

St. Croix Prep Speech Program

Speech Handbook



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I. Introduction

Dear Student,

Greetings, and welcome to the SCPA Speech Program. Speech is a nationally recognized extracurricular activity that can earn you and your team local, state, and national recognition, as well as provide you with a strong addition to any college resume. Speech is a great activity for students who enjoy speaking, want your voice to be heard (instead of always being told to just be quiet and listen), like discussing important topics, or enjoy acting. Through Speech, you will have the opportunity to develop skills that will help you in all avenues of life: increasing your confidence, reducing your speaking anxiety, and build friendships with other students with similar interests. Thank you for your interest in Speech, and I hope you enjoy your time as an important part of our team!

Each and every year of Speech at SCPA is a fun and exciting year. Students develop friendships while learning to excel in an activity most college graduates identify as the activity that helped them the most in preparing for college and the real world. This year will be an exciting and unique year, as there is a possibility that many tournaments will be hosted online, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this can be a great opportunity to explore new formats for performance. SCPA's Speech Program offers students the opportunity to compete in the events that they love (or will grow to love as first year members). It is my hope that this year, much as in years past, students in Speech will flourish and thrive, take advantage of the lessons and insights offered by our coaching staff, and work hard to compete with the best teams in the state and the nation.

Needless to say, I am thrilled and excited for the chance to work with you this season as we build our team, build your skills, and build a community at SCPA that is passionate about public speaking. Thank you, and welcome to the team.

Sincerely,

Matthew Davis
Director of Speech and Debate
St. Croix Preparatory Academy

II. Speech

The Speech Program is an MSHSL sanctioned event, much like athletic events, for students in 7th through 12th grade. Speech challenges students to develop their creative energies and delivery skills as they select, edit, and practice speeches in a wide variety of categories. Speech challenges students to break out of their shell (or perhaps climb back inside just a little bit), prepare engaging and thoughtful speeches, and deliver those speeches in competition against “speechers” from schools from our state and region. Students typically compete in a given round against five other speakers, and a judge watches and ranks all speakers, providing feedback to each speaker after their speech. The primary Speech season runs from to December through April, but there will be additional opportunities for competition at the local, state, and national level before and after those dates.

From the National Speech and Debate Association website:

“Speech involves a presentation by one, two, or sometimes a group of students that is judged against a similar type of presentation by others in a round of competition. Speech events range from limited preparation events that require extensive knowledge of current events to dramatic and humorous interpretation, which challenge students to find powerful moments in literature and recreate them for an audience. [...] Each event features a different form of public speaking and requires a unique skill set and talent. While students often develop a passion for specific events, many compete in multiple categories throughout the course of their academic careers.”

While participating in Speech, you will have the opportunity to work with coaches to select one or two events that suit your speaking preferences. Additionally, coaches will work with you to select an appropriate performance piece, consider possible edits for time concerns, develop a teaser and an introduction for the piece, and practice, practice, practice until you’ve prepared enough (usually after 2-3 tournaments) to recite your piece by memory. Of course, to adequately prepare for this inevitability, you will need to dedicate time (and space in your brain palace) to this task, which will mean starting early in the season (or before), and working hard to become comfortable with the piece.

As a first-year “Speaker,” you will spend most of your time practicing the various aspects of speech delivery during your practices. Accordingly, your coaching staff will work with you to select an appropriate event, piece, and edit, so that you can focus on developing your characters, voice, posture, gestures and movement, and pacing for your speech. As you progress beyond your first year of speech, you will have more freedom to choose your event, piece, and edit, while the coaching staff will function as peer editor, delivery critic, and tournament mentor. Speech is a great activity to learn skills that will serve you in all walks of life, making you a more confident, poised, and powerful communicator.

