



ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION
Scotland



Schools' Public Speaking Handbook

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welcome!

The English-Speaking Union (ESU) was founded by Sir Evelyn Wrench in 1918 to promote international friendship and understanding. Today, the ESU is a dynamic educational charity and membership organisation with over 60 international branches. ESU Scotland will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2022.

The aims of the ESU have remained the same - to promote the value of effective communication around the globe and to help people realise their potential.

The importance of effective spoken communication skills cannot be underestimated. Even in a global village where communication has moved more and more online, the ability to speak confidently in public remains invaluable for people in all walks of life. World leaders in politics, law, religion, business, science and technology all have an important skill in common. They speak with confidence.

Oracy skills are key to all our activities and ESU Scotland's speech and debates programmes include competitions, workshops and outreach programmes which focus on persuasive spoken English.

Our Public Speaking Competitions provide students with an opportunity to develop the vital skills that enable them to speak with confidence in public. Not only does the competition enhance these public speaking and critical thinking skills; it also gives students the opportunity to showcase them in a national competitive arena, which makes the practice of public speaking even more engaging and exciting for everyone involved.

This handbook provides a guide to our Public Speaking Competitions, but information about this year's competition is available on our website and will be sent to all participating schools.

If you would like further information about this year's competition or our other programmes, please email debates@esuscotland.org.uk or phone 0131 229 1528.

We wish you the best of luck!

public speaking competitions

introduction

ESU Scotland runs two single-speaker competitions: the ESU Scotland Senior Public Speaking Competition, for pupils in years S4 to S6 (aged 18 or under), and the ESU Scotland Speakers' Corner Challenge for S1 to S3 pupils. Both competitions comprise preliminary heats and a joint national final.

Different themes are set for the preliminary round and the final, and the format allows pupils to present a creative speech of five minutes on a very broad topic. This provides a forum to develop their own personal speaking style and to build confidence in articulating and sharing their ideas; skills that will help them at school and throughout their everyday lives.

senior public speaking competition

The Seniors Competition is open to pupils in S4-S6, although students must be aged 18 or under on the closing date for applications. Theme are released at the start of the competition. Speakers are expected to answer questions after their speech, posed by members of the audience or the adjudication panel to help the adjudicators ascertain how well-researched the speaker is.

Themes for past Senior Public Speaking Competitions have included:

- 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world. - Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Ulysses
- Hatred is so much easier to win than love - and so much harder to get rid of. - Enid Blyton, Six Cousins Again
- It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences. - Audre Lorde, Our Dead Behind Us: Poems
- There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him it is right. - Martin Luther King Jnr
- Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family. - Kofi Annan
- Equality before prosperity?
- Does the Internet empower us?

speakers' corner challenge

The Speakers Corner Challenge competition was launched in 2014-15 and is aimed at younger students, in the S1-S3 age range. Like the seniors competition, the format requires the student to present a five minute speech on a choice of themes and then answer questions after their speech.

Themes from past years have included:

- Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. - Margaret Mead
- Where words fail, music speaks. - Hans Christian Andersen
- Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school. - Albert Einstein
- Think global, act local. - Patrick Geddes
- The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes. - Arthur Conan Doyle, The Hound of the Baskervilles
- Free speech is all or nothing
- Are we Scottish, British or European?



guidance for teachers



competition info & faqs

registration

The closing dates to register for the competitions vary slightly from year to year and registration details and entry forms are available on our website:

www.esuscotland.org.uk

themes

Participants must write and deliver a speech, the title and content of which are connected with the theme or themes for the competition. Participants may interpret the theme in any way they wish, but may not use the theme as the title of their speech. The themes for each year are sent out by email after the registration deadline has closed.

hosting heats

Many of our Public Speaking Competition heats are hosted by schools and we really appreciate the generosity of schools hosting, without which the competition could not run so efficiently. The hosting process is simple and should not be at all costly for schools and there are real benefits to hosting - not only does it save your school from travelling; it is also a good way to expose your other pupils to competitions.

the process

Once all registrations are in, heats are arranged according to geographical proximity by the ESU in groups of schools, depending on the number of speakers entered. Host schools are chosen based on convenience for the surrounding schools amongst those that have offered. Usually the heats involve a room for the Senior Public Speaking Competition and a room for the Speakers' Corner Challenge. However, if numbers are low in each category then the two heats may run consecutively.

Host schools will be provided with the names and contact details of the teachers involved in their heat, along with other information and support.

venue

A hall, large classroom, library or lecture theatre is ideal for the heats to take place, including (if possible) the use of a break-out room for the judges to deliberate.

Speakers are not permitted to use microphones so attention should be paid to the size of the room and the sound of air-conditioning and heating systems.

catering

Some schools choose to provide some catering (e.g. tea, squash, biscuits) but there is no requirement to do so, and unfortunately the ESU cannot cover catering expenses.

This is my school's first time taking part in the competition! Do you have any resources to help me get started?

Yes. In addition to this handbook we have a resources page on our website dedicated to helping you get your students interested in debating and public speaking. Everything is free to download and ready to use in your clubs and classrooms. Visit our Resources page www.esuscotland.org.uk/resources

How many pupils can I enter?

You can enter one or two pupils into the Senior Public Speaking Competition and one or two pupils into the Speakers' Corner Challenge (4 pupils in total).

How old do my pupils have to be to take part?

The Senior Public Speaking Competition is open to pupils in S4-S6, and students must be aged 18 or under on the closing date for applications. The Speakers' Corner Challenge is open to pupils in S1-S3.

How much does it cost to enter the Public Speaking Competitions?

Entry fees vary slightly from year to year. Please see the competition details and entry form for fees.

I've registered. What happens next?

After registration closes, you'll receive an email stating on which date your speakers will be competing and where your heat will be.

I've chosen our speakers but I have a whole class/debating club eager to be involved. Is there a way that they can all take part?

Although you can only enter two speakers in each category, it's great if you can get a whole class or club involved in helping your speakers prepare. Additionally, students can also accompany their school's speakers to the heat and contribute to the questions on the day, making the competition a real team activity.

format of rounds

The format of rounds is the same for both the Speakers' Corner Challenge and the Senior Public Speaking Competition.

preliminary rounds

The preliminary rounds are the first stage of the competition and are held regionally. Participants speak in a random order determined by the chief adjudicator and deliver their five-minute prepared speech, which must be connected with the theme.

