



# IESA SPEECH NEW COACH MANUAL



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# Welcome

This manual for new speech coaches has been edited by members of the IESA Speech Advisory Committee and staff and made available to you. We hope to have some feedback from you as a new coach. Please direct your comments or questions to the **IESA Office, 1015 Maple Hill Road, Bloomington, IL 61705.**

Communication skills are an essential part of a relationship, career, or creative expression. As a speech coach, the skills you teach will last a lifetime. Often your team members are involved in many other activities, or you are the only coach they have. Your commitment nourishes self-confidence, poise, and leadership qualities so vital in today's competitive world.

You are about to embark on one of the greatest adventures you can have as coach of an extracurricular activity!! It is hoped that the information inside this manual will be very useful and enlightening to you. The ideas, suggestions, thoughts, etc. are by no means the only way to have a successful program for speech. This booklet is meant to give you a head start on the many things "experienced" coaches have learned along the way. Speech is meant to be a creative expression in the wonderful world of oral interpretation, so . . . **Go to it and Good Luck!!**

# History

In 1934, the first literary activities (now called speech) of the *Illinois Elementary School Association* (IESA) were held in Normal, Illinois. No other organization in Illinois offers any type of speech competition for grade levels five through eight. Many elementary, middle school, and junior high school students offer their positive experiences for success both in high school speech and drama activities and in public speaking throughout their adult lives as the result of their participation in IESA speech contests.

A state contest is held annually in a set number of contest regions throughout the state. Almost all contests occur during the last week in October and the first two weeks of November, with one school in each region hosting the contest. The state host is determined on a rotation basis. Judging is done by adult judges based on the quality of the performance. There is no competition between schools. Anyone and everyone participating may earn a Division I rating. The Association awards medals for a Division I rating and ribbons for Division II and III ratings.

The state speech contest is held under the by-laws and direction of the IESA with suggestions for change and improvement coming from the **IESA Speech Advisory Committee**. This committee is composed of a Committee Chair, six speech instructors from throughout the state, and an administrator from a member school. Committee members serve three years. In addition to the advisory committee members, there are also trained representatives who assist at the various contest sites. The advisory committee is also responsible for the annual speech workshop for instructors, administrators, and judges held each September. The workshop has always proven to be particularly useful to new instructors!

In order to participate in the speech contests, your school must hold membership with the IESA. If you are interested, please contact the IESA Office at:

1015 Maple Hill Road  
Bloomington, IL 61705  
Phone: (309) 829-0114  
Fax: 309-829-0625  
[www.iesa.org](http://www.iesa.org)

## Advice for the New Coach

- 1. You can never dream too big.** "You may be starting a speech program from scratch, with no budget and perhaps little administrative support for this strange animal you're attempting to convince everyone is a program that is essential for success in the real world. You may even be beginning with a zero budget. It probably appears that you are on an island apart from everyone. Don't give up hope! As your performers start having success, people will take notice."
- 2. Start small.** Recognize the importance of small advancements and celebrate the small successes.
- 3. Establish your philosophy.** Spell out clearly your squad rules. Make plain your expectations on preparation, responsibility and regulations. Make sure that your administration approves of your program policies and that they are in line with district policies prior to reviewing them with your students. Make your program policies known in writing not only to your team but also to the parents. Have both student and parent sign off on those policies in the event you need documentation.
- 4. Don't be afraid to ask for help.** Talk to other coaches in your area or conference.
- 5. Give your older more experienced students responsibility.**
- 6. Know the rules and procedures.**
- 7. Seek resources.** Information is available on the IESA website and many other websites.
- 8. Build bridges at your school.** Don't exert your energy complaining about the lack of support, if that is the case. Put your energy into running an excellent program so no one can ignore the accomplishments of your students.
- 9. Embrace your role as a coach.** A coach is actively involved. A coach trains performers; a coach instructs the fundamentals; a coach directs. You should rehearse them, critique them and observe their practice.
- 10. Pay attention to details.** Dates and deadlines!!! Make sure that you know when information and fees need to be submitted.
- 11. Consider becoming a judge.** Actively engaging in judging makes you a better coach because you will know first-hand the expectations of performances.
- 12. Debrief following contest.** Evaluate what critiques were useful and which were not and how those valuable critic comments would be used to improve their performance for the next opportunity.
- 13. Love your students.** The teachers and coaches who carry the most influence are those who demonstrate they are about their students for the human beings that they are. If students know that you care about them and you are willing to invest in them as individuals, they will walk the extra mile with you to give all they can to build a speech program. You must first give them a place to belong. A place to be safe. A place to grow. They will return your efforts tenfold!

