

Developing and Giving Oral Reasons

One of the objectives of the Consumer Decision-Making Contest is to help you learn to recognize your thoughts and express them in a clear, confident manner. Developing and giving reasons will help you do that.

You may take notes during judging to use as a reminder. However, you will not be allowed to use them when giving oral reasons to judges.

Your thoughts should be organized in a logical sequence. Tell how and why decisions were made to place the class, beginning with the highest ranking item.

A suggested outline for presenting reasons is:

OPENING STATEMENT:
Give the name of the class and order of placing, i.e. "I place this class of (name of class) 2- 1 - 4 - 3."

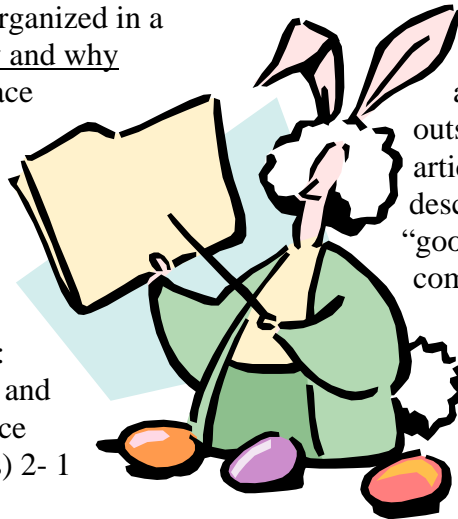
GENERAL STATEMENT: Indicate how you saw the class as a whole. The class may have:

- an outstanding or "easy" top
- a close top pair
- a close middle pair
- a close bottom pair
- an "easy" bottom
- a close class

an even class
two pairs

COMPARISON OF EACH PAIR: Give reasons for placing 2 over 1 (first pair), reasons for 1 over 4 (second pair), reasons for placing 4 over 3 at the bottom. Be specific in giving comparisons.

Always tell why one item is superior to another in positive terms. Use comparative terms. Rather than "2 is a large, multipurpose product," say "2 is a larger, more multipurpose appliance than 1." Bring out the outstanding differences among the articles. Be specific in your description. Try not to use words "good," "nice," and "better" in making comparisons. Make the reasons short, snappy, and definite.



ADMISSIONS OR GRANTS: If an item placed lower is superior in some respect, admit (or grant) this fact when giving reasons.

Also state that with this superior quality, it still did not warrant a higher placing. If something can be improved on the item you placed first, be sure to state it. Admissions are usually given after the comparison.

CONCLUSION OR CLOSING

STATEMENT: Complete your reasons in a decisive way, i.e. “Therefore, I place this class of (name of class) 2-1-4-3.”

Rules to follow in giving oral reasons are suggested in the handout on the following pages. These should be read by you and your leader. Use the checklist in item 19 to help you prepare. A 2 minute time limit for reasons will be enforced.

RULES TO FOLLOW IN GIVING ORAL REASONS

1. Do not use notes when presenting reasons to the judge. Learn to visualize the class. The notes help get reasons organized and ready, but cannot be used in giving reasons before the judges. You may take notes while you are viewing and placing the classes.
2. Speak in a slightly louder than ordinary tone of voice. Do not shout or yell. Be assertive and enthusiastic – confident.
3. Stand approximately 6-10 feet from the judges.
4. Always start reasons by giving the placing. Example: *I placed this class of Checking Accounts 1-2-3-4.* Then go into the reasons as to why the class was placed as it was.
5. Be sure to compare each item to the one you placed below. Refer to the sample set of reasons on some of the following pages.
6. Use comparative terms. Note: Most of these terms are adjectives ending in “er.”
7. Be concise and definite. Don’t hunt for things to say. If you don’t remember, go on to the next pair you are to discuss.
8. Never use indefinite words such as better, good, etc. They explain nothing about the class and do not explain why one item is superior to another. Instead, use precise words such as sharper, lighter-weight, or easier to use.
9. Tell why one placed over two, then two over three, then three over four, and a brief statement as to why four was placed bottom.
10. End reasons strongly. Give a concise final statement as to why you placed the last item last, then repeat total placings.
11. Always think about the class – as you talk, learn to visualize. Don’t memorize your reasons. This probably won’t help.
12. Do not learn one set of reasons and apply it to every class you judge. Remember, no two items are exactly alike and no two classes are alike. Remember that the placing of the class is closely related to the situation statement provided for the class judged.
13. Big, fancy words are not important. Use every-day terminology – “straight from the shoulder” terms.
14. The truth about the class is the most important factor in giving reasons. Do not claim strong points that are not true! Remember the judges have read the same study guides and placed the classes before you.
15. Reasons need not be long. A minute and a half is enough time if your thoughts are well organized. Two minutes is the maximum.
16. Always be prepared to answer questions concerning the class. If you can readily visualize the class, answering questions is easy. Evaluation of facts and figures are logical questions. Know them.
17. Every good decision should be able to be backed up with a good set of reasons.
18. Train to be able to give a good set of reasons on any class. Practice. Record, audio or video, your presentation and then evaluate it. Ask others to evaluate your work.
19. Use the following checklist to evaluate you or your team members’ reasons.

