

Instructions for the Speech Timer

- Introduce yourself to the judges in your speech room. Arrange your chair so that you are behind the judges but still have a *very* clear view to the speaker.

TIP FOR TIMING CARDS: Stack your cards face down with “0” on the bottom, “30 sec.” in the middle, and “1 min.” on top. This will ensure you show the correct timing card at the correct time. As soon as you’re done timing the Prepared Speech or Impromptu Speech, immediately restack the cards so you’re ready for the next timing round.

- Be prepared to explain to each speaker the use of timing cards for the **Prepared Speech** by reading the following to them, when asked by the head judge to do so:

Remember: A prepared speech is “in time” if you speak between 3 ½ and 4 minutes. After you have spoken for three minutes, I will hold up the 1-minute card, meaning you have 1-minute left to speak. After you have spoken for 3 ½ minutes, I will hold up the 30-second card, meaning you have spoken 3 ½ minutes and still have 30 seconds left if you need them. After you have spoken 4 minutes, I will hold up the “0” card, meaning time is up. I will not say stop, but you have no “grace period” and will be penalized if you continue.

- Below are the timing rules for the **Impromptu Speech**. The head judge will explain to the student that you, as the timer, are using the same procedures with your timing cards except you will only be timing 1 ½ to 2 minutes for the impromptu. Be prepared to explain to each speaker the use of the timing cards for the **Impromptu Speech** by reading the following to them, when asked by the head judge to do so:

Remember: An impromptu speech is “in time” if you speak between 1 ½ and 2 minutes. After you have spoken for one minute, I will hold up the 1-minute card, meaning you have 1-minute left to speak. After you have spoken for 1 ½ minutes, I will hold up the 30-second card, meaning you have talked for 1 ½ minutes and still have 30 seconds left if you need them. After you have spoken 2 minutes, I will hold up the “0” card, meaning time is up. I will not say stop, but you have no “grace period” and will be penalized if you continue.

- Make sure that the speaker can see you and notices the cards you are holding up. If they continue to speak after you hold up the “0 card,” do not say “stop,” but note this action. The student will receive a timing penalty if they do not meet the minimum standard time, or if they exceed the maximum time, for each speech.
- It is easy to get so involved with a performance that you forget to give time signals. This can be both devastating and disastrous to the student. Most of them have these speeches timed to the second so PAY ATTENTION and signal EXACTLY! If you are the one who makes a mistake, do not penalize the student for your error.
- You are not allowed to give competitors their times for the speeches or even to say if the speech is “in time” or not. If the student asks, simply say that you are only allowed to tell the judges the exact times after the student leaves the room.
- If a student hesitates and/or pauses for a long duration during their speech, the timekeeper should make a note of when the pause begins, but NOT stop the clock until the speech time has expired. Students may resume their speech as long as time has not expired.
- After the speaker leaves the room, you will tell the judges one of the following choices: “No Penalty,” “Penalty on Prepared,” “Penalty on Impromptu,” or “Penalty on Both Speeches.” You are the final arbiter in the matter of timing so be very careful not to make a mistake. All three judges will mark the same penalty on their Speech Evaluation Forms.

Step by Step Procedures:

The following instructions are for timers that are set to a certain time and count down to zero. If you have a stopwatch that counts forward, you will not need to follow these instructions; however, we strongly recommend that all regions use the type of timer that counts down to zero for consistency.

1. Using the Stop/Reset button, set the timer to 4:00 minutes by pressing those numbers on the keypad.
2. Press the Start button when the student begins their prepared speech. The timer will count down from 4:00 minutes. When the timer reads 1:00, hold up the appropriate timecard. Then do the same when the timer reads 00:30. The timer may make a noise at the 00:00 point. Hit the Stop/Restart button to disarm the noise and immediately hold up the "0" card. Do not say "stop." However, if the student continues to talk, they will receive a penalty. No extra courtesy time is allowed.
3. If the student goes over time, simply note this on your timer's log for prepared speech. Since your time counts down from 4:00, you will not know the exact time if they go over. However, for every other scenario, please record on your timer's log, the EXACT time of the speech. Do the math on the timer's log! Do not trust "doing it in your head." If the timer reads 00:33 at the end of the speech, here is how you calculate the time:

$$\begin{array}{r} 3:60 \\ -0:33 \\ \hline 3:27 \end{array}$$

This student would be *under* time by 3 seconds because the prepared speech must be between 3:30 and 4:00 minutes.

4. The head judge will explain the impromptu procedure. When they hand the student the topics, give the student one minute on the timer to prepare.
5. After you have indicated to the judges and the student that the one minute is up, immediately reset your timer for 2:00 minutes and follow the same procedure in timing as you did for the prepared speech. The student's impromptu speech must be between 01:30 and 02:00 minutes.
6. Calculate the time for the impromptu and record on the timer's log.
7. After the student leaves the room, tell the judges if there are any penalties.

IMPORTANT: After the competition, put your timer, timing cards, and timer's log back in the timer packet you received, and return everything to the Speech Coordinator. Please do not leave until they release you.

SAMPLE Speech Timer's Log

Timer Jane Doe Room # 227

Do the math on every speech! Two examples are shown below:

3:60
-:14
3:46
1:60
-:24
1:36
3:60
-1:14
2:46
1:60
-:21
1:39

| Student # | Exact Time Prepared | Exact Time Impromptu | Comments |
|-----------|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| 1807 | -- | -- | Did not come to the room. |
| 1607 | OK | 1:58 | I messed up on prepared speech. Did not hold up card at correct time. Did not penalize student. |
| 2007 | 1:32 | 0:36 | Was not prepared. Short on both. |
| 2407 | 3:59 | 1:43 | No penalties |
| 2007 | 3:46 | 1:36 | No penalties |
| 3007 | over time | 1:34 | Forgot prepared speech – paused a long time then went over time. |
| 1407 | 2:46 | 1:39 | Was nervous and spoke too fast on prepared – under time. |
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NOTES:
 Note that this timer made a mistake on student #1607. The timer took responsibility for their error and did not penalize the student.
 These instructions assume you are using a timer that counts down from a set time to zero. If you are using a stopwatch that counts up from zero, you will not need to do the math in the margin.
 If the student is over the time limit on either speech, you do not need to record the exact time; simply record “over time.” However, if the student is anywhere within the time limit, you must record the exact time.