

# STEPS IN SETTING UP A DISTRICT CONTEST

*Please read this section thoroughly.*

Setting up your district speaking contest is not as difficult as you may think and enclosed you will find the information you need to conduct a successful contest. The most common advise other hosts have given is to get started early. This will help your contest run smoothly and be more enjoyable for you as a host.

**1. SELECT YOUR DATE:** Pick a date that works best for you and the chapters in your district. Avoid dates that could conflict with other events. If you plan to utilize university judges for any contest make sure to contact them to see if they have a date that would work for you and their travel schedule to other contests. Once date is confirmed, contact the Wisconsin FFA Center so your date can be publicized.

*In case of a cancellation/change of your date, please make sure to inform the Wisconsin FFA Center and all the chapters in your district immediately.* If for some reason weather is a factor, make sure that you work the best to accommodate the schools in your district. If several schools would cancel due to bad weather, consider rescheduling the date in order that schools can participate. Schools must compete in their districts, so your contest is the only time they can compete. District hosts can do whatever possible to accommodate members who may have a conflict with the contest date, but the district host is not required to hold a separate competition for those individuals. Due to the nature of this competition, inclement weather, illness or other events could interfere with the contest date. However, to readjust the scheduled competition is very difficult and the competition will go forth as scheduled, unless all the schools in that district agree to accommodate these individuals.

**2. CONTACT YOUR DISTRICT CHAPTERS:** Information from the District Hosts must be sent to the chapters in the corresponding districts no later than December 15, so all chapters know about the details of the contest and know when various deadlines have been set to submit manuscripts and job interview resumes.

You will need to contact the chapters in your district to inform them about the contest you are hosting. A list of your district chapters is in the appendix of this handbook and posted on the Wisconsin FFA website. Make sure to inform chapters what time registration begins and when the contest officially starts. Also include information about how to get to your school, especially for new teachers in your district who may not have visited your school.

*When contacting chapters, make sure to inform them of these important items...*

**A.** All students participating in FFA speaking competitions must be listed as ACTIVE FFA members on the chapter's current school year membership roster. Advisors need to make sure the students are entered on their roster or their student's membership is properly renewed.

**B.** Review rules and procedures for the speaking contests in the Official Speaking Competition Handbook online at [www.wisconsinffa.org](http://www.wisconsinffa.org). There is a specific handbook that each advisor should have with the rules, procedures and scorecards of each individual speaking event. It is important all participants follow the current updated rules published by the Wisconsin FFA Center.

**C.** An individual FFA member can **only compete in 2 individual events and 1 team event** at the district competition. If a member violates this rule, they will be disqualified from all the events they participated in. This is very important that ALL members follow this rule.

**D.** Chapters are allowed 2 participants/teams in each contest EXCEPT parliamentary procedure. All participants must be active, dues paid members at the time of participation in the district contest.

**E.** Remind chapters about the rule concerning Prepared Speaking Manuscripts and Job Interview Resumes and Cover Letters. These **must be postmarked two weeks before the contest** to the district host or 25 points will be deducted for each day it is late (Monday through Friday only).

F. The DISCUSSION MEET TOPICS are online at [www.wisconsinffa.org](http://www.wisconsinffa.org).

G. Participants must wear name badges (about 3"x5") for both Discussion Meet and Parliamentary Procedure contests on which his/her name is legibly printed and visible.

H. All contestants MUST HAVE PROPER OFFICIAL DRESS. Quiz Bowl can be the only exception at the District and Sectional Level Only. Proper Official Dress is defined in the Speaking Contest Handbook.

**3. SELECTING JUDGES:** Three judges are needed for each of the following contests: Creed, Prepared Speaking, Extemporaneous Speaking, Parliamentary Procedure, Discussion Meet and Job Interview. You need three people to operate the Quiz Bowl contest. It is always a good idea to select people who are familiar with agricultural topics, communications, FFA, etc.

Suggestions for judges include: English teachers or forensic coaches at school or neighboring schools, principals, guidance counselors, FFA alumni members, retired ag teachers, Farm Bureau Members, other farm/commodity organizations in your area, farm/agribusiness individuals in community, other organization leaders in your community (i.e. Women's Clubs, Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, etc.), university representatives, fellow agricultural education instructors in schools not having participants in particular contests.

**4. ORIENTATING JUDGES:** Once judges are selected, send a copy of the rules and scorecard to them before the actual contest date so they can review and ask any questions. Make sure the judges for your prepared speaking and job interview contests understand they are to judge the manuscripts and resumes before arriving at the contest. Give these judges enough scorecards to do this before the contest.

