



2021 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 V

Author: Sardar Daljeet 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. To whom should we leave all our worries? Why? How do we do that?
2. Why and how should we look pleasing to our best friend (Waheguru Ji)?
3. Which person should we consider truly rich and what advantages does he or she have over others in this life?

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: Selected Episodes from Sikh History, Volume 4

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. In your words, describe three inspiring incidents from Bidhi Chand Ji's life. Do you believe that Guru Ji can convert a Demon into a ਦੇਵਤਾ (*devta*)?
2. Do you believe that Sikh principles are clear, concise, and easy to follow? Why or why not?
3. Explain what valuable lessons you have learned from this book and how will you practice those in your life?

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: Brief History of The Sikh Gurus

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. Some people believe that there are differences in the teachings and outlook of the 10 historic Guru Sahibs. They believe some Gurus were pious and tranquil, while others were brave and courageous warriors. They believe that some Guru Sahibs were not political and advocated only peace, while others were very political and waged war. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
2. In most cultures, royalties pass on their power and position to their children, usually their eldest son. Why did the Sikh Gurus not follow this practice? What criteria did they use for choosing their successor? What kind of opposition did they face and how did they deal with it?
3. There are several sakhis of different Gursikhs in this book. Which Gursikh's sakhi impressed you the most? What inspires you in this Gursikh's journey and how can you apply learnings from those to your own life?

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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Age Group: IV (14 to 17 years)

Time allotted: 7 minutes

Book: The Message of Gurbani, Chapters 4, 5, 6

Author: Sardar 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. Several *pauris* in Anand Sahib reference being blessed by *gur prasad* as the means by which a Sikh may receive *naam* or attain *amrit*. It is a common theme throughout the Guru Granth Sahib that no one can achieve *anand* by their own efforts without the blessing of the Guru. Is receiving *gur prasad* simply a matter of luck or is it something you must actively work towards? What are some concrete steps you can take in your daily life to help attain the Guru's blessing?
2. In the *sloks* leading up to the ninth *pauri* of Asa di Var, Guru Nanak Dev Ji discusses the risk of increasing one's ego through the act of studying. Do academic pursuits prevent one from being a good Sikh? In a competitive world, how can you balance the desire to further your education with the risk of falling prey to a growing ego?
3. A central tenet of the Sikh faith is that all of humankind is part of one Universal Force, regardless of the name by which we identify the Creator. In a world suffering from so much strife, give an example of a recent conflict on a local, regional, or global scale and consider how this might be prevented or resolved by a better understanding of the Sikh principle of the oneness of humankind.

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

Theme: The Status of Women in Sikhi and Gurbani

Book: No book assigned

The theme for this year is "The Status of Women in Sikhi and Gurbani". Guru Sahibs have clearly and unambiguously emphasized complete equality among women and men. However, like most other segments of society, many Sikhs have fallen prey to treating women as lower than men, and often mistreating women badly. Understanding the guiding principles and historical aspects behind equality among men and women is essential in dealing with this serious challenge faced by Sikhi, and to provide solutions/directions to other segments of society. Please research and think about various aspects of the theme and related issues. Among other aspects, think about why many Sikhs do not follow this important message of our Gurus, and what can be done to remedy this situation.

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 various related issues. We hope to encourage an understanding of the Gurmat values based on Gurbani, History and Rehat, 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. Discuss examples—either from Sikh history or from the present times—of women living their lives in accordance with the status of women laid out in Gurbani. Explain your answer.
2. Many Sikhs believe women should not be part of the ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ (*Panj Pyaare*) during ਖੰਡੇ ਬਾਟੇ ਦੀ ਪਾਹੁਲ (*Khande Baate Di Pahul*) ceremony or during a nagar keertan. Women are also not allowed to recite keertan in Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. Many other Sikhs, however, strongly disagree with these views and practices, as they believe any distinction between men and women is against gurmat.

What are your thoughts on these issues and why? How would you convince those on the other side of the argument of your views on these specific issues?

3. It is almost impossible to think of any country, religion, race, profession, or any other segment of society where women are really treated equal to men and are not mistreated.

What underlies such universal mistreatment of women? What approach can you suggest to address such problems? Why do you think your approach would succeed in changing a system that has been totally resistant to change for thousands of years?

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

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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