

**Pennsylvania High School
Speech League**



**NEWS
BROADCASTING
HANDBOOK**

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NEWS BROADCASTING

Description of Event

The event of News Broadcasting is open to all PHSSL schools, and every member is invited to participate. This event is held on the State level only, and there is no qualifying procedure except for registering. Description of News Broadcasting is in Article B18, PHSSL Bylaws. Every member school may enter one pair of students in News Broadcasting. There is no charge for name changes in Impromptu, News Broadcasting and Student Congress. A \$50.00 nuisance fee will be assessed for drops.

Students who participated in PHSSL District and/or Regional Tournaments and who did not qualify to the State Tournament may be entered in News Broadcasting.

To register students in News Broadcasting, the coach completes the registration form by the stated deadline. No registrations will be accepted after the deadline date.

Article B18 – News Broadcasting

Section B18.1

A school may enter one pair of students in News Broadcasting.

Section B18.2

There will be only a state contest in News Broadcasting.

Section B18.3

All entrants are required to prepare three (3) broadcast scripts that are three (3) minutes in length and are to be delivered while seated.

- A. A newscast focusing on international news events.
- B. A newscast focusing on “the lighter side” of the news.
- C. A newscast focusing on national news events.

Those entrants who do not have a prepared script for a given round will be disqualified from that round.

Section B18.4

A. Round One – Each pair of students will read a three-minute prepared newscast focusing on international news events. The reading of the script should be balanced between the two students. The script is prepared by the students covering international news events of the time period Sunday two weeks prior to the State Tournament through Round One of the State Tournament.

B. Round Two - Each pair of students will read a three-minute prepared newscast focusing on “the lighter side” of the news. The script is prepared by the students covering “the lighter side” of the news of the time period Sunday two weeks prior to the State Tournament through Round One of the State Tournament.

C. Round Three - Each pair of students will read a three-minute prepared newscast focusing on national news events (sports news may be included in this national newscast). The script is prepared by the students covering national news events of the time period Sunday two weeks prior to the State Tournament through Round One of the State Tournament.

Selection for the Quarterfinal Round will be based on the approximately 24 lowest cumulative ranks from Rounds One, Two, and Three.

D. Quarterfinal Round - Fifteen minutes before the contestants are to appear in the round, they will be given a copy of a broadcast script provided by PHSSL Staff. This sight reading will concentrate on domestic news stories and will be approximately 3-minutes long. This script is not to be edited.

Selection for the Semifinal Round will be based on the lowest rank totals of the top three teams in each Quarterfinal Round room.

E. Semifinal Round - Fifteen minutes before the contestants are to appear in the round, they will be given a copy of a broadcast script provided by PHSSL Staff. This sight reading will concentrate on international news stories and will be approximately 3-minutes long. This script is not to be edited. Selection for the Final Round will be based on the lowest rank totals of the top three teams in each Semifinal Round room.

F. Final Round - Twenty minutes before the contestants are to appear in the round, they will be given a copy of a broadcast script provided by the PHSSL Staff. This sight reading will concentrate on a combination of international and national news stories and will be approximately 4-minutes long. This script must be cut to 3 minutes for presentation.

Section 18.5

Fabrication of news stories is prohibited and will result in a team being disqualified from the tournament.

Section 18.6

The teams may receive assistance from a pronouncing guide but may not seek the help of any other person. Failure to abide by this rule will result in disqualification from the tournament.

Section 18.7

The names of the contestants shall be sent to the Office of the Executive Director no later than the deadline date set in the League's calendar.

Section 18.8

The PHSSL News Broadcasting Handbook is to be considered a part of the PHSSL Constitution and Bylaws; therefore, all Constitutional provisions are applicable to the Handbook.

Procedures Used at the State Tournament

Since many students are competing in this event for the first time at the State Tournament, the following list of procedures may give you an idea of the way this event is conducted. A few suggestions are also included.