## Rules and Regulations

- 1. Terms and Conditions:** The IESA Terms & Conditions are sent in mid-August to every school that participates in Speech. The Terms & Conditions contain the rules and guidelines under which the activity of Speech is conducted. Please review all of the material that is contained in the Terms & Conditions. This document is also available on the IESA website at [www.iesa.org](http://www.iesa.org).
  - Please be aware of scholastic eligibility regulations (Section 2.040) for all participants. It is very unfortunate when coaches have not been informed through one misunderstanding or another and have had to comfort a student who has been disqualified because of a rule infraction. Also, make sure your students understand the rules. It is very maddening to have a student decide at the last minute to add something to his selection without thought and have it be a violation of the rules.

2. **Categories and Events:** Qualified students are eligible to participate in any combination of up to three events. Students may participate in multiple performances in the same scripted event within the maximum. Improvisational events will only be allowed one entry in the same event per performer. To be eligible to participate in Team Improv, students must also perform a scripted event. IESA Speech categories include:

**Individual Events:**

- Solo Acting- A theatrical presentation by an individual student. This may be a monologue or a selection in which two or more characters are portrayed.
- Poetry- One or more selections of poetry.
- Impromptu Speaking- An event in which a student is given eight minutes to prepare and deliver an original script. The student will be given two words or phrases from the judge and will choose one. The person will then have a specified amount of time to compose and present the speech.
- Original Script- The student will present a speech which he or she has written. The speech may be a monologue, poetry, short story, essay, or presentation.
- Storytelling- The student will present a story from his/her own life experience, from folk literature, from his/her family's oral tradition, or from any other source. Storytelling is unique from most other contest events in that it should have a very spontaneous quality encouraging audience participation/interaction.

The presentation should have a clear beginning, middle, and end; and demonstrate the customary attributes of characterization, stage presence, body and facial expression, articulation, pronunciation, fluency, and eye contact.

The presentation may include multiple characters and sound effects.

**Duet Events:**

- Duet Acting- One or two humorous or serious selections. Presentation must have direct dialogue or conversation between two contestants portraying any number of characters, who may speak to off-stage characters or to silent characters.
- Improv Duet Acting- The duet will be given two humorous prompts and one serious prompt. The students must use the prompts to start their scene. Presentation and scenes must adhere to the time guidelines.
- Original Script- The students will present a speech which they have written. The speech must be a duet.

**Small Group Events:**

- Small Group Acting- A serious or humorous presentation by 3 to 5 performers characterizing three or more persons presenting one selection within a time limitation.
- Team Improv- The team comprising of 4 to 6 students will be given three different improvisation games to be played in 2 minute time intervals. The students must adhere to the spirit of the games assigned. Presentation and scenes must adhere to the time guidelines. Games and participants will be selected by the judge.

**Chorale Presentation:**

- Groups of nine to twenty members must present one or more selections within time a time limitation.

