

2017 Sikh Youth Symposium

(A Division of Sikh Youth Alliance of North America)

GUIDELINES FOR CONTESTANTS AND JUDGES

Age Group: I (6 to 8 years)

Time allotted: 5 minutes

Book: My Guru's Blessings Book 3

Author: S. Daljeet Singh

Publisher: Gyan Khand Media

I CONTENTS (Answers to the following questions are expected in your speech. Please be brief and to the point. Contents are worth 60 points: 20 points for each question):

1. How does Gurbani help us in everyday life? Do you do paath daily? What should we do so that we are not bored by daily Nitnem paath?
2. How can we feel that Waheguru Ji is close to us? What happens if we forget to thank Him for all we have gotten from Him?
3. Do you feel entrapped like a butterfly in a bottle? How do the teachings in Gurdwara sahib help you get free from entrapment?

II Presentation (40 points):

Included in this area are items like style, delivery, poise, eye contact, voice, diction, language and effectiveness.

Time allotted to finish the speech for this group is **5 minutes**. There is no penalty for finishing the speech either earlier than 5 minutes or during the grace period of next 30 seconds. After the grace period, i.e., after 5 minutes and 30 seconds have elapsed, one point would be deducted for every extra 10 seconds or part of 10 seconds, from every judge's score for the participant.

III Punjabi Presentation and Maintenance of Sikhi Saroop:

Use of Punjabi and maintenance of Sikhi Saroop needs to be encouraged. Participants who use Punjabi and/or maintain Sikhi Saroop will be judged according to the above format. However, it is suggested that such participants be rewarded suitably.

IV Suggestions on preparing youth for the Sikh Youth Symposium:

Given that the primary purpose of the Sikh Youth Symposium is for our children to focus on their learning, we would like to clarify the appropriate levels of support children should receive as they prepare for their speeches. It is our recommendation that it is in the best interest of the children to write their own speeches, with minimal support from parents or other adults.

Parents/Mentors may sit with children to read and discuss the book, as well as review the questions with them. They may write the child's responses as the child verbally answers the questions. The parents may help the children put their answers together in a speech format and further develop their thoughts, as needed.

If your child's speech is prepared in Punjabi, it must still follow the guidelines above. If it is prepared in English, it can be translated into Punjabi after it is created per the above guidelines. However, once the speech is in Punjabi, your child should understand the speech in its entirety.

Although these are only suggestions, in order to make this experience most meaningful and equitable for all children, it is recommended that we adhere to these suggestions as closely as possible.

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GUIDELINES FOR CONTESTANTS AND JUDGES

Age Group: II (9 to 10 years)

Time allotted: 6 minutes

Book: My Guru's Blessings Book 4

Author: S. Daljeet Singh

Publisher: Gyan Khand Media

I CONTENTS (Answers to the following questions are expected in your speech. Please be brief and to the point. Contents are worth 60 points: 20 points for each question):

1. What advice does Bhagat Sheikh Farid ji give us for living a happy life? How does this advice help us?
2. Where did our Guru ji get the strength to help the suffering world? What should we do when we face problems ourselves or see others in a similar situation?
3. Why do we need guru ji's guidance to live a successful life? How do the stories of Guru ji's life and of elders help us?

II Presentation (40 points):

Included in this area are items like style, delivery, poise, eye contact, voice, diction, language and effectiveness.

Time allotted to finish the speech for this group is **6 minutes**. There is no penalty for finishing the speech either earlier than 6 minutes or during the grace period of next 30 seconds. After the grace period, i.e., after 6 minutes and 30 seconds have elapsed, one point would be deducted for every extra 10 seconds or part of 10 seconds, from every judge's score for the participant.

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Parents/Mentors may sit with children to read and discuss the book and questions, however the children should write their own answers. Parents/Mentors may verbally support the children develop thoughts, suggest the ways and means to use better language without providing exact language to use in the speech.