A. Speech Events Catalog for the SCPA Speech Team

- 1. Creative Expression (Performative)** - Creative Expression is the performance of material written by the contestant, so no more than 20% may be material from other sources. All materials quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from other sources must be documented orally *and* in the written text. The contestant may use pantomime, storytelling, interpretive reading, impersonation, or any combination of these performance styles. Properties, costumes, instrumental music, and stage makeup are NOT allowed. (An exception would be the allowable one time only use of up to two phrases of music from the actual published literature being quoted, or the student's own writing.)
- 2. Discussion (Informative)** - Problem-solving Discussion is an effort on the part of a small group to reach a solution to a problem through informal interchange of facts, inferences, and judgments. This method of discussion seeks consensus rather than majority rule. The focus of this event should be the encouragement of cooperation and critical thinking to arrive at the collective goal of better understanding and problem solving.
- 3. Duo Interpretation (Performative)** - Duo interpretation features two students interpreting together one or more selections from a single published source or a single anthology of prose, poetry, and/or dramatic literature, serious and/or humorous, with literary merit and appropriate to the readers (Published means the source has an ISBN, a Library of Congress Number, or verification of original print publication). The students' script may be limited to a single author or genre, but may include material from more than one genre and/or author, so long as the material comes from that single published source.) Each student may portray one or more characters. Costumes, props, make-up, special lights, scenery, stools, or chairs, music stands, or lecterns may not be used. The use of scripts is optional.
- 4. Extemporaneous Reading (Performative)** - Participation in Extemporaneous Reading teach a student to introduce and read excerpts from prose or poetry for the purpose of appreciation or enjoyment. The student will declare, prior to each draw, his/her choice of genre. Specific sources for reading will be announced in the fall of each year. The League Office will identify specific poems and stories for contests. **NO CUTTINGS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE BEFORE THE ACTUAL CONTESTS.**
- 5. Extemporaneous Speaking (Informative)** - The Extemporaneous Speech should be an original synthesis of current fact and opinion on a topic drawn by the contestant. Speakers may choose from either U.S. or International topics. The Judge(s) should consider the quality of information presented by the speaker, together with the speaker's use of that information to support the thesis. The MSHSL will publish each fall subject areas chosen from these publications. The MSHSL will provide questions in both U.S. and International areas for each level of MSHSL competition. Questions shall require persuasive rather than informative speeches. The goal of this activity is the encouragement of extensive reading, understanding of many subjects, and the development of reasoned, supportable positions on issues.
- 6. Great Speeches (Informative)** – Great Speeches is an event in which the contestant speaks about either a single speech or an anthology of speeches (not to exceed three) related by common author, theme, or other element. Each speech (public address) must have been delivered by the speaker before the speaker's intended original audience. For example, "Sermon on the Mount" is Biblical Prose; "Antony's Funeral Oration" is Shakespearean Drama.

The contestant's analysis should convey the delight, edification, and challenge of contemporary or historical public address. Information about each author/speaker, subject, original audience, and occasion must be included in an introduction. During the presentation, the contestant must also justify the selection for presentation to the contestant's immediate audience. The justification need not be an explicit statement, but may include such subjects as the historical or potential importance, language style, rhetorical technique and audience appeal. Comments about textual accuracy and ghostwriting style may be included where appropriate. All materials quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from other sources must be documented both orally and in the written text. A minimum of 25% of the presentation must be the contestant's own material. How portions of the original speech text are incorporated into the participant's presentation shall be at the discretion of the participant. Statements, analysis and exposition may be either interspersed throughout the presentation or contained in only one or a few portions of the presentation.

7. Humorous Interpretation (Performative) - Humorous Interpretation uses any published selection, either prose, poetry, or dramatic literature, with literary merit and appropriate to the reader. Published means the source has an ISBN or verification of original print publication. The selection shall not have been taken from record or tape. The *cutting* should amuse, give enjoyment, or create laughter. The use of gestures is optional.

8. Informative Speaking (Informative) - Informative Speaking is an event in which the student presents an original informative composition of which no more than 10% shall be direct quotation. Quality of thought, research, and composition, as well as delivery, should be considered by the Judges. All materials quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from other sources must be documented both orally and in the written text. The purpose of Informative Speaking is to present information which the audience may or may not possess and which the student believes important for the audience. The use of visual aids is optional. Only two-dimensional aids such as charts, graphs and pictures may be used. These aids must be hand-held, free-standing or supported on tripods, easels or similar equipment. This equipment must be provided by the student. Electronic media and equipment may be used in the PREPARATION of visual aids for the speech. During the PRESENTATION of the speech, no electronic media, or three dimensional OBJECTS may be used as visual aids.

9. Original Oratory (Informative) - Original Oratory is an event in which the contestant presents his/her own PERSUASIVE composition of which no more than 10% shall be direct quotation. Because these orations have been written by the contestants, judges should consider the high quality of thought and composition, as well as, communicative delivery. All materials quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from other sources must be documented orally and in the written text. The orator should not be expected to solve any of the great problems of the day, but must offer some insight and guidance. The contestant should be expected to speak intelligently and with a degree of originality about the message chosen. The rule does not allow for any type of audience participation. The composition should be especially adapted to oral presentation, and the orator should employ a variety of persuasive skills and strive for eloquence in style. No particular manner of delivery is required, nor is any particular manner of content organization.

