

Liars Contest ~ Teller Rules and Judging Guidelines

Rev. 2026

Teller Rules:

- Tellers have a total of 8 minutes. A teller still talking when the eight-minute mark is reached will receive reduced points in this criterion.
- No notes, instruments, costumes, or props. Use of any of these will result in disqualification.
- The time will begin the moment the teller addresses the audience verbally or non-verbally; thus, the teller should not look at/say anything to audience until the microphone is adjusted and the teller is good to go.
- Stories must be told, not read. No use of notes.
- No profanity or explicit material.
- Teller cannot repeat a story that has placed First, Second or Third in a previous Liars Contest hosted by the Story People of Clallam County.
- Teller cannot repeat a story or the slightly revised premise of a story that has been told in a Story People of Clallam County Liars Contest in the past five years.

Logistics:

- Before the show, tellers will write their names on pieces of paper and put that piece of paper in the “hat.”
- We will draw the name of the first teller.
- After telling, each teller will pull the name of the *next* teller, etc.
- We will have five tellers tell, take a short intermission and return for the rest of the tellers.

During the show:

Judges will:

- Score each teller independently – that is, without consulting the other judges – using the guidelines below.
- Respond authentically to the tellers and their stories; laughter, smiles, joining the audience in applause, and a spontaneous, “ah …” are all okay.
- Not offer judgment on tellers verbally or non-verbally throughout the show, e.g. No nudges, side slaps, sighs, thumbs up, yawns, eye rolls, etc.
- Keep scores hidden from others throughout the show, esp. from people who can look over your shoulders or at intermission.
- Do not knowingly talk with tellers before the show or during the intermission. If you find yourself talking to a teller, please end the conversation. The tellers will understand!

After all the tellers have told, the judges will do the following:

Individually:

- Add up all the scores for all the individuals to determine who, on your individual score sheet has earned first, second and third place.

- In the event you have a tie for top place on your score sheet, you award ONE discretionary point to ONE of the top individuals.
- Your criterion for this is purely personal. This will give you, the individual judge, a winner.

THEN, as a group of three:

- Tally your scores for each of the individuals.
- The person with the most points between the three judges will be FIRST.
- The person with the second most number of points will be SECOND.
- The person with the third most number of points will be THIRD.

If once all the points are tallied there is a tie for FIRST, you will each award ONE discretionary point to ONE of the two top individuals.

- This should result in one person as winner and the other person will be second.
- The next highest point getter will be third.

If, once all the points are tallied, there is a tie for SECOND, you will each award ONE discretionary point to ONE of the second-place individuals.

- This should result in one person as SECOND and the other person will be THIRD.

If, once all the points are tallied, there is a tie for THIRD, you will each award ONE discretionary point to ONE of the third-place individuals.

- This should result in one person as THIRD and the other person not be awarded.

We cannot have a tie at any level.

Once you have determined FIRST, SECOND and THIRD:

- Clearly write on a piece of paper 1st, 2nd, and 3rd with the FIRST and LAST names of the tellers.
- Then, your fine work is done. Thank you!

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Judging Criteria:

- You will score the stories on **Creativity, Story Construction, Delivery, and Time Limit** using the points as allotted below.
- You will rate tellers in each section on a scale of 0 to 10.
- For Time Limit, teller should get 10 if they finish their story by the eight-minute mark. If teller is still talking after the 8-minute mark, teller must not receive full points. However, it is to the discretion of the judge how much that person should be docked. If teller talks so long as to be asked to leave the stage, teller will receive 0 (zero) points for this criterion.

0 to 2	Does virtually nothing to address criterion. (Poor)		
3 to 5	Criterion is weakly addressed. (Fair)		
6 to 8	Story solidly addresses criterion. (Good)		
9 to 10	Story addresses criterion in a creative and/or compelling way. (Excellent)		

Creativity: (Points awarded 1 to 10)

- Story is original or a new, fresh take on a classic tale or lie.
- Story unfolds in an unpredictable way, but one that makes sense given the story.
- Teller using engaging language.

A story that does not demonstrate much creativity might:

- Be a recitation of a standard story.
- Might be structured in a very predictable manner.
- Might unfold in a random way that doesn't make sense given the story, characters or circumstances.
- Teller has done little to use interesting or compelling language.

Story Construction (Points awarded 1 to 10)

- Story has a beginning, middle and end.
- Story has an arc; it builds to a climax, then reaches resolution.
- Story builds to an intangible idea or universal truth.
- Teller uses audience-appropriate language in a compelling way.

A story that lacks good construction might:

- Fail to include any sort of orientation information, so it is confusing – where is this? When is this? What is going on?
- Ramble; have no point.
- Make a big deal out of nothing; feel exaggerated.
- Be conveyed in an inarticulate manner; have poor word choices, technical words or slang with no “translation.”

Delivery: (Points awarded 1 to 10)

- The teller tells the story in an engaging way that helps create some kind of connection with the audience. Audience “connection” might be indicated through laughter, applause, moans/groans/sighs, or audience might be silent but listening with bated breath, or some other detectable way that indicates audience is paying close attention.
- The teller can be heard.
- The teller makes eye contact with the audience in a way that feels natural and appropriate.
- The teller’s non-verbal body language “supports” the telling of the story.
- The teller does not use notes.

A teller with weak delivery might:

- Not make eye contact with the audience at all.

- Be inaudible.
- Seem rote, memorized to the point that the audience seems irrelevant.
- Respond inappropriately to the audience – disrupting the story flow, losing h/her place; unfocused; random.
- Make gestures or body movements that distract from the story.
- Refer to a cheat sheet.

Time Limit (Points awarded 0 to 10)

- The teller respects the time limit, which is 8 minutes total.
- The teller has *finished* h/her story by the time the eight-minute mark is noted.
- If a teller is still talking when the eight-minute sounds, teller should be docked points at the discretion of the judge. If teller is eventually asked to leave the stage, teller should receive 0 (zero) points.

The judges' decisions are final!