A timekeeper gives an audible signal at 4:30 minutes (to indicate that 30 seconds remain), a double signal at 5:00 minutes (to indicate that the participant's time is up), and again at 5:30 minutes (at which point the participant must conclude their speech immediately).

The judges may mark down speeches that are significantly shorter than 5 minutes. Anything said after 5:30 minutes will not be written down or counted in adjudication.

The speech is immediately followed by a 3-4 minute question period.

Questions may come from members of the audience or members of the adjudication panel and participants should respond to each question individually. However, audience members who are connected with a participant (e.g. a family member or an accompanying guest) may not ask questions of that participant.

No visual aids, props or amplifying microphones may be used when delivering your speech, but of course the speakers' personal notes are allowed.

The adjudicators judge the participants in the preliminary rounds in accordance with the adjudication guidelines and the marking scheme for prepared speeches, and the speaker scale, contained in this handbook. The adjudicators' decision is final in all matters.

Participants may seek feedback from the adjudicators, and are encouraged to do so.

The top scored speakers from all of the preliminary rounds will progress to the National Final. Usually eight to ten speakers from each competition progress to the National Final.

national final

The National Final is the last stage of the competitions and both competitions have their National Final on the same day, usually a Saturday, as a joint event.

Once again participants speak in a random order determined by the chief adjudicator, and deliver their five-minute prepared speech on the theme set out for the National Final.

The rules relating to timing, questioning and adjudication apply to the National Final exactly as they apply to the preliminary rounds. No visual aids or props may be used, but dependant on venue, amplifying microphones may be used.

The adjudicators select a winner and a runner up, both of whom receive an award.

The winner of the Senior Public Speaking Competition is also invited to represent Scotland at the International Public Speaking Competition, held in London, the following year. This event sees national winners from ESUs across the world come together for a week of workshops, competition and activities.



first-time speakers

getting started

For many pupils, speaking in a competition for the first time will be a nerve-wracking experience and even very experienced speakers get nervous before speaking in public.

Some confident pupils will immediately volunteer for competitions whilst others may be reluctant to speak in public. They may, however, become more involved in public speaking over time, especially if they are able to help the competitors prepare, attend heats and ask questions. You will know which of your pupils will be able to compete initially and which will need more help to become more confident.

building confidence

You should let pupils know that it is perfectly natural to be nervous before speaking in a competition and that, in many ways, it is a positive thing - a few nerves can encourage dynamism and quick thinking.

Most young people are much better public speakers than they think are. However, many pupils will be very nervous about speaking in public, especially in front of their peers.

Working with their team mates and pupil coaches can help encourage speakers - both in their preparation and showing them that all speakers get nervous before a competition. The pupil coaches and team mates can play an important role in encouraging and supporting speakers.

There are a number of strategies that can help young people overcome their nerves. These may be particularly useful for pupils competing for the first time.

preparation

Good preparation helps. If a speaker has done a lot of research and worked with others to prepare their arguments and practise their speeches, they will be much less nervous.

It is also a good idea for the speaker to practise answering questions on their topic. You can involve other pupils in helping with this.

the audience is on your side!

At the heats most of the audience will comprise fellow competitors and some supporters. The other competitors will also be feeling nervous so everyone is in the same boat. The supporters may also have invested time in helping the speaker to prepare and they want the speakers to succeed.

Speakers should not see the audience as an intimidating factor but remember that they are on their side! If you are chairing, encourage the audience to applaud the speeches and remind the speakers that the audience is here to enjoy and learn from their speeches.

positive mental attitude

Encourage a positive mental attitude by encouraging speakers to be confident. Team mates should support each other and pupil coaches should say encouraging words to their teams. If a pupil is especially worried before a competition, the teacher can go through their speech with them and offer reassuring advice.

provide constructive feedback

Judges (either pupils or adults) should provide positive and constructive feedback to speakers.

Judges should highlight the strong aspects of a speaker's performance and, rather than criticise elements, should suggest areas where the speaker can improve. Positive and constructive feedback is a useful way of building a speaker's confidence. If the speakers are practising their speeches in front of other pupils to prepare, ask pupils in the audience to say two things they liked about each speech and one thing to work on. Encourage peer support and learning from each other.



guidance for speakers

getting started

interpreting the theme

Speakers may interpret the theme in any way they wish, but may not use the theme as the title of their speech. Themes for the Public Speaking Competition are deliberately broad and do not suggest any specific subject area. Speakers should avoid trying to second guess any notional 'intention' behind the theme (there is none!), and should choose a topic they want to speak on, rather than a topic they feel they should speak on.

Finally, speakers should remember that the audience and the adjudicators will be hearing numerous speeches based around the same theme, so an original or creative interpretation of the theme, with an interesting or memorable speech title, is likely to be rewarded. However, the most important thing is that speakers are comfortable with their speech, and is a true reflection of their own personal style.

choosing a topic and title

Many speakers attempt to think of a title that is connected with the theme and then try to construct a speech around that title. It is usually much more effective to choose a topic that they want to write a speech about first (either something they already know a lot about or something they would like to learn more about), and then find a connection between that subject area and the theme. An interesting title is very often something that simply comes to the writer during the researching or writing process (or indeed after the speech has been constructed in its entirety).

It is usually advisable to pick a topic and title which require the speaker to persuade the audience of or argue for something. This provides a focus and 'end goal' of your speech, which helps to structure it and makes it a speech with purpose rather than interesting musings.

Speakers should consider the following when choosing a topic:

- **Am I interested in the topic?**

Speakers should not write a speech on a topic or subject area that they are not interested in. Enthusiasm is difficult to fabricate and without it speakers may find it difficult to maximise their marks

under Expression and Delivery. Conversely, many speakers also try to avoid writing a speech on a topic or subject area that they have very detailed knowledge of, as the inability to get all their knowledge into a five-minute speech can be quite frustrating. For those reasons, speakers often try to strike a balance between the two extremes; i.e. they choose a topic or subject area which they don't know a lot about but which they are interested in.

