

# PHILOSOPHY OF SPEECH STANDARDS

**Stoa is committed to high standards of ethics and accountability and believes that the Event Rules, Script Submission process, Judge Orientation, and Adjudication process advance these goals. This document outlines the philosophy behind these processes.**

## **I. Why do we need standards?**

Stoa is committed to promoting integrity and recognizing competitive excellence. To this end, standards of fairness have been created for each event. Speech standards teach our students academic integrity and increase the educational value of each event. Stoa aims to establish an even playing field for all competitors, eliminating any competitive advantage. A commitment to these standards would encourage consistency at a local level so that students earn valid checkmarks.

## **II. What does the Speech Committee do to uphold these standards?**

The Speech Committee thoughtfully creates rules, ballots, and processes to uphold the Speech Standards. An old adage says that one must inspect what one expects. The Event Rules, Ballots, Judge Orientation, Script Submission, and the Adjudication Process facilitate this expectation. Acknowledging that Script Submission can be difficult for students, we have provided a variety of help pages and a video to guide them through the process. The Speech Committee strives to enforce the Event Rules at NITOC fairly. We are also committed to serving and helping the membership and local tournaments as they uphold these standards.

## **III. Speech Standards**

### **A. What are the standards of fairness for Interps?**

#### **1. Valid sourcing**

Valid sourcing is an issue of academic integrity. The Publication Guidelines assist in finding valid sources. Media transcripts (sources transcribed from a live or recorded performance) are not considered valid sources as they do not appropriately and/or legally give credit to the original author(s).

#### **2. Added words**

Limiting added words encourages the use of the original source/literature, increasing the academic rigor of the event. Students who do not abide by the added word limit create a competitive advantage that other students do not have. Having the local and NITOC Script Reviewers confirm the added word count is vital to ensure that checkmarks are awarded fairly.

#### **3. Original work**

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For an Interp to be original, the script and the blocking must be unique. The competitor must not copy the added words, cutting, characterization, and/or blocking of a previous speech and/or video. This removes the merit of an original presentation and creates a competitive advantage. By creating an original interpretation, the student learns to evaluate literature, vocabulary, and the art of storytelling at a higher level. The skills of storytelling and empathizing with the characters will create a well-rounded individual who can communicate with various types of people in different settings.

### 4. Matching Scripts

The original source and the typewritten script must match exactly and be sorted in the correct order of lines so that the Script Reviewer can quickly check the scripts and count the added words. This is not a suggestion but a requirement for NITOC Script Submission. Without this standard, added words may not be counted correctly, which may provide an unfair advantage to some.

### 5. Delivery

The student must perform the speech as written and approved by the Script Submission Team. Students are not permitted to ad-lib within their speech as this would allow them to use uncounted and unapproved added words, creating a competitive advantage.

## B. What are the standards of fairness for Platforms?

### 1. Original work

An original work is material collected and created by the competitor to produce a unique perspective on a topic. Plagiarism (copying someone else's work and ideas without crediting them) will not be tolerated. Works used must be cited both orally and parenthetically. Limiting quotes to 30% of the speech encourages original thoughts and ideas from the student, thereby increasing the academic rigor of the event.

### 2. Citations

- **Common Knowledge:** While many students have gathered knowledge over the course of their studies and hobbies, not all of that knowledge is common to the average person. Thus, detailed knowledge must be cited. This includes dates, statistics, technical information, and facts that the listener would not know unless they had researched the topic. When in doubt, cite the source. Learning to cite source material prepares the student for writing in any academic setting. When sources are cited and

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used to craft a unique message, the student builds credibility (ethos) with the judge and becomes the expert in the room.

- Blanket citations: A blanket citation is when a student claims that a specific source will be the source he/she is using throughout their speech. Many students want to give a blanket citation to keep from having to orally cite the same source multiple times. The difficulty for both the Script Reviewer and the Judge becomes knowing what is original to the student and what is not. The lines between plagiarism and originality become blurred. While writing a script that flows smoothly with multiple oral citations may be difficult, it is also a mark of skilled writing and develops ethos with the judge.

### 3. Delivery

The student must perform the speech as written and approved by the Script Submission Team. Students are not permitted to ad-lib within their speech as this would allow them to use unapproved verbiage, which may create a competitive advantage.

