

An Official Judges Guide for a Miss America Local or State Preliminary Competition

The Miss America Organization is one of the nation's leading achievement programs and the world's largest provider of scholarship assistance for young women. Last year, the Miss America Organization and its state and local organizations made available more than \$45 million in cash and scholarship assistance.

Agreeing to judge local and state Miss America preliminaries is an honor and an awesome responsibility, not only to the entire Miss America Organization, but to the young women who, by entering the competition, have placed their trust in the integrity and objectivity of the judges' scores.

As a judge for a Miss America preliminary, it is imperative that you recognize as professional conduct:

- That you have been entrusted with the preservation and perpetuation of the goals, objectives and spirit of the Miss America Organization;
- That the Miss America Organization expects your first and greatest concern to be the best interest of each contestant without distraction as to who she is or what her background may be;
- That the Miss America program depends in the largest measure upon your effectiveness as a judge.

Therefore, it should be your constant endeavor to:

- Devote time, thought and study to learn the phases of competition and complete the duties and responsibilities of a judge;
- To work with your fellow judges in a spirit of harmony and cooperation;
- To score each contestant honestly in every phase of competition;

- To maintain confidentiality.

Most importantly, your score sheet is your personal statement, and your signature attests that you have scored in such a manner that the results will produce the best representative, a young woman who will be a role model in your community – and who may represent your state and become Miss America.

You will select a young woman who will represent the community in which she is competing – as a public servant, an advocate for local issues, a friend to local businesses and a role model to youngsters. It is crucial that you select the woman who best meets these criteria. While she will compete at the local/state competition and perhaps in the Miss America Pageant, these considerations are secondary. Most women will return to their communities after the state competition and must be of the character and mindset to serve that community.

Consistent with the job responsibilities and the Miss America philosophy of judging, women are being sought with the best composite of the following attributes and qualities of Miss America – a woman of these times:

- Role model who cares about her role and other women's roles in societies;
- An ambassador and public relations representative of the Miss America Organization;
- Physically beautiful woman with a confident and commanding presence;
- Talented and intellectual;
- Independent and eloquent communicator with the courage of her convictions;
- Accomplished individual who represents a composite of the "Best of Modern Women";
- A leader by virtue of her experiences;
- One who takes personal pride in physical fitness and health.

As a judge, you must be:

- Decisive
- Impartial
- Consistent
- Appreciative of the arts
- Appreciative of community service endeavors

The philosophy of the Miss America system of judging relies on the premise that "each contestant competes against herself", rather than being compared to other contestants.

The dimensions of the system promote:

- Equity (outstanding talents can receive the same score)
- Scoring each contestant
- Accumulative scoring
- Confidentiality

All aspects of the Miss America system of judging mandate consistency.

Judges' Materials

To acquaint you with each contestant, the volunteer in charge of judges should supply contestant resumes, contestant photos, and other materials to assist you in your task. You are urged to study these materials carefully, and then use them as a basis for your questions as you meet the contestants at the Private Interview prior to the stage competition.

Do not lose or misplace your judges' materials. The system dictates that you must score each contestant immediately after she competes each phase of her individual competition.

Remember the contestant is competing against herself and must receive a score in a *1 to 10 point range*, using whole numbers only.

The five areas of competition are:

- Talent
- Private Interview
- Evening Wear
- Lifestyle and Fitness in Swimsuit
- On-Stage Question

Award points immediately after you see each contestant.

Talent
Criteria for Scoring

Talent is a vehicle by which you can discern and measure a contestant's commitment and discipline to her stage performance. A woman's talent selection should distinguish the contestant's:

- True talent and entertainment abilities
- Interpretive ability
- Technical skill level (execution, technique, synchronization, control)
- Stage presence and on-stage personality
- Totality of all elements (including costume, props, voice, use of body, choreography)

You will see a variety of talents – vocal in every medium, dance in all forms, gymnastics, instrumentals and drama.

On judging each, keep in mind that these women are not usually professionals. They are showing you an aspect of their character and values as much as their performing arts aptitude.

General observations should include execution, technique, synchronization, stage presence, and the totality of all elements – including voice, use of body, costume, music, props and choreography.

Private Interview

The judges' panel will meet each contestant for a private interview. The basic tool for conducting this interview is a resume of personal credits and a guide for getting to know the contestant. Clues to the personality and ability are given.

Questions should be directed to determine the contestant's ability to fulfill the job of Miss Local/State as described by current title holder, the Judge's Chairman, and/or the Executive Director.

No questions are prohibited; simply do not become too personal, and also stay within the bounds of good taste. Keep your questions short enough that plenty of questions can be asked and please do not ask the contestant to perform any sort of talent during the

private interview phase of competition.

Criteria for Scoring

- Overall "First Impression"
- "Naturalness" and relevance that would be of interest to her peers and to the Miss America constituents and markets
- Strong communication competencies (speech, vocabulary, grammar)
- Validated aspirations, opinions and responses
- Personality, personal appearance, attractiveness and physical beauty
- Leadership and sense of accomplishment
- Knowledge of and commitment to a community service advocacy issue
- Qualities, abilities and sincere desire to be Miss America

As a judge planning for a contestant's interview, you may choose to use high-gain questions to generate other questions spontaneously in response ("triggered") to points the contestant raised. When asking high-gain questions, be sure to encourage the contestant. High-gain questions are tough to answer. If you do not encourage while asking them, the contestant may feel interrogated. By using a lot of encouraging, you can take the edge off your high-gain questions and make the interview more conversational. In simple terms, high-gain questions require the contestant to THINK before responding. It is asking the contestant to defend existing fact sheet information, express her beliefs or search for new meaning.

Judge the contestant on how well she has stated her opinion; it is inconsequential whether her opinion aligns with your own.

In a contestant interview, asking questions is like "spending money". You as a judge must get a "high return" from your questions because you only have a short time with each contestant. The contestant will have an opportunity to make a .30 second closing statement. The total time of

the Private Interview should not exceed 10 minutes.

Lifestyle and Fitness in Swimsuit

Criteria for Scoring

- Overall "First Impression"
- Beauty and attractiveness
- Physically fit
- Sense of confidence and presence
- Drive, energy, charisma and composure
- Value your first impression and remember the swimsuit and the young woman should compliment each other.

Evening Wear

Criteria for Scoring

- Overall "First Impression"
- Physical beauty
- Sense of confidence and stage presence
- Walk, posture, carriage and grace
- Style and personality
- Appropriate, contemporary evening wear
- Value your first impression: consider the contestant's total look.

On-Stage Question

Criteria for Scoring

- Overall "First Impression"
- Ability to articulate both a sincere, engaging personality and her opinions
- Confidence and stage presence
- Ability to answer question in the time allotted and in context
- Do people *want* to listen to her?
- Potential spokesperson for the Miss America Organization

For information about the National Program, contact:

The Miss America Organization
Two Miss America Way, Suite 1000
Atlantic City, New Jersey 08401