

**THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI
ORATORICAL CONTEST**

COUNTY CHAIRMAN CHECKLIST

- _____ 1. Study the Missouri Rules Brochure guidelines, so you know the basics.
- _____ 2. Arrange for a date, specific time, and place for the County Contest within the time range stated in the Missouri Rules Brochure. The date and time should not be during school hours.
- _____ 3. Contact each high school and post in your area. Tell them (and the District Chair) the date, time, and place of your contest. Send certification blanks to the high schools. Do this early in the fall.
- _____ 4. Be sure the contest site is suitable for the contest and has seating room for an audience and nearby rooms for contestants, separate from the audience. Be sure the acoustics are good since P.A. systems are not allowed. High school auditoriums or similar facilities are good. Gymnasiums are bad.
- _____ 5. Notify in writing (or email) the high school, certified high school winners, and others of the time, and location of your contest as early as possible.
- _____ 6. Arrange suitable publicity to insure an audience of Legionnaires, other adults, and high school students.
- _____ 7. At the contest site, have a separate room for briefing the judges. Keep contestants in a different room.
- _____ 8. Select and get confirmation from at least three well-qualified judges (five judges may be used), such as speech teachers, attorneys, college faculty, ministers, public speakers, and other knowledgeable persons. Have an alternate on hand.
- _____ 9. Be sure judges are briefed ahead of the contest and have appropriate materials for judging (furnished to you) with enough time for study. Tell judges the purpose of the contest and how to utilize the score cards. Judges may downgrade by up to ten (10) points if the oration is not on the Constitution.
- _____ 10. Select one escort (preferably a Legionnaire) for each contestant, and one overall escort to help you the chairman (leg work in notifying the individual escorts to bring the contestants in to speak).

_____ Select number of escorts needed

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

- _____ Brief the escorts ahead of time on their duties and be sure the escort chairman has a copy of the instructions sent to you.
- _____ 11. Select two timekeepers. Brief them on their duties. Furnish two stop watches. Instruct them how to use time cards which you furnish (5,6 minutes). Show them how to record the time. Seat them near the front in clear view of the contestants.
- _____ 12. Select three tabulators ahead of the contest. Brief them and describe the process of scoring as defined in the rules brochure and materials furnished to them.
- _____ 13. Brief contestants before the contest on how the contest works. Hold a drawing for speaking position as contestant #1, #2, #3, etc.. Do not mention their names until after judges turn in their score cards. Do not let contestants listen to each other's speeches. Tell contestants (and timekeepers) that they are timed from the use of their first word of the oration until completion of their last word. Remind them that a negative point is assessed below five minutes, or above six minutes, for each minute or fraction thereof. Timing begins after the title is announced by the chairman and the first word is said.

_____ 14. Open the contest by having any of the following:

- _____ Announce the beginning and proceed without other formalities.
- _____ Arrange to have a Post advance colors and give the Pledge of Allegiance.
- _____ Have colors in place and give the pledge.
- _____ Have an opening invocation.

_____ 15. Contest procedures

- _____ Have all contestants seated at the front ONLY at the beginning and end.
- _____ Tell the audience that no applause is to be given during the contest.
- _____ Allow no flash pictures during speeches.
- _____ State to the audience that no smoking is allowed during the contest.
- _____ Tell the audience the function of the timekeepers
- _____ Ask the escorts to take the speakers from the room.
- _____ Ask the head escort to call for Contestant #1. Introduce him/her as Contestant #1.
- _____ Follow this model throughout.
- _____ As soon as the contestant is escorted from the hall, ask the timekeepers to report the time. Announce the time to the judges and tell the number of negative points (if any) which should be assessed.

_____ 16. After all contestants speak, ask them to come in and allow audience to applaud. Then ask escorts to take them from the auditorium until judges have completed and turned in their ballots.

_____ 17. After all speaking by contestants is completed and they have been escorted from the hall:

- _____ Have tabulators located in front of the hall or at side. Judges are completing their score cards at this time.
- _____ If judges have questions, they should hold up their hands and a tabulator should go help them.
- _____ While judges are scoring, have a person or Legionnaire introduce distinguished visitors. The District Commander may do this and make some remarks. At least 5 to 15 minutes of time will need to be killed.
- _____ Have a table at the front of the hall in full view of the audience where the tabulators will sit and summarize the score cards of the judges, (or they may proceed to a private room). Be sure all three tabulators agree. If an error in arithmetic is found on the score card, have a tabulator take it back to the judge to make his/her own corrections before final tallies are made.
- _____ If a tie or ties occur for the winner or alternate, follow the rules procedures because a winner and alternate must be named. There can be no tie at the end of the contest.
- _____ When the tabulators have finished their tallies and the winner and alternate are determined, be sure you get the correct name to match the number of the winner and alternate. You will announce only the winner and alternate.
- _____ Also check the timer's card for all negative points.

_____ 18. When the tabulators determine a winner and alternate, ask all contestants to return to the front. Applaud them again.

- _____ Have each contestant in order of appearance introduce his/her parents, friends, and speech teachers.
- _____ Have District Commander or yourself present the medals or any other certificates to the alternate and winner.
- _____ Introduce to the audience at this time your

_____ Judges
_____ Escorts

_____Timekeepers

_____Tabulators

_____Thank any others who helped.

_____Announce the date, time, and place of the District Contest. **Tell the winner in writing (or email) the date, time, and place of the District contest.**

_____19. Prepare your certification blanks and send a copy to District Oratorical Chair **and** to the Oratorical Commission Chair.

_____20. As a bonus, take photos after the contest and send them to the local paper, with a short news article about the contest for the local news media.

_____21. Write (or email) "thank you" letters to all who were involved. **Tell the winner in writing (or email) the date, time, and place of the District contest.**

_____22. Be sure that no merchandise which can be converted to cash, or no actual cash awards or bonds, are given to contestants. Only medals, brooches, or certificates furnished should be given; however, trophies purchased by the "Post" or "District" can be given. Some Posts and Districts also provide a "scholarship" award to be redeemed after graduation – this is permissible (the Department has the forms for this). Some colleges and universities may also authorize scholarships for use after graduation from high school.

_____23. Be sure that the winner knows the local Post that is sponsoring him/her. Remind the local Post to follow up on its sponsorship to the District Contest.