**The day of the contest, make sure to have an orientation meeting with your judges before the contest begins.** Ask all judges to report to your school 30 minutes before the start of the contest. You are required to orientate the judges and clarify any questions they have. These 30 minutes gives judges an opportunity to review the rules and get prepared to judge their particular contest. Judges need to understand the rules and procedures for their contest and know what to be watching for when judging. This is a great time to answer any last questions they may have and help them feel comfortable with what you have asked them to do.

The judges are the individuals who make the final decision of the placing of their contestants in the contest they are judging. If they need to consult with each other, they are allowed to do so. They must break any ties. They also must use their best judgment in determining penalties for prompting, use of notes, etc. *The decision of the judges is final.*

**Before the contest ends:** Make sure all judges have signed the OFFICIAL RESULTS sheets. Judges must turn in confidential information they used during their contest.

Please ask judges to stay around shortly after their contest is completed to give any ideas to contestants on areas of improvement. Mention to the judges that contestants like to get feedback and this helps to make the contest more of a learning experience for the members.

In your Host materials, you will find a Judge's Comment Card. Make copies of this card so the judges can provide contestants with feedback. It is fine to return the judge's score sheet to the contestants only if the judge indicates that it is ok. Sometimes judges write comments on the score sheets that they do not want contestants to see, so make sure the judge says it's ok to return the scorecards.

Make sure to thank your judges for their time. A small gift of appreciation is always nice.

**5. TABULATION ROOM:** A separate area should be designated by the host of the contest for the judges to report to after they have completed their judging. The judges are to report to the tabulation room to turn in all scorecards, official result sheets and confidential information. The State FFA Officer in attendance at the conference could serve as the chair of the tabulation room. In this area, all judges must turn in their materials, verify their results and sign the proper documents before leaving the contest site.

**6. MANUSCRIPTS AND RESUMES:** You **must** receive three copies of each prepared speakers' manuscript and three copies of each job interview participants' resume and cover letter **postmarked two weeks before** your contest date or 25 points will be deducted for each day it is late (Monday through Friday only). It is fine to receive manuscripts and resumes through fax, however, the final manuscripts and resumes will be in "fax" form. This is a chance the contestant will take if they fax you materials. They should fax the information to you three times so you do not need to make copies for the judges.

Prepared Speaking manuscripts and Job Interview resumes and cover letters should be sent to the judges before the actual contest date. This will give the judges plenty of time to develop proper questions and review the written materials since each contestant receives a score in this area.

**7. TIMERS:** You need two timers for Prepared, Extemporaneous, Parliamentary Procedure and Discussion Meet. You need one timer for Quiz Bowl and Job Interview. Note: It may be possible to use only one time keeper for each event, *however*, two time keepers help make sure the correct time is recorded.

**8. MODERATOR:** You will need one individual to moderate the Discussion Meet. This person introduces the topic and keeps the discussion moving if the participants stop discussing the topic. This person would also recognize each participant to give opening and closing statements. The moderator is not a judge and should leave the room when the contest is completed. State officers and Farm Bureau members in your area make great moderators for this contest.

**9. DOOR/HALL MONITORS:** Have FFA members serve as door/hall monitors to make sure no one enters or exits the contest rooms while a participant is competing. It will also keep noise down, if there are students in the hallways. These monitors need to make sure that once someone enters the room for a competition that they stay in the room until the entire competition is completed especially for Creed, Quiz Bowl and Parliamentary Procedure. We need to keep this fair for all participants so confidential questions cannot be shared with those who have not yet participated.

**10. HOLDING ROOM:** It is REQUIRED to have a monitored holding room for contestants, especially Creed Contest and Quiz Bowl, since the same questions are asked of each contestant. There has been a problem with contestants from the same school revealing questions before their fellow contestant has competed. Usually there is not a problem with Prepared Speaking, Extemporaneous Speaking, Discussion and Parliamentary Procedure since different questions are asked or only one team is competing.

**11. PREPARATION ROOM MONITOR:** You need one individual in the preparation room for the Extemporaneous Contest. This individual should be a fellow FFA advisor or another adult to check materials brought into the preparation room. The contestants can only have the following items with them in the preparation room: (Taken from the 2012-2016 National FFA CDE Handbook)

1. Must be limited to five items
2. Printed material such as books or magazines
3. Printed compilations of materials collected from internet research
4. To be counted as one item, a notebook or folder of collected materials may contain NO more than 100 single-sided pages or 50 pages double-sided numbered consecutively.
5. Cannot be notes or speeches prepared by the participant or by another person for the purpose of use in this event.

