

Judging Criteria taken from the Ballot Details for the National Storytelling Youth Olympics

Farmington Public Library – Four Corners Storytelling Festival

Total # _____ Name _____

Story _____ Judge _____

Storytelling Talent: The information below gives a description of the seven divisions that appear on the judges' ballots for the National Storytelling Youth Olympics. Maximum = 60 points.

_____ A. (Up to 20 points) **The Teller's Performance Spirit**

Some delivery traits simply do not fit the categories below. The "spirit" of the teller, however, carries enormous weight in the audience appreciation and admiration of the performance. This area includes factors such as enthusiasm, vibrancy, poise, personality, charm, smoothness, energy--and all other similar factors involving the spirit of the delivery. Please understand that this factor is NOT to be confused with theatrical dramatics. Although some storytellers choose to incorporate dramatic factors into their delivery, each teller should be true to his/her own natural performance and style.

_____ B. (Up to 4 points) **The Story Choice**

Story selection is an important factor. (Was the story one the audience members might not have previously heard? If they have heard it, might the delivery be one that still keeps the attention of the listeners via its delivery or adaptation?)

_____ C. (Up to 4 points) **The Story Launch**

The story beginning is very crucial to an effective delivery. (Did the teller approach the stage center with confidence and poise? Did he/she begin at a slow or moderate pace to allow the audience to begin "painting the picture" of the story's setting? Were the initial words spoken clearly enough for a good "launch" into the story?)

_____ D. (Up to 10 points) **The Voice**

Vocal factors are of major importance in story performance. Some of the vocal factors to be considered are the following:

- 1) **Vocal rate** Was the timing of each story portion appropriate? Was the rate too fast? Too hurried? Did the teller use timing techniques to the best advantage of the story's content? Had the story been practiced sufficiently for the words to flow easily and naturally?
- 2) **Vocal volume** Could all members of the audience hear at all times? Did the teller use the microphone to *assist with* the story rather than interfere with the story

- 3) **Special vocal sound effects** Stories do not *require* special sound effects, but they can occasionally spice up a story. If they *were* used, did they enhance the story?
- 4) **Vocal flow** Did the story sound memorized? It is appropriate, of course, for stories to be memorized, as long as the teller has rehearsed enough not to *sound* memorized.

_____ E. (Up to 6 points) **The Body**

The teller's physical choices are important delivery techniques. Consider the following:

- 1) **Eye Contact** Did the teller demonstrate a natural eye-flow with the audience members, looking at all sections at least intermittently?
- 2) **Facial communication** Did the teller's face "help tell" the story? Were the facial expressions befitting the story elements? Did they detract? Was the teller unnecessarily deadpan? Did the face show excitement, sorrow, joy—or other emotions—matching the content of the story?
- 3) **Gestures** Please keep in mind that for the NSYO, many of the contestants will be restricted to a stationary microphone on a stand. Thus, gesturing, etc., might need to be modified because of this difference in the usual physical set-up.
- 4) **Other bodily movements** Did the body "help tell" the story? Did the feet or arms sway back and forth unnecessarily? Did a hypnotic pacing occur? Was the body "in sync" with the story? Was the posture appropriate for the story?

_____ F. (Up to 12 points) **The Words**

The linguistic connection for all stories centers on the selected words. Did the teller carefully choose the appropriate wording for all portions of the story? Were there verbal "tics" [*you know, like, kinda, right, uh...*] that interfered with the listeners' concentration? Was the grammar appropriate for the chosen story? [In some stories, unusual grammar might be needed—for a special character, etc.] Did the teller's dialect blend well with the story content?

_____ G. (Up to 4 points) **Story Closure**

The teller needs to prepare an appropriate wind-down for the story. The story's end establishes the final flavor with the listeners. For many stories, the pace slows down somewhat near the end, and the final sentence(s) reflect a vocal intonation that says "my story has ended" (rather than a vocal pitch ending in a upward questioning tone). The teller may choose to say "The End," "Thank you," etc.—or no words at all after the story is over. He/she may also choose to bow, etc., according to what fits the story's end and the teller's personal style of delivery. Even the walk back to the seat should reflect much poise and can influence the story's finality.