



OCA MODEL RULES & SCORING

Competitive Apology

Model Rules & Scoring for fictional accountability performance

MODEL RULE PRINCIPLE

A strong apology takes responsibility without requiring anyone to be harmed for the competition to work.

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PUBLIC MODEL RULESET

1. Scope and Purpose

Competitive Apology is a judged speaking event in which competitors respond to fictional, harmless, organizer-supplied scenarios by delivering an apology intended to demonstrate accountability, repair, clarity, and effective communication. It is not a contest in humiliation, confession, or emotional exposure.

BRIGHT LINE

Prompts must be fictional or clearly hypothetical. Competitors may never be required to disclose, reenact, or apologize for real trauma, abuse, criminal conduct, protected-characteristic harm, sexual conduct, medical history, or private interpersonal events.

1.1 The Five Core Questions

Question	Competitive Apology Answer
What is evaluated?	A short spoken apology to a fictional scenario.
Against what?	Rubric for accountability, specificity, repair, audience awareness, and delivery.
How expressed?	Five rubric scores per judge.
How combined?	Weighted judge totals aggregated across panel.
What happens next?	Highest final score wins; ties resolved by accountability-focused hierarchy.

2. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Scenario	Organizer-written fictional situation creating a harmless or low-stakes need for apology.
Recipient	The fictional person, group, or audience to whom the apology is addressed.
Accountability	Clear ownership of the assigned conduct without evasion or blame-shifting.
Repair	A reasonable statement of correction, restitution, prevention, or next action.
Deflection	Language that avoids ownership by shifting responsibility, minimizing the event, or attacking the recipient.

3. Prompt Standards and Participant Protection

- Scenarios must be fictional, low-stakes, and suitable for public performance.
- Permitted examples: arriving late to a fictional meeting; ruining a fictional cake; borrowing a fictional lawn flamingo without asking; sending the wrong attachment; forgetting an imaginary anniversary between invented characters.
- Prohibited prompt subjects include real grief, abuse, self-harm, sexual misconduct, serious discrimination, criminal victimization, medical trauma, war trauma, or public accusations against real identifiable people.
- A competitor may request one alternate prompt without penalty if a prompt unexpectedly intersects with a personal sensitivity. The alternate must be from the same difficulty class.
- Humor is permitted, but the recipient of the apology may not be treated as inherently ridiculous, inferior, or deserving of harm.

4. Eligibility and Divisions

- Open Division: eligible adult competitors.

- Youth Division may be offered using age-appropriate scenarios and safeguarding procedures.
- Competitors may not write or approve scenarios used in their own division.
- One official entry per competitor per division unless otherwise published.

5. Competition Procedure

5.1 Recommended Structure

Stage	Preparation	Performance	Advancement
Preliminary	60 sec	90 sec	Top N by score
Semifinal	45 sec	2:00	Top 6
Final	30 sec	2:30	Final placement

5.2 Scenario Reveal

The competitor receives the written scenario at the start of preparation time. The scenario must identify the conduct, recipient, and any factual constraints the competitor must treat as true. Competitors may not dispute the assigned facts as a substitute for apologizing.

5.3 Delivery

- The apology may be sincere, formal, conversational, comedic, or stylized, provided the required accountability remains present.
- No props or external media are permitted unless declared as an event variant.
- A competitor may address an empty chair, designated reader, or the audience as the fictional recipient. No volunteer may be pressured to participate in a humiliating or intimate role.

6. Officials

- Recommended panel: five judges for final, three or five for earlier rounds.
- One timekeeper/scorekeeper is required.
- Judges score independently.
- Judges should be briefed that theatrical emotion is not a substitute for accountability and that humor is not automatically rewarded or penalized.

7. Judging Criteria and Weights

Criterion	Weight	What is rewarded
Accountability	30%	Direct ownership of the assigned conduct without excuse, blame-shifting, or evasive conditional language.
Specificity & Understanding	20%	Shows understanding of what happened and why it affected the recipient.
Repair & Future Action	20%	Offers proportionate, credible corrective action or prevention.
Audience Awareness	15%	Tone and content appropriately address the fictional recipient and situation.
Delivery & Coherence	15%	Clear, controlled, persuasive delivery with effective structure.

7.1 Scoring Anchors

Score	General Anchor
9–10	Complete, specific, accountable, proportionate, and compelling.
7–8	Strong apology with minor omissions or softening.
5–6	Competent but generic, uneven, or somewhat defensive.
3–4	Material deflection, weak repair, or poor understanding of impact.
1–2	Minimal accountability or largely nonresponsive.
0	No scoreable apology.

8. Scoring

Each criterion is scored 0–10 in whole numbers. Judge Total = Σ (criterion score $\times$ criterion weight $\times$ 10). Five-judge finals use a trimmed mean: highest and lowest Judge Totals are discarded and the remaining three averaged. Three-judge rounds use all three totals.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Accountability 9, Specificity 8, Repair 7, Audience Awareness 9, Delivery 8 produces 85.0 Judge Total.

9. Penalties and Disqualification

Violation	Consequence
Over time by 1–10 seconds	–1.0 point from Panel Score
Each additional 10 seconds or fraction	Additional –1.0
Real-person accusation or targeted humiliation introduced by competitor	Chief official may stop performance; penalty up to disqualification
Use of prohibited notes/device	Disqualification from round
Refusal to engage the apology task	Scores may reflect nonresponsiveness; no valid attempt if no apology is meaningfully delivered

10. Ties

- Higher Accountability panel average.
- Higher Repair & Future Action panel average.
- Higher median Judge Total.
- If still tied for an award-bearing placement, competitors receive a common 60-second micro-scenario and a 60-second response scored only on Accountability, Repair, and Delivery.
- Remaining tie is shared.

11. Results and Review

- Official records retain scenario code, marks, penalties, calculation, and placement.
- Judgment calls are not re-scored on protest absent a rules or process error.
- Arithmetic, timing, prompt assignment, or scoring-transcription errors are reviewable.
- An organizer should not publish a competitor's fictional scenario in a way that implies real misconduct.

12. Organizer-Selectable Options

- Round structure and advancement cuts.

- Designated scenario style: workplace, domestic absurdity, public-service, fantasy, or mixed.
- Audience Favorite as separate recognition.
- A paired “apology and response” exhibition variant may be used only if both roles are fictional and the official scoring rules are separately published.

Appendix A. Document Control

Field	Value
Document	OCA Model Rules: Competitive Apology
Publisher	Open Competition Alliance
Ruleset ID	OCA-MR-CAP-1
Edition	Version 1.0
Publication date	August 2026
Status	OCA Public Model Ruleset
Purpose	Voluntary model competition standard intended for adoption or adaptation by organizers.

Adoption Statement

An organizer adopting this model ruleset should identify the exact edition in the event announcement and disclose every organizer-selectable option before the applicable entry deadline. Material changes should be published as event-specific modifications rather than applied informally during competition.

Appendix B. Pre-Event Rules Check

- ☐ Eligibility and divisions are published.
- ☐ Organizer-selectable options are declared.
- ☐ Officials are assigned and briefed.
- ☐ Equipment, prompts, materials, or course layout have been checked for equivalence.
- ☐ Scoring or measurement procedure has been tested.
- ☐ Tie procedures are understood by the scorekeeper.
- ☐ Safety, safeguarding, accessibility, and incident-response arrangements are in place.
- ☐ Results can be reconstructed from retained official records.