# IESA Speech Adjudication Criteria

Event	Adjudication Criteria
Solo Acting/ Poetry	Articulation, body and facial expression, characterization, fluency, pronunciation, memory, stage presence, and staging.
Impromptu	Articulation, body and facial expression, fluency, pronunciation, memory, stage presence, staging, content, and organization of presentation.
Storytelling	Audience interaction, articulation, body and facial expression, characterization, fluency, pronunciation, memory, stage presence, and staging.
Regular Duet	Articulation, body and facial expression, characterization, fluency, pronunciation, memory, stage presence, staging, and participant interaction.
Improv Duet	Articulation, body and facial expression, characterization, fluency, staging, entertainment value, and participant interaction.
Original Script	Articulation, body and facial expression, characterization, fluency, pronunciation, memory, stage presence, staging, quality of writing, and participant interaction (for duets).
Small Group Acting	Articulation, body and facial expression, characterization, fluency, pronunciation, memory, stage presence, staging and participant interaction.
Team Improv	Articulation, body and facial expression, characterization, fluency, staging, entertainment value, participant interaction, working together as a team, creativity, spontaneity, and adherence to the spirit of the game.
Chorale	Articulation, body and facial expression, fluency, pronunciation, memory, stage presence, staging, balance and participant interaction.

### 3. Entry Fees and Due Dates:

- The speech entry deadline is the **Monday of Week 13** on the IESA standardized calendar. Entries must be postmarked by that date to be accepted at regular fees. Entry fees are indicated *per entry*. Entry information must be entered on-line through the IESA Member Center. In order to register the number of entries per category, you must first obtain your school password from your administrator or athletic/activities director. This information was sent to your school administrator in the spring.
- **Caution:** The IESA has stiff penalties for lateness! Read the rules carefully because you may pay a penalty of double entry fees. It's well worth the effort to get things in on time.

- **Each school entering the speech state series must submit its Participation Information via the Internet through the IESA Member School Center to the IESA Office.** Participant information is to be completed by the Tuesday of Week 15 in the IESA standardized calendar. After the Tuesday of Week 15, all event changes must include a \$25.00 fee made payable to the host school. Participant name changes within an entry or the elimination of an entry will continue to be accepted by hosts with no penalty.
- To submit your entries on-line, you will need to follow these steps:
  1. Go to the IESA homepage at [www.iesa.org](http://www.iesa.org)
  2. Click on the red "Member Center Login" button located at the top of page on the left-hand menu.
  3. Select your school and enter the password for your school. Your school password was sent to your school in the Spring. Either your administrator will have to register your entries or you will have to obtain the password from your administrator.
  4. Once you have logged in, click on the "Registration & Entry Center Logins" link located under your school name and above the Activity Tracker. Now, click on the current school year link located to the right of "Speech Contests". Categories in red indicate your school's participation last year.
  5. Proceed through all levels of the registration process. Enter the total number of entries in each category that you have participants. Suggestion: Order 1 to 2 extra entries in Solo Acting and Duet Acting. You may need to use these should a participant get sick, become ineligible, etc. Once the deadline has passed, you will be unable to register or pay for additional entries.
  6. Through all the levels of the process, you will need to click "Continue Registration" as steps are completed.
  7. An invoice will be generated at the final page of the process and a confirmation email will be sent to the email address you provided during the registration process.
  8. Submit the invoice to your bookkeeper/business manager and forward it with your check for the total amount shown to the IESA Office.
  9. Only school issued checks are acceptable. No personal checks or purchase orders will be accepted. Entries must be postmarked by the deadline to avoid late fees.
- Once payment for your entries is received, you will be sent a password and instructions for entering your participant information- names of students, performance pieces, year in school, etc. Instructions for participant entry information:
  1. Go to the IESA homepage at [www.iesa.org](http://www.iesa.org)
  2. Click on the red "Member Center Login" button located at the top of the page in the left-hand menu.
  3. Choose your school from the drop-down menu and enter the **speech** password for your school.
  4. You will need to provide your speech password. This is the password that was included on your registration instructions and is specifically for speech.
  5. You will need to provide the name and contact information for the speech coach at your school.
  6. After you have logged in, you will be taken to a page that lists all of the speech links you will need for participant registration.
  7. To register your students, you must first begin by entering your complete list of participating students. You will need to enter first and last name, year in school, and year in contest. No event information needs to be indicated at this point.
  8. Enter the first and last name of the student, grade level, and year in contest. Click "Add This Participant" button after entering the student information. **IF YOU DO NOT CLICK THIS BUTTONS AFTER ENTERING PARTICIPANT INFORMATION, THE INFORMATION WILL NOT BE SAVED!**
  9. After you have finished entering your list of participants, you are ready to place students into events.

