



2026

Extemporaneous Public

Speaking

2026 Updates

Please find details of the handbook updates to the Extemporaneous Public Speaking LDE for the 2026 convention cycle. We will continue to evaluate recent delivery method changes and adjust the programming as needed to ensure the safety of all those involved. We will announce the delivery methods and/or changes in a timely manner.

HANDBOOK UPDATE:

JULY 2025

- Added” Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) language models is allowed for research purposes within the 10 minutes of allowed internet access. Competitors may not use any AI or generative language models to construct speech components (full speeches, introductions, conclusions, main points, outlines, etc.).
- Use of language modeling to generate speech components or verbiage will result in disqualification.

Rationale: Speeches are to be the result of the student's effort.

JANUARY 2026

Policies and Guidelines

I. Eligibility of Students

- Added — Eligibility is based on the National FFA membership year (August 1–July 31)—not a school’s academic calendar or “rising grade” designation.

Rationale: Clarifying that a student must be a 7th-grade member on the date of the qualifying event to compete or qualify at a state qualifying event. A student who is still a 6th-grade member on that date is not eligible to qualify and may compete for 7th-grade consideration only in qualifying events held on or after August 1.

Refer to the National FFA Career and Leadership Events webpage on [FFA.org](https://ffa.org) for the most up-to-date career and leadership development handbook edition.

CONTACT

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FFA VISION

Growing the next generation of leaders who will change the world.

FFA MISSION

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

FFA CODE OF CONDUCT

FFA members participating in National FFA programs understand and agree to abide by the National FFA Code of Conduct at:

<https://ffa.app.box.com/s/x6l2lkovv4x9tgiegy73mei30zvlip5i>

Guiding Principles

National awards and competitive events should:

1. Inspire members to explore, learn, and be prepared for future careers related to the AFNR career pathways and FFA AFNR Value Chain.
2. Recognize achievements in skill development and knowledge, including:
 - a. leveraging relevant technologies
 - b. utilizing creative problem-solving
 - c. meeting developmentally appropriate learning objectives (Bloom's Taxonomy)
 - d. utilizing employability skills (teamwork, communication, collaboration)
3. Be accessible and engaging for all students and FFA members.
4. Provide awards and recognition opportunities for students at all levels.
5. Work with other groups to utilize or partner with existing experiences.
6. Provide feedback that promotes personal and professional growth.

Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR)

Career Cluster Content Standards

The National Council for Agricultural Education has provided permission to the National FFA Organization to use the National AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards in the development of their educational resource materials. The National Council for Agricultural Education is the owner and developer of the National AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards © 2016 and reserves all rights to the original material used here with permission. In addition, the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education/National Career Technical Education Foundation (NASDCTE/NCTEF) has provided permission to use the Common Career and Technical Core (CCTC) Standards in support of this project. NASDCTE/NCTEF are the owners and developers of the Common Career and Technical Core (CCTC) Standards © 2012 and reserve all rights to the original material used here with permission.

The National FFA Organization has adopted the AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards and integrated them into the national award and recognition programs for the benefit of members, school administration, and agriculture as a whole. For a complete set of the standards, please visit the [2016 AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards](https://ffa.org). You may access the standards alignments for this event at <https://ffa.box.com/s/hrxlqv7g6zo54xfi5x5kyltlyusqjhy0>.

Professional Integrity

FFA members participating in national FFA programs and events understand and agree that all work must result from their own effort and ability, created, and completed alone (except for partner or chapter applications). When outside sources (direct quotes or phrases, specific dates, figures, or other materials) are used for a project, document, or application, the required reference citation must be completed according to the rules specified by the applicable handbook.

While participating in National FFA programs, FFA members are prohibited from:

- Plagiarizing
- Violating copyright
- Cheating
- Falsifying information
- Using another person's results or thoughts as their own, even with this person's permission. This includes work done by a family member or a mentor.
- Using information or data obtained from the internet without proper citation.

Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage will not be tolerated. Non-compliance represents plagiarism and will automatically disqualify a member.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for National Programs and Events

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems capable of performing complex tasks that historically only a human could do, such as reasoning, making decisions, or solving problems. As AI continues to evolve, it can be a tremendous tool to help companies, organizations and individuals enhance their productivity and work. Therefore, the National FFA Organization allows the use of AI tools. FFA members may use AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and CoPilot, to assist them in their learning.

Appropriate uses of AI may include:

- generating ideas for any FFA-related assignments, projects, contests and award applications
- checking facts of a phenomenon
- checking for and correcting grammatical errors in a paper written by a member

For more information, please see the [Standard Operating Procedures on the Use of Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) for National Programs and Events](#) document.

Member Safety

At National FFA, we're committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all members— students, educators, and families alike. We believe in fostering premier leadership, personal growth, and career success, and that starts with a community built on respect and professionalism. These guidelines outline the expectations for behavior and conduct across all FFA activities and spaces. By upholding these principles, members help ensure FFA remains a place where everyone can thrive.

Please take a moment to review these policies, [here](#) (Member Safety at FFA.org), which includes an agreement to abide by the [National FFA Code of Conduct](#). Adherence is essential—violations may result in disciplinary action, including restricted access to events.

2026 CAREER AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EVENTS GUIDELINES

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

I. Eligibility of Students

- a. Eligibility is based on the National FFA membership year (August 1–July 31)—not a school's academic calendar or "rising grade" designation.
- b. Each student must be a student FFA member on the current roster in good standing with the local chapter, state FFA association, and the National FFA Organization during the school year in which the student qualified to participate at the national level.
- c. If a student's name is not on the chapter's official roster, please work with the National FFA membership team to update the membership before the national event.
- d. The student, at the national event, must be:
 - i. A secondary education (grades 7-12) FFA member during the school year in which the participant qualified to participate at the national level as determined by the roster at the time of qualifying.
 - ii. A graduating senior is eligible to compete in state and national career and leadership development events up to and including their first national convention following graduation.)
 - iii. Participants in the Creed Speaking and Conduct of Chapter Meetings LDEs must qualify as a 7th, 8th, or 9th grade member.
- e. If a student moves to a different chapter or a different state once the student has qualified as a state representative in an event, that student may be allowed to compete in the national event with the school they qualified with during the qualifying year.
- f. A student may only participate in the same official CDE/LDE once. No student may participate in more than one National FFA event each year.
- g. Each student participating in a national event must complete an online Waiver and release of Liability through the convention registration system.

II. Selection/Certification of State Teams

- a. Each state will submit a team declaration form by July 1, before the national FFA convention. Participation in each declared event will incur an entry processing fee. [State Staff Declaration Instructions](#),
- b. Each team will be composed of the number of members determined by the specific event rules and formats. The members of a state team must be from the same chapter.
- c. All students must be certified online by the designated deadline of Sept. 1 or within 10 days of the qualifying date if after the deadline. Advisors or state staff must certify members in each event by the certification deadline [How to certify a team or member Instructions](#)
- d. Once the original certification has been completed, no member may be added without first deleting a member. (See III. Drop/Add Process).
- e. State staff shall approve students are eligible (See I. Eligibility of Students). [State Staff Certification Approval Instructions](#) If an ineligible student participates in any career or leadership development event, the member will be disqualified, which may also impact the team's ranking.
- f. States may approve teams comprised of fewer members than the required members.
- g. Substitutions of any student or team are subject to the determination and approval of the state association.
- h. If reputable international competitions invite teams to competition the national organization will certify National FFA Career and Leadership Development Event winners for international competition when states request. This is with the understanding that the state team will provide their travel expenses.

III. Drop/Add Process

- a. If a student needs to be substituted or dropped, the online drop/add process must be used to substitute or drop the team member. A team member must be dropped before another team member may be substituted. [How to Drop/Add a team member Instructions](#)
- b. The Drop/Add must be submitted one hour before the first event component or official activity of an event as listed in the schedule of events. Changes will not be permitted after this time.
- c. Members added to any team must meet all the eligibility and membership requirements described in this Guide's other sections.
- d. Substitutions may be allowed after the online document submission date (See individual Event Handbooks for details).

