour 1 9:00-10:00 and 12:30-1:30

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dramatic Monologue | Comedy Pairs | Persuasive | Poetry |
| A.  B.  C.  D.  E. | A.  B.  C.  D.  E. | A.  B.  C.  D.  E. | A.  B.  C.  D.  E. |

Hour 2 10:00-11:00 and 1:30-2:30

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Impromptu Speaking | After Dinner Speaking | Reader’s Theatre\* | Improv Pairs |
| A.  B.  C.  D.  E. | A.  B.  C.  D.  E. | A.  B.  C.  D.  E. | A.  B.  C.  D.  E. |

Hour 3 11:00-12:00 and 2:30-3:30

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Comedy Monologue | Dramatic Duo | Musical Pairs | Prose |
| A.  B.  C.  D.  E. | A.  B.  C.  D.  E. | A.  B.  C.  D.  E. | A.  B.  C.  D.  E. |

\*Write title of piece above, and list performers here:

**Write performers’ first and last names for all categories.**

Appendix F: Schematics

Event:

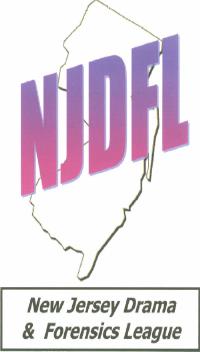
Round:

Time:

Location:

Judge(s):

Competitors:

Appendix G: Judging Form

New Jersey Drama & Forensics League

Judge’s Comment Ballot

EVENT:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ROUND:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ SECTION:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SPEAKER’S NAME:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL CODE:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TOPIC/TITLE OF SELECTION:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ TIME:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Vocal Quality & Expression   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Criteria | Yes | No | N/A | | \* Loud enough |  |  |  | | \* Clearly spoken |  |  |  | | \* Appropriate expression |  |  |  | | \* Appropriate rate, or speed |  |  |  | | Facial Expression   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Criteria | Yes | No | N/A | | \* Appropriate eye contact/focal point |  |  |  | | \* Interesting and expressive facial expression |  |  |  | | \* Enhanced presentation |  |  |  | |
| Staging & Movement   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Criteria | Yes | No | N/A | | \* Effectively staged given the rules |  |  |  | | \* Movements motivated |  |  |  | | \* Effective and appropriate gestures |  |  |  | | Character/Speaker Quality   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Criteria | Yes | No | N/A | | \* Clearly defined character |  |  |  | | \* Demonstrated understanding of piece |  |  |  | | \* Stage presence |  |  |  | |
| Introductions & Time   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Criteria | Yes | No | N/A | | \* Adhered to time limits |  |  |  | | \* Informative introduction |  |  |  | | \* Appropriate introduction time |  |  |  |   For PERSUASIVE and IMPROMPTU Only   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Criteria | Yes | No | N/A | | \* Clear organizational skills |  |  |  | | \* Supportive examples |  |  |  | | Transitions & Level of Preparation   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Criteria | Yes | No | N/A | | \* Well-rehearsed |  |  |  | | \* Appropriate transitions |  |  |  | | \* Proper etiquette onstage and off. |  |  |  |   \* Only judge performance  \* Please avoid personal bias in judging |
| **Judge’s Comments**: Use this box to clarify the information checked above. Comments should not be personal; instead, they should be constructive and meant to help the competitor improve upon their performance. | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Rank (circle one – no ties – 1st is best) | Rating (between 70 and 100, 100 being the highest)  No ties – 1st place must be 90 or higher |
| 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th | Rating: |

NAME OF JUDGE:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

JUDGING FOR WHICH HIGH SCHOOL:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix H: Round Record

COMPETITION ROUND RECORD

**EVENT:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ROUND:** (*circle one*) **AM PM FINALS**

INSTRUCTIONS: List the speakers in speaking order in the boxes below. After the round is over rank and rate the speakers according to the following process:

RANK- The best speaker gets “1”, the second best “2”, the third best “3”, the fourth best

“4”, and anyone below that “5”, whether there are five or more contestants.