10. Click on the "Events List" link. A list of your events will show.
11. To enter students into an event, click on the "Edit Event" link next to the entry.
12. Once you have selected an event, you may begin adding participants from your participant list.
13. Once you have selected a participant from the drop-down menu, click on the "Add Participant" button. The student will then be displayed.
14. To enter selection information, enter information into the appropriate spaces and click the "Add this Selection" button. It is extremely important to click on the "Add.." buttons after entering all information.
15. RESPONSES AND ERROR MESSAGES WILL BE LISTED IN RED AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE. IF THE PROCESS WILL NOT ACCEPT AN ENTRY, CHECK THE TOP OF THE PAGE FOR A MESSAGE.

- Your entries will be posted to the IESA website. Please check your entries via the web for accuracy. If the web does not accurately reflect your information, please contact the IESA immediately.

4. **Contest Areas:** Areas are grouped geographically. Contest areas are posted on the website. One school within your area will serve as the host of the contest. The date of the contest will be chosen by the host. You may find information regarding your area host and date on the IESA website.

### 5. Specific Rule Clarifications:

- **Props:** The only permitted props are those listed in the by-laws. These props can "become" anything the characters want them to be such as a bed, couch, sink, kitchen counter, etc. The problems that have occurred in the past have been about using such things as referring to what time it is and looking at the watch on your wrist. If there is no watch, and you are "pretending", that is fine. However, if you look at a wristwatch, or over at a real clock on the wall, that can be interpreted as an additional prop. Problems have also occurred when characters have inadvertently leaned against the wall, touched a wall as in dialing a wall phone, leaned against an additional table, etc. This again is a no-no! Props **cannot** be used in chorale presentation groups. Contestants can interact with audience members without this being considered the introduction of a prop. This would include dialogue and/or physical contact. **Contestants may not stand on tables or chairs during a performance.**
- **Sound Effects:** Sound effects and singing are permitted for all events. They should be kept to a minimum and should not be considered a character. Additional props may not be used to make sound effects.

### 6. Penalties for Rule Violations:

<b>No Rating:</b>	Please keep in mind that the presentation may be performed but <b>cannot</b> receive a rating. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient number of participants in a duet, small group, or chorale</li> <li>• Using an ineligible participant.</li> <li>• Directing/conducting a chorale presentation with any 7<sup>th</sup> and/or 8<sup>th</sup> grade members</li> </ul>
<b>Automatic Lowering to a Third</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third character in a duet</li> <li>• Purposeful use of props not allowed for event</li> <li>• Purposeful use of costumes</li> <li>• Use of the same selection by an individual in more than one IESA contest</li> <li>• Any violation of the speech contest rules unless otherwise stated in the By-laws or Terms and Conditions shall be penalized by the lowering of the rating to third place.</li> </ul>

# Adjudication Criteria and their Hidden Meanings

## VOICE AND DICTION

### **Articulation:**

- Was it clearly spoken?
- Was there adequate volume?
- It is permissible to inform the judge of any speech impediments.

### **Fluency:**

- Was pacing used to enhance the script?
- Was the rate of delivery understandable?

### **Pronunciation:**

- Were all words pronounced correctly?

## STAGING AND MOVEMENT

### **Stage presence:**

- Did the contestant seem comfortable, thus drawing attention to the presentation and not the presenter's anxiety?

### **Eye contact:**

- Was eye contact with audience (when appropriate) and other characters comfortable and appropriate to the script?

### **Staging:**

- Was it obvious that the movement was planned?
- Was there an appropriate use of the performance space?
  - Were props used appropriately where applicable?

### **Body and facial expression:**

- Were the expressions appropriate to the material?
- Were expressions present?
  - Did the expressions enhance the presentation?