IV. Disqualification

- a. FFA members participating in national FFA programs and events understand and agree that all work must result from their effort and ability, created and completed alone (except for partner or chapter applications). Details about Professional Integrity, the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for National Programs and Events, and the National FFA Code of Conduct are included in event handbooks.
- b. Any verbal or non-verbal communication between students during an event that is not part of the event will be sufficient cause to eliminate the team member involved from the career development event.
- c. Teams or students arriving after the career development event has begun may be disqualified or penalized. This includes a zero or lower score for that team or student for the missed section of the career or leadership development event.
- d. Any assistance given to a student from any source other than the career development event officials or assistants will be sufficient to disqualify that

student from the career and leadership development event.

- e. Event superintendents may stop any student if they deem their manner hazardous to themselves or others. Such action may result in a zero or lower score for that student for that section of the career or leadership development event.
- f. Students who start an event and do not complete it without notifying event officials at the time of departure may be disqualified. This can affect the overall team rank and position; in some events, it could also disqualify the entire team.
- g. Students will not be allowed to utilize personal electronic communication devices other than those approved by the event officials during the entire event. Students who access personal electronic communication devices without prior approval from the event officials may be disqualified from the national event.
- h. Any CDE/LDE student, team, advisor, or coach who is proven to have gained access to event materials intended for or utilized by the event committee during the competition will be disqualified from the national event.

Purpose

The National FFA Extemporaneous Public Speaking Leadership Development Event is designed to develop the ability of all FFA members to express themselves on a given subject without having prepared or rehearsed its content in advance. This event allows FFA members to formulate their remarks for presentation in a very limited time. The event will be held in connection with the National FFA Convention & Expo.

Event Rules

Review the Career and Leadership Development Event Policy and Guidelines for information on eligibility, selection, certification, team member changes, disqualification and more.

[General Information for National Competition](#) can provide general guidance on preparing for national competition.

The National FFA Extemporaneous Public Speaking Leadership Development Event will be limited to one participant from each state association.

- It is highly recommended that participants wear FFA Official Dress for this event.
- Copies of the rules and score sheet will be made available to participants before the national event.
- Three to eight competent and impartial persons will be selected to judge the event. At least one judge should have an agricultural background. Each state with a speaker shall provide a judge for preliminary rounds of the national event. Any advisor with a student competing in a speaking event may not serve as a judge for that speaking event.
- Any participant possessing any electronic device not provided by the event committee in the preparation room is subject to disqualification.
- Each speech should result from the participant's effort using approved reference material, which the participant may bring to the preparation room. No other assistance may be provided.

Event Format

Event officials will randomly draw speaking order. The superintendent will announce each participant by name and in order of the drawing.

The selection of topics will be held 30 minutes before the event. The participants will draw three specific topics, selected randomly from the pool of 18, relating to the agriculture industry. After selecting the topic they desire to speak about, all three topics will be returned for the next drawing.

Eighteen topics will be prepared by the event superintendent and will include three each from the following categories:

- Agricultural literacy and advocacy.
- Current agricultural issues.
- Advancing agriculture through agriculture science.
- Current technology uses and applications in agriculture.
- Agri marketing and international agriculture.
- Food and fiber systems.

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS

A list of all possible topics will be given to and reviewed by the judges before the beginning of the event.

Participants will be admitted to the preparation room at 15-minute intervals and given exactly 30 minutes for topic selection and preparation.

The officials in charge of the event will screen reference material using the following guidelines:

- Must be limited to five items.
- Printed material such as books or magazines.
- Printed compilations of materials collected from internet research.
- To be counted as one item, a notebook or folder of collected materials may contain no more than 100 single-sided pages or 50 double-sided pages numbered consecutively.
- References should be in original format.
- There can be no notes or speeches prepared by the participant or by another person for the purpose of use in this event. Cutting and pasting into a Microsoft Word document will be considered prepared notes.
- Participants may have up to 10 minutes to conduct online research. Computers may be provided. Access to email, cloud storage or any prepared materials is prohibited. A room monitor will be the official timekeeper for each contestant's technology time. Using prepared notes or speeches, even if accessed with technology time, is prohibited and will be grounds for disqualification.

