

# HOUSTONFEST: INSTRUCTIONS TO JUDGES

## Scheduling

**Art:** Begin judging at 9:00. Contestants should have their work in place by 9:00, but occasionally schools run late, so accept art until 9:30. After that point, no one (students, parents, teachers) should be in the judging area except the judges until you have finished judging. Return your judging packet to the tabulation room as soon as you have finished. If you are judging multiple events, finish one event and turn in the packet to the tabulation room before starting the next event so that the tabulation room can get a head start on processing the results.

**Declamation, Drama, Music, and Oral Tests:** For some events, the contestants sign up for performance times on the day of the contest, in which case a sign-up sheet is posted on the door of the contest room, and contestants should sign up for times by 10:30. For other events, the times are pre-assigned, in which case copies of the schedule are in your judging packet and on the door of the contest room. Changes in times may be made with your approval, if, for instance, students are entered in other events and conflicts arise. Please stay in the contest room until all contestants who signed up by 10:30 have performed or until the last time slot posted on the sign-up sheet. **Do not quit early even if it may seem that no one else is coming – they may be performing in other areas!**

## Deductions

Rather than disqualify an entry for any reason (time-limit violation, forgotten lines, going over the spending limit, etc.), deduct what you deem to be a fitting number of points from an appropriate criterion, for instance, from “Selection and Preparation.” For poetry/prose and drama events, you may prompt if necessary; however, excessive prompting should be reflected in the score. After all, even the best English-speaking performers occasionally forget a line; it's even more difficult in a foreign language.

For the following types of violations, there is a **standard 10-point deduction** off the **cumulative score** (not off each judge's individual score). There is a place to reflect this deduction on the results sheet, but also make a note about the violation in the comments section of the critique sheet.

- failure to provide copies of scripts, music, or poetry/prose selections as required in the rules
- failure to include receipts for an artwork as required in the rules
- failure to include at least the contestant's name and school on an artwork (applies ONLY to art events)

In the art events, it is possible to take two 10-point deductions if both the receipts and the name or school are missing.

## Critique Sheets

**Each judge should fill out their own critique sheet for each entry.** Fill in all information on the critique sheets carefully and LEGIBLY, especially the contestant's name, school, and level. Your critique sheets will be returned to the contestants to assist them with future language learning and contest preparation. **Please provide some positive and constructive comments on each sheet and avoid extremely negative wording!** The students really take these comments to heart, and your comments could positively or negatively affect their decision to continue studying German! Please try to keep your scores at 70 or above except in cases of *extremely* poor quality.

In judging, objectively evaluate the linguistic, musical, literary, and/or artistic merit of the entry. Try not to be biased by your personal taste. Do not reveal your opinion to the contestants by saying such things as “You're going to place for sure” or “That was the best performance yet,” and don't cast doubt on your competence by saying such things as “I'm a terrible judge” or “I don't know what I am doing.” If you follow the rules and evaluate everyone on the same criteria, then you are rendering a valid decision.

If you have any questions about the rules, the level of the competitors, whether they are advantaged speakers, whether their entry is the proper length, or any other aspects of the contest, please send to the Tabulation Room for help. **Do not make any major decisions such as disqualifying an entry without first consulting the director.**

## Results Sheets

Do not begin filling out the results sheet(s) until all entries have been judged. All judges should confer in determining the final ranking and especially in the case of ties. **You MUST break all ties.** Even though it takes a little more time, it is important that you fill out the individual scores given by each judge (J1, J2, etc.) in the appropriate columns and then add them to determine the total scores; this will help greatly if any discrepancies are discovered later. Rank entries through 10<sup>th</sup> place unless there are fewer than 10 entries; schools receive sweepstakes points for these rankings all the way down to 10<sup>th</sup>. **DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR ADDITION!!! Please print legibly.**

## Check-Out

All judges should go together to the tabulation room to check out and turn in these items in the judging packet:

- critique sheets
- copies of student scripts, poetry/prose, or music, if applicable (please put school name on them)
- results sheet

Your donation of time, your encouragement, and your constructive comments benefit our students and our German programs tremendously! **HERZLICHEN DANK!**