RATING- All speakers will be rated 70 to 100. The best speaker may be given a rating of

100 but no lower than 90. The poorest speaker may not be given a rating of less than 70.

All other speakers may be given scores between the high and low, with no ties and with

the ranks and ratings correlating exactly.

**NOTE: Record the speaker’s full name and school code number.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of Speaker | School Code | Rank  (1-5) | Rate  (100-70) |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

Please return this score record and all ballots to the Control Room *at the end of the round*. **Please return it before going to your next round.**

Judge's Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of school you are judging for\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix I: Change Form

**CHANGE FORM (ONE FORM PER CHANGE)**

School Name:

Team Number:

Drops:

Adds:

Mark each DONE when changes are made!!!!

Computer list changed:

Morning posting changed:

Afternoon posting changed:

Appendix J: Photo/Internet Consent Form

www.njdfl.org

**Parent/Guardian Photo/Internet Consent Form**

We are sending you this parental consent form to both inform you and to request permission for your child’s photo/image and personally identifiable information (name and school) to be published on the NJDFL website – [www.njdlf.org](http://www.njdlf.org) – as well as other media outlets (newspapers, etc.).

As you are aware there are potential dangers associated with the posting of personally identifiable information on a website since global access to the internet does not allow us to control who may access such information. These dangers have always existed; however, we want to celebrate your child and his/her work. The law requires that we ask for your permission to use information about your child. The internet is a world-wide group of hundreds of thousands of computers and the NJDFL does not and can not control the content of the internet.

Pursuant to law, we will not release any personally identifiable information without prior written consent from you as parent or guardian. Personally identifiable information includes names, photo or image or school attended.

If you as the parent or guardian wish to rescind this agreement, you may do so, at any time, in writing, by sending a letter to your child’s Forensics Team Coach or any of the officers of the NJDFL and the rescission will take effect upon receipt of the letter.

Please check one of the following and return to your child’s Forensics Team Coach:

🗌 **I/We GRANT** permission for this student’s photo/image, name and all other personal identifiers listed above to be published on the NJDFL internet website.

🗌 **I/WE DO NOT GRANT** permission for photo/image that includes this student to be published on the NJDFL internet website.

Student’s Name: (print)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

High School Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print name of Parent/Guardian:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Relation to student:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix K: Food Coupons

|  |
| --- |
| Breakfast Coupon |
| **1 donut OR**  **1 muffin OR**  **1 piece of fruit OR**  **1 bagel**  **AND**  **1 drink** |

|  |
| --- |
| Lunch Coupon |
| **1 hoagie (turkey or Italian) OR**  **1 slice of pizza OR**  **1 hot dog OR**  **1 bagel**  **AND**  **1 drink**  **AND**  **1 snack - chips/cookie/brownie/fruit/candy** |

Appendix L: Event Rules

RULES OF COMPETITION

*Dramatic (acting) categories:*

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE:  Each contestant will present a cutting of a scene (or   
scenes) from any published play or monologue book, after 1920\*, classified as a drama or tragedy (no screenplays or television scripts).  The scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of drama.  The cutting presented must involve one character.  The contestant may use props, costumes, make-up, and/or background music (live or recorded).  The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed seven minutes, including set-up and strike time.  No scripts or prompters are to be used.

COMEDY MONOLOGUE:  Each contestant will present a cutting of a scene (or scenes)   
from any published play or monologue book, after 1920\*[[2]](#footnote-2)\*, classified as a comedy (no screenplays or television scripts).  The scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of drama.  The cutting presented must involve one character.  The contestant may use props, costumes, make-up and/or background music (live or recorded).  The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed seven minutes, including set-up and strike time.  No scripts or prompters are to be used.