- **Will my topic capture the interest of the audience?**

The audience and the adjudicators do not necessarily have to be personally interested in the speaker's topic to be persuaded by the speech. Speakers should try to make their speech more engaging by demonstrating the relevance of their arguments to the audience and the adjudicators (e.g. The allocation of government resources may seem like a boring topic to some audience members until one considers that the topic could be linked to the availability of teachers or hospital beds. Similarly, intellectual property law may be something that few people are interested in until one considers its link to illegal downloading).

- **Will I be able to research my topic effectively?**

Speakers will need a certain amount of evidence to support their arguments and persuade the audience. The speaker's topic must be one which they can research effectively using the resources available to them (the school library, the local library, the internet etc). Researching the topic area is important; not only for the speech itself, but for the question period when the speaker's background or ancillary knowledge of the issues is put to the test.

- **Will I be able to discuss my topic in the limited time available?**

Some topics or subject areas are particularly obscure or otherwise unfamiliar and would require a significant amount of explanation to make the information accessible to the audience and the adjudicators.

Any background, contextual or technical information required should not take up more than a few sentences of the speech. If such information requires elaborate explanation, speakers should consider refining their topic.

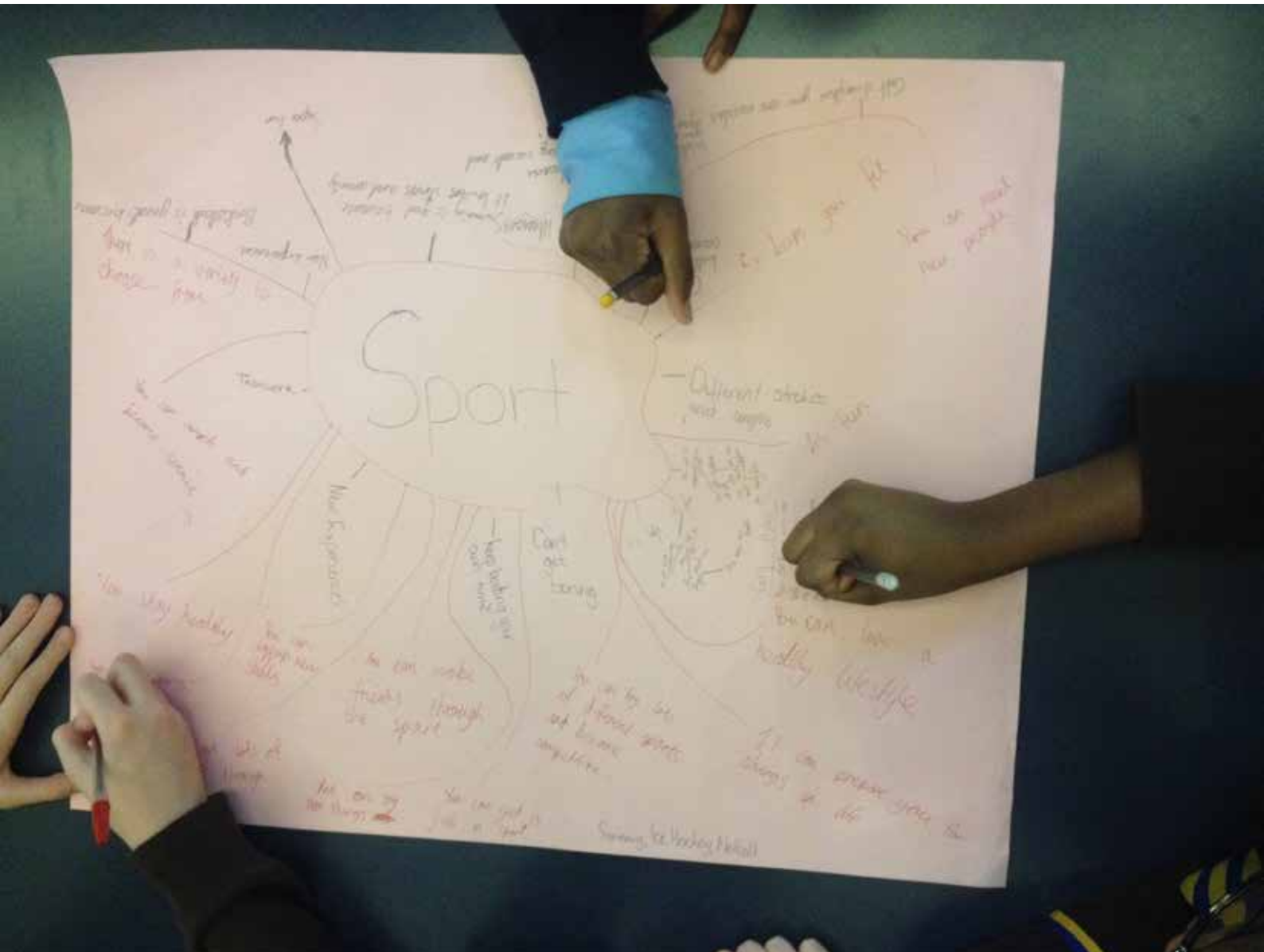
brainstorming

initial brainstorm

One way for speakers to decide on a topic is to write down as many words and ideas as they can think of that are connected with the theme in 60 seconds. Another method is to take individual words from the theme (or various different permutations), put them into a search engine and see what kind of results come back. A similar exercise involves taking individual words from the theme (or various different permutations) and putting them into an online dictionary or thesaurus. The resulting definitions, synonyms or antonyms may inspire an interesting idea for a speech.

secondary brainstorm

Once the speaker has decided on a topic for the speech, it is useful to go back and brainstorm again; writing down all the words and ideas relating to that topic that come to mind in 5 minutes. This process will help the speaker to identify all the possible arguments which they may want to use in their speech. It will also help the speaker to decide how best to group those arguments. Finally, it will help the speaker identify arguments that they may not be able to use in the speech, but which may be useful when answering questions.



research

Once the speaker has decided on a topic for the speech and has taken the time to think about all the possible angles or arguments, they should begin researching in more depth. Even where the speaker has prior knowledge of the topic, it is important for them to broaden their perspective as much as possible, and to ensure that the evidence and information they use in their speech is reliable and up-to-date.

different types of sources

Speakers should aim to utilise fact-based resources (e.g. encyclopaedias), academic resources (e.g. journals or reports) and opinion-based resources (e.g. newspapers or news websites). A broad range of knowledge and information to draw from demonstrates a depth of research and engagement with the subject, which is likely to be rewarded by the judges.

up-to-date information

Speakers should ensure that the information they are relying on to support their arguments is up-to-date. The Internet is invaluable for checking that the

information already obtained (e.g. a journal or newspaper article) is the most up-to-date information available. However, don't just rely on Wikipedia!