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GUIDELINES FOR CONTESTANTS AND JUDGES

Age Group: III (11 to 13 years)

Time allotted: 6 minutes

Book: Khalsa Generals

Author: Dr. Gurbakhsh Singh

I CONTENTS (Answers to the following questions are expected in your speech. Please be brief and to the point. Contents are worth 60 points: 20 points for each question):

1. Describe the character of the Khalsa Generals? How did they differ from the rulers of the time? What were the aims of Khalsa generals and how did they achieve those?
2. Describe the great qualities and the weaknesses of Maharajah Ranjit Singh ji.
3. Describe the role women played in Sikh struggle to free Punjab of foreign rule.

II Presentation (40 points):

Included in this area are items like style, delivery, poise, eye contact, voice, diction, language and effectiveness.

Time allotted to finish the speech for this group is **6 minutes**. There is no penalty for finishing the speech either earlier than 6 minutes or during the grace period of next 30 seconds. After the grace period, i.e., after 6 minutes and 30 seconds have elapsed, one point would be deducted for every extra 10 seconds or part of 10 seconds, from every judge's score for the participant.

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The participants should read the books independently, asking parents/mentors for support to understand the text and questions as needed. The participants should independently write their speeches, asking parents/mentors for suggestions, Gurbani references and reference points.

If your child's speech is prepared in Punjabi, it must still follow the guidelines above. If it is prepared in English, it can be translated into Punjabi after it is created per the above guidelines. However, once the speech is in Punjabi, your child should understand the speech in its entirety.

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GUIDELINES FOR CONTESTANTS AND JUDGES

Age Group: IV (14 to 17 years)

Time allotted: 7 minutes

Book: Baba Banda Singh Bahadur

Publisher: Sikh Missionary College, Ludhiana

I CONTENTS (Answers to the following questions are expected in your speech. Please be brief and to the point. Contents are worth 60 points: 20 points for each question):

1. Discuss some noteworthy achievements of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur. Explain what you think was his most courageous act.
2. The book says that Baba Banda Singh Bahadur "...was a seasoned tactician. The Mughals who had petrified the whole of India would surrender before small contingents of Baba Ji."

Question: Analyze some of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur's tactical approaches and explain how these approaches helped him in his missions.

3. The Sikhs went through tremendous struggles, hardships and sacrifices in maintaining their principles. As one of the many examples, the section on "*Procession of Arrested Sikhs in Delhi*" in the book is illustrative of their struggles and hardships. They still maintained steadfast faith and Sikhi sidak. As explained in the book, there were thousands upon thousands of Sikhs who were brutally tortured and killed but not even a single one of them wavered in his or her faith. In fact they repeatedly spurned lucrative offers and enticements to renounce their faith and live a comfortable life.

Question: What lies at the root of such invincible faith and fortitude? What lessons can we learn from the lives of those unwavering Sikhs that can help us in upholding Sikhi values in our own life in today's world?

III Presentation (40 points):

Included in this area are items like style, delivery, poise, eye contact, voice, diction, language and effectiveness.

Time allotted to finish the speech for this group is **7 minutes**. There is no penalty for finishing the speech either earlier than 7 minutes or during the grace period of next 30 seconds. After the grace period, i.e., after 7 minutes and 30 seconds have elapsed, one point would be deducted for every extra 10 seconds or part of 10 seconds, from every judge's score for the participant

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The participants should independently read the book and answer questions and ask adults for support only as reference points or to ask for guidance on Gurbani references.

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GUIDELINES FOR CONTESTANTS AND JUDGES

Age Group: V (16 to 22 years)

Time allotted: 8 minutes

Book: Asa Ki Vaar

Publisher: Sikh Missionary College, Ludhiana

The theme for this year is the Guru Ji's message in *Asa Ki Vaar*. This bani explains some of the most fundamental aspects of Sikhi, which bear upon important questions that Sikhs face today. An understanding of the concepts given in *Asa Ki Vaar* can help us greatly in living a Gurmat oriented life.

