

Standards of Adjudication

Adjudicators must acquaint themselves with standards of performance which may be expected from school groups and soloists. The entire rating plan is based on this understanding. All groups earning the same rating should have attained approximately the same level of performance. Inclusion within the same division of groups of widely varying achievements is a misuse of the rating system. Expected levels of achievement may vary according to the scope and location of the assessment.

Standards for ratings in the widely-used five division plan are quoted below, with some explanatory remarks. It is strongly urged that, when these ratings are used, no plus or minus signs or other means of qualifying the ratings be employed. It is essential that the adjudicator offer criticisms which support and clarify the rating.

Five-Division Plan for Performance

Rating I (Division 1) This rating reflects an outstanding performance. While the judge might have some minor points to criticize and make some helpful suggestion for further improvement, his/her comment sheet would have a preponderance of A's for each of the categories. His/her remarks would generally be complimentary for outstanding work.

Rating II (Division 2) This rating reflects an outstanding performance in many respects, but not one worthy of the highest rating due to minor defects. It is a performance of distinctive quality. The player or group in this division usually shows the results of sound, fundamental training, but the performance lacks the polish and finesse necessary to qualify for Division 1. In the squares on this comment sheet there would be some A's but there would also be some B's. It is relatively easy for a judge to comment on such a performance because the weaknesses stand out clearly against a generally first-rate background, and suggestions can usually be focused on something specific and helpful.

Rating III (Division 3). This rating is awarded for a good performance, but one that is not outstanding. The performance shows accomplishment and marked promise, but is lacking in one or more essential qualities. This division indicates much room for improvement in any of the fundamental items listed on the adjudicator's comment sheet. Such a comment sheet might show a few A's and B's, but would show quite a few C's. There would probably not be time or space to record each separate error as it occurred, but the group would have some basically fine qualities, and there should be ample opportunities for the judge to make suggestions for general improvement in those fundamental factors in which the performance revealed weaknesses.

Rating IV (Division 4). This rating describes a performance that shows some obvious weaknesses. These may reflect handicaps in the way of instrumentation or lack of rehearsal time. This classification represents a performance which is generally weak and uncertain. There are numerous errors and the performance reveals basic weaknesses in most of the fundamental factors listed on the score sheet. The judge's comment sheet will show a great many D's and will probably not devote much space to pointing out specific errors in the works performed. Comments, however, will likely be encouraging and contain helpful suggestions for improvement. They might suggest such things as a more favorable screening of players. The judge might even make specific recommendations for ensemble or individual studies and exercises which would contribute to the development of a player or the group.

Rating V (Division 5). This rating indicates a performance which reveals much room for improvement. This division is rarely used even by the most critical of judges. It indicates a performance in which the players reveal almost a complete lack of preparedness and understanding. In some cases this may be due to immature students attempting music which is far too advanced for them. In others, it may be due to an accumulation of careless and bad playing habits, which only tend to become accentuated and more noticeable as the player becomes older. The judge's comment sheet will, of course, be filled with D's and E's. A great deal of tact should be used in comments to soloists or groups in these lower

divisions. If there are any commendable features in the performance, they may be singled out. Perhaps there is one outstanding player in the group. This student could be held up as a model. Sometimes, only the stage deportment and appearance can be commented on favorably, but even this may be some comfort. Remarks should be honest, never sarcastic. They should make suggestions for improvement.

Five Division Plan for Sight Reading

Rating I (Division 1). All the parts are played or sung accurately and with musical sensitivity. The secondary parts of instrumental compositions are played with confidence. Balance is maintained between voice parts of choral compositions. Where technical errors occur, they are quickly recognized by the performers themselves and the same mistake does not occur twice. The selection is not only performed with technical accuracy, but with good attention to its expressive features.

Rating II (Division 2). This is an authentic reading on the whole, but one which is marred by a considerable number of technical errors. The section leaders carry the group through well, but there is a lack of precision and solidity because many in the group are not performing with confidence. The playing lacks the fluency and finesse of a Superior performance. The rhythms are not always accurately performed. Instrumentalists are careless as to articulations. Singers fail to enunciate clearly. Expressive features are not carefully noted.

Rating III (Division 3). This is not a clean performance by any means. There are many wrong notes. Key signatures are not recognized; wrong intervals are sung; rhythmic patterns are not correctly performed. There is little attention given to expressional features. A few leaders hold the selection together, but there are many who frequently get lost and do not contribute to the performance. Stops may be necessary to rally wanderers to a fresh start. Such a group might show qualities which would enable it to give a fine performance of a prepared selection, but it obviously needs more experience and training in the reading of unfamiliar music.

Rating IV (Division 4). This performance is full of technical errors. Many students are lost a good deal of the time. It reveals weakness in the fundamentals of tone production, rhythm, articulation, enunciation, and other basic factors. There will probably be numerous stops or at least places which approach a complete breakdown. The judge's comment sheet will show many D's. It would be of little use for the judge to attempt to list specific errors. Comments should be encouraging and offer suggestions for a course of training which would prepare the students to read with greater confidence and assurance the next time they have the opportunity to read at sight.

Rating V (Division 5). This rating indicates a performance which reveals much room for improvement. The director should check the use of methods, schedule, etc., with those of more mature organizations. This division is rarely used even by the most critical judges. It indicates a performance in which the students reveal almost a complete lack of preparedness and understanding. The students in such a group have probably been taught a few pieces largely by rote and even in those pieces have developed many undesirable habits. The selections they attempt at sight are barely recognizable and such a group will often give up before the test is completed.

Adjudicators

It will be the responsibility of the respective District Director to determine the number of and to secure adjudicators for various events, keeping in mind the desirability of securing adjudicators who are presently engaged in the teaching field in which they are asked to adjudicate. Judges will be chosen within a radius of 300 miles of the respective assessment centers.

Each large ensemble (band, choir, orchestra, wind ensemble) in concert events will have three judges. An additional judge will be provided for the sight reading event. At least one adjudicator for chorus events should be engaged in elementary vocal or junior high teaching. If there is orchestra participation, it is recommended that one of these judges have orchestra experience.

All judges should have current experience in their area of adjudication. The music education goals of the district should be made to secure judges whose standards are in accordance with those sought by the participating directors.

It is recommended that no adjudicator be hired for more than three consecutive years in the same district.

Adjudicators:

1. will not consult with anyone before placing the final rating on the adjudication sheet.
2. are advised to refrain from engaging in the recruiting of students for College purpose under penalty of being barred from adjudicating at LMEA performance assessments.
3. who do not approve of particular selections performed are reminded that the musical components listed on the adjudication sheet will be the only criteria for judgment. A personal note, separate from the adjudication form, to the director on the matter of musical taste in the selection of assessment music is recommended, but adjudicators' tastes relative to selecting music is not to affect the rating.
4. are advised to be very professional about their comments on tapes and adjudication sheets.

Ratings

Three Judges x Five Ratings—Every possible combination.

I	II	III	IV	V
I-I-I	I-II-II	I-III-III	I-IV-IV	I-V-V
I-I-II	I-II-III	I-III-IV	I-IV-V	II-V-V
I-I-III	I-II-IV	I-III-V	II-IV-IV	III-V-V
I-I-IV	I-II-V	II-III-III	II-IV-V	IV-V-V
I-I-V	II-II-II	II-III-IV	III-IV-IV	V-V-V
	II-II-III	III-III-III	III-IV-V	
	II-II-IV	III-III-IV	IV-IV-IV	
	II-II-V	III-III-V	IV-IV-V	