

How Impromptu Works

What is impromptu?

In impromptu, students give a speech based on a topic off the top of their heads. They know the general subject area before the tournament. When they arrive to the round, the student is given 3 prompts (a question, comment, quotation) in that area. The student chooses only one. The student then has approximately 1 minute to think about the question and gather their thoughts before they speak. The student should speak for anywhere between 2-4 minutes (the longer the better, ideally, however, only if they are still speaking competently).

How are they judged?

Students are judged on:

- Delivery
 - Speaking style, speed, volume, physical presence, enunciation, confidence, fluidity
- Content
 - Speech content (see more on this below)

Content Goals

Students should try to give a structured speech. This structure is one that should be memorized and practiced and used for all speeches:

1. Introduction or Attention Getter
 - This area is a creative introduction to the speech. The speaker can either tell a short anecdote or recite a statistic or quotation that may be relevant to the topic.
2. Introduction of topic
 - Next the speaker should recite the question or prompt. The student should answer the question in thesis form with a clear opinion or answer.
3. Preview of Main points
 - The student should briefly preview the 2-3 areas of examples or supports that they plan to talk about to support their answer to the question.
4. Main Point 1,2,3 (between 2-3 main points)
 - These points should be supports to the student's answer, position, or interpretation. These should be organized and relevant to the topic. Depending on the topic they can include real world examples, personal examples, or relating the topic to a movie or book.
5. Conclusion
 - The conclusion should, again, overview and recaps everything that was talked about. Then it should restate the question and answer. Then the student should end thoughtfully with why this topic is important or tieback to the anecdote in their introduction.

Delivery Goals

Students should try to sound as professional and competent as possible. Some specifics to look for are:

- Appropriate volume and pace for the room
- Minimal “um’s” and “uh’s,” moments/seconds of silence are preferred
- Eye contact with members of the audience
- Standing up straight
- Remaining still while speaking (no playing with feet)
- Gestures that are purposeful or hands at sides
- Walking between main points and staying in one place for each section
- Appropriate emotion: seriousness, smiling, humor, etc