

BRIEFING THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS TEAM

This document will guide you through the briefing of the Sergeant-At-Arms (SAA) team. The Contest Chair and the lead Sergeant-At-Arms need to communicate during the contest planning and decide who will lead the briefing.

If you are leading the briefing, review this document prior to the contest and be sure you are comfortable with all the information included.

The Sergeant-At-Arms briefing includes the following sections. After each section, give team members the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any confusion.

Following are the roles on the Sergeant-At-Arms team. Assign a role to each team member. Depending on the size of your team, you may need to assign a team member to multiple roles.

- Lead Sergeant-At-Arms
 - Control the overall contest flow.
- Door Master
 - Ensures speeches are uninterrupted and controls traffic into the contest room.
- Prop Master
 - Assists contestants with props.
- The Escort
 - Shuttles contestants back and forth from the contest room and holding area.
- Notes Master
 - Presides over the evaluation contestant preparations.

Following are the specific responsibilities of each role. Ensure that each task in the Lead Sergeant-At-Arms section is completed before the contest begins. Review all other roles with the entire team so members can understand how they need to interact with one another.

LEAD SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

- Define the holding area for Table Topics or Evaluation contestants.
- Ensure that contestants in holding area will not be able to hear the contest.
- Post “Contest In Progress” signs on the contest room doors.
- Lead the Sergeant-At-Arms briefing using this document.
- Check with the Contest Master to see if any contestants need help with props.
- Five minutes before the contest, announce that the Speech Contest will be called to order.
- Use the Sergeant-At-Arms Contest Script to call the contest to order and begin.

DOOR MASTER

- The Door Master role is required for all types of speech contests.
- Before the Contest Master is introduced, position yourself at the entry door. Remain there during the contestant speeches and times of silence. Do not allow anyone to enter or exit the contest room while contestants are speaking. People can enter and exit during the times of silence.
- [Table Topics and Evaluation Contests Only] Assist with the flow of contestants into the contest room. When a contestant speech has ended, signal The Escort to send the next contestant. When the contestant arrives at the entry door, ask the contestant to proceed to the staging area, or the sound station if lapel microphones are being used.

PROP MASTER

- The Prop Master role is required for International and Humorous Speech contests only.
- Assist any contestants who need help arranging the props for their speeches. Props must be arranged during the minute of silence before the speech and removed during the minute of silence after the speech.
- During the contest, position yourself near the speaking area off to one side in a place where you are not conspicuous.

THE ESCORT

- The Escort role is required for Table Topics and Evaluation contests only.
- Escort the contestants out of the contest room before the speech contest begins.
- [Table Topics Only] When the Contest Master says, “The first contestant will now proceed to the staging area. The Sergeant-at-Arms will escort the remaining contestants out of the room”, meet the contestants at the entry door and escort them out of the room.
- [Evaluation Only] When the Contest Master says, “Will the sergeant-at-arms please escort all of the contestants out of the room for the five minute preparation time?” meet the contestants at the entry door and escort them to the holding area where the contestants will prepare their evaluations.
- Collect phones from each contestant.
- Escort the contestants to the holding area.
- [Evaluation Only] When the five minute preparation time is over, stay with the contestants in the holding area.
- When the Door Master signals you to send another contestant, ask the next contestant to enter the contest room. Repeat the process for each contestant.
- When the Door Master signals you for the last contestant, escort that contestant to the contest room and then stay in the contest room.
- Return phones to each contestant after the contest has completed.

NOTES MASTER

- The Notes Master role is required for Evaluation contests only.
- Record the speaking order during the Contest Master's introductions.
- Accompany The Escort and the evaluation contestants to the holding area.
- Bring a stopwatch or timing device to record five minutes.
- When all contestants are seated, read the following to the contestants:

"This is where you will prepare your evaluations. The procedure will be as follows: You may start preparing as soon as I say to begin. Please work in silence for the five-minute period. I will signal you when five minutes have elapsed. At that time, you will need to stop writing. I will collect the notes from each of you, beginning with the first contestant. I will then escort the first contestant into the contest room. The rest of you will remain in this room until it is your turn to speak. During the minute of silence before you speak, I will hold your notes. I will return your notes to you immediately before the Contest Master announces your name the second time, just before you depart for the speaking area."

- Ask the contestants if they have any questions and clarify any confusion.
- Instruct the contestants to begin and start the time.
- After five minutes have elapsed, instruct the contestants to stop writing.
- Collect the notes from each speaker, being careful to arrange them in the proper order so that each contestant is given the correct notes.
- Escort the first contestant into the contest room and to the staging area. For contests that use lapel microphones, escort the contestant to the sound station prior to going to the staging area.
- Hold on to the contestant's notes while waiting with the contestant in the staging area during the minute of silence.
- Give the contestant their notes immediately before the Contest Master announces their name the second time.
- While the contestant is speaking, position yourself near the staging area off to one side in a place where you are not conspicuous.
- Remain in the staging area until the next contestant arrives.
- Stay in the staging area until the next contestant arrives.
- Give each subsequent contestant their notes immediately before the Contest Master announces their name the second time.
- After the last contestant is handed the notes, your tasks are complete.