

EXTEMP MATERIALS AT NATIONALS

by Bob Jones & Judith McMasters

"Can I use this material?"

"What do you mean I can't have this in my files! It was okay at my state tournament."

In the Extemp Prep Room at the national speech tournament we hear the same complaints year after year.

The reason for rules or guidelines is to establish an even playing field for competition -- one on which everyone competes knowing what's accepted and what isn't. We believe it is important to review the rules for evidence files and explain some recent interpretations.

One of the most asked about concerns is electronically retrieved information such as from On-Line America, Prodigy, wire service hookups, or the internet. The rules now state (Extemp Speaking Rules, TN-6) "No electronic retrieval **devices** may be used, but printed material from 'on-line' computer services may be used." As more and more of this information has become available and easily accessible, we've accepted the material as legitimate if it has the copyright code. In the credits at the beginning of a computer retrieved article is the copyright symbol which indicates a computer copy of an original article.

A second concern is the cutting of material for files. Extemp Speaking Rule 5B states that the original article must be "intact or uncut." With news articles it is important to keep the whole article together. If speakers could cut and paste without regard to original format, a speaker could cut and paste article parts into prepared speeches. This would clearly violate the fair playing field concept. The problem, though, is what to do about quotations and cartoons -- popular extemp

materials. Quotation books, intact and uncut, are certainly acceptable, but so are personal compilations of quotations. For instance, one speaker had created his own "dictionary of quotations" from typed and cut and paste quotations. This was ruled legal because the finished product resembled an original and gained the speaker no special advantage. On the other hand, a card file of factual and literary quotations was disqualified because the speaker could lay out her "quote cards" into a quick speech outline. Definitely, an unfair advantage. Similarly, pages grouping political cartoons around a topic -- creating a dictionary of cartoons -- is acceptable. But adding commentary with the cartoons would not be legal. That would constitute annotation and is in violation of rule 5D.

Rule 5D says, "D. Topical index **without annotation** may be present." The most important question here is what constitutes annotation? *Webster's International Dictionary* defines annotation as "a note added by way of comment or explanation." So, it is legal to have a card index file or a computer index file (hard copy) of article titles as long as no "comment or explanation" accompanies the file. In other words, the prep room committee would reject files which included entries like the following:

"Ending Welfare as We Know It," *USA Today Magazine*, March, 1995, pp. 16-20. Good article suggesting the welfare system can't be reformed and therefore we stop throwing money

away on a system which will never work.

The article title, magazine, date, and page are all acceptable -- it is the commentary that would get this file in trouble.

Besides being complete and filed correctly, speakers need to also be aware of how they mark articles. The Extemp Speaking Rules read, "Underlining or highlighting in materials will be allowed if done in only one color on each article or copy." This rule restricts someone from highlighting in different colors or mixing underlining and highlighting in such a way as to pre-outline a speech. Again, to keep the playing ground fair, restrictions need to be observed. And although there should be no notes written on the articles (that would be annotation), it is acceptable to have file names on the article to help in refiling.

These suggestions do not exhaust the possibilities for questions and interpretations of the rules for materials in extemp prep. If you have questions or concerns about your files at nationals, be sure to ask the prep room staff. If there's something they can't answer right away, they'll be glad to check with headquarters.

At every nationals there will be whines of "I didn't know that was the rule." But with a little reading and a little effort, any speaker can be prepared to compete well on the fair field of competition at NFL Nationals.

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