CLASSIC MONOLOGUE: Each contestant will present a cutting of a scene (or scenes) from any published play classified as a classic drama or tragedy (no screenplays or television scripts AND no plays published after 1920.) The scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of drama. The cutting presented must involve one character. The contestant may use props, costumes, make-up and/or background music (live or recorded). The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed seven minutes, including set-up and strike time.  No scripts or prompters are to be used. All contests are held in regular classrooms or meeting rooms.

DRAMATIC PAIRS: Each dramatic pair will present a cutting of a scene (or scenes) from any published play classified as a drama (no screenplays or television scripts).  The   
scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of   
drama.  The cutting presented must involve two characters.  The actors may use props,   
costumes, make-up, and/or background music (live or recorded).  The scene, with an   
appropriate introduction, must not exceed ten minutes, including set-up and strike time. No scripts or prompters are to be used.  A contestant may enter only one (1) dramatic pair.

COMEDIC PAIRS: Each comedic pair will present a cutting of a scene (or scenes) from

from any published play classified as a drama (no screenplays or television scripts).  The  
scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of   
drama.  The cutting presented must involve two characters.  The actors may use props,   
costumes, make-up and/or background music (live or recorded).  The scene, with an   
appropriate introduction, must not exceed ten minutes, including set-up and strike time. No scripts or prompters are to be used. A contestant may enter only one (1) comedic pair.

MUSICAL THEATRE PAIR: The performers must present one selection drawn from **published** musicals written for the theatre. No original works, medleys, or screenplays will be allowed. The selection may contain dialogue, but must be at least 50% singing. Both participants must be actively involved in the piece. The performers may use props, costumes, and make-up. Performers may use non-vocal musical accompaniment, which can be live or electronically produced. Students using tape or CD must bring their own equipment and be able to operate it themselves or provide an operator. Criteria for evaluating shall include characterization and interpretation of roles, staging, delivery, interaction, communication, and balance. The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed seven minutes, including set-up and strike time. No scripts or prompters are to be used. All contests are held in regular classrooms or meeting rooms.

IMPROVISATIONAL PAIRS:  Each improvisational pair will present a scene created

from a situation card to be selected from the judge's envelope. Situations are selected as a blind draw – no choices will be given. The preparation and presentation of the improvised scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed 7 minutes.  No notes, scripts, or props (doors, walls and clothes are considered props) are to be used (student chairs/desks in classroom are permitted).  An introduction by one or both students is **REQUIRED**to set the scene, and a resolution of the conflict must be evident at the end of the scene. Excessive profanity, sexual innuendo, or excessive physicality (i.e. pushing, shoving, and striking) will not be tolerated. All contests are held in regular classrooms or meeting rooms.

SCENE: Each drama group will present a cutting of a scene (or scenes) from any **published** play classified as a comedy or drama/tragedy (no screenplays or television scripts). The scene need not be a complete scene or act, but should function as a meaningful unit of drama. The cutting presented must involve three to six actors. The actors may use props, costumes, make-up, and background music (live or recorded). The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not exceed twelve minutes, including set-up and strike time. No scripts or prompters are to be used. All contests are held in regular classrooms or meeting rooms. A contestant may enter only one (1) group. Only the top three scenes will place and be eligible for States. There are no finals in Scene.

*Forensic (public speaking) categories*

AFTER DINNER SPEAKING:  Each contestant will present an **original** speech to entertain an audience about an important topic and make greater sense of it through the use of humor.  The speech may be either informative or thought-provoking in nature, but it must have a serious thesis and cannot merely represent a "stand-up" comedy routine. All humor during the speech should be in good taste.  The speech should be memorized but may be presented from note cards.  No manuscripts may be used.  Visual aids are **not allowed**.  Time limit for the speech is 7 minutes.   Speakers are not confined to the three-foot circle of interpretation events but are reminded that this is NOT an acting category; all speeches should reflect appropriate public speaking etiquette and delivery.