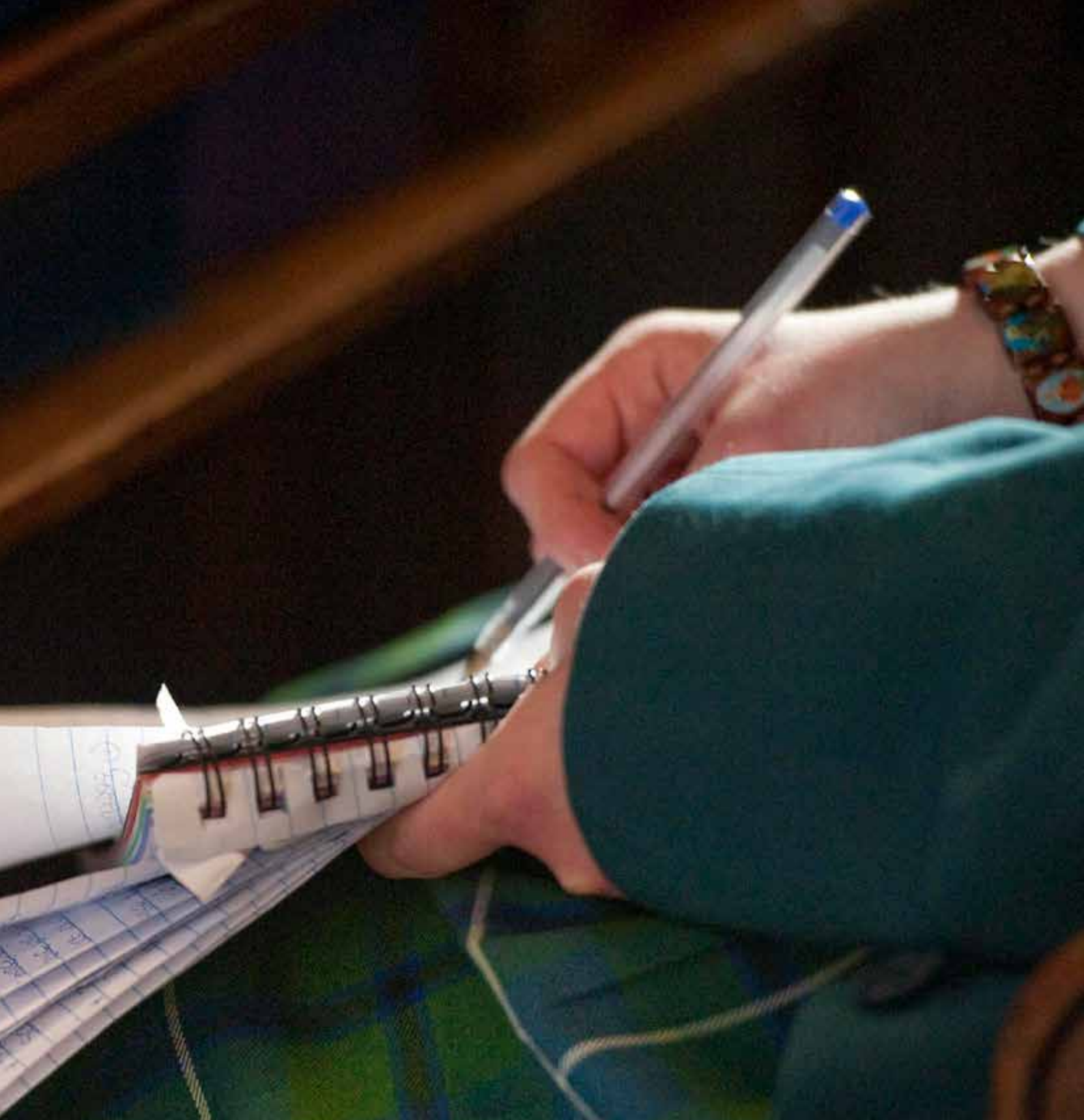
multiple sources

Speakers should aim, where possible, to have more than one source of evidence, particularly where statistics are involved. It is generally unwise for a speaker to allow one piece of evidence, from one source, to underpin an entire argument in their speech.

anecdotal evidence

Anecdotal evidence (personal stories, myths, memories etc.) is generally unpersuasive, as it usually lacks clarity, certainty and universal applicability. However, depending on the nature of the speech and the style of the speaker, anecdotal evidence can sometimes be used to great effect (particularly if the speaker's primary goal is to entertain or inspire empathy in the audience; anecdotal evidence can be used to demonstrate the human dimension of an issue).





key elements of the speech

expression & delivery

35 marks

what is the purpose of the speech?

The purpose of the speech (or the purpose of the speaker) is what distinguishes one type of public speech from another. A politician seeks to persuade the voters. A school teacher or a university professor seeks to inform and inspire their students. A comedian seeks to entertain the audience.

In a competitive context, speakers should always approach their task of speech writing with a clear purpose in mind. Good speeches should attempt to do all four – persuade, inform, inspire and entertain the audience and the adjudicators.

make an impact from the start!

First impressions are important. The audience and the adjudicators are at their most attentive at the very beginning of the speech. It is crucial to grab their attention from the very start with a confident and flawless opening.

An excellent way to grab the attention of an audience or an adjudication panel is to make the speech relevant to them (i.e. “how crucial a role we all have to play”). The use of single words or very short sentences at the start of a speech makes for a dramatic opening (a shocking statistic or quote can have a similar effect). Note also how effective the use of alliteration for emphasis, the use of powerful or dramatic language, and the contrast between long and short sentences.

