



MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

ONE ACT PLAY LETTER OF INSTRUCTION FOR JUDGES

The Sub-Section and Section Contests are designed to stimulate interest in theatre, but it is necessary that they also have as one of their purposes the elimination of contestants for the State Festival. However, it would be well to remember that neither the Sub-Section, Section nor State Festival is a strictly competitive event. Rankings and ratings will be made solely on the basis of performance and not on choice of play or theatrical style. Judges should have a well-established set of standards before judging the first production.

In judging the contests, judges should do the following:

1. Each judge is employed to aid in a program of theatre education. The results of her/his judging can either be a help or a hindrance. Care should be exercised in the wording of statements in order that they may be detailed, constructive and helpful. There is no place in Minnesota contests for unkind, sarcastic, caustic or other objectionable remarks. Be considerate in the type of comments given orally and written. Adverse criticism should be given when needed but presented in a constructive and helpful manner. Comments should be detailed enough to qualify the ranking and rating given in order that Directors may have sufficient suggestions to improve their work.
2. Judges must keep in mind that they are judging high school students and not college, university, or professional groups.
3. Judges should give close attention to the performance. Psychologically, pupils will accept an adverse decision if they feel the judge has given them fair and unbiased attention.
4. Judges will use the [Judges Critique Sheet](#) when evaluating the plays. A score must be given in each of the four areas and written comments must be included in the space provided. AVOID GENERALIZED STATEMENTS – BE SPECIFIC. Judges will still, independently, rank and rate each play. Judges must be sure that the scores and comments on the critique sheet directly correlate to the rank and rating of each play. The use of the “Directors Critique” is optional. This form allows the Judge to communicate with the Director on production aspects, which may not be appropriate to other forms currently in use.
5. Judges are to rank and rate all plays without consulting with the other Judges.
6. The Contest Manager is responsible for enforcement of contest rules; however, Judges and Directors must report rule violations or rule concerns to the Contest Manager. This must be done before the start of the next play or prior to the announcement of results for that contest.
7. Judges are reminded that the plays have already been certified to meet community standards. Plays also comply with the dangerous weapon rule.

2021 ADDENDUM FOR VIRTUAL CONTESTS

- The same basic MSHSL OAP rules apply as in the past. [Please review the rules](#). If you feel there has been an infraction, please report the infraction to the Contest Manager.
- The 10 minute set-up rule is not taken into consideration for 2021 contests.
- You may watch sections of a recording twice if necessary for technical reasons or in the case of a possible infraction. If you feel it is necessary to watch an entire recording twice, for equity watch all recordings twice.
- It is not encouraged or recommended to confer with the other judges. It is, however, allowed if a judge has questions about the technology or an infraction. For example, if a judge has technology issues, it is permissible to confer with another judge. “At 10:51 I have a volume issue for several minutes, even when on full volume. Is it the recording or a problem on my end?” It would also be allowed to confer to clarify a possible infraction. Only if a Contest Manager contacts the judges to break a tie should the judges confer concerning rank.
- It is important to remember that this is not a “film festival.” Some schools will have state of the art cameras and others will be using iphones. In the case of an on-stage in person recording, the single camera may pan or zoom in on one character. In the case of an entire virtual recording through zoom or another platform, each actor would have an individual device. In either case, editing after the fact is not permitted. Microphones are allowed.
- Along the same lines, productions should not be judged on available performance areas. Some schools may not have a stage and may be recording in a classroom or gym or library. In some sections, a school may volunteer to let those schools record on their stage.
- Similarly, for shows that are created in a videoconference format, schools will be using different platforms (Google Meet, Zoom, etc.) so they may look different. We encourage them to use the basic features of those platforms, like renaming characters, switching which character(s) are visible and creating/changing their backgrounds. Some may be using an additional service called Open Broadcast Studio (OBS). They are allowed to use it if they are using it WHILE they are recording, but not after. It will be hard to notice the difference, and we are trusting directors to be ethical. We don’t want to force judges to become experts on this technology, so appreciate it, but don’t worry about it. OBS can add some additional bells and whistles (framing around characters, different views, captioning over the video). While we appreciate their creativity, please don’t select a play as your favorite strictly because of their “bells and whistles.” (In addition, just like in a stage production, sometimes added features take away from the production.) Again, this is not a film festival.
- It may be impossible to avoid all distractions and interruptions. It is, however, expected that judges will make every effort to view an entire recording at one time.
- It is possible and more than likely probable that individual districts will have their own Covid-19 protocol above and beyond the MSHSL protocol. Therefore it is possible you will see some in masks and some socially distanced and others not. It is not the judges’ responsibility to consider and check on district protocols.
- It is also more than likely that protocols will change during the rehearsal period leading to the Sub-section Contests. Check out the OAP page on the MSHSL website to make note of any changes.
- Yes, this is going to be an unusual year. We all want the students to have the best experience possible.