



# MESA DAY CONTEST RULES

## 2025-2026

(FINAL)

### Environmental Science ~ Prepared Speech

- LEVEL:** Middle School (MS)
- DIVISION(S):** Grade 6 and Grades 7/8
- COMPOSITION OF TEAM:** 2-3 students per team
- NUMBER OF TEAMS:** Preliminary – Determined by your local MESA center  
Regional – # of teams per division at the discretion of each region (Northern, Central, LA/Central Coast, and Southern)
- SPONSORS:** University of California Irvine MESA College Prep  
San Jose State University MESA College Prep
- OVERVIEW:** **Changes, if any, from “DRAFT” rules are highlighted in “yellow.”**  
Teams will choose a topic from the official topic list, research, prepare, and deliver a short prepared speech which demonstrates their knowledge of the subject matter.
- Participation logistics and limits may vary by host site. Advisors and students are responsible for verifying this information with their local MESA center.**
- RESOURCES:** [Prepare Speech Resources](#)
- MATERIALS:** The host MESA Center will provide the following:
- Internet-enabled computer and projector with HDMI/USB/VGA cables (verify with the Host Center)
  - Standard table
- GENERAL RULES:**
- 1) Teams must consist of 2 to 3 students. Teams consisting of 1 (one) student will not be allowed to compete.
  - 2) Prior to MESA Day, teams **MUST** select one of the topics below.
    - a. The Carbon Footprint of Battery Production
      - i) Examine the environmental impact of mining and processing raw minerals and metals (e.g., lithium, cobalt, nickel, rare earth elements, etc.) needed for battery production.
    - b. Environmental Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Mining
      - i) Examine the relationship between AI data centers and air quality in surrounding neighborhoods.

c. Environmental Pollution and E-Waste Management

- i) Examine how the improper disposal of electronics threatens environmental health and sustainability.
- 3) Teams must research their topic, thoroughly prepare, and rehearse an oral presentation that clearly demonstrates their collective ideas.
- 4) Teams may use notes during the delivery of their presentation, however they should not read their presentation.
- 5) Teams **MUST** use at least one visual aid which assists in the understanding of the topic. Visual aids may include but are not limited to: PowerPoint/slideshow presentation, model, handout, poster, or video (confirm audio compatibility with the Host Center).
- 6) Each team will have one (1) minute to prepare and up to five (5) minutes to present. All team members should actively participate in the presentation.
- 7) Teams which advance to Regional MESA Day may use the same topic presented during the Preliminary competition.

**JUDGING:**

- 1) Judges will determine team order by random selection and will post the team order prior to the start of competition.
- 2) The team must be ready to present when called or forfeit the competition.
- 3) Only judges, MESA staff, and competing teams will be allowed in the competition room.
- 4) Presentation may not exceed 5 minutes. Once 5 minutes has elapsed, teams will be stopped and prevented from speaking beyond the 5 minute mark.
- 5) Judges will provide time signals at the following intervals: one (1) minute, thirty (30) seconds, and five (5) seconds remaining.
- 6) At the conclusion of each presentation, the panel of judges shall evaluate each team according to the Scoring Sheet. Judges' scores will be averaged to determine final scores.
- 7) **In the event of a tie**, the team with the highest "Content" score shall be the winner. If teams are still tied, duplicate awards shall be given.

**AWARDS:**

- Awards will be given per division: Grade 6 and Grades 7/8.
- Medals will be awarded for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place.
- Please check with your MESA center to determine the number of teams that advance to Regional MESA Day.

**ATTACHMENTS/APPENDIX:**

- Score Sheet

**SCORE SHEET FOR PREPARED SPEECH****Middle School – Grades 6 and Grades 7/8***Copies of this inspection and score sheet will be provided by the MESA Day Host Center.*

Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_ MESA Center: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade 6 or 7/8(circle one)**

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Required Elements	YES		NO		
Team consist of 2-3 students			Unable to compete		
Visual aid present			Unable to compete		
Presentation addresses topic from the official list			Unable to place		
Content	Excellent (5 points)	Very Good (4 points)	Good (3 points)	Satisfactory (2 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)
<b>Knowledge/Understanding of Topic:</b> Comprehensive understanding and explanation of the topic	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Organization/Structure:</b> Clearly organized with distinct and relevant introduction, body, & conclusion.	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Logical Flow/Reasoning:</b> On topic, deliberate progression of information, smooth transitions.	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Evidence/Examples:</b> Provides relevant supporting materials and real world examples directly linked to the topic.	5	4	3	2	1
Presentation	Excellent (5 points)	Very Good (4 points)	Good (3 points)	Satisfactory (2 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)
<b>Team Introduction:</b> Creative introduction of team members that includes names, grades, MESA center and topic presented.	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Body Language:</b> Confident, relaxed personable demeanor; fluid movements enhance presentation.	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Pace/Flow/Vocal Control:</b> Appropriate timing moves the audience smoothly from point-point. Voice clear & projects; clear pronunciation & enunciation.	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Effective Use of Language:</b> Clever, concise, and appropriate word choice; use of meaningful antidotes, statistics, or quotes.	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Audience Engagement &amp; Impact/Overall Presentation:</b> Direct eye contact; effective use of gestures & facial expressions. Broad appeal and stimulates audience interest.	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Visual Aid:</b> Supports & enhances audience understanding of topic; creative; integrated seamlessly into presentation. (2x points)	10	8	6	4	2
<b>Team Participation:</b> All team members participate meaningfully in the presentation.	5	4	3	2	1
<b>COLUMN TOTALS:</b>					
<b>FINAL SCORE:</b>	<b>/60</b>				