SPEECH

Each speech should result from the participant's effort using approved reference material, which the participant may bring to the preparation room. No other assistance may be provided. Participants must use the uniform note cards provided. Any notes for speaking must be made during the 30-minute preparation period. A participant will be permitted to use notes while speaking, but deductions in scoring may be made for this practice if it detracts from the effectiveness of the presentation.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) language models is allowed for research purposes within the 10 minutes of internet access. Competitors may not use any AI or generative language modelers to construct speech components (full speeches, introductions, conclusions, main points, outlines, etc.). Use of language modeling to generate speech components or verbiage will result in disqualification.

Each speech should be at least four and at most six minutes in length. An additional five minutes will be allowed for the questioner to ask related questions. The room coordinator of the event will introduce the participant by name and state. The participant may introduce their speech by title only. Participants will be penalized one point per second on each judge's score sheet for being over six minutes or under four minutes. Time commences when the speaker begins talking. Speakers may use a watch to keep a record of their time. Event officials or observers will not give time warnings.

PRESENTATION

The national event will be conducted in three rounds: preliminaries, semifinals and finals. No ranking will be given except for the final four speakers. Comment cards for all participants will be distributed at the awards function.

Timekeepers will record the time each participant spends delivering his or her speech, noting under time or over time, if any, for which deductions should be made.

At the time of the event, the judges will be seated in a designated section of the room in which the event is held. They will score each participant on the delivery of the production using the score sheet provided.

Each room in the preliminary and semi-final rounds will have one person designated as a questioner. This individual will ask all questions for the event round. All judges will score the response to questions. Questions will pertain directly to the speaker's subject. Questions containing two or more parts should be avoided. The full five minutes should be used. All judges will be permitted to ask questions in the final round.

When all participants have finished speaking, each judge will total the score of each participant. The timekeepers' record will be used to compute each participant's final score. The judges' score sheets will then be submitted to event officials to determine the final ratings of participants.

During preliminary and semifinal rounds, recording of presentations is permitted by one person from each participant's association, including advisor or family member, for that participant only.

Scoring

Participants will be ranked numerically based on the final score determined by each judge without consultation. The judges' rankings of each participant will then be added, and the winner will be the participant whose total ranking is the lowest. Other placings will be determined similarly (using the low-rank method of selection).

TIEBREAKERS

Ties will be broken based on the greatest number of low ranks. The participants' low ranks will be counted, and the participant with the greatest number of low ranks will be declared the winner. If a tie still exists, then the event superintendent will rank the participants' responses to questions. The participant with the greatest number of low ranks from the response to questions will be declared the winner. If a tie still exists, then the participants' raw scores will be totaled. The participant with the greatest total of raw points will be declared the winner.

Awards

Awards will be presented to teams based on their rankings at the awards ceremony. Advisors of cash award recipients will receive information about claiming their award following the convention. Guidelines for amounts and recipients of cash awards can be found [here](#). Corporate partners help grow the next generation of leaders through supporting AFNR pathways awards.

Resources

This list of references is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Other sources may be utilized, and teachers are encouraged to use the best instructional materials available. The following list contains references that may prove helpful during event preparation.

- Figures of Speech DVD,
- CDE Q&A's, FFA.org
- American Farm Bureau Federation, www.fb.org
- United States Department of Agriculture, www.usda.gov

