

# Virtual Competition Video & Audio Checklist

Set yourself up for success in online tournaments by following this guide

- Eliminate background distractions.** Choose a neutral background, (preferably off-white or grey) such as a blank wall in your house, or a wall with minimal decorations. Perform (or record) in front of this background.
- Adjust camera placement.** Set up your device so that you are standing square to the camera. Avoid extreme camera angles (we don't want to be looking down on you, or staring up at you). Put your device on top of a stack of books to level the camera, if needed.
- Frame yourself.** Stand so that we can see you from about the waist up. We don't need to see your feet or your lower legs (unless they are critical to your speech). Be sure *not* to cut the top of your head off by standing too close to the camera.
- Use framing creatively.** Don't be afraid to use your position in front of the camera to your advantage. Would it make sense to get up close and personal to the camera at a certain point in your speech? Try it out!
- Adjust your lighting.** Make sure that the lighting (especially on your face) is even. Harsh shadows or overexposure will make it hard to see you and your facial expressions. When possible, use natural light. Find a window in your house that gets indirect sunlight to film near. (If your windows get direct sunlight, try hanging a curtain to diffuse the light). You may need to bring extra lamps into the room, to ensure even lighting.
- Avoid backlighting.** Do not stand with your back facing a bright light source. This will illuminate the background instead of your face!
- Be mindful of your internet connection.** If you have video connection problems, try turning off internet-connected devices you are not using during your performance. [Here](#) is an article that gives more bandwidth tips.
- Check your audio settings.** If you choose to wear wireless earbuds during your performance, make sure that your device's audio input and output are set to the earbuds. *Note: test your audio with and without them. You may not need earbuds for better audio.*
- Test your connection.** Connect with a coach, teammate, or friend online before the tournament to test your audio and video connection. Run through a speech with them, and get their feedback on how you looked and sounded. Troubleshoot ahead of time so you don't have to worry the day of. *Note: If the tournament is synchronous and running on Zoom, for instance, try to use that specific platform to test your connection beforehand.*

