



# Round Three - Impromptu: How to Practice for an Impromptu Speech

## Round Three: Impromptu Speaking

Student scores will be penalized for speeches that exceed or fall short of the 2-3 minute time limit.

In the third round, students will be expected to prepare and deliver a two-to-three minute impromptu speech. Each participant will draw a slip of paper containing four words. For example, "truth," "trouble," "brothers," "keys." The participant will choose one of the four words. This will be the topic of the speech. You may wish to deliver a serious address or develop your talk in a humorous vein.


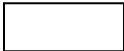
A five-minute period of complete silence will be observed while contestants plan and write their speeches (note cards and pencils provided). The speech should contain a brief introduction, two to three main points of development, and a logical conclusion. Only notes prepared during the time provided may be used during delivery. At the end of a five-minute preparation period, contestants must label their note cards and hand them to the chairperson. The chairperson will return the cards when the speaker is called to deliver the talk.

All students will be expected to read the topic (word or phrase) they have chosen for their impromptu speech topic to the judge (my topic/phrase was \_\_\_\_\_) and then proceed with the delivery of the speech.

When contestants are finished, they are to remain in the room until the entire round is completed. (This rule of courtesy holds true for all rounds and for all those attending the tournament.)

The Impromptu topics are the same for seventh and eighth grade contestants. Fifth and sixth grade contestants do not participate in the impromptu topic round but they will be assigned a room to watch the older contestants.

### Where to begin:

1. When you start to write, make sure your card is turned the long way  - not horizontally.   
This allows you to hold the card in your hand in such a way that it is not as noticeable. It will appear that you are more relaxed and confident as you present your speech.

2. When you prepare your card, do so as follows:

- a. Write the topic (word or phrase you chose). You will have to state to the judge which word/phrase you picked.
- b. Most important – Write your first (introduction) sentence using your topic. Make this sentence very well written. It introduces your entire speech. Spend a lot of time really developing it.
- c. Do not write any of the body of the speech. On another index card, you may jot a few ideas/brainstorm but do not waste your time writing the middle part of the speech.

- d. Second most important – write your last (conclusion sentence). Again, use the topic in the conclusion. Be sure that you are not simply copying the introduction sentence but are rewording it. Write it in much the same way you would write an introduction and concluding sentence for a report.

Topic	Your Name
Write your first sentence (include topic)	
Leave middle blank - Do not write any middle details	
Write your last sentence (include topic)	

## **Developing Your Impromptu Speech:** *Should be 2 and 3 minutes long*

### **The Topic**

Write down the topic you will use to develop your impromptu speech. It must be one of the four words or phrases from the slip of paper you drew at the start of the round:

### **Introduction**

Specific Purpose Statement:

Tease your Points:

### **Body**

Point #1:

Support #1:

Support #2:

Support #3:

Short Summary of point #1:

Point #2:

Support #1:

Support #2:

Support #3:

Short Summary of point #2:

### **Conclusion**

Summarize why your answer is the best and restate the topic (word or phrase) you chose

## Examples of note cards:

### Topic assigned: Grandparents

#### Grandparents

I've always believed that the most important and wonderful people in the world are grandparents! Why?

- They have nothing to do.
- They are rich
- Love to ply
- Happy
- Never scold

I still think grandparents are the most wonderful people in the world and I can't wait until I can be called a grandparent!

### Topic Assigned: Bubble Gum

#### Bubble Gum

Bubble gum can get us kids in a lot of trouble if we are not careful!

Where we chew it

- School
- Church
- Company

How we chew it

- Loud
- Popping Noise
- Open Mouth

How we blow bubbles

- In Public
- On Our Clothing
- On Furniture

Yes, bubble gum can get us kids in a lot of trouble, and we'd be smart if we didn't chew it until we are adults.

## Ideas for practicing impromptu speeches:

### Try to think of "canned" first lines:

- i.e. " \_\_\_\_\_, now that's an interesting subject."
- " \_\_\_\_\_, Oh I remember my first encounter with \_\_\_\_\_."
- "How funny, I was just thinking about \_\_\_\_\_ the other day."
- " \_\_\_\_\_, we can't live with it, \_\_\_\_\_ we can't live without it."

### Use the topic as a metaphor for something else:

- Life is like \_\_\_\_\_.

### Think of different direction you could take a topic such as:

- The first time you encountered something
- The topics good and bad points as opposite sides to the topic
- The topic as viewed by different people

2. Don't try to be funny unless you can pull it off naturally.

## Final Tips about Impromptu Speech Topics

Go through the intro, the main points and the conclusion on the note cards. Think about what you are saying, make corrections. If necessary, tweak a little bit with your thesis, points and supports. They have to fit.

Rehearse your speech if there's enough time. Good luck!

## Tips for appropriate body language

Your body language is very important during all three rounds (Elocution speech, Extemporaneous Reading, Impromptu Speech). It could make the difference between a good delivery and a prize-winning speech.

**Hands:** Try to incorporate gestures into your speech. This will give them something to do – But don't overuse gestures. Make them "Natural" through the movements themselves and/or by practicing them enough that they become second nature to you. Remember that bad gestures (awkward, not matching the text, etc.) are more distracting than no gestures at all.

**Posture:** Stand up straight, although if playing someone meek or weak you can show that in posture but stand up straight other times.

**Feet:** Don't rock, don't shuffle. Step forward to emphasize a point but be careful about stepping back. It's usually not a good idea.