*The reference materials should have been selected by the contestant before the day of the contest and brought with them to the contest site. They are not allowed to select references after the topic is selected.*

The host advisor can cut up the topics for the Extemporaneous contest just before the first contestant selects a topic. You can also have the judges cut up the topics if you wish and they take them to the prep room for official drawing. Either way is fine.

**12. ROOM SET-UPS:** Rooms should be located in one general area.

Creed, Prepared and Extemporaneous Speaking. A regular classroom set up is fine for these contests. The participant will stand in the front of the room and the judges should be spread throughout the classroom.

Discussion Meet: Contestants should be seated at two tables set at approximately a 90 degree angle to one another. This allows them to see each other and to see the judges and time keepers. Each contestant should have a card visible in front of them on the discussion table that includes their name, and is visible by judges and fellow contestants. The contestants will also have a name badge on their jacket in order that their name is clearly seen. A podium should be placed between these two tables for the moderator. See diagram in host handbook.

Parliamentary Procedure: See diagram in host handbook.

Quiz Bowl - Contestants should be seated at two long tables in front of room. Each team will be seated at a table.

Job Interview - Set the room as a job interview would occur. A table for the three judges and a chair out in front of the table for the contestant.

**13. CONTEST PROGRAM:** Select a location in the school where everyone can gather for a brief opening to the contest. Below is a sample agenda you could follow for beginning a contest.

Welcome from the advisor

Welcome from a school official

Welcome from the state FFA Officer

Explanation of how the contest will operate, if there are any special rules to point out and location of the various rooms.

Some advisors have even put together a printed program for participants including room numbers for each contest, judges, timekeepers, names of other individuals helping with the contest and a thank you to them, a list of the schools in that district and other acknowledgments.

**14. REGISTRATION TABLE:** Have an area set up where each contestant and/or team checks in as they arrive at the contest site. Once every one has arrived, draw for the order of participation if you haven't established the order of competition before this time. Remember, some people may be competing in more than one contest so make sure to make adjustments in your order so you are not delayed waiting for someone.

You should have extra 3" x 5" white index cards and pins available for Parliamentary Procedure teams, Discussion Meet participants and for Extemporaneous speakers in the preparation room.

**NOTE:** In the past a pre-registration form has been sent to chapters in the district so that the order of participation could be decided ahead of the contest. This helps the contest run more efficiently, especially if you have several individuals participating in multiple speaking contests. Emphasize to the teachers in your district that you need their pre-registration forms on the specified date. Members will not be disqualified however if their advisor did not submit a pre-registration form.

**14. A – DISCUSSION MEET REGISTRATION**

**\*\* NOTE\*\*** If there are not at least 3 contestants to conduct a Discussion Meet contest, the host advisor would be allowed to ask for extra participants with the consent of the discussion meet participants at the contest site to just sit in and discuss the topic. These people would not be judged, they would simply be used to enhance the contest for those competing and give the contestants some experience in the discussion contest before competing at the sectional level.

**15. REFRESHMENTS:** You may want to have refreshments for your contest participants and advisors. Cheese and crackers, cookies, milk and coffee can be set up. Sometimes these contests do last until 7:00 p.m. so plenty of food is nice if you are going over the dinner hour.

**16. HANDING OUT AWARDS:** You are provided with plaques for the first place and second place winners in each contest. Make sure that all of those competing in the particular contest are present at the time of the award presentation. You do not need to wait until all contests are complete. Just make sure your participants for a particular contest are all present.

Introduce the judges of the competition and let winners know they can speak to the judges after the winners are announced.

Announce that both the 1st and 2nd place winners advance to the Sectional Contest and announce that date.

Finally, announce winners - 2nd place first; 1st place last - Builds suspense.

**17. ROLE OF YOUR STATE OFFICER:** A state officer will be available for your District Speaking Contest unless the contest date falls on the same date as a State FFA Officer Board Meeting. The state officer is available to help with anything you need them to do including meeting and greeting participants, registration, giving a welcome, escorting participants to their contest rooms, monitoring holding room or Extemp. Prep room, handing out awards, serving as a moderator for the discussion meet, timing, etc. The state officer **SHOULD NOT** serve as a judge for any contest. The state officer may be able to clarify questions concerning your contest, however, if there is a major question or concern, please call your Executive Director at office: (715) 659-4807 or home: (715) 659-4547.

**18. SEND IN THE SIGNED RESULT SHEETS IMMEDIATELY AFTER YOUR CONTEST!** We need this information for the sectional contest. Please make sure **all participant FIRST AND LAST** names are spelled clearly and correctly and that their chapters are listed on the result sheet. **THE RESULT SHEETS ARE LOCATED IN THE BACK OF THIS HANDBOOK. ALL OFFICIAL RESULTS MUST BE RECORDED ON THESE FORMS.**

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