An opening that conveys a sense of humour or sorrow (or another emotion) can also be effective. The most effective type of opening will be determined by the subject matter of the speech and the speaking style of the speaker.

Similar emphasis should be put on the conclusion of the speech. It should link back to the opening of the speech (e.g. the problems that were identified, the questions that were posed etc.). All the techniques identified above (and many, many more) may be used to help a speaker to achieve a dramatic or otherwise memorable conclusion. It is often effective, at the end of a speech, to finish with a rhetorical question.

verbal skills

Speakers should remember that delivering a speech is not like reading an essay. If the reader of an essay misses a line or misunderstands a phrase, they can go back and re-read it. If a person listening to a speech misses a line or a phrase, they don't get an opportunity to hear it a second time. For that reason, when giving a public speech, it is imperative that speakers speak slowly, clearly and loudly. This will help to ensure that the audience and the adjudicators hear every word, and can comprehend what is being said as they are listening.

Speakers should also attempt to vary their pitch and tone of voice, as well as the pace of their speech (where appropriate). These variations help to keep the audience and the adjudicators alert, and help the speaker to maintain their attention for the full five minutes of the speech. However speakers should take care to ensure they sound natural; an obviously forced variance in tone can be as distracting and unpersuasive as speaking entirely in monotone.

Pauses can also be extremely effective. Two or three well-timed pauses can effectively juxtapose five minutes of constant speaking, and can be used to emphasise an important point or signal the transition from one section of the speech to another.

non-verbal skills

Much of a speaker's communication is non-verbal, so public speakers must be conscious of their body language if they are to engage the audience and the adjudicators.

'Open gestures' (which help to engage the audience) include facing the audience, and using hands and arms freely to demonstrate, emphasise or otherwise support the words being spoken. By contrast, 'closed' gestures (which often disengage the audience) include the speaker folding their arms, facing away from the audience or hanging their head.

The use of facial expression and eye contact are both related to good body language. Facial expression may also be used to mirror the message or emotion being conveyed by the speech (e.g. a humorous quote, a shocking statistic, a sorrowful narrative etc.), adding a sense of sincerity or truth to the words being spoken. Eye contact is another important way for speakers to

engage with the audience and the adjudicators, and convince them of their confidence and their credibility.

Movement is another technique which public speakers use to keep the audience and the adjudicators alert. Similar to the effect of changing your pace or tone of voice, or the use of pauses, physically moving your body during your speech has the effect of varying what the audience is hearing and seeing, which helps to maintain their attention. Freedom to move allows the speaker to see every audience member, which is particularly important when trying to maintain eye contact in a large room.

linguistic skills

Speakers who have spent a lot of time researching for their speech will probably be very familiar with the surrounding issues, as well as background or ancillary subject matter. However, speakers should bear in mind that most audience members will not have their level of specialist knowledge on the subject and should therefore avoid technical, specialist or abbreviated jargon or other unfamiliar terminology.

Speakers should also resist the temptation to use overly lofty or ornate language, which often undermines the clarity of the speech. When trying to communicate an idea to a large group of people, it helps to keep language clear.

Finally, the Public Speaking Competition is not an English language exam. Speakers are not penalised under E&D (or under any other section of the marking scheme) for occasional grammatical errors, mispronunciations etc.

confidence and style

Confidence and style are at the core of effective expression and delivery. Speakers feel more confident, and exude that confidence when delivering their speeches, by following the tips discussed above (having a clear purpose or goal, making an impact from the start with a dramatic or otherwise memorable opening, and using verbal, non-verbal and linguistic skills or techniques effectively).

A good way to practise projecting confidence is for speakers to record themselves delivering their speech. This allows speakers to go back and assess their own strengths and weaknesses.

Once speakers have mastered the art of projecting confidence when speaking in public, developing a

speaking style comes next. A compelling speaking style is what makes a speaker unique. Some speakers have an emotive speaking style, and feel most comfortable persuading the audience of important social, economic or global issues. For such speakers, an ability to convey passion and emotion is a huge strength.

Others have a witty, light-hearted or humorous speaking style and feel most comfortable when entertaining the audience; often delving into satire and using rhetorical devices such as sarcasm and irony to great effect. Light-hearted speakers often prefer to use narratives to communicate their ideas, rather than structured arguments supported by empirical evidence.

Both methods of illustration can be effective, depending on the subject matter of the speech and the natural style of the speaker.

a note on notes

Using notes effectively (or ineffectively as the case may be) is often what makes or breaks a good speech. Most people who speak in public as part of their professional life usually rely on notes, palm cards, Teleprompters, PowerPoint slides etc., to a certain extent. Therefore, in the context of a public speaking competition, it is entirely appropriate (and indeed expected) for speakers to have some personal notes.

The key is striking the right balance between, on the one hand, being entirely reliant on notes (i.e. reading the speech from a piece of paper and failing to make eye contact with or engage the audience in any other way) and, on the other hand, not relying on notes at all (i.e. reciting a speech, which has been learnt by heart, for the thirtieth time and sounding over-rehearsed or bored with the speech).

Rather than writing out a speech in full and learning it by heart, speakers are advised only to write out the structure of their speech.

Speakers should use their notes (while they are speaking) to remind themselves of the structure of their speech and the progression of the points within the main body of their speech, so that they can construct each individual sentence and argument afresh every time they deliver the speech. This allows the speech to retain a sense of novelty and reality each time it is delivered. It also ensures that when the speaker is speaking, their engagement is with their ideas and with the audience; not with a collection of words that have been committed to memory in a particular sequence.

reasoning & evidence

35 marks

using empirical evidence

There are various types of evidence which a speaker may use in support of an argument in their speech. Any empirical evidence used in support of an argument should (1) have a reliable source, (2) be up-to-date and (3) be relevant to the speech. Irrelevant evidence, evidence that comes from an unreliable source, or evidence that is out-of-date will inevitably undermine the credibility of the argument and the speaker.

Speakers should avoid using too much empirical evidence. Speeches that contain large amounts of facts and figures or lengthy quotations are unlikely to be particularly persuasive, because the audience and the adjudicators are unable to absorb large amounts of statistics, large excerpts from reports, etc.