Use body language to differentiate between people or scenes. Face left or right, or up or down. But, always keep one eye on the judge and the audience.

**Eye Contact:** If you are nervous about looking at the person, a good trick is to look at the top of their head. It will appear to the person that you are looking at them and it will not break your concentration by looking them in the eyes.

Also, good eye contact "rotates" throughout the room. For example, be sure to look in all directions, front, left, right.



# Valley Catholic Middle School Speech Tournament

Sample of Judge's Score Sheet

## Sample of Round Three – Impromptu

# Student Code

Judge: \_\_\_\_\_  
Room Number \_\_\_\_\_

Student Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Word/Phrase Choice:

### Directions:

Rate the speaker for each of the criteria listed below, according to the following marking system:

5. Excellent
4. Very Good
3. Good
2. Fair
1. Poor

### Delivery:

\_\_\_\_\_ Poise

\_\_\_\_\_ Voice Quality: (Diction, fluency, expression)

### Composition:

\_\_\_\_\_ Introduction

\_\_\_\_\_ Organization: (Clear, logical, interesting)

\_\_\_\_\_ Conclusion

### Effectiveness:

\_\_\_\_\_ Did the student develop the speech on the assigned topic/word?

\_\_\_\_\_ How effectively did the student use the word in developing the speech?

\_\_\_\_\_ Within Time Limit (2-3 minutes)

\*\* Please list the student's speech time here: \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring for the time limit requirement:

A speech length of 2-3 minutes = a score of 5
1 - 20 seconds off either way = a score of 4
21 - 40 seconds off either way = a score of 3
41 - 80 seconds off either way = a score of 2
81 + seconds off either way = a score of 1

\_\_\_\_\_ Total (Total Possible: 40)

# Practice Materials for Round Three

I have included the step-by-step instructions for round three. It is a copy of the script that the judge's assistant and judge will be using the day of the tournament. It might be helpful as you practice your impromptu speech. I have also included a copy of the judge's score sheet.

## Step-by-Step Instructions for Judge's Assistants

Wait for the announcement to begin before you start this round.

You will say:

*"Welcome to your new room. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the student assistant for this round. I would like to introduce you to your Judge \_\_\_\_\_ . (If there is another student helper – introduce him/her too.*

*"In this round you will draw a slip that has four words on it. You will choose one of them for your topic. Once the announcement is made for coaches, parents, and any other observers to leave the classroom, I will hand out the slip with your four topic choices.*

*When everyone has drawn, we will spend 10 minutes in complete silence while you (the contestants) mentally plan your opening sentence, your points of development, and your closing sentence. You will be able to use note cards for this round, so I will pass out a pencil and cards to you when you come up to draw a topic."*

*"You will give your topic slip back to me, as well as your speech note cards when the announcement is made ending the 10 minute preparation period. I will give you your note cards back when you are called upon to speak. At this point your coaches, parents or other observers will be allowed back into the classroom to watch."*

Wait for the announcement dismissing coaches, parents, and observers from the classrooms. Then, pass out the topic slips, note cards, and pencils.

You should say: *"Be sure to put your tournament symbol (01-08-123) on all your note cards before you give them to me so you'll get your own cards back when it is your turn to speak. YOU WILL ALSO NEED TO WRITE THE WORD OR PHRASE YOU HAVE CHOSEN AS YOUR TOPIC ON THE TOP OF YOUR INDEX CARDS. You will need to tell us what word or phrase you have chose to write your speech about when you present your impromptu speech. Your talk should be about 2-3 minutes long. Will everyone in the room be very quiet now for 10 minutes? You may not leave the room for this preparation, and you may not receive any help. Begin writing now."*

After approx. 10 minutes an announcement will be made asking you to collect the topic slips, note cards (he/she should check that the contestant's symbol is on all cards (01-08-123). Then, when this is finished you should open the door and allow coaches, parents, or other observers to enter quickly and quietly.

You should say: *"Please remember that after each recitation, we will allow time for the judge to finish tabulating the contestants score before we proceed to the next student. **Please do not applaud during any of the round.**"*

Then, when they are ready, you should call the first contestant and give him/her the note cards.

Say to the contestant *"What word or phrase have your chosen to discuss today?"*  
The contestant should say the word and then begin his/her speech.

The judge should have the score sheets in front of him/her at this point.

When the contestant has finished, the student assistant should say *"Thank you"* and continue on.

Once the judge has finished scoring this contestant, you should call the next contestant . . . (01-08-123) and continue as above.

When all are finished, you should say, *"We are finished now, but some of the other 29 rooms are not finished. So, until the announcement is made to end round three, please wait VERY QUIETLY until the dismissal announcement is made. Please remember there are contestants giving their speeches in rooms next to us so the visiting needs to stay quite. Thank you."*

*"Once the other rooms end round three, you will be dismissed until the awards ceremony in the gym. Please check with your coach by 1:30 to see if you will need to compete in the tie-breaker round. The tie-breaker round will include all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade contestants in all categories.*

*The awards presentation will start at 2:00 in the gym.*

*"We have enjoyed working with you, and hope to see you on the stage with a trophy this afternoon. Thank you for your excellent cooperation."*

At this point you should take your finished score sheets to the computer lab in the envelope for round three. Then return to your room. It is not break time yet.

Once all the score sheets are brought to the computer lab from all 30 rooms, an announcement will be made ending round three.