1. After registration, a mandatory meeting of all news broadcasting contestants is held to go over any last minute changes. This meeting also involves a very important role call. The procedures are reviewed, and students may ask questions about any aspect of the competition. This is a big help to most students, as they will be responsible for finding these facilities for each round.
2. Make sure that teams report at least 20 minutes before they are scheduled to compete. Times are available at registration.
3. Each team must have his/her own scripts for the three different topic areas as listed in the rules of the Broadcasting event.
4. The Quarterfinal, Semifinal and Final Round are sight-reading scripts, prepared by the PHSSL staff. The purpose of these rounds is to determine the student's ability to read aloud a script after minimal preparation. These scripts are typical examples of ones that would be read on the air. Approximately fifteen seconds are available for sign-on, segues (transitions), and sign-off.
5. Check the time and place for each sight-reading. Teams should report to the room at least 20 minutes before they are scheduled to compete. **IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT TEAMS ARE NOT LATE FOR THESE ROUNDS- LATENESS WILL RESULT IN LOSS OF PREP TIME.**
6. Teams may want to bring a stopwatch or digital watch with to the sight-readings. Although the scripts for the Quarterfinal and Semifinal Rounds are written with the three-minute time limit in mind, teams may want to allow for sign-on, sign-off, and brief transition lines. The Quarterfinal and Semifinal scripts should not be altered in any other way. The Final Round script will need to be edited down to the three-minute time limit.
7. Teams will be given scripts approximately 15 minutes before their scheduled "air time" for the Quarterfinal and Semifinal Rounds, 20 minutes before air time in Final Round. During this preparation period, teams can edit the script (e.g.-- add a sign-on, transition lines, sign-off and cutting to three minutes in the Final Round). However, teams should not make any other changes (e.g.-- adding their own news story into the script).
8. In all rounds a 15-second grace period, both under (2:45) and over (3:15) is given to all students with no penalty. If a team is 16 to 30 seconds over or under, it cannot place first but may rank 2-7. If a team is more than 30 seconds over or under, it cannot place in the top 7. Students are ranked 1 through 7. All others are ranked 8.

Sample Script (Final Round Script 2022)

(YOUR SIGN ON)

A POWERFUL 7.4 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE STRUCK OFF THE COAST OF FUKUSHIMA IN NORTHERN JAPAN WEDNESDAY NIGHT, SMASHING FURNITURE, KNOCKING OUT POWER AND KILLING FOUR PEOPLE. A SMALL TSUNAMI REACHED SHORE, BUT THE LOW-RISK ADVISORY WAS LIFTED BY THURSDAY MORNING.

THE REGION IS PART OF NORTHERN JAPAN THAT WAS DEVASTATED BY A DEADLY 9.0 QUAKE AND TSUNAMI 11 YEARS AGO. THAT QUAKE CAUSED NUCLEAR REACTOR MELTDOWNS, SPEWING MASSIVE RADIATION THAT STILL MAKES SOME PARTS UNINHABITABLE.

U.S. OFFICIALS SAY A 13-YEAR-OLD BOY DROVE THE PICKUP TRUCK INVOLVED IN A FIERY HEAD-ON COLLISION IN TEXAS THAT KILLED NINE PEOPLE, INCLUDING SIX UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTHWEST GOLFERS AND THEIR COACH.

A NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD OFFICIAL THURSDAY SAID PRELIMINARY INFORMATION INDICATES THE LEFT FRONT TIRE OF THE PICKUP WAS A SPARE THAT FAILED, CAUSING THE VEHICLE TO PULL HARD TO THE LEFT INTO ONCOMING TRAFFIC OF A TWO-LANE ROADWAY.

INVESTIGATORS WERE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE REMAINS OF THE DRIVER BY HIS SIZE. BOTH VEHICLES WERE PROBABLY MOVING CLOSE TO THE POSTED SPEED LIMIT OF 75 MPH, THE OFFICIAL SAID.

HENRICH SIEMENS, 38, OF SEMINOLE, TEXAS, WAS IN THE TRUCK WITH THE BOY, AUTHORITIES SAID. HE WAS AMONG THE NINE PEOPLE KILLED IN THE TUESDAY EVENING CRASH.

TWO SURVIVORS OF THE CRASH, BOTH STUDENTS, ARE STILL HOSPITALIZED.

THE SURVIVORS ARE RECOVERING AND MAKING STEADY PROGRESS, UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTHWEST PROVOST RYAN TIPTON SAID THURSDAY.