Speakers should also remember that simply stating the evidence is not a substitute for explaining their arguments logically, providing the audience with certain pieces of evidence in support of those arguments, and analysing the evidence to demonstrate how or why it supports the overall thesis of the speech.

Ultimately, any empirical evidence used should support or complement an argument in the speech, not dominate it.

using examples and analogies

An argument does not always have to be supported by facts, figures, quotations etc. Arguments can also be supported by analogies or examples of things that people know to be true under the status quo.

For example, in a speech proposing to legalise the sale, distribution and consumption of marijuana (in a country where it was previously illegal), rather than citing statistics from scientific reports or quotations from academic articles, the speaker could support their arguments by reference to another country where the sale, distribution and consumption of marijuana is already legal (e.g. the Netherlands). Similarly, rather than spending a lot of time justifying age limits or explaining an intricate licensing system, the speaker

could simply support their arguments by reference to an analogous system in the same country (i.e. the age limits and licensing system applicable to the sale of tobacco in that country).

Arguments supported by analogies or examples, which most people accept as true under the status quo, are often even more persuasive than arguments supported by statistics or quotations, the sources of which many people may be unfamiliar with.

using reasoned analysis and logic

Whether or not an argument is supported by evidence, examples or analogies, the audience and the adjudicators must be given some analysis explaining why what the speaker is saying is true and why what the speaker is saying supports the overall thesis of the speech.

When making an argument, speakers should try to avoid making assertions, assumptions or other errors in logic. Evidence, analogies, examples or other facts should be presented in a logical order such that they support the argument being made and lead to an obvious or logical conclusion. Speakers should avoid presenting a series of seemingly disconnected statements.

using reasoned analysis and logic

Most speakers try to give speeches on issues which are topical and interesting. Many of those issues will be unresolved or debatable. There will be arguments on both sides. During research, speakers will discover evidence or other information which does not support the conclusion of their speech or with which they disagree.

This evidence or information should not be ignored! An interesting speaker will invariably make statements which are bold or controversial. A brave speaker will acknowledge the existence of evidence or opinion contrary to the conclusion of their own speech and utilise their persuasive skills and their own evidence to persuade the audience of their credibility and the truth of their own arguments.

There are a number of ways to challenge or undermine pieces of evidence or information which support a conclusion contrary to that presented in the speech. The speaker may argue that the evidence is out-of-date

or that the source of the evidence is unreliable. The speaker may argue that the evidence is irrelevant (e.g. because it relates to a specific country or a specific set of circumstances not applicable to the speech). The speaker may also argue that the evidence fails to take account of other issues.

It is important to remember that audiences aren't passive. They are made up of people who also have opinions about the things they see and hear in the world around them. Ultimately, an audience is more likely to be persuaded by a speaker who understands and has engaged with both sides of an argument, but can still justify their stance on one side or the other.

credibility is key!

Credibility is an important part of public speaking. This doesn't mean being the most knowledgeable or qualified person in the room; it means presenting strong, logical arguments in support of your position.

Just as mastering all the elements of Expression and Delivery leads to a confident speaker; mastering all the elements of Reasoning and Evidence leads to a credible speaker.





organisation & prioritisation

15 marks

why structure is important

Audiences and adjudication panels are made up of people. Most people have relatively short attention spans. For that reason, if a speaker stands up, starts speaking and continues to speak constantly for five minutes, most people (including audiences and adjudicators) will tune out after about two minutes.

Public speakers use structure to help maintain their listeners' attention. By telling the audience and the adjudicators at the start what they can expect to hear, presenting the arguments in order of priority, gravity or importance, and reiterating what they have heard at the end, the speaker gives their speech a sense of symmetry or unity and compounds the arguments in the minds of the audience and the adjudicators.

Structure can also be used by speakers to make their speech more interesting (and therefore easier to follow). For example, many speakers group their points or arguments into categories at the start of their speech. Another example is when speakers give each group of points or arguments a label which is part of a theme that runs right throughout the speech.

Using structure creatively allows the speaker to incorporate their own speaking style into their structure and maximise their marks under O&P.

the outline of a typical speech

Introduction – The speaker should tell the audience who they are, what they are speaking about, why, and what they want to have achieved or proven by the end of the speech. A map of the main points in the speech should be provided. Each point should be given a label (see above) and perhaps a brief explanation of what will be analysed.

Main arguments – The speaker should then move onto to the main points of the speech, remembering to deal with each point in order of

priority (in the same order they were listed in the introduction), and signalling to the audience when they are moving from one point to the next.

Conclusion – The speaker should tie together all the main points of the speech, remembering to refer back to the introduction (in particular, to any specific targets or goals that the speaker intended to achieve or prove). The conclusion should not be a simple re-statement of the speech; rather, it should be a comprehensive but succinct summary of all the main strands in support of the overall thesis of the speech.

NB: The outline described above is just one way of structuring a speech. Speakers will not lose marks under O&P just because they structure their speech or organise their points in a slightly different manner to the one presented above. In particular, the structure outlined above is not always suitable for speakers who prefer to use a narrative as a method of illustration.

Crucially, the speech must be easy for the audience and the adjudicators to follow and understand. Speakers who achieve that aim in an interesting way will receive good marks under O&P.

timing

Timing goes hand-in-hand with structure and notes. Once a speaker has established a good structure and has found the method of using notes which works best for them, it's important to practise delivering the speech within the five minutes allowed. A good speaker will know exactly how long they are going to spend on each section of their speech. Speakers should try to ensure that they spend a similar amount of time on sections of the speech of similar importance.

Speakers should practise speaking for one, two, three minutes etc., so that they know what it feels like to speak for different blocks of time and how much information they are able to cover in that time. .

There will be a timekeeper at all stages of the competition, who will give audible signals to indicate how much time has elapsed. However, it is entirely appropriate for speakers to have a stopwatch or similar device with them when they get up to speak.

listening & response

15 marks

answering questions

Most public speakers have to justify the arguments made in their speech at some stage. The question period after the speech is designed to test the speaker's knowledge of the surrounding issues, as well as their ability to listen and respond to questions, justifying the position they have taken in their speech.