Extemporaneous Public Speaking Rubric

1,000 POINTS

Name				Member Number		
Chapter				State		
Indicators	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Oral Communication – 300 points						
Examples	- Examples are vivid, precise and clearly explained. - Examples are original, logical and relevant	- Examples are usually concrete, sometimes need clarification. - Examples are effective, but need more originality or thought.	- Examples are abstract or not clearly defined. - Examples are sometimes confusing, leaving the listeners with questions.		X 10	
Speaking without hesitation	- Speaks very articulately without hesitation. - Never has the need for unnecessary pauses or hesitation when speaking.	- Speaks articulately but sometimes hesitates. - Occasionally has the need for a long pause or moderate hesitation when speaking.	- Speaks articulately but frequently hesitates. - Frequently hesitates or has long, awkward pauses while speaking.		X 10	
Tone	- Appropriate tone is consistent. - Speaks at the right pace to be clear. - Pronunciation of words is very clear and intent is apparent.	- Appropriate tone is usually consistent. - Speaks at the right pace most of the time, but shows some nervousness. - Pronunciation of words is usually clear, sometimes vague.	- Has difficulty using an appropriate tone. - Pace is too fast; nervous. - Pronunciation of words is difficult to understand; unclear.		X 10	
Responding to topic selected and articulating facts and issues	- Completely addresses the topic selected, exemplary in connecting facts and issues relating to the topic and articulating how they impact the issue locally and globally. - Possesses a strong knowledge base and effectively shares accurate information regarding related facts and current issues.	- Sufficient in addressing the topic selected, connecting facts and issues relating to the topic and articulating how they impact the issue locally and globally. - Possesses a good knowledge base and for the most part, shares accurate information regarding related facts and current issues.	- Does not completely align speech with topic selected, has difficulty with connecting facts and issues and articulating how they impact the issue locally and globally. - Possesses some knowledge base but is unable to articulate information regarding related facts and current issues.		X 30	
Oral Communications Total						
Non-verbal Communication – 400 points						

Indicators	Very strong evidence of skill 5–4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3–2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1–0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Attention (eye contact)	- Eye contact constantly used as an effective connection. - Constantly looks at the entire audience (90–100% of the time).	- Eye contact is mostly effective and consistent. - Mostly looks around the audience (60–80% of the time).	- Eye contact does not always allow connection with the speaker. - Occasionally looks at someone or some groups (less than 50% of the time).		X 20	
Mannerisms	- Does not have distracting mannerisms that affect effectiveness. - No nervous habits.	- Sometimes has distracting mannerisms that pull from the presentation. - Sometimes exhibits nervous habits or ticks.	- Has mannerisms that pull from the effectiveness of the presentation. - Displays some nervous habits — fidgets or anxious ticks.		X 20	
Gestures	- Gestures are purposeful and effective. - Hand motions are expressive and used to emphasize talking points. - Confident posture with positive body language.	- Usually uses purposeful gestures. - Hands are sometimes used to express or emphasize. - Occasionally slumps; sometimes negative body language.	- Occasionally gestures are used effectively. - Hands are not used to emphasize talking points; hand motions are sometimes distracting. - Lacks positive body language; slumps.		X 20	
Well-poised	- Extremely well-poised. - Poised and in control at all times	- Usually well-poised. - Poised and in control most of the time; rarely loses composure	- Isn't always well-poised. - Sometimes seems to lose composure.		X 20	
<i>Non-verbal Communication Total</i>						
Question Points — 300 points						
Supportive details/facts	- Speaks unrehearsed mostly with comfort and ease. - Speaks quickly with organized thoughts and concise accurate answers.	- Speaks mostly with comfort and ease, but sometimes seems to lack supporting details. - Sometime gets off focus and uses less concise facts and examples.	- Shows nervousness or seems unprepared when speaking unrehearsed. - Seems to ramble or speaks before thinking. - Inaccurate or incomplete details.		X 30	
Being detail-oriented	- Stays fully focused and detail-oriented. - Always provides details that support the issue; is well organized.	- Stays mostly focused and detail-oriented. - Usually provides details that are supportive of the issue; displays good organizational skills.	- Difficulty staying focused and detail-oriented. - Sometimes overlooks details that could be beneficial to the issue; lacks organization.		X 30	
Questions Points						
<i>Non-verbal Communication Total Points</i>						
<i>Oral Communication Total Points (from pg. 1)</i>						
Time Deduction*						
NET TOTAL POINTS						
RANK						

* –1 point per second under four minutes or over six minutes as determined by the timekeepers.