AN IRAQ WAR VETERAN WHO ALLEGEDLY FORMED A MILITIA HE DUBBED THE “PROUD BOYS OF NORTH TEXAS” PLEADED GUILTY ON THURSDAY TO A SINGLE COUNT OF ASSAULTING OR RESISTING POLICE. THE CHARGE IS RELATED TO THE STORMING OF THE U.S. CAPITOL IN AN EFFORT TO BLOCK CONGRESS FROM CERTIFYING PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN’S ELECTION.

THE PLEA FROM LUCAS DENNEY, 44, OF TEXAS, MARKED AN ABRUPT SHIFT IN THE CASE. EARLIER THIS WEEK, PROSECUTORS HAD SIGNALLED THEY SUPPORTED HIS EMERGENCY REQUEST TO RELEASE HIM FROM JAIL AND DROP CRIMINAL CHARGES. PROSECUTORS HAD AGREED TO THE REQUEST BECAUSE THEY HAD VIOLATED HIS RIGHTS TO A SPEEDY TRIAL BY FAILING TO SECURE AN INDICTMENT UNTIL ABOUT THREE MONTHS AFTER HIS DECEMBER 2021 ARREST.

IN A SURPRISE MOVE, DENNEY OPTED TO WITHDRAW HIS EMERGENCY REQUEST TO HAVE THE CASE DISMISSED, AND PLEADED GUILTY INSTEAD. HE DID SO EVEN AS FEDERAL PROSECUTORS WARNED IN A VIRTUAL HEARING IN THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA THAT THEY HAD NOT

RULED OUT FILING ADDITIONAL CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST HIM IN THE FUTURE.

INSTAGRAM SAID THURSDAY IT HAD BLOCKED RAPPER KANYE WEST, WHO NOW GOES BY YE, FROM USING HIS ACCOUNT FOR 24 HOURS FOR VIOLATING THE SOCIAL NETWORK'S HARASSMENT POLICY AMID HIS ACRIMONIOUS DIVORCE FROM REALITY STAR KIM KARDASHIAN. THE 44-YEAR-OLD MEGASTAR HAS BEEN IN THE SPOTLIGHT FOR SEVERAL WEEKS OVER HIS ATTACKS ON COMEDIAN PETE DAVIDSON, WHO IS DATING KARDASHIAN.

WEST, WHO IS NOW OFFICIALLY DIVORCED, HAS PUBLICLY CALLED ON KARDASHIAN TO RECONCILE THEIR RELATIONSHIP. KARDASHIAN HAS MEANWHILE URGED HIM TO KEEP THEIR FAMILY MATTERS PRIVATE, BUT HER EFFORTS HAVE BEEN TO NO AVAIL, WITH THE SINGER SPEAKING PUBLICLY ABOUT THE CUSTODY OF THEIR CHILDREN, FOR EXAMPLE.

AN INSTAGRAM SPOKESPERSON SAID THAT WEST WAS PREVENTED FROM POSTING, COMMENTING AND SENDING DMS ON THE SOCIAL NETWORK FOR 24 HOURS.

IT ALSO DELETED CONTENT -- WITHOUT SAYING SPECIFICALLY WHAT -- FROM HIS ACCOUNT FOR VIOLATING RULES ON HATE SPEECH, BULLYING AND HARASSMENT.

ACCORDING TO US MEDIA, THE POST IN QUESTION INSULTED LATE-NIGHT TALK SHOW HOST TREVOR NOAH AFTER HE SAID WEST WAS BECOMING "MORE AND MORE BELLIGERENT IN HOW HE TRIES TO GET KIM BACK" INSTAGRAM SAID IT COULD TAKE FURTHER ACTION AGAINST WEST'S ACCOUNT IN THE EVENT OF REPEAT VIOLATIONS

IN THE DOG EAT DOG WORLD, IT LOOKS LIKE LABRADORS ARE HOLDING THEIR OWN WHILE POODLES ARE ON THE WAY UP.

IN THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB'S ANNUAL RANKINGS, RELEASED ON TUESDAY, LABRADOR RETRIEVERS STILL CAME OUT AS THE MOST POPULAR BREED OF DOG – TAKING NUMBER ONE FOR AN UNPRECEDENTED 31 ST STRAIGHT YEAR.