## Interpretation

### **Audience Interaction:**

- Was the audience encouraged to participate when and appropriate for this selection?
- Some events- such as storytelling, Impromptu speaking, and some Solo Acting- are delivered directly to the audience, while in other events the audience becomes eavesdroppers to the scene.
- Please note that in the event of storytelling, a speaker's interaction with the audience is highly recommended.

### **Participant Interaction:**

- Did the participants engage with one another?
- Was active listening apparent?

### **Characterization:**

- Did the performers stay in character throughout the performance?
- Did the performers create a convincing character?

## CONTENT- as applied to student created pieces

### **Organization of Presentation (Impromptu and Storytelling):**

- Did the presentation have a unified theme?
- Did the speaker provide transitions that served the script?

### **Quality of writing:**

- Was there a clear beginning, middle, and end?
- Was the quality of the script appropriate and challenging?

### **Content:**

- Was it appropriate for students and audience?
- Originality should be emphasized in material written by the student.



# IESA Speech Events and Limits

Event	# of Participants	Time Limit	# of Selections	Props
<i>Individual</i>				
Solo Acting	1	5-10 minutes	1-2	Single chair
Poetry	1	4-7 minutes	1+	Single chair
Impromptu Speaking	1	0-8 minutes		3x5 note card and writing instrument
Original Script	1	5-10 minutes	1+	Single chair
Storytelling	1	5-10 minutes	1	Single chair
<i>Duet</i>				
Duet Acting	2	5-10 minutes	1-2	2 chairs/ 2 stools/ 1 chair and 1 stool/ 1 table and 2 chairs/ 1 table and 2 stools/ 1 table and 1 chair/ 1 table and 1 stool/ 1 table, 1 stool, and 1 chair
Improv Duet	2	0-8 minutes (no penalty for time violation) Approx. 2 min. per prompt		2 chairs/ 2 stools/ 1 chair and 1 stool/ 1 table and 2 chairs/ 1 table and 2 stools/ 1 table and 1 chair/ 1 table and 1 stool/ 1 table, 1 stool, and 1 chair
Original Duet Script	2	5-10 minutes	1-2	2 chairs/ 2 stools/ 1 chair and 1 stool/ 1 table and 2 chairs/ 1 table and 2 stools/ 1 table and 1 chair/ 1 table and 1 stool/ 1 table, 1 stool, and 1 chair
<i>Small Group Events</i>				
Small Group Acting	3-5	5-10 minutes	1	1 table and 5 chairs
Team Improv	4-6	0-12 minutes (no penalty for time violation) Approx. 3 min. per game	3 games	Max of 5 chairs
<i>Chorale Presentation</i>				
	9-20	6-10 minutes	1+	No props allowed

# Organizing your Speech Program

## A. Where to Find Selections

1. So you're a new coach, a new kid on the block! Where do you find selections suitable for speech? Take heart! No matter how long you have been in speech, you are always looking for new material. A partial list of some of the more tried and true places is available on the IESA website. You should be aware that some publishing companies require not only purchase of scripts, but a royalty payment. It is the responsibility of the individual coach to make sure that all copyright responsibilities are fulfilled. Most of the publishers listed here require no royalty payment. Also, it is unethical to disregard the stipulations of certain publishers who require the purchase of a certain number of scripts. For example, many ask that two copies of a duet be purchased. These publishers work on a very low profit margin and we badly need them to keep producing good scripts for our students.

## B. Pre-Preparation

- In the summer, spend time re-typing and replacing existing files.
- In early September, gather and organize your materials.
- Plan your recruitment strategies. Use the announcements in your school newspaper, daily announcements, personally visit classroom, etc.
- Read through the current rules and regulations. Always do this no matter how long you have been in speech, as there are usually some minor clarifications and changes each year.
- Write a letter to be distributed to eligible contestants in your building. Remember, any student in grades 5-8 may participate. This should be done 8-10 weeks before contest.
- Hold a meeting and explain rules, regulations, contract, etc.
- Give the students a copy that is their own. If they lose that copy, they should pay for the copying of another.