With the suggested book as a starting point, research and think about the concepts presented in *Asa Ki Vaar*, and about how this bani discusses some of the major themes presented in Sri Guru Granth Sahib in general.

The judges will consider the development of the arguments presented. They do not have to agree with the speaker; in fact, the viewpoint presented may be unusual, different or even unpopular. What matters is the logic, its development and its strength.

Competition at the International level will involve discussions around the above theme and related issues. We hope to encourage an understanding of the Sikh philosophy and Sikhi values, as well as promote the habits of critical thinking. This will also help in developing skills to discuss difficult issues with other Sikhs and with non-Sikhs.

For the speech competition at the Center and the Regional levels, the participants should address the three specific questions given below.

I CONTENTS (Answers to the following questions are expected in your speech. Please be brief and to the point. Contents are worth 60 points: 20 points for each question):

1. Briefly mention some important messages contained in *Asa Ki Vaar*. What is the most important message from *Asa Ki Vaar* that you hope to put in practice in your own life? Why is it important for you to personally live by that message?
2. Guru Sahib often found inspiration and spiritual insights by looking towards Creation to understand Truth. Yet, the same Creation is described as "false". Is there a contradiction between the two? Please explain.
3. *Asa Ki Vaar* rejects discrimination or mistreatment of others based on gender, caste and other divisions among humans, and emphasizes the oneness of all humanity. Briefly discuss the message of *Asa Ki Vaar* on various inequalities prevailing at Guru Ji's time, and analyze the importance of such a message in today's world.

II Presentation (40 points):

Included in this area are items like style, delivery, poise, eye contact, voice, diction, language and effectiveness. Time allotted to finish the speech for this group is **8 minutes**. There is no penalty for finishing the speech either earlier than 8 minutes or during the grace period of next 30 seconds. After the grace period, i.e., after 8 minutes and 30 seconds have elapsed, one point would be deducted for every extra 10 seconds or part of 10 seconds, from every judge's score for the participant.

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ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION - GROUP V

For group V, the guidelines at the International level are different from those at the Center and the Regional levels. The format at the International level is specifically designed to foster discussion and critical thinking.

What follow next are guidelines that are specific for the competition at the International level. *The Regions may, if they so desire, implement these guidelines at the Regional level also.*

- A. Hold the presentations in a setting like a hotel convention room or a college auditorium, although there is no reason why this could not also be done in a gurdwara.
- B. Arrange the participants in a circle. The audience can sit in a wider circle behind and around the participants. Appoint a moderator whose job is to stimulate discussion, in case it is flagging, and to keep it focused.
- C. **Phase 1.** Each participant will have two minutes to make an opening statement. The order of the participants is to be chosen at random. The opening statement does not necessarily need to cover every specific question and sub-question mentioned within the three questions that are addressed at the local and the regional level, but it needs to cover the overall theme in a competent manner.
- D. After each opening statement, another participant chosen at random will be asked to respond to the opening statement. Time allotted for the response would be one minute.
- E. After each opening statement and the response to it, there will be an open discussion among the participants for about five minutes.
- F. **Phase 2.** Each participant, chosen at random, will be asked a question by the moderator. The participant will have one minute to answer the question.
- G. After the participant has answered the question asked by the moderator, there would be an open discussion among the participants for about five minutes.
- H. During the discussion mentioned in E and G above, the moderator will ask questions from the participants as necessary to keep the discussion alive. The moderator will ensure that the discussion stays on track and that no one participant gets to dominate the discussion.
- I. **Phase 3.** Following the discussion, each participant will get one and a half minute to make a closing statement. The order of presentations is to be chosen at random.

The competitive part of the program will conclude here and judges will complete their evaluation at this point. What follows is equally useful but not part of the competition.

- J. **Optional Phase 4.** Following the program detailed above, if time permits, there will be an open discussion (20 to 30 minutes) on the subject but it will also allow the audience to participate. This will keep the audience interested and awake. The adults will learn, as will the young.

The moderator will carry a critical burden on his/her shoulders