DECLAMATION:  Each contestant will deliver an oral interpretation of a famous speech. Students will pick their own speech between 4-6 minutes long (600 and 750 words).  This is not an acting category, as the student is not being judged on imitation. The speech may be cut to adhere to word limit.  As a forensic interpretation event, all contestants must stay within a three foot circle from original speaking location and should not sit, kneel, etc. The use of a manuscript is required.

DRAMATIC DUO INTERPRETATION: A cutting from one or more serious published texts of literary merit, involving the portrayal of two or more characters presented by two individuals. The material may be drawn from any genre of literature. This is not an acting event; thus, no costumes, props, lighting, etc. are to be used. Physical use of space is allowed and encouraged. Presentation is from the manuscript and focus must be off-stage and not to each other. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING:  Each contestant shall draw a random quote or topic from the judge’s envelope and will present a speech based on that quote or topic.  Contestant   
may use a note card, but should not have a manuscript or prepared notes of any kind.     
Total event time will be seven minutes including an appropriate introduction and   
preparation time.    
  
PERSUASIVE SPEAKING:  Each contestant will present an original speech to persuade,   
convince, stimulate, or activate the audience about a certain topic or idea.  The speech   
should be memorized but may be presented from note cards or a manuscript.  Visual aids are not allowed to be used.  Time limit, with an appropriate introduction, is seven minutes.      
  
POETRY INTERPRETATION:  Each contestant will orally present a selection of poetry   
from a published work or online source (a complete poem, a segment of a whole poem or several poems based on the same theme or poet).  Students may NOT read their own poetry. Contestants must have a manuscript and must use an introduction and relevant transitions. As a forensic interpretation event, all contestants must stay within a three foot circle from original speaking location and should not sit kneel, etc.  Time limit is seven minutes including introduction.     
  
PROSE INTERPRETATION:  Each contestant will deliver an oral interpretation of a   
program of published prose, with appropriate introductory and transitional material.  As a   
forensic interpretation event, all contestants must stay within a three foot circle from   
original speaking location and should not sit, kneel, etc.  Time limit is seven minutes. Selections may be single or multiple.  The use of a manuscript is required.

CHILDREN’S LITERATURE: Each contestant will orally present a selection of poetry or prose from a published work. The selection may be single or multiple; if multiple, from either prose or poetry or both, but no drama. The piece must be written for the elementary level or under (meaning the content, themes and word choice are suitable for the elementary level or younger). No visual aids may be used (including the use of the book’s pictures for demonstration). Contestants must have a manuscript and should have an introduction and relevant transitions. This is not an acting category—no costumes, props or music allowed. As a forensic interpretation event, all contestants must stay within a three foot circle from original speaking location and should not sit kneel, etc. Time limit is seven minutes.

RADIO BROADCASTING: Each contestant will report directly to the performance room and sign-in. The contestants will then return to the hallway or designated waiting area and wait to be called. When it is their time to perform, each contestant will return to the room individually and be given a “broadcast short” **approximately 45 sec- 1 min** in length. They will be allotted exactly **1 min** to read over the material. The short will be a typical radio announcement consisting of formal news, pop-culture news, product advertisement, weather report, traffic update, etc. **The report may be real news or mock*.*** When the 1 min is up, the student will read the speech from the front of the room. The judge will follow along with a copy of the exact speech. (Each student will receive the same short) Remember, **this is not an interpretation** event. The news should be read with the level of professionalism that one would hear on the radio.

READER’S THEATRE: Each group will present a cutting of a reader’s theatre piece,   
novel, or short story from any published venue.  The piece need not be a complete   
scene or act, but should function as a meaningful narrative.  The cutting presented   
must involve three to six actors. All actors must have lines and may play more than   
one character.  The actors may use props for sound effects only and background   
music/sounds (must be live).  The scene, with an appropriate introduction, must not   
exceed ten minutes, including set-up and strike time. Scripts must be used.  All group   
members must be sitting or standing in place as consistent with reader’s theatre   
rules.  All contests are held in regular classrooms or meeting rooms.  A contestant   
may enter only one (1) group.  (Please list actors’ names when completing the   
registration from.)