POODLES MADE IT BACK INTO THE TOP FIVE FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1997 EVEN THOUGH THEY ONCE HELD THE NUMBER ONE SPOT FROM 1960 TO 1982. OTHER BREEDS IN THE TOP FIVE WERE FRENCH BULLDOGS, GOLDEN RETRIEVERS, AND GERMAN SHEPHERDS.

Ten Suggestions for Preparing Students for News Broadcasting

Originally written for Radio Announcing by Janet Dicenzo

Adapted for News Broadcasting by Beth Young

1. After selecting the students who will compete in News Broadcasting, tell them to watch and listen carefully to two- or three-minute news spots on a variety of television stations. They should use their observations in planning and writing their three-minute prepared script.
2. At least two weeks before the contest, contestants should read newspapers and magazines for interesting ideas or events that they may want to include as their "soft news story" or "public service" in their scripts. Remember that the script is prepared with events in the time period Sunday two weeks prior to the State Tournament through Round One of the State Tournament. This allows for the students to practice and become familiar with it.
3. Everyone should be familiar with the rules of the event. The final copy of each of the three prepared scripts must be ready by the time your school registers on the day of the tournament.
4. The students should include their names (but not the school) as part of the sign-on. Remember that many professionals agree that the lead story is the most important part of the broadcast because it grabs the attention of the listener.
5. The students should keep their audience in mind as they write the prepared scripts. The audience (judges) hears the script and relies on the students to be clear and precise in their language. The sentences should be varied (but mostly simple, not complex or complicated; the script should be relatively cliché-free; and direct quotations should be written in an easy-to-understand manner (e.g. "quote/unquote"). Journalism requires that the broadcast be honest, accurate, and fair. Finally, most news is written in the present tense. Consult one of the accompanying references for other suggestions.
6. The students should compose an interesting sign-off for their broadcasts. They should include their names and station call-letters.
7. The students should practice reading aloud often. This may also be the best way to prepare for the sight-reading scripts. They should mark their scripts for pause and emphasis. Preparation for the events helps them to sound more confident and relaxed.
8. The students should maintain a conversational tone while reading their scripts.
9. The students should practice reading aloud names in the current news. This may help them with some of the "tongue twisters" that they may encounter in the sight-reading script.
10. The coach should acquaint the students with a few relaxation and "stretching" exercises. These may be very helpful on the day of the tournament.

Radio Announcing Tips

(Please apply, as appropriate, to your News Broadcasting experience)

by

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As with any speech-related activity, there are some people who show a natural talent for radio announcing and there are those who have to work very hard to attain that “natural” style. This article is written primarily for those in the latter category, to help them gain a better sense of what makes a good radio announcer. I use the term “sense” because there is no such thing as a list of checkpoints that, when each point is checked, necessarily produces a good announcer.

It may encourage you to know that most professional announcers make it a point to continually monitor what the “competition” is doing: Are they doing something during their announcing that could work well for me? Is there something they use that doesn’t work and I should try to avoid? The point here is that what “works” in radio is constantly changing. You need not feel you must sound exactly like a Paul Harvey or a Wolfman Jack to be a successful announcer. I would, however, suggest you do some “monitoring of the competition” to gain a few pointers.

Before you try to write your own radio script, try this little experiment. Choose a newscaster on one of your local radio stations and tape approximately three minutes of one of the better newscasts. Write down the exact words the newscaster uses in script form. Then, you play the newscast, reading the script and taping it. Go back and make comparisons. Was your newscast longer or shorter? Did you stumble over a few words? Did it sound like you were reading from a script, or like you were talking to a group of people?

This should begin to give you a feel for what works and what doesn’t. Try adjusting your pitch and rate to make the newscast the same length of time as the newscaster’s. You may find yourself out of breath, or you may find yourself making an effort to slow down. Make notes on your comparisons and use the guidelines in the rest of the article to help you work with any problems or incorporate what works into your own script and delivery.

The rest of this article will be divided into three sections --- (1) preparation of script, (2) delivery techniques, and (3) studio techniques. It is important to remember that these are all interrelated; a good script is nothing if the delivery is poor, and beautiful delivery is worthless if the mic was not handled properly and the audience couldn’t understand the words.

