

4-H Alberta Public Speaking Rules and Guidelines

(Reviewed September 2023)

Please note: These rules supersede the Public Speaking Organizer's Guide and any other Public Speaking publication. Please read the following carefully. Organizing committees at each level will have an adult non-member ruling committee to ensure rules, deductions and disqualifications are adhered to.

SPEAKERS

1. Speakers must be registered 4-H members and in good standing as per 4-H Alberta.
2. Age categories (as of January 1 of the club year) are as follows:

Level	Ages	Highest Level of Competition
Junior	9-11	District or regional (depending on the region)
Intermediate	12-14	Regional
Senior	15+	Provincial

3. Each speaker must prepare a new and original (defined as having done their own research, scripting and presenting) speech each year. Speakers may modify their speech or prepare a completely different one for each level of competition.
4. Members may compete and advance in public speaking and presentations within the same club.
5. Members belonging to more than one club;
 - a. can do a different communications activity (i.e: speech and presentation) for each club;
 - b. can do a different prepared speech in each club;
 - c. can do the same prepared speech in each club BUT can only be placed and advance in the club competition that is held first. Note: the member must deliver their prepared speech in the other club's competition but will not be placed
6. If competitors wish to leave a competition early, they must receive permission from the organizing committee prior to the date of the competition. The committee's decision as to whether they will be allowed to leave early is final.
7. Speakers must progress through each competition made available to them (e.g. club → zone/areas district → regional → provincial) before advancing to the next level. If there is no formal club competition, the speaker must still speak in front of an audience and receive feedback before advancing
8. All facts and figures used in speeches and impromptus are to be accurate.
9. If available, speakers can choose if they want to use a podium, microphone and/or time cards (use is not mandatory).
10. If using electronic cue cards, the device must be switched to "airplane mode" and not connected to Wi-Fi

TIMING

11. Speeches are timed from the first word spoken to the last word spoken. Members have the option to see their time faults on the day of the competition.

Time Limits are:

Level	Prepared Speeches (minutes)	Impromptu Speeches (minutes)
Junior and Intermediate	3-5	1-2
Senior	4-6	2-3*

***1 to 2 minutes at the club level if voted on by your club**

12. **Juniors** = 1 point will be deducted for every 5 second range over or under the time limit. A maximum of 7 points will be deducted for a prepared speech and 3 for an impromptu.
Intermediates/Seniors = 2 points will be deducted for every 5 second range over or under the time limit. A maximum of 14 points will be deducted for a prepared speech and 7 for an impromptu speech.

Seconds Over/Under Time Limit	Prepared (points deducted)		Impromptu (points deducted)	
	Junior	Intermediate / Senior	Junior	Intermediate / Senior
1-5	1 total	2 total	1 total	2 total
6-10	2 total	4 total	2 total	4 total
11-15	3 total	6 total	3 total	6 total
16-20	4 total	8 total	3 total	6 total
21-25	5 total	10 total	3 total	6 total
26-30	6 total	12 total	3 total	6 total
31 +	7 total	14 total	3 total	6 total

13. Impromptu speeches: Speakers have 15 seconds to select a topic from three choices and 1 minute to prepare. A member will not be allowed to choose a topic or prepare until the previous member has finished speaking. Organizers will request prepared speech topics so impromptus that appear similar can be removed.
14. For prepared speeches, speakers will have the option of having time cards shown at 2 minutes remaining, 1 minute remaining, 30 seconds remaining and stop. For impromptu speeches, speakers will have the option of having time cards shown at 1 minute remaining, 30 seconds remaining and stop.

JUDGING

15. Each speaker will be judged by 3 or 6 judges at a competition.
16. A judge may only judge any speaker's prepared or impromptu speech once at any level in the same year. Judges must be impartial to all speakers.
17. Judges will give speakers unbiased and constructive feedback on 4-H comment sheets.
18. Judges shall not converse during the speech/impromptu or scoring process.
19. Judges will receive the speech/impromptu time faults and penalties at the end of the competition and must record them on their sheet. Judges will then write their placing on the ranking sheet. Judges must break their own ties prior to giving their ranking sheet to the tellers. Only the ranking sheets will be given to the teller.

20. If the tallied results end up in a tie, an impromptu speak off will be held. The tied competitors will speak on the same impromptu topic, chosen ahead of time by the organizing committee, and wait outside the speaking area until it is time for them to prepare their impromptu. This is only necessary if it affects the top four placings.
21. Judges, and/or officials should not be a member of the immediate family (including aunts, uncles and grandparents) of any of the competing speakers. If circumstances warrant the use of a family member for the role of teller, timer or impromptu coordinator it is recommended that two officials be used in that role.

DEDUCTIONS and DISQUALIFICATIONS

22. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in **disqualification**. If it is discovered at a later time that a speech is copied, the speaker(s) will forfeit any award(s) received and awarded to the next speaker
23. Speakers may not use visual aids or gimmicks. A gimmick is any device or stunt used to distract the audience, such as clothing, costumes, props, singing a song, using taped music in the background, or leading a cheer or chant (e.g. quoting a nursery rhyme or song is acceptable). Gestures are acceptable and are defined as a subtle, physical action that is meant to highlight or support a verbal message. It should not distract the audience and at no time should there be audience participation. **Deduct 3 points.**
24. Prompting of any kind during the speech or impromptu will NOT be tolerated and will result in a **5 point deduction.**
25. Speakers may not give an impromptu speech on the same topic as their prepared or another member's speech who has already spoken in that competition. If one of the impromptu topics is similar they should either choose one of the alternatives, or inform the ruling committee. If a speaker speaks on the same topic, they will be required to re-do their impromptu using a single topic selected by the ruling committee.
26. Sources and/or references must be acknowledged in the 4-H Communications Event Quote/Reference Sheet. It is NOT necessary to note them in the context of your speech. A Quote/Reference Sheet must be handed in at every level of communication events. Not handing in the quote sheet will result in a **5 point deduction.**
27. Total quotes used must not exceed 75 actual words not word count of a computer program and need to be noted on the 4-H Communications Event Quote/Reference Sheet. Quotes must also be recognized in the context of the speech. If quotes exceed the maximum length the ruling committee will result in a **3 point deduction.**
28. Complaints regarding rule violations must be directed to the ruling committee. It will be up to the committee to make decisions regarding penalties and disqualifications. If a speaker is to be disqualified, a representative of the presentations organizing committee will advise the tellers not to place the speaker once all the speeches are given.

A disqualified individual(s) will be notified in private, accompanied by their parent(s), of the decision and provided with the reason(s). If a parent is not present then a guardian or club official must be present in their place. Disqualification should only be used as a last resort and discretion in doing so is a must. It is strongly suggested the word 'disqualification' be softened when talking to members.

4-H Alberta Provincial Communication Event (Senior Level Only)

- ❖ Finalists must prepare a new speech. Speakers will be given a general subject one to two weeks prior to the competition (emailed to them and/or posted online). Speakers must then choose a specific topic related to the general subject and write a new prepared speech.
- ❖ Speakers are required to give a 2 to 3 minute impromptu speech at the Provincial Level Competition.
- ❖ The top speaker at the 4-H Alberta Public Speaking Finals may no longer compete in any future 4-H Alberta Public Speaking Competitions; however, this person is still responsible for completing a communications activity each club year.