GENERAL RULES

Rules require programs not given in competition prior to April 201-. The same program may not be used in several events. Any questions regarding clarification of rules, violations of stated rules, plagiarism, or disqualification should be presented to the tournament director before any action is taken or ballot completed. Each contestant, pair or group will be given two preliminary rounds of competition, and the best five entries will compete in a final round.

FOR ALL INTERPRETATION EVENTS (Except DRAMATIC DUO): a three-foot rule applies, which means the contestant should not move outside of a three-foot radius during their presentation.  The purpose of these events is the ORAL interpretation, not the physical. A PODIUM MAY NOT BE USED DURING ANY OF THE SPEECH CATEGORIES.

MARRIED RULE:  Once a contestant places in any category with another person/people, they must remain the same for the rest of the season.

DISQUALIFICATION: If the time maximums are not adhered to, the contestant will receive an automatic last place with a 70, even if they are the best participant in their room—no exceptions!!!

All contestants are cautioned against the use of the f-word; NJDFL regulations call for an automatic last place and 70 score. Please also remember that ANY inappropriate content may be grounds for disqualification.

*Judges are not allowed to disqualify any student until they speak with the tournament moderator.*

**No video taping of any performance during the competition day is allowed at any time!!**

ENTRIES: A school may have five entries per event. Schools wishing to enter more than five entries per event may request a second team entry. The second school entries are considered to be a separate team. Contestants cannot be interchanged between the two teams. Schools are obligated to provide judges or pay judge fees to cover entries.

AWARDS: In each event, there will be five awards.

Sweepstakes: These awards are given to the top five teams in the competition. The computation of those awards is based on the following:

Preliminary Rounds: 3 points for 1st Place Rank

2 points for 2nd Place Rank

1 point for 3rd Place Rank

Final Rounds: 5 points for 1st

4 points for 2nd

3 points for 3rd

2 points for 4th

1 point for 5th

JUDGING: Each school must provide a *qualified* person to judge the events. Judges should possess specific training or extensive experience in theatre events. One judge must be provided for a school's entry of every 12 competitive slots (i.e. 2 judges for 24 slots, 3 for 36, etc.). Hired judges are available for $4.00 per speaking slot.

Appendix M

Judges’ Comment Suggestions

**Non-constructive comments**

Non-constructive comments are brief, vague or mean; they do not help the performer learn and grow.

For example:

* Not my favorite piece (play, musical, whatever).
* Funny.
* Not funny.
* Started a little rough
* Bad.
* Good/Good job.
* Pick a new scene (piece, etc)
* There was something about it I didn’t like.
* Dated material.
* I’ve seen this piece before
* This piece finaled last year.
* You suck.
* I hate Neil Simon.
* That was awesome!
* This event is not for you.

Remember…

If you are familiar with the piece, try not to prejudge.

Don’t criticize choice of material based on your personal preference.

Do not prejudge pieces based on age and gender of the performer – students are encouraged to explore a variety of characters and situations in their pieces.

**Constructive comments**

Constructive comments are specific, professional and include both positive and constructive feedback. Constructive comments help the performer learn and grow.

For example:

* Character was well-rounded and believable.
* You have a high level of vocal quality; however you could adjust where you stand in the scene to draw focus.
* Clear beginning, middle, and end of story.
* Character is clear, but movements are not justified.
* Vocals are good, but actions are not always motivated.
* If you make a mistake, don’t panic; try to keep going.
* Timing between characters is perfect and energy is high.
* Characters need to interact more; make eye contact with each other
* Volume was good; I could hear you clearly
* Voice was too monotone
* Volume was strong; work on enunciation
* The beginning was rushed; try to slow down.

1. \* When Classic Monologue is not offered, “after 1920” is omitted from the rules. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. \* When Classic Monologue is not offered, “after 1920” is omitted from the rules. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)