## C. Practice Time

- Practice should be started about six weeks before contest.
- Practice should be held at least once a week for 20 to 30 minutes each.
- Parent helpers are a tremendous asset to the program. If parents are used, it is wise to have a meeting prior to the start of practices so that you can give them guidelines about what their part should be. Some schools have also successfully used high school students who themselves previously have participated in IESA contests to assist. Also, a practice packet that contains an information sheet and practice comment sheets help you keep tabs on a student's progress from one week to another. The students can get their own out of a file at a designated place in your room and take it to the parent helper and return it. Another suggestion is to provide a copy of the comments made so that the student can take a copy with him/her so they know what needs to be practiced.
- The selection should be memorized by the first practice. This is very important. Students can't concentrate on anything you might want to accomplish if they are hesitant about their lines.
- Establish memory deadlines.
- Establish lost script procedures, warm-ups, home practice, etc.
- Give each student a copy of the practice schedule. It should be made clear that doctor's appointments, etc., if possible, should not conflict with the practice time, especially if you have many students. If a student needs to change a time, let the student find someone to "trade" with and then be sure to inform you.
- Eligibility - all students who participate in contest must be eligible at that time. Keep informed. Send out an eligibility list each week or coordinate this through your principal's office. Keep tabs on your students. The memorization rule helps to weed out potential problems too.
- Have students practice in front of different audiences - other classes, relatives, etc. If you are in a junior high, make plans to visit the grade school classes. This is a great way to get practice in for your students but is also a good program builder for younger students to see what is available for them to do when they reach junior high.

- Videotaping - provides visual feedback - an excellent tool which is usually accessible. Practicing before a mirror also works well with some students.
- Workshops - if you have a lot of students - workshops are a good way to get many things practiced and explained in a very short time. Saturday mornings work well with a length of one to two hours. Having eighth graders help you is also a good way to promote a team-like atmosphere.

## D. Contest Time

- As soon as you have received the schedule for your students from your host school, you should meet with your participants and give them a handout about contest. In the handout, give information about when and where each student will be performing, a map of the school, when and from where the bus leaves and approximate returning time, acceptable clothing (no costumes--this would be considered a prop), behavior expectations, a final review of the rules, the meaning of good sportsmanship, and anything else you consider important for them to know. **Include an invitation to the parents to attend. Many do not know this is permissible.**
- **MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE CHECKED THE ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY OF ALL OF YOUR PARTICIPANTS. ONLY THOSE MEETING THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIRMENTS WILL BE ABLE TO PERFORM. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT YOU BEGIN CHECKING ELIGIBILITY THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO CONTEST.**

## Recognition of Achievement

- Some schools have a special assembly to hand out the awards earned at contest, while others have a banquet much like the well-known sports banquets. Whatever the case, it is important to recognize the accomplishments of your students. A recap in the local newspaper, a spot in the daily school announcements, etc. are all important. The time to strike out at the community is now. In the newspaper article, mention how your students would be willing to perform at clubs, organizations, nursing home, etc. You will be surprised at the feedback you will receive. And, if you need to, make a few calls and offer to bring a group or two to perform for some function. This helps with community support tremendously.

## Evaluation of Program

- After the contest is over and you have had some time to reflect, take a few minutes and focus on how you can improve your speech program. Don't wait until later. Do it now while you are still in the "speech" mind-set. An evaluation should come from at least three areas: self-evaluation of the program, evaluation from the parent or student helpers, and evaluation from your students, especially eighth graders who have had experience working in the program for more than one year. You may be surprised at the perceptions of those involved. Sometimes the coach can be too close to see some of the changes that would be good for the program. This is the time to open the blinders and "flex".

## Future Planning

- The next logical step after evaluation is planning for next year. Again, the time to make changes is now while everything is fresh. Straighten your files. Make a list of the pieces that need changes. Order new material. Have the students in an English class write duets and/or improv duet situations for a creative writing project. Do the routine things now, and you will be truly pleased with yourself next fall when it all starts again. **Good luck!!**