



The Kentucky Division Competition and National Youth Storytelling Showcase Judging Guidelines

Storytelling Ambassadorship: All finalists who are invited to perform in the NYSS are selected solely on the objective criteria below (Storytelling Talent). The “Storytelling Torchbearer” for each age group will be selected using these same talent criteria AND their storytelling ambassadorship. This is based upon less easily measured “people” skills; nevertheless, they are crucial factors in future storytelling gatherings. It may include any or all of the following; friendliness, personal character, cooperativeness, attitude, willingness to accept the judges’ decisions, attitude of parents, promptness in event communication, association with other finalists and a variety of other personal attributes that make an individual a good “ambassador.” Up to 40 points are given for this ambassadorship score.

Storytelling Talent: The information below gives a description of the seven divisions that appear on the judges’ ballot for the KSA and National Youth Storytelling Showcase. Maximum = 60 points.

Each section description represents only a brief summary of the information from intensive training seminars and classes regarding the judging of professional storytellers. Although the description lists single storytellers, each description is equally applicable to tandem tellers.

- A. (Up to 20 points) The Teller’s Performance Spirit
Some delivery traits simply do not fit the categories below. The spirit of the teller however, carries enormous weight in the audience appreciation and admiration of the performance. This area includes factors such as enthusiasm, vibrancy, poise, personality, smoothness, energy, and all other similar factors involving the spirit of the delivery. Please understand that this factor is NOT to be confused with theatrical dramatics, although some storytellers choose to incorporate dramatic factors into their deliver. Each teller and/or team should be true to his or her own natural performance and style.
- B. (Up to 4 points) The Story Choice
Story selection is an important factor. Was the story one the audience members might not have previously heard? If they have heard it, might the delivery be one that still keeps the attentions of the listeners via its delivery or adaptation?
- C. (Up to 4 points) The Story Launch
The story beginning is very critical to an effective delivery. Did the teller approach the stage center with confidence and poise? Did he or she begin at a slow or moderate pace to allow the audience to begin “painting the picture” of the

story's settings? Were the initial words spoken clearly enough for a good "launch" into the story?

D. (Up to 10 Points) The Voice

Vocal factors are of major importance in story performance. Some of the vocal factors to be considered include the following:

Vocal rate – Was the timing of each story portion appropriate? Was the rate too fast? Too hurried? Did the teller use timing techniques to the best advantage of the story's content? Had the story been practiced sufficiently for the words to flow easily and naturally?

Vocal volume – Could all the members of the audience hear at all times? Did the teller use the microphone to assist with the story rather than interfere with the story?

Special vocal sound effect – Stories do not require special sound effects, but they can occasionally spice up a story. If they were used, did they enhance the story?

Vocal flow – Did the story sound memorized? It is appropriate, of course for stories to be memorized, as long as the teller has rehearsed enough not to sound memorized.

E. (Up to 6 points) The Body

The teller's physical choices are important delivery techniques. Consider the following:

Eye Contact – Did the teller demonstrate a natural eye-flow with the audience members, look at all sections at least intermittently?

Facial communication – Did the teller's face "help tell" the story? Were the facial expressions befitting the story elements? Did they detract? Was the teller unnecessarily deadpan? Did the face show excitement, sorrow, joy or other emotions, matching the content of the story?

Gestures – Please keep in mind that for the KSA and NYSS, many of the contestants will be restricted to a stationary microphone on a stand. Thus, gesturing, etc., might need to be modified because of the difference in the usual physical set-up.

Other bodily movements – Did the body "help tell" the story? Did the feet or arms sway back and forth unnecessarily? Did a hypnotic pacing occur? Was the body "in sync" with the story? Was the posture appropriate for the story?

F. (Up to 12 points) The Words

The linguistic connection for all stories centers around the selected words. Did the teller carefully choose the appropriate wording for all portions of the story? Were there verbal “tics” (you now, like, kinda, right, uh...) that interfered with the listeners’ concentration? Was the grammar appropriate for the chosen story? (In some stories, unusual grammar might be needed, for a special character, etc.) Did the teller’s dialect blend well with the story content?

G. (Up to 4 points) Story Closure

The teller needs to prepare an appropriate wind-down for the story. The story’s end establishes the final flavor with the listeners. For many stories, the pace slows down somewhat near the end, and the final sentence(s) reflect a vocal intonation that says “my story has ended” (rather than a vocal pitch ending in an upward questioning tone). The teller may choose to say “The End,” etc. according to what fits the story’s end and the teller’s personal style of delivery. Even the walk back to the seat should reflect much poise and can influence the story’s finality.

GRAND TOTAL (Contestant’s Name): _____