

ACP Speech and Debate Handbook

1. **Competitive Speech and Debate ENE-140** for 9th– 12th graders; two semesters; course fee (tax credit \$200). This course has a zero-hour option but will also be offered for 1-6 periods. The class is mandatory* for membership on the ACP Speech and Debate Team. Students must attend a minimum of two tournaments per semester. If the student doesn't "qualify" because of "Limitation of Participants" (see #5 below) he/she will still need to attend and observe. The student will receive full credit for the tournament by filling out judge ballot sheets and taking notes of what is seen.

The course is designed to prepare and train students for high school tournament competitions on the Arizona circuit. Students can expect to develop the following skills: research, argument, logic, critical thinking; verbal projection, non-verbal and verbal expression and diction; as well as growth in confidence, leadership, poise and the ability to receive and apply constructive criticism. After taking this class, student will be more efficient in all academic areas, especially those that require academic stamina, rigor and critical thinking.

*(see Theater Events Addendum below)

2. Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) Eligibility

- a) Arizona Interscholastic Association rules state that no student may miss more than 10 days per semester in any class.
- b) Students must maintain academic eligibility (No failing grades)
- c) Students do **not** have to fill out any AIA forms typical of athletic sports.
- d) Students will **not** be drug tested.

3. Transportation to tournaments

- a. For most tournaments, a school bus will leave from and return to the school parking lot. For a few of the smaller tournaments, we will take the 14 passenger Activity Bus. For Friday Congress Debate events, we will take the school van.

4. Typical Debate Weekend Schedule

- a. Friday Morning-van leaves at 6:45 am for Congress Debate (only for Congress people; Congress people return on the van at 3:00 pm unless doing Debate Events)
- b. Friday Afternoon-different bus leaves for Debate Events-2:15 pm
- c. Saturday Morning-bus leaves at 6:45 for Speech/Theater Events (and those who **advanced** in Debate Events). Otherwise, debaters do not need to attend.
- d. Saturday Noon – 12:00 pm - Debate Final Rounds begin. (if debater doesn't travel on bus, he or she would need to provide transportation (self or parent))
- e. Most competitions finish at approximately 7:30 to 8:30 pm
- f. Students may not leave early after they have been eliminated.** Everyone must stay for the awards ceremony for these reasons: 1) it is considered a serious breach of ethics in the Speech and Debate Community. 2) it is courteous and respectful to stay and celebrate with teammates and opponents who have won awards. 3) they

- learn by watching the final rounds. 4) it is motivating. ***If you can't meet this requirement, then don't attend the tournament.***
- g. Judges may leave when their duty is finished. Do NOT leave until the ballot table tells you that you are free to go.

5. Financial Cost:

- a. **Participation Fee** - \$200. Pay the bookstore. Check, cash or card. Make checks payable to: ACP Erie. This will automatically be applied to your tax-credit donation. Print the receipt. Put it in your income tax folder and then you will receive a **full refund**, not a deduction, at tax time. *This covers the mandatory \$40 pay to play fee.*
- b. **Tournament Registration Fees** - \$5-10 / person / event. This will be paid automatically from the above Participation Fee.
- c. **NSDA fee** - \$20 – This will also be paid from the \$200 participation fee.

6. Limitation of Participants: (we will normally take the strongest/most prepared participants in each event)

- a. Speech/Theater – 6 Participants/Event
- b. Debate – 6 Teams/Event (for Novice and Varsity)
- c. Congress Debate – 6 Participants

To consider: Speech and Debate is an AIA Competitive Event. Just like a high school sport, not everyone gets in the game. There is still great value in being on the team. As skilled and experienced team members graduate, spots begin to open for those who have attended practices, developed research skills, evaluated performances, practiced speaking and debating, and absorbed the vast array of information that is exchanged daily. That said, there is a fairly good chance that there will be some events that are open even if a student is not be able to earn one of the top six spots in an event that he or she prioritizes. Of course, regardless of the event, a student must demonstrate an acceptable degree of effort and achievement before participating in that event.

7. Registering to Attend a Tournament

- a. Students will register in my classroom by signing the Registration Signup on the Speech and Debate Bulletin Board by the Wednesday 10 days before each tournament.
- b. Cancellations: Please do not cancel unless it is an emergency. It causes great difficulty for the planners of the tournament and for me. Also, last minute cancellations tarnish the reputation of our program. Please put the tournament schedule on the family calendar. The most common cancellation is when a student informs me that a parent just informed them that (fill in the blank).
- c. Non-performance: this is when a student a) doesn't show up on the day of the tournament and doesn't notify me, or b) shows up on the day of the tournament, but skips a round or rounds for whatever reason. ***On the second, non-performance, a student is removed from competing in further competitions for the year.***

8. **Dress** - participants must be dressed professionally according to NSDA rules. The dress code is as follows:

- a. Men – dress shoes, dress pants, dress socks, long-sleeve dress shirt, tie (can be bright) and jacket (navy, black, or other dark color is preferable). The jacket and tie are not optional.
- b. Women – Option #1 - dress pants and blouse preferably with a blazer. Option #2 – a professional business dress (professional length, not frilly or flowery) does not need to be black, navy, or dark, but I think that is best. Think business world. Dress shoes (nice flats or heels). You will do a lot of walking. Some people wear flats, then change into heels just before they enter the room.