## C. What are the standards of fairness for Limited Prep?

While there is no script submission for these events, standards of fairness still apply to ensure a level playing field. Limited Prep events emphasize understanding the question/topic being asked and responding to the question/topic clearly and accurately.

### 1. Impromptu & Mars Hill

- Adhering to the prompt: Circumventing the prompt to make the subject matter easier for the student is an unfair competitive advantage as the student is speaking on a topic they are more comfortable with rather than the chosen topic.
- Spontaneous speech: Pre-written speeches may not be used for this event as they compromise the purpose of intelligent and inventive speech and thought proceeding from the prompt during preparation time. Students who use a prepared speech have taken more than their allotted prep time to craft a compelling speech, which gives them a competitive advantage over students who are creating a speech in the moment.

### 2. Apologetics

- Adhering to the prompt: Circumventing the prompt to make the subject matter easier for the student is an unfair competitive advantage as the student is speaking on a topic they are more comfortable with rather than the chosen topic.
- Before judging the event, Apologetics judges are required to affirm that they agree with the Stoa Statement of Faith.

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### 3. Extemporaneous

- Adhering to the prompt: Circumventing the prompt to make the subject matter easier for the student is an unfair competitive advantage as the student is speaking on a topic they are more comfortable with rather than the chosen topic.
- Oral Citations: Students are required to orally cite the source(s) they are using. Falsifying sources or material or taking credit for another's research or analysis is unethical.
- Spontaneous speech: Pre-written speeches may not be used for this event as they compromise the purpose of intelligent and inventive speech and thought, proceeding from the prompt during preparation time. Students using a prepared speech have taken more than their allotted prep time to craft a compelling speech, which gives them a competitive advantage over students creating a speech in the moment.

### D. How does Script Submission uphold the standards of fairness?

1. Accountability to rules: Script Submission provides the accountability process for Platform and Interpretative events. It attempts to ensure that rules are followed, publications adhere to Stoa guidelines, sources are appropriately cited, and added words are counted.
2. Script Approval: Prior to the tournament, Script Submission verifies the legitimacy of the script, reducing tournament adjudications. The intent is to guarantee that students earn a **legitimate** green checkmark with an approved NITOC-qualifying script.
3. Standardized Process:
  - Trained Script Reviewers: Tournament in a Box provides training for our Script Reviewers through videos and documentation. This training allows for a cohesive approach when approving submitted scripts.
  - Standard Checklist for Reviewers: Script reviewers use a standard checklist published in Tournament in a Box to examine scripts. This maintains consistency throughout Stoa so that nothing less than or more than the stated rules is expected.
  - Clear and Respectful Communication: Communication between the Script Reviewer and competitor supports corrections and clarification of rules. Every competitor has the opportunity to communicate with the reviewer and make appropriate changes.
  - Timely Submission: Students who exceed the submission deadline receive an unfair advantage.
  - Stoa Speech Committee: The Speech Committee is available to answer questions and provide support and oversight for the Stoa membership.

### E. How does Judge Orientation uphold the standards of fairness?

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1. Providing uniform Judge Orientation enables all judges to be on the same playing field regarding how to judge fairly and without bias. We encourage all judges to go through training at least once a year, even if they are experienced and/or parents.
2. Judge Orientation team - The team should consist of experienced parents and/or coaches specifically trained to lead Judge Orientation.
3. Training for judges. Having an experienced team allows judges to be trained before the start of the round.
4. Answering judge questions: This team handles all speech-related questions by consistently pointing the judges back to the Event Rules so that the rules are fairly understood and applied to all.

### **F. How does the Adjudication Process uphold the standards of fairness**

1. The Adjudication Team safeguards the tournament from unfair competitive advantage.
2. The Adjudication team should include experienced staff from multiple clubs to avoid bias. The Speech Committee always has a member on call available for each tournament. The three-step Adjudication process consists of:
  - Investigation of a supposed rule violation.
  - Ensuring compliance in subsequent rounds if a rule violation (or misunderstanding of a rule) is determined.
  - Recommendation of a consequence for the rule violation to keep a fair playing field.