



2026 Sikh Youth Symposium



(A Division of Sikh Youth Alliance of North America)

GUIDELINES FOR CONTESTANTS AND JUDGES

Age Group: III (11 to 13 years)

Time allotted: 6 minutes

Book: Teaching Sikh Heritage to The Youth

Author: Dr. Gurbakhsh Singh

I CONTENTS (Answers to the following questions are expected in your speech. Please be brief and to the point. Contents are worth 60 points: 20 points for each question):

1. Often, we hear that it is important for Sikh youth living in the western world to “fit in” or assimilate within the societies they are living in, and that focusing on education about Sikh values and heritage prevents them from doing that. What are the author’s thoughts on this? What are yours?
2. The Sikh Rehat Maryada is seen by some as placing too-strict restrictions on our code and conduct. What analogies does the author use for justifying the need to follow the practices listed in Sikh Rehat Maryada? In what ways do you practice the Rehat? How does that help you?
3. For many, Sikhism is “yet another religion”. Per the book, what was Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s intent in establishing Sikhism? In what ways do Sikhs today align, and in what way do they misalign, with that intent?

II Presentation (40 points):

Included in this area are items like style, delivery, poise, eye contact, voice, diction, language and effectiveness.

Time allotted to finish the speech for this group is **6 minutes**. There is no penalty for finishing the speech either earlier than 6 minutes or during the grace period of next 30 seconds. After the grace period, i.e., after 6 minutes and 30 seconds have elapsed, one point would be deducted for every extra 10 seconds or part of 10 seconds, from every judge’s score for the participant.

III Punjabi Presentation and Maintenance of Sikhi Saroop:

Use of Punjabi and maintenance of Sikhi Saroop needs to be encouraged. Participants who use Punjabi and/or maintain Sikhi Saroop will be judged according to the above format. However, it is suggested that such participants be rewarded suitably.

IV Suggestions on preparing youth for the Sikh Youth Symposium:

Given that the primary purpose of the Sikh Youth Symposium is for our children to focus on their learning, we would like to clarify the appropriate levels of support children should receive as they prepare for their speeches. It is our recommendation that it is in the best interest of the children to write their own speeches, with minimal support from parents or other adults.

The participants should read the books independently, asking parents/mentors for support to understand the text and questions as needed. The participants should independently write their speeches, asking parents/mentors for suggestions, Gurbani references and reference points.

If your child’s speech is prepared in Punjabi, it must still follow the guidelines above. If it is prepared in English, it can be translated into Punjabi after it is created per the above guidelines. However, once the speech is in Punjabi, your child should understand the speech in its entirety.

Although these are only suggestions, in order to make this experience most meaningful and equitable for all children, it is recommended that we adhere to these suggestions as closely as possible.