

Instructions for the Timer

- You are the Speech Timer in Room _____. After your training session, please go immediately to this room and introduce yourself to the judges in that room. Arrange your chair so that you are behind the judges but still have a very clear view to the speaker.
- Be prepared to explain to each speaker the use of time cards for the Prepared Speech by reading the following to them, when asked by the head judge to do so:

Remember: A prepared speech is “in time” if you speak between 3 ½ and 4 minutes. After you have spoken for three minutes, I will hold up the 1-minute card, meaning you have 1-minute left to speak. After you have spoken for 3 ½ minutes, I will hold up the 30-second card, meaning you have spoken 3 ½ minutes and still have 30 seconds left if you need them. After you have spoken 4 minutes, I will hold up the “0” card, meaning time is up. I will not say stop, but you have no “grace period” and will be penalized if you continue.
- Below are the timing rules for the Impromptu Speech. The head judge will explain to the student that you, as the timer, are using the same procedures with your timing cards except you will only be timing 1 ½ to 2 minutes for the impromptu. You will not read the following timing rules unless the decathlete specifically asks:

Remember: An impromptu speech is “in time” if you speak between 1 ½ and 2 minutes. After you have spoken for one minute, I will hold up the 1-minute card, meaning you have 1-minute left to speak. After you have spoken for 1 ½ minutes, I will hold up the 30-second card, meaning you have talked for 1 ½ minutes and still have 30 seconds left if you need them. After you have spoken 2 minutes, I will hold up the “0” card, meaning time is up. I will not say stop, but you have no “grace period” and will be penalized if you continue.
- Make absolutely sure that the speaker can see you and notices the cards you are holding up. If he continues to speak after you hold up the “0”, do not say stop, but note this action. The student will receive a timing penalty if he/she does not meet the minimum standard time, or if he/she exceeds the maximum time, for each speech.
- It is easy to get so involved with a performance that you forget to give time signals. This can be both devastating and disastrous to the student. Most of them have these speeches timed to the second so PAY ATTENTION and signal EXACTLY! If you are the one who makes a mistake, do not penalize the student for your error.
- You are not allowed to give competitors their times for the speeches or even to say if the speech is “in time” or not. So, if the student asks, simply say that you are only allowed to tell the judges the exact times AFTER the student leaves the room.
- If a student hesitates and/or pauses for a long duration during his/her speech, the timekeeper should make a mental note of when the pause begins, but NOT stop the clock until the speech time has expired. Students may resume their speeches as long as time has not expired.
- After the speaker has finished both of his/her speeches and takes a seat, you will approach the judges and show the judges one of the following choices: “No Penalty,” “Penalty on Prepared,” “Penalty on Impromptu,” or “Penalty on Both Speeches.” You are the final arbiter in the matter of timing so be very careful not to make a mistake. All three judges will mark the same penalty “bubble” on their Speech Evaluation Forms. The marking of the timing portion of the Speech Evaluation Form should be done as quietly as possible in an effort not to embarrass or upset students who had an infraction.

The following instructions are for stopwatches that are set to a certain time and count down to zero. If you have stopwatches that count forward, you will not need to follow these instructions; however, we strongly recommend that all four regions use the type of stopwatch that counts down to zero for consistency.

TIP FOR TIMING CARDS: Stack your cards face down with “0” on the bottom, “30 sec.” in the middle, and “1 min.” on top. This will ensure you show the correct timing card at the correct time. As soon as you’re done timing the Prepared Speech or Impromptu Speech, immediately restack the cards, so you’re ready for the next timing round.

Step by Step Procedures:

1. Using the Stop/Reset button, set the stopwatch to 4:00 by pressing those numbers on the keypad.
2. Press the Start button when the student begins his prepared speech. The stopwatch will count down from 4:00 minutes.
3. When the stopwatch reads 1:00, hold up the appropriate timecard. Then do the same when the stopwatch reads 00:30. The stopwatch will make a noise at the 00:00 point. Hit the Stop/Restart button to disarm the noise and immediately hold up the “0” card. DO NOT SAY “STOP.” However, if the student continues to talk, he will receive a penalty. No extra courtesy time is allowed.
4. If the student goes over time, simply note this on your timer’s log for prepared speech. Since your stopwatch counts down from 4:00, you will not know the exact time if he goes over. However, for every other scenario, please record on your timer’s log, the EXACT time of the speech.

Do the math on the timer’s log!!! Do not trust “doing it in your head.” If the stopwatch reads 00:33 at the end of the speech, here is how you figure the time:

$$\begin{array}{r} 3:60 \\ - 0:33 \\ \hline 3:27 \end{array}$$

This student would be *under* time by 3 seconds because the prepared speech must be between 3:30 and 4:00 minutes.

5. The head judge will explain the impromptu procedure. When he hands the student the topics, give the student ONE minute on the stopwatch to prepare.
6. After you have indicated to the judges and the student that the one minute is up, immediately reset your stopwatch for 2:00 minutes and follow the same procedure in timing as you did for the prepared speech. The student’s impromptu speech must be between 01:30 and 02:00 minutes.
7. Figure the time for the impromptu and record on the timer’s log.
8. After the student completes his/her speeches and has taken a seat, show the judges whether the student has any timing penalties.

After the competition, put your stopwatch, timing cards, and timer’s log back in the manila envelope provided and return to the Speech Coordinator in room _____. Please do not leave until he/she releases you.