These can be found at Good Will; a parent's closet; a teammate's outgrown hand-me-downs, etc. Be resourceful.

“My mama always said you can tell a lot about a person by their shoes; where they going, where they been.” – Forrest Gump

Team rule for men and women: You should be **“buttoned up”** at all times. This includes at school on Fridays. Pay attention to detail. Shirts should be ironed and tucked in neatly. Ties should be up high, not loose. Shoes should be polished and certainly no tennis-shoes. By being “buttoned up” you are communicating to judges and others that you care very much. Just as in the business world, first impressions are important and others will judge you by your appearance. Finally, it intimidates.

9. **Earning Honor Society status through NSDA** - www.speechanddebate.org/honor-society/

- a. By registering on the National Speech and Debate Association website, students can earn points and achieve membership in the Honor Society.
- b. NSDA Membership Fee is \$20. This will be paid from the \$200 Participation Fee.
- c. 25 Merit points must be earned during your high school career to achieve membership into the Honor Society.
- d. Points system:
 - Debate: 6 pts for winning; 3 pts for losing (4 rounds in prelims) possible 24 pts
 - Speech/Theater: 1st place=6 pts; 2nd place=5 pts; 3rd place=4 pts; etc (3 rounds in prelims) possible 18 pts
 - If you “break” out of Prelims into the Octo/Quarter/Semis/Finals you can earn even more points.

10. **Scholarships** – many scholarship websites that I have researched say that there approximately 280 schools that offer yearly scholarships based on the number of years they have participated in S&D. Some scholarships are for participating on the college S&D team, but most scholarships do not require you to participate on the college team. They just

recognize that these are quality students. Please do your own research, but understand that S&D can most definitely lead to scholarship money.

11. Letters, pins, and graduation cord –

- a. A **letter** will be awarded the first season a competitor achieves **100 NSDA points** in a season.
- b. A **pin** will be awarded each subsequent year that a competitor earns **100 points** in a season.
- c. A graduation **Honor Cord** will be awarded to seniors who achieve at least **400 career points**.
- d. A **graduation pin** will be awarded to seniors who achieve at least **750 career points**.

12. Judges – all tournament judges are volunteers. The tournaments adhere to strict rules that declare a certain quota of judges must be supplied for each participant in an event. The online registration will not accept a school's registration until all judge quotas have been met.

- a. This judge can be a parent, a relative, a teacher, a friend or sibling (as long as he/she has graduated from high school). You must go to Sign-up Genius and make a commitment to the judge sign-up calendar before your child can attend a tournament. If you don't sign-up to judge your child will be dropped from competition.
- b. The judge does not have to judge in a tournament that your child attends. This supplied judge will never judge anyone from ACP. This judge can sign-up for either speech OR debate. However, it is on a first come basis. In some cases, your choice of speech OR debate may not be able to be accommodated.
- c. The judge quota is 20 hours per semester. (you don't actually judge 20 hours, you just need to be at the tournament and available for those 20 hours. Debate judges can earn 5 hours on any given Friday evening; 5 hours on any given Saturday afternoon. IE judges (speech/drama) can earn 10 hours on any given Saturday.
- d. There will be a SignUp Genius for Semester 1 and then a SignUp Genius for Semester 2. If your child chooses to drop out of Speech and Debate 1st semester, you can request to take your name off of the judge signups for 1st semester, although it would be greatly appreciated if you would still fulfill your previous commitment for that Semester only. Same is true for 2nd semester.
- e. ***SignUp Genius is official. You will receive a reminder from SignUp Genius 3 days before the tournament. In the event of a conflict disabling you from fulfilling a tournament obligation, you MUST go to SignUp Genius and remove yourself from the sign-up. I will receive an email from SignUp Genius, but I would appreciate an email. Also, if possible, rather than dropping, please try to do a "swap" with another parent. Sign-up Genius allows you to do this. Finally, if at all possible, don't wait to the last minute.***

13. After School Practice Schedule (for your event):

- i. Interp Events – Monday, 2:45 – 4:15 (2nd Semester these are "as needed")
- ii. Congress – Tuesday, 2:45 – 4:15 – Room C102
- iii. Platform Speech Events – Wednesday, 2:45 - 4:15 pm – (2nd Semester "as needed")
- iv. Impromptu and Extemporaneous Speaking – Wednesday, 2:45 – 4:15 pm – (2nd Semester "as needed")

14. Theater Events in Speech and Debate Addendum:

If a student is not taking the Speech and Debate class and wants to compete in competitive theater he/she must comply with the following:

- pay \$200 tax credit.
- furnish a judge (usually a parent or relative) for 20 hours per semester. Two weekends usually.
- Attend the after school Interp Practices from 2:45-4:15 pm. Once or twice a week.
- Attend the General Session Meeting held during Success Period on Tuesday.