As part of their preparation, speakers should have considered alternative points of view to those presented in their speech and considered how best to respond to those alternative points of view if presented in the form of a question (questions from the audience and the adjudicators are generally not combative but speakers may be asked to justify their views).

Speakers should always listen to the question that is actually asked and avoid giving prepared answers to anticipated questions. Speakers frequently have questions put to them which they did not anticipate. Speakers should start thinking about the answer as the question is being put to them (while remembering to listen all the way to the end), but should never answer the question immediately after it has been asked. It is important to pause for a moment or two, consider again the question that was actually asked, and make sure that the answer being given is relevant to that question.

When answering questions, speakers should avoid re-stating sections of their speech verbatim. The question period is a great opportunity for speakers to demonstrate extra knowledge (perhaps an extra piece of evidence that there wasn't room to include in the speech). However, answers should always be relevant to the question asked and ultimately support the position taken in the speech.

Questions can be lengthy and convoluted, which can make it difficult to establish what the audience member or adjudicator is actually asking. Speakers should take a moment to try and break down what the questioner has said in their head. Speakers should also be willing to ask the questioner to repeat the question in a shorter or simpler form if necessary (if the speaker

that at least some other audience members or adjudicators didn't understand it either).

The question period will last for 3-4 minutes.



Speakers should not feel obliged to give lengthy answers to questions, even where the question itself was lengthy or convoluted. The best answers to questions are usually brief, succinct and to the point. Lengthy answers often lose the attention of the audience and the adjudicators.

Finally, all the tips given under E&D (above) apply to the question period exactly as they apply to the speech. It's important to continue to use body language and eye contact etc. effectively during the question period, and maintain confidence generally. Speakers may be asked to justify their position during the question period, but should avoid becoming defensive or entering into a debate with a particular questioner.



guidance for adjudicators

judging overview

Participants and spectators must be confident in the competence of the adjudicators if they are to accept their decisions and take their advice on board. For that reason, adjudication should be as professional as possible at all stages of the competition.

The adjudication panels are normally made up of university students who have competed in public speaking and debating competitions at school and university level, Public Speaking Competition alumni, accomplished public speakers and communications experts, many of whom use their oratorical and persuasive skills as part of their professional lives.

The following overarching principles should be borne in mind by adjudicators when adjudicating public speaking:

- **appearance**

Does the speaker have a confident and commanding presence on the platform or at the podium? A good public speaker will utilise body language, facial expression, eye contact and gestures effectively to engage the audience and the adjudicators.

- **audibility**

Can the speaker be heard? A good public speaker will speak slowly, clearly and loudly and will utilise a range of verbal skills such as varying their pace, pitch and tone of voice to maintain the attention of the audience and the adjudicators.

- **argument**

Has the speaker delivered a speech, which is persuasive, informative, inspiring and/or entertaining? A good speech will be well structured, the arguments will be presented in a coherent and logical manner, and the content of each argument will be supported by some form of evidence or analysis.

- **audience**

Has the speaker effectively engaged with and built a rapport with the audience? A good public speaker will utilise a range of verbal, non-verbal and linguistic skills, as well as the structure and content of their speech, to maintain the attention and interest of the audience.

- **adaptability**

Has the speaker demonstrated an ability to think on their feet? A good public speaker will not sound over-rehearsed, and will demonstrate adaptability by

(for example) pausing their speech to allow for an unanticipated interruption (e.g. applause or laughter from the audience), making a spontaneous or unscripted comment or argument where appropriate and/or responding to questions confidently and without recourse to the text of the original speech.

general adjudication points

Notwithstanding the general principles laid out above, when adjudicating a prepared speech adjudicators should consider, in particular, the 'guidance for speakers' and the 'key elements of the speech' sections, set out in this handbook.

The key point for adjudicators to bear in mind for all preliminary rounds and the national final is that all speakers will have had a considerable amount of time to interpret the theme, choose a topic and a title, research the topic, write a speech and practise delivering that speech.

It should be evident from the speech that the speaker has researched and thought about the chosen topic, and the arguments in the speech should be supported by an appropriate level of evidence and/or analysis.

It should be evident from the question period that the speaker has a reasonable level of background and/or ancillary knowledge relating to the topic. Speakers who demonstrate an ability to reinforce their arguments by reference to additional evidence or analysis, not contained in their speech, should be rewarded.

It should also be evident from the speech that the speaker has not learnt their speech word for word. Speakers who demonstrate a sense of spontaneity, while also appearing prepared (making effective use of notes if necessary), should be rewarded.

Finally, the Public Speaking Competition is not an English language exam. Even when adjudicating speakers who have had a considerable amount of time to prepare their speeches; adjudicators should not penalise speakers for occasional grammatical errors, mispronunciations etc.

marking scheme

marking scheme

Expression and Delivery – 35 marks
Reasoning and Evidence – 35 marks
Organisation and Prioritisation – 15 marks
Listening and Response – 15 marks

The marking schemes are designed to assist adjudicators when assessing the different aspects or features of a speech (adjudicators should consider the relevant marking scheme in conjunction with the speaker scale).

Adjudicators should not feel constrained by their initial allocation of marks. Adjudication is an inherently subjective pursuit, which cannot be reduced to a purely mathematical process. It requires careful consideration of the categories within the marking scheme, coupled with an ability to balance the strengths and weaknesses of different speakers in different areas.

Adjudicators must engage in a discussion with the rest of the adjudication panel after the competition, justifying their own opinion and allocation of marks, and considering the opinion and allocation of marks of other adjudicators (in an attempt to reach consensus).

speaker scale

The speaker scale is designed to assist adjudicators when assessing a speaker's overall performance.

Excellent - 90-100 marks – The speech would almost certainly be the winning speech at the national final of the competition. Such a speech should be delivered flawlessly, arguments should be structured to perfection, and the arguments presented should be compelling and supported by comprehensive evidence and/or analysis. The speaker should be uniquely confident and stylistic.

Very good - 80-90 marks – The speaker would probably be one of the speakers in the national final of the competition. Such a speech should be delivered to a very high standard, arguments should be very well structured, and the arguments presented should be supported by solid evidence and/or analysis. The speaker should display confidence and style.