Scripts

Perhaps the most important point here is to write in a conversational style. Even if yours is a hard news report, stiff, research-paper English is a no-no. You want to be conversational, but not chatty. Conversational means easy to listen to and easy to comprehend--it does not mean poor grammar (double negatives, leaving the "g" off words ending in -ing, etc.). Avoid colloquialisms.

Remember the importance of time. You may have wondered why I suggested you try to match the newscaster's time in the earlier experiment. The point is that no matter how much or how little news there is, the broadcast scheduled allows a prescribed amount of time for the newscast, particularly on large, all-news stations. You must use all that time, or only that amount of time, to do your newscast, or you will throw off the station's schedule. This is why the Speech League competition sets a very strict time limit on your newscasts. With that in mind, then you write your script, don't give yourself more than you can handle in the allotted time. Consider your newscast to be an update, not the full-blown noon edition. Include, for instance, a local story or two, and a national story of major

importance; perhaps a weather forecast, and maybe a few scores "from the ballpark." While you don't want to put in too much, don't go to the other extreme and include too little so you can leisurely deliver your newscast--this easy way out will be all too obvious to the judges, and will do nothing to improve your announcing skills.

When writing your stories, it is often helpful to keep in mind the "5 W's": Who, What, When, Where, and Why. If you limit yourself to answering these questions, you will generally be able to give your listener adequate information without becoming chatty or losing their attention.

Use transitional lines to link stories of similar content: "While taxes are a problem here in Anytown, they're also giving Congress a difficult time. Today on Capitol Hill..." Little phrases (e.g., "And on the national scene...", "And now the latest from the nation's ballparks...", etc.) also help to make the jump from various stories a little easier. Basically, just remember to keep it sharp and concise.

Delivery of Newscast

If you are like most people, you probably found you took longer to read the newscast in the experiment than did the newscaster. While we don't realize it, most radio personalities speak much more quickly than the average person, in an effort to get across as much information as possible in as short a time as possible. Your task is to discover how quickly you can speak and still keep your message clear, your pitch acceptable, and not overload your audience with information. These things together are all part of interpretation: how you emphasize certain phrases, when you pause to let the information sink in or to signal a change in topic, etc. Everyone has a different method of interpretation with the same hoped-for result: to make information stick in the listener's minds. Again, there is no hard and fast rule--it's whatever works for you.

Pitch is another factor that contributes greatly to overall effectiveness. It can be terribly annoying if it jumps around to try to project enthusiasm; it can be equally annoying if it doesn't change at all to help the listener clue in to important information or topic change.

No matter what pitch you use, strive to make it one of confidence. Walter Cronkite, CBS's long-time news anchorman, was once voted "America's most-trusted individual." This high accolade had a great deal to do with his delivery: confident, authoritative yet still personable, and consistent.

You may find it difficult to sound confident and authoritative when you come upon foreign names you know you don't know how to pronounce. Don't worry about exact pronunciation (if and only if there is no feasible way for you to discover the correct pronunciation); say the word the best you can, then use that pronunciation throughout the newscast. Rehearse. There is nothing worse than stumbling over it or saying it slowly in an attempt to get the proper pronunciation; this only draws attention to the mistake. This is a good rule to follow whenever you falter on words. Unless it is critical information (e.g., a specific number, an incorrect identification), it is better to glaze over the error rather than to go back and draw attention to it.

Studio Technique

These are a few things you may want to keep in mind:

--Noise of any kind is very audible. Do not ... rattle your script or move your chair. You may want to remove any jewelry (bracelets, cuff links, etc.) that may either scrape on the table or jangle together or somehow produce noise.

--Write on your script: your introduction, transitions, etc. You will probably be nervous and whatever you can write down and not commit to memory will help. Many people tend to rewrite difficult-to-pronounce names in a form they can pronounce over the original and cross out the original to avoid stumbling over it. Some people write cues to their script (e.g., "Slow here," "Serious here"). Be careful, however, of writing too much on the script and getting yourself confused.

You will probably be nervous, particularly if this is your first attempt at broadcasting. Don't let it worry you - even professionals get butterflies. It's the waiting right before "air time" that will be most difficult; the actual newscast will be a lot easier than you expected. Who knows--if you're not careful you might even enjoy your moment in the spotlight!