



2024 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. There are different types of wealth, what types of wealth you think are most important and why? Describe the true, everlasting wealth that we should seek? How does this spiritual wealth help us lead a better life?
2. Who is truly your best friend in life? How do you find your best friend and how can you be with your best friend forever?
3. Why should you honor your parents? Give some examples of how you honor and respect your parents and other elders

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 the 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: Teaching Sikh Heritage to Youth

Author: Dr. Gurbaksh 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. Why is it important to speak publicly about Sikhi? Is it more important to teach non-Sikhs about Sikhi (speak externally) or discuss with Sikhs about getting closer to Waheguru (speak internally)? Why?
2. Should we hide our kirpan if others are threatened by it? How can we change others' negative view of the kirpan?
3. What lessons in the book Teaching Sikh Heritage to the Youth did you learn the most from? Why?

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 the 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: 20 Minutes Guide to the Sikh Faith

Author: Sardar Gian 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. Why is Guru Nanak Dev Ji considered a visionary? What are some examples to support this?
2. Why do you think Guru Arjun Dev Ji included writings/compositions of Non-Sikhs in the Aad Granth/Sri Guru Granth Sahib? Does this message align with our Gurus teachings? Why or why not?
3. What are some of the main components and practices of the Gurdwara? What is their significance and how do they relate to the teachings of our Gurus?

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: The Clash of Cultures

Author: Sardar Gursimran 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. Sikhi principles steadfastly focus on Sarbat da Bhala to the extent that Sikhs protected the rights of others even at the cost of their own lives. However, as the book 'The Clash of Cultures' highlights, a clash of cultures has been playing a role in atrocities committed against Sikhs over the centuries, including in the events of 1984 and subsequent years.
Discuss how differences in cultures, as described in the book, could lead to such serious consequences. Is there a way to avoid such differences in cultures from leading to events like those that occurred in 1984 and subsequent years?
2. For centuries, there have been serious attempts to wipe out Sikhs and Sikhi, both at the physical and the doctrinal level. None of these attempts have succeeded in vanquishing us.
What underlies our resilience and the spirit of Charhdi Kala in the face of extreme brutalities? How have these qualities helped us survive under persistent attempts to annihilate us?
3. The world has cared very little about the events of 1984 and subsequent years.
What are the reasons for such lack of global response to the 1984 and related events and even lack of awareness of those events? Do Sikhs bear any responsibility for such lack of awareness or response? Suggest practical and viable approaches for raising awareness of human rights violations committed against Sikhs.

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 the 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 Ghalughara of 1984(40th Anniversary) and Subsequent Sikh Struggle

Book: No book assigned

Commemorating the 40th anniversary, this year's theme revolves around the Battle of Amritsar and Ghallughara (ਘੱਲੂਘਾਰਾ) in 1984 and the subsequent Sikh struggle. Since the fall of Sarkar-e-Khalsa and the colonization of Panjab in 1849, Sikhs have endeavored in their struggle for justice and sovereignty through various movements to achieve justice and realize Khalsa jee kay Bol Baley – a phrase we use in our daily Ardaas. This struggle has involved massive battles and countless sacrifices. Amidst the current state of the Panth and ongoing global geopolitical developments, Panth and Panjab are expected and poised to be impacted by numerous challenges and possibilities in the near future. What should the Sikhs, especially the youth do to effectively fight against injustice and create an environment that will help them achieve their objective of Khalsa jee kay Bol Baley?

There is no specific book assigned for this year's theme. Research and learn about the happenings and analyze the issues mentioned in the above paragraph, as well as other issues that you think are important in this context. Keep in mind that the purpose of this competition is to encourage an open discussion on areas that will define our community and its future. Discussion and debate will also promote the habits and methods of critical thinking while imparting useful life-skills.

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.

While competition at the international level would involve discussions around the above theme and related issues, 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. What is your understanding of "Khalsa ji Kay Bol Baley"? *Considering Sikh principles and various historical movements aimed at asserting Sikh sovereignty over the last 175 years since 1849, do you think that the militant struggle (ਖਾੜਕੂ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼) after 1984 was necessary and justifiable? Did it achieve its intended aim? What did we learn from this struggle?*

2. *According to Sikh ideals, is Shahadat (ਸ਼ਹਾਦਤ) an asset or detriment to the Panth, and why? Can you illustrate the life of a Shaheed in the 1984 Ghallughara or subsequent Sikh struggle who inspires you?*

3. *Four decades have passed since the 1984 Sikh Ghallughara, and South Asia has become a stage for geopolitical conflict between China and the USA-led West. India is pushing the Hindutva project, and its security agencies are intensifying the suppression of minorities, particularly assassinations of Sikh activists worldwide. What are the immediate and long-term threats and opportunities for the Panth and Punjab? What role can Sikh youth in the diaspora play by putting Sikh principles of Bhakti and Shakti into practice in our march to achieve Khalsa Ji Kay Bol Baley?*



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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 to the competition at the International level. ***The Regions may, if they so desire, implement these guidelines at the Regional level also.***

Phase 1.

1. Each participant has two minutes to make an opening statement. The order of the participants is 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.
2. After each opening statement, another participant chosen at random will be asked to respond to the opening statement. Time allotted for the response is one minute.
3. After each opening statement and the response to it, there will be an open discussion among the participants for about five minutes.
4. During the discussion mentioned in 3 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.

Phase 2.

Following Phase 1, each participant will get one and a half minute to make a closing statement. The order of presentations is to be chosen at random.

Note:

While it is understandable and acceptable for the participants to come with a prepared closing statement, they are encouraged to incorporate relevant elements from the discussion during Phase 1 into their closing statement. That reflects a participant's ability to comprehend what is being discussed, analyze it, and integrate some relevant points from the discussion into their own statement.

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