JUDGING SHEET
For
JOSEPH S. RUMBAUGH HISTORICAL ORATION CONTEST
**The oration will be presented without the use of notes or props*

Points for Consideration	Speaker by Number Only									
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Composition 15 pts										
Delivery 40 pts										
Significance 15 pts										
History 30 pts										
General Excellence										
Points Scored (add)										
**see below Penalty Points										
Total Points (Grand total can be over 100)										

Attention Please: General Excellence is to be used only if necessary. General Excellence will be interpreted as follows: How impressive and convincing was the oration? Through joint consultation of the judges, General Excellence will be the basis for determining a winner in the case of a tie. (Points to be awarded should be no greater than 10 points)

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First Place No. 	_____ 	**Points_____**

Second Place No. 	_____ 	**Points_____** 	Also enter on
	Chief Judges Summary Sheet
Third Place No. 	_____ **Points_____**

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**Penalty Points will come into play only if the official timer and/or official prompter indicate the contestant spoke less than five minutes, more than 6 minutes, and/or seriously deviated from the prepared manuscript. The judges in a private conference will access the timer's report and jointly decide the total sum of the penalty.

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COMPOSITION: (15 points maximum)

Delivery relates to the manner in which the speaker communicates, and composition relates to what the speaker says. A skillful orator with weak arguments and poor organization is wasting the audience's time because the orator is unlikely to persuade the audience to accept a weak thesis no matter how well it is delivered.

Organization. The speaker should clearly state the thesis early in the talk so the audience is thinking about it throughout the talk. Then the speaker should begin building his case with examples, quotes, rhetorical questions, logic and any other methods that support the thesis. The speaker should use the arguments to draw the logical conclusion for the audience and prove the thesis. The conclusion should pull it all together and show how the thesis has been established. Examples or arguments, which do not directly support the main thesis, may confuse the audience and detract from the argument.

Vocabulary, Syntax and Grammar. To a skillful orator, words are the brushes and colors, which paint a picture for an audience. Carefully chosen words create a precise message. Words should be chosen to convey the message, not simply to impress the audience that the orator knows big words. The goal is to persuade.

Logic. Once the speaker establishes the thesis, the entire speech should be designed to support and prove that thesis. Examples or arguments that do not logically support the thesis should be discounted. Flamboyant statements unrelated to the thesis, or statements obviously calculated to appeal to a perceived bias of the audience may be discounted as irrelevant. The ultimate determination as to whether the speaker's composition is logical will occur after you hear all of the speech, and ignoring the delivery, decide if the arguments and examples supported and proved the thesis.

DELIVERY: (40 points maximum)

This is an oratorical contest so a significant amount of points should be allocated to the speaker's oratorical skills. There are three main areas to look at, which are as follows:

Voice. How well does the speaker pronounce all of the words and does the speaker enunciate properly? The speaker's voice should be modulated from soft to loud and not monotone. The pace and cadence should be varied. A speaker who consistently speaks too fast and is difficult to understand should not be graded as highly as someone who is understandable. Does the speaker speak loudly enough to be heard? A good speaker has a rhythmic style, which is smooth and persuasive. Speakers who yell simply for the shock value may have weaker arguments or poor oratorical skills.

Body Movement and Gestures. Speakers who pace back and forth are distracting. Some movement, however, if it is done for emphasis or to serve as a break between points or sections, can be powerful. Points should not necessarily be subtracted if a speaker stands rigidly in one place, as body movement is not required for an effective oration. Gestures are one of the hardest oratorical tools a speaker must master. Gestures should seem to spring up effortlessly, almost as an afterthought. A gesture that appears mechanical, awkward or rehearsed distracts from a speech and causes the audience to think about the clumsy gesture and not what is being said. An orator is better off not using gestures if the gestures are not natural. Gestures should be employed to provide emphasis for points in the speech and not just for the sake of using a gesture.

Appearance. Audiences derive their first impression of an orator by perceiving his or her appearance. Well-trimmed and combed hair and well-pressed clothing are noted immediately. Conservative attire generally sends a message to the audience that the speaker is credible, believable and sincere. Orators speak to entertain, inform or persuade, and the finest orators are able to do all three at once. The typical orator in our contest will give a speech designed to persuade the audience as to the speaker's thesis. If the audience believes the orator is not credible or sincere then they will be unlikely to be persuaded by the orator's arguments and the oration must be judged a failure. An intangible to consider is the speaker's charisma or stage presence. Some speakers are able to connect with an audience and project a feeling of authority and believability that can be a powerful persuasive tool.

Significance: (15 points maximum)

The study of history can be interesting but it is not particularly relevant to our daily lives unless a meaningful connection can be established. The American Revolution may not contain much of interest for most Americans today, unless it can be shown to be relevant to our everyday lives. The SAR exists to make the American Revolution come alive, to show its importance to our lives today, and to reaffirm Americans beliefs in those principles of patriotism and sacrifice.

Do the people, or events referenced in the speech typify the American spirit or character, and does it offer glimpses into the way we view the world today?   Are there lessons to be learned from the founding of our country, which offer insights into what our country should do today? These are all questions, which could be relevant and important to us today. The oration should ask these questions and then be able to answer them affirmatively.

History: (30 maximum points)

We are an organization devoted to studying, preserving and promoting the history of the American Revolution and our founding fathers. No one should ever win our oratorical contest unless his or her speech is firmly grounded in that era of history. The speech should focus on some aspect of the American Revolution or the founding of our country. A passing reference to the founding of our country as an excuse to devote most of the speech to some other subject should result in a severe downgrading in this category.

While there is nothing wrong with reciting familiar tales from the Revolutionary War, it may be worth more points if the speaker did some original research or perhaps analyzes old facts and comes up with a novel interpretation or theory. The emphasis on the history of the American Revolution in the speech should make it apparent to any listener that the oration is designed for the SAR and not the American Legion or some other patriotic organization. While there is nothing inherently wrong with a speech lauding the World War II soldier, or the charge up San Juan Hill in the Spanish American War, it is not the focus of the SAR. The winning speech should be the best oration by the best orator on a subject central to the beliefs and goals of the SAR.