You may not participate in Speech Events or Debate events. Only Theater events.

15. National Tournaments

As a team, we do not normally attend national tournaments. Occasionally, a small group of upper classmen get the urge to attend one of these tournaments. Our school policy is this: such a trip is permissible, but it will NOT be done through CUSD or ACP resources. In other words, the parents must arrange for transportation, accommodations, judges, chaperones and assume all liability for the trip. Because the parents and students of such a trip are accepting the full burden of responsibility, it cannot be “opened” to everyone and anyone who wants to attend.

16. Core Values

- a) See the big picture. We need to recognize that participating in forensics is much more than coming in first place. Through this process, we learn self-discipline, how to win graciously, how to lose gracefully, how to receive criticism, how to conduct ourselves under pressure, how to cope with disappointment and how to give up your ego for the good of a team. Confidence grows; oratory skills become impeccable. Of course, a major part of the big picture is the academic gains you receive through the process: becoming a stronger reader, developing a thirst for knowledge, efficiency in research skills, broadening your world view, argument skills and greater academic stamina to name just a few.
- b) Iron sharpens iron. We want to develop a culture where we make each other better; better speakers, better debaters and better people. Let’s greet everyone enthusiastically and help each other with our own strengths. So remember, don’t drink the poison of comparison, but embrace who you are and be the best that you can be. That will sharpen others. When one person wins, we all win.

15. Tournament Etiquette

- a) **On campus.** Remember that people, judges and competitors, are watching. Be polite and professional with your language at all times. Be friendly and respectful with all other students and adults. Refrain from loud talking, especially in the halls outside of competition rooms. Never gossip or say negative things about other competitors or judges.
- b) **Before entering a competition room.** *Never walk into a room during a performance.* When you do enter, enter ready to compete. You are “on” the minute you walk into the room. Do your makeup or hair, **before** you enter. Make sure your tie is up and collar down. Disable your phone.
- c) **When waiting to perform in IE.** Sit where you can make eye-contact with whoever is speaking. Respectfully listen to the other competitors. Don’t daydream or do anything that would be distracting. Don’t talk to your friends or other competitors when the judge is working on ballots.
- d) **When you are called on to perform in IE.** Walk up confidently and with good posture. Make eye contact with the audience and the judge as you approach. The judge has called your name so he/she is ready. No need to ask, “Is my judge ready?” Collect yourself; make eye-contact; begin.
- e) **Debate specific etiquette.** Debaters: Ask the judge where he/she would like you to set-up. Make sure you can see the judge from where you sit. Don’t talk during anyone’s speech. Keep facial expressions to a minimum. Don’t react negatively to your partner or opponent. Frowns included.
- f) **Judge etiquette.** Don’t offer advice on rules or procedures to inexperienced judges. Don’t volunteer to keep time, unless the judge asks for a volunteer. Don’t ask a judge for feedback or disclosure. That is up to the judge’s discretion. If the judge gives you a critique, don’t justify your performance. Just say, “Okay, thank you.” When leaving the room, don’t say “Thank you for judging” or anything that could be considered trying to butter-up the judge.
- g) **When you don’t have a round or you’ve been eliminated.** Go watch and support a teammate. This is not optional.
- h) **During the awards ceremony.** Sit as a team. Clap for the award winners and stand for first place. Don’t be lazy or lethargic about this. It will reflect negatively on our team and our school. Remember: no one leaves a tournament early. If you must, then don’t attend the tournament.
- i) **Social etiquette.** Never give compliments to anyone unless sincerely felt. Never give unsolicited critiques. Beware of flaunting your accomplishments. Remember one person’s victory is another person’s loss.
- j) **Trophy acceptance etiquette.** Be “buttoned up.” Dress shoes, shirt-tail in, tie tied properly, suit jacket buttoned. You are still representing our school. Other naughty

behavior: chewing gum, setting the trophy on the ground, acting disappointed on the stage. Good idea: congratulate those who placed higher than yourself.

Other Items of Importance

Reputation. Once a reputation has been tarnished, it is hard to recover the shine. We want others to think of ACP as a classy team. We need to remember that people are watching us. Remember, that if opponents and judges respect us as individuals and as a team, then we will be respected in the competition room. That could make the difference between winning and losing, as in life. So, watch your body language and remember that the walls have ears. Be humble, be gracious, and be kind.

Speak up. If you see trouble brewing, anything detrimental to the relationships on the team, or anything unethical taking place, try to intercede in the conflict. If that doesn't work, come to the coach. This is not being a snitch. It's what good citizens do. We are simply protecting what is sacred.

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