10. Program Oral Interpretation (Performative) - Program Oral Interpretation is an event where a student performs a selection of prose, poetry, and dramatic literature (the student must pick at least two of the three to include in the piece), with the intention of delivering a

performance that persuades the audience pertaining to a central unifying theme. The delivery should involve the development of vocal and bodily expression.

11. **Serious Drama Interpretation (Performative)** - Serious Drama Interpretation uses any published selection of dramatic literature (plays, radio plays, television plays, or screenplays) with literary merit and appropriate to the reader. Published means the source has an ISBN, or verification of original print publication. The term "dramatic" here refers to the genre of the literature and does not include prose or poetry that is serious. The mood of the *cutting* must be essentially serious. The use of gestures is optional.

12. **Serious Poetry Interpretation (Performative)** - Serious Poetry Interpretation uses any published poetry selection, including novels in verse with literary merit and appropriate to the reader. Published means the source has an ISBN, or verification of original print publication. Serious dramatic literature written in verse, such as a tragedy by Shakespeare is considered "Serious Drama" rather than "Serious Poetry". The mood of the *cutting* must be essentially serious. Selections for poetry may include one poem or several poems. The use of gestures is optional.

13. **Serious Prose Interpretation (Performative)** - Serious Prose Interpretation uses any published selection of prose, fiction or non-fiction. "Novels in verse" are typically considered Serious Poetry. Published means the source has an ISBN, or verification of original print publication. Any selection, with literary merit and appropriate to the reader, that is not poetry, a play or part of a play, or a delivered speech is considered prose. The mood of the *cutting* must be essentially serious. The use of gestures is optional.

14. **Storytelling (Performative)** - Participation in storytelling should train students to recreate a familiar story extemporaneously. A selected list of fifteen (15) stories will be announced in the fall of each year. The order of presentation shall be determined by lot before the contest begins. Thirty (30) minutes before the contest begins, the first storyteller shall draw three titles. The storyteller shall immediately choose one of them and return the other two, which will then be placed with the other stories remaining to be drawn. The title chosen shall be recorded by the Event Manager. Each of the succeeding performers shall, at intervals of six (6) minutes, in turn, follow the same procedure. After the contestant has drawn a title, the student shall not confer, or communicate in any way with a coach or others until the presentation has been delivered. Each storyteller shall present the storytelling draw slip to the Room Manager or Judge(s) in the round. No books, notes or properties shall be taken to the platform. Introductory comments (which may be preceded by a teaser) must precede the telling of the story. The contestant must not add subplots that change the original plot or violate the story's style, intent, and mood. Cutting of a lengthy story is allowable to meet time constraints. The use of a concluding statement that ties back to the introduction is allowed but not required.

B. Team Practices

Speech requires a sizeable amount of skill-building, meaning that even as a fourth or fifth year *speaker* you will need to develop the delivery strategies and techniques that will best serve your selected piece. This usually involves several coached practices and even practicing your speech for your family and friends. However, the more practices you attend, the more quickly you will become comfortable with your event, your piece, and your delivery strategy, and the sooner you will be ready to go “off script” at the tournament level. With this in mind, it is my goal as your coach to maintain a practice schedule starting in December and running through April. Practices are mandatory, and students must attend at least two practices per week. Students that do not attend the practice minimum will forfeit their opportunity to compete at the next upcoming tournament. Lastly, students are expected to follow instruction and abide by appropriate SPCA behavioral standards while at practice.

*****IMPORTANT NOTE for 2020-21:**

While we are hopeful that our winter in-person practice schedule will not be thwarted by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are also aware of this possibility. For this reason, there is a good likelihood that our practices (and possibly tournaments) will have to happen online. The decision regarding this possibility will be made as soon as the necessary information is available (if hybrid learning will continue into second semester), and I will contact all participants with new information as it becomes available.

Typically, whether in-person or online, practices will happen on the following days:

PRACTICE SESSIONS (One hour per practice; September through December):

Monday After School

Tuesday After School

Wednesday After School

Thursday After School

Again, specific times will be communicated as more information regarding the effects of the pandemic become available.

