



2025 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: The Illustrated Story of Chamkaur Sahib

Author: Prof. Jagdish 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. What were the reasons that made Moghul emperor Aurangzeb attack Anandpur Sahib in 1695? What inspired Sikhs to fight with such courage and bravery in every battle with Moghuls following the battle of Anandpur Sahib in 1704?
2. Why and when did the battle of Chamkaur Sahib take place? What did you learn from the battle of Chamkaur Sahib?
3. What lessons did you learn from the martyrdom of Sahibzada Ajit Singh ji and Sahibzada Jujhar Singh ji? If you could ask Sahibzadas Ajit Singh ji and Jujhar Singh ji anything, what would it be and 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 **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: Sikh Sakhis (Part 3) - Brave Sikh Women

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. Which brave Sikh woman from the stories did you enjoy learning about most and why?
2. How did the Sikh women in the stories show courage in difficult situations? How did they inspire others?
3. What lessons can we learn from the brave Sikh women about standing up for what's right? How can you apply these lessons in 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 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.

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: III (11 to 13 years)

Time allotted: 6 minutes

Book: Selected Episodes from Sikh History Part IV

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. What were the reasons for the battles fought by Guru Gobind Singh ji? Do you think a person's life can be transformed by Guru's blessings, Gurbani, Sangat, and self-effort? Explain by giving two examples from the book.
2. Explain the following statement by giving examples: "Mind's code of conduct is more important than code of conduct of the body". Rather than giving up their principles for a comfortable life, why do martyrs choose to sacrifice their life?
3. Do you think Sikh principles are easy to follow? Why or why not? What valuable lessons have you 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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IV Suggestions on preparing youth for the Sikh Youth Symposium:

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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 Message of Gurbani – Jap Ji Overview

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):

Please answer the following questions, with references from Gurbani, the lives of the Gurus, and other relevant sources.

1. The first two pauris of Jap Ji Sahib focus on *hukam*. What is *hukam*? How do you accept *hukam* in your daily life? If everything is in *Waheguru's hukam*, do we have any free will?
2. The fifteenth pauri of Jap Ji Sahib references *mokh duaar*. What is *mokh duaar*? How do we find *mokh duaar*? What prevents us from finding *mokhduaar*?
- 3: *Ik onkar* embodies the idea of oneness. Based on what you have learned from Jap Ji Sahib, how have you lived your life so far? What do you need to improve to achieve oneness?

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.

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: V (16 to 22 years)

Time allotted: 8 minutes

Theme: Guru's Way as the worldview through the lens of Asa-Ki-Vaar

Book: No book assigned

The theme for this year is "Guru's Way as the worldview through the lens of Asa-Ki-Vaar". Gurbani provides the foundation for how Sikhs are to live their lives at a personal and at the Panthic level. Asa-Ki-Vaar offers us clear look into living our lives as Gursikhs. Discussions on the guidance provided by Asa-Ki-Vaar would enhance our ability to form our worldview in line with Guru's Way. Please research and think about various aspects of the theme and related issues.

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. How can the philosophical and ethical tenets embedded within Asa Ki Vaar be effectively utilized to shape a contemporary Sikh worldview, and subsequently serve as a foundational framework for disseminating the Guru's message in the world today?
2. How can the teachings and symbolism within Asa Ki Vaar be applied to facilitate personal introspection and community reflection, enabling Sikhs to assess their individual and collective adherence to the Guru's principles and identify areas for spiritual growth and communal improvement?
3. Asa Ki Vaar addresses issues of social justice, inequality, human imperfections, and spiritual liberation. How does this Baani offer hope and optimism to overcome these challenges? Cite specific examples or experiences from the Sikh world around you to support your view.

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 the 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.

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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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