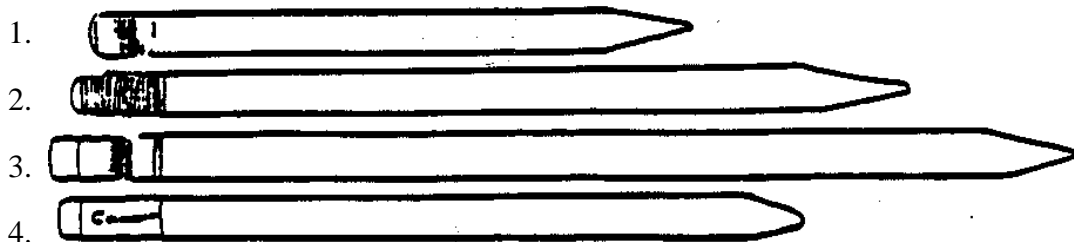
HOW GOOD ARE YOUR REASONS?

	Yes	No
Content		
Are your reasons meaningful?		
Did your reasons show that you knew the criteria in the situation?		
Speech and Grammar		
Did your statements flow smoothly?		
Did you have something to say?		
Did you say it as though you meant it?		
Was your voice too loud or too weak?		
Accuracy		
Were your statements truthful?		
Were your statements accurate?		
Emphasis		
Did you stress major differences?		
Did you give the most important points first?		
Completeness		
Were all major points covered?		
Did your reasons last less than two minutes?		
Did you give both good and bad points?		
Terms		
Did you use the proper terms for the class?		
Did you use the terms correctly?		
Did you use comparative terms?		
Delivery		
Were your reasons organized in a logical manner?		
Did you maintain eye contact with the judge?		
Did you really believe in yourself?		
Did you really believe in your reasons?		

SAMPLE CLASS

Here is a class of pencils:

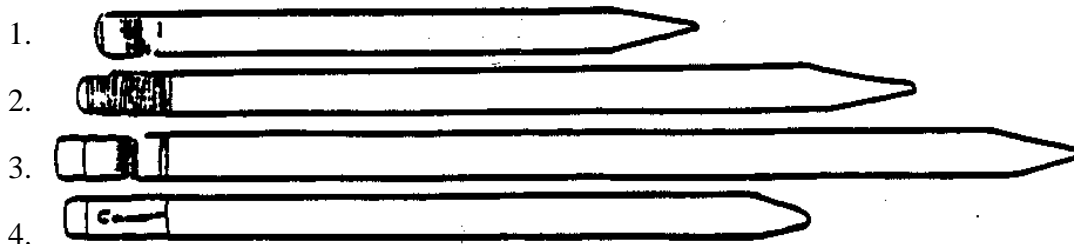
Look at the four pencils shown below. Place in order based upon length, size of eraser, and sharpness of point.



Put your placing in the lines below.

_____ _____ _____ _____
 First Second Third Fourth

Picture the class in your mind. (Let's look at the pencils again.)



Make mental or written notes about each item and how it meets the standards for the class.

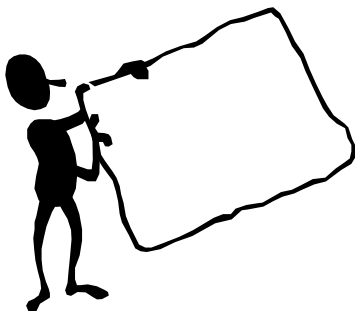
SAMPLE NOTES

NUMBER STANDARDS	1	2	3	4
Longest	-	+	++	-
Sharpest Point	-	+	++	-
Biggest Eraser	-	-	++	+

Eraser on #1 is black and might smear.

Use your notes and mental picture to organize reasons. Reasons for the class of pencils might be given like this:

OUTLINE	REASONS
Opening statement	I place this class of pencils 3-2-4-1
General statement about the class	I found this class of pencils easy to judge with a definite top and definite bottom. I considered the length of the pencil and eraser, and sharpness of the point when placing the class.
Reasons for placing the first pair	I placed 3 over 2 because 3 is the longest pencil with the sharpest point and biggest eraser, while 2 has a much smaller eraser and is somewhat shorter.
Reasons for placing the second pair	I placed 2 over 4 because 2 is longer than 4 with a sharper point.
Admissions or grants	4 however, has a bigger eraser than 2.
Reasons for placing the third pair	I placed 4 over 1 because 4 is longer than 1 with a bigger eraser.
Admissions or grants	1 has a sharper point than 4, but 4 could be sharpened and still be about the size of 1.
Reasons for the bottom placing	I placed 1 last because it is the shortest pencil of the four with an eraser which is not only the smallest, but is also black and might smear.
Conclusion or closing statement	Therefore, I place this class of pencils 3-2-4-1.



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