Good - 70-80 marks – The speaker would probably be one who would progress from the preliminary rounds into the national final of the competition. Such a speech should be delivered to a high standard, arguments should be structured, and arguments should be supported by good evidence and/or analysis.

Average - 60-70 marks – The speaker gave a reasonable performance, but had a minor fault in one of the categories of the marking scheme.

Below average - 50-60 marks – The speaker had minor faults in multiple categories of the marking scheme or a significant fault in one of the categories of the marking scheme.

Poor - 40-50 marks – The speaker had significant faults in multiple categories of the marking scheme.

feedback

Adjudicators play an integral part in the educational process, by providing constructive feedback to speakers after the competition.

When giving feedback, adjudicators should bear in mind that each speaker has made it to the national final and has therefore achieved huge success already by earning their place in the competition. Adjudicators should also bear in mind that, even though there is a certain extent to which adjudication is subjective and intuitive, decisions are more likely to be understood by speakers and coaches if they are justifiable by reference to the objective criteria laid out in this handbook. This also allows speakers to focus on the specific area(s) where there is room for improvement.

Adjudicating is also a valuable learning experience for public speaking and debating coaches in particular. It gives them an insight into how their own speakers can be successful from an adjudicator's point of view. It also hones their skills as coaches and enhances their ability to deconstruct and critique a speech, and give constructive feedback.

code of conduct for working with young people

introduction

The development and delivery of ESU Scotland projects and programmes bring our employees, mentors and volunteers into contact with children and young people in many different contexts. In line with schools and other organisations which work with young people, a code of conduct for engagement is necessary to ensure best practice and compliance with statutory requirements.

duty of care

Adults cannot be in a position of responsibility for children or young people whilst acting as representatives of ESU Scotland. All children and young people who participate in ESU Scotland events should be accompanied by a parent/carer or a member of staff from their school who will take primary responsibility for their care. Where there is no person in primary responsibility for children or young people then ESU Scotland representatives should ensure that any interactions with children or young people is in the presence of another adult. The representative of ESU Scotland should then contact the Head of Education to report this matter.

contact with children or young people

It is important to bear in mind that all remarks/gestures should be appropriate for the age of the child or young person. In almost all ESU Scotland events that involve children or young people the primary purpose is education, and therefore any comments made should be done so to help that child or young person to develop their skills. ESU Scotland Representatives should never make salacious, suggestive or demeaning remarks/gestures to, or in the presence of, children or young people. Where this is reported, and found to be true, then the person concerned will no longer be able to represent ESU Scotland. Any physical contact between a representative of ESU Scotland and a child or young person should be a considered action and for the purposes of instruction or immediate care. It should be age appropriate, context specific, preferably visible to others and prompted by the needs of the child or young person.

communication

As a general rule, ESU Scotland representatives should seek to avoid direct correspondence with young people, rather contacting them through their school or via their parents, as appropriate. Where this is not possible, official ESU accounts should be used for email communication. Telephone communication should take place in exceptional circumstances, and details of any communication should be shared with the Head of Education.

There can be no one-to-one communication or direct messaging between ESU Scotland representatives and young people on any social media forum. If appropriate, a closed Facebook group or WhatsApp group (using an ESU Scotland account) may be set up to facilitate communication between ESU Scotland representatives and groups of more than one participant in a programme or project. Where a child or young person makes contact with an ESU representative through a personal account or phone number this should be recorded and reported to the Head of Education without delay.

meetings with young people

One-to-one meetings between ESU representatives and young people should be avoided. Where such a meeting has to take place, for confidentiality, etc., then this should take place in a public location. Any meeting should be recorded and a report forwarded to the Head of Education.

inappropriate relationships

If a representative of ESU Scotland is seen to be behaving inappropriately with a child or young person, or is believed to be involved in an inappropriate relationship with a child or young person, this matter should be reported immediately to the Head of Education. If you feel that you have acted inappropriately towards a child or young person, either through your remarks, gestures or actions then you should report this matter to the Head of Education who will investigate the matter. Further training may be offered if appropriate or necessary.

equal opportunities statement

introduction

The English-Speaking Union Scotland welcomes everyone from different ethnic groups, backgrounds, sexual orientations, genders and creed, regardless of disabilities. Harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated. All users have the right to equal access to our services and this should not be prevented by staff or other users. This policy is a general statement of the commitment of the organisation to equal opportunities.

aims

The organisation recognises that direct and indirect discrimination might take place and therefore sees the value of a positive and effective equal opportunities policy:

- We will promote the concept of equality of opportunity throughout the organisation for all
- We will seek to promote an understanding of, and promotion of, human equality and equal opportunities
- We will promote good relations between members of different racial and cultural and religious groups and communities
- We will encourage everyone involved in our work to take responsibility for their behaviour and relationships with others.

Where a service user feels that this is not the case they should raise a complaint with the Chairman who will follow the ESU Scotland Complaints Procedure. The Complaints Procedure is available on the ESU Scotland website or by request from the ESU Scotland office.

prevention

As part of our commitment to Child Protection all staff and volunteers are provided with a copy of our Code of Conduct for Engagement with Young People. Within this document the organisation has outlined its expectations with regards to Duty of Care, Communication with Young People, and relationships. Where a person fails to meet these standards they will no longer be able to represent ESU Scotland.





English-Speaking Union Scotland

The English-Speaking Union is a unique educational charity and membership organisation dedicated to helping people realise their potential through giving them the skills and confidence in communication to articulate their ideas and share them with others.

Our vision is to provide people in Scotland and internationally with communications skills, confidence and opportunities to engage in an exchange of ideas and opinions. We believe that good communication and cultural exchange is essential to individual, community and global development and understanding. Education is at the very heart of our work.

Central to our mission is a commitment to working with schools and young people to narrow gaps in opportunity and assist in closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

We believe that the transferable long-term skills gained by pupils boost their exam performance, day-to-day confidence and future employability. We also believe in the value of lifelong learning to help build confident communicators of all ages.

ESU Scotland, 23 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 8HQ

0131 229 1528

Scottish charity number 000653

www.esuscotland.org.uk