C. Tournaments

*****Special Note for 2020: see the Online Addendum at the bottom of this section**

1. Wear appropriate clothing. Men should wear dress slacks, long-sleeved dress shirt, and a tie, with dress shoes and socks as a finishing touch (suit coats are optional, but recommended). Women should wear an appropriate skirt or dress slacks, a modest blouse, and dress shoes with socks or leggings. Denim clothing is not acceptable, and do not wear your school uniform.

2. Be on Time. Transportation is provided by the SCPA Speech and Debate Program for those tournaments that are outside of a twenty-mile radius of SCPA. No matter where you are expected to meeting (at SCPA or at the tournament site) you should always plan on being there five to ten minutes before the designated meeting time.

Also, when you are at the tournament, you should always arrive at your round promptly when the rounds are posted. Always be attentive to see if other participants are gathering around the postings board, this is usually a good sign that it is time to find out your room number and skedaddle.

3. Respect Room Etiquette. Never enter a room before the judge has arrived. If the light is on in the room, it is okay to peek inside and see if the judge is already there, but it is otherwise common courtesy to wait outside of the room until the judge has arrived. The primary reasoning behind this is that tournaments don't want students in the room messing around with the teacher's stuff. So, of course, don't mess with the stuff in the room. Leave the room in better shape than it was when you arrived. Also, never enter a room while someone is speaking. If the door is closed, listen carefully and err on the side of caution. Wait until you hear applause or until the door opens.

4. Don't goof off. Remember, you are representing SCPA. When other participants, judges, and coaches see you, they see SCPA, so do your best to act professional, as if any of these people could be your future employer.

5. Watching a round. If you want to watch a teammate's performance, ask permission from the other participants and the judge and respect their wishes. Also, if you are participating in a round, it is common courtesy to watch the entire round unless you have a conflict. Be polite to your competitors, and applaud after each speech. Don't be rude or distracting, as this could have a negative impact on the judge. If you have two events scheduled at the same time, do the earliest scheduled event first. Try to communicate with both judges that you have another event, and they will be accommodating.

Online Addendum: If this season's tournaments are offered online, students are expected to attend a pre-tournament team meeting the morning of the tournament, so that your coach can be sure that all participating students are in attendance. If you do not attend the pre-tournament meeting, you will be dropped from the tournament. Students will be expected to have access to a computer with video/audio capabilities, as this is how debates will be held online. If you have any questions or concerns about this unique experience, please let me know.

IV. NSDA Certification and Lettering in Speech

The National Speech and Debate Association

One of the new aspects of our Speech and Debate program will be an option for students to become members of the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA). This organization's primary goal is to help speech and debate participants earn the recognition they deserve. Member students accrue points for each event they attend and/or round in which they compete. These points allow students to attain varying levels of national recognition, while also earning those students certificates and seals of recognition for their achievements in Speech and Debate. Additionally, students who are members of the NSDA are eligible to attend district qualifier tournaments with the chance to qualify for the National Speech and Debate Tournament. Becoming a member of the NSDA is a rewarding experience and highly recommended for all students.

Lettering

There are five primary ways for a student to letter in the Speech and Debate Program:

1. If the student is a member of the NSDA, they will receive a letter when they have acquired 250 points from speech tournament participation.
2. A student can earn a letter by making the final rounds of three or more varsity tournaments.
4. A speech team member can earn a letter by qualifying for the MSHSL State Tournament.
5. Coach's discretion will be used in certain cases to award additional letters.

V. Judges

We are always looking for parent judges to help out at tournaments. One of the biggest costs for a tournament (aside from transportation) is judging fees, so if your parents are interested in judging for one or more tournaments, they can help recoup some of your participation fees in the process. Parent judges can earn \$75 for each tournament that they judge, so please let your parents know that this is available, and I will be sure to provide them with the necessary materials and training.

SCPA Speech: Participation Form

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Parent Name: _____ Parent Email: _____

Parent telephone/emergency contact number: _____

Medical Alerts: _____

I am interested in _____ speech category(ies).

I have _____ years of experience in my desired area of interest.

Days available for practice after school (circle all that apply):

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

I understand and accept the guidelines, rules, and requirements asked of me as a member of the SCPA Speech and Debate Program. I recognize that my participation in Speech and Debate tournaments is contingent on my participation in team practices, completing the necessary preparatory work, and following the behavioral expectations of our school. I understand that I am a representative of SCPA, and I will do my part to advance a positive image of myself, my team, and my school.

Student Signature: _____

Parent's Signature of Acknowledgement: _____