



2026 Sikh Youth Symposium



(A Division of Sikh Youth Alliance of North America)

GUIDELINES FOR CONTESTANTS AND JUDGES

Age Group: V (16 to 22 years)

Time allotted: 8 minutes

Theme: Guru's View of a Just World – ਬੇਗਮਪੁਰਾ ਸਹਰ ਕੇ ਨਾਉ (Begumpura Sehar Ko Naon)

Book: No book assigned

The theme for this year is "Guru's View of a Just World – ਬੇਗਮਪੁਰਾ ਸਹਰ ਕੇ ਨਾਉ (Begumpura Sehar Ko Naon)". Our Gurus offered a clear vision for a just society, and in fact laid the foundations of such a society. Discussions this year would relate broadly to Guru Sahib's view of a just world; how much do today's Sikhs as well as the world at large live by that world view; and what we can do to bring our own life in tune with Guru Sahib's vision as well as bring awareness of such vision to others. Please research and think about various aspects of the theme and related issues.

The judges will consider the development of the arguments presented. They do not have to agree with the speaker; in fact, the viewpoint presented may be unusual, different or even unpopular. What matters is the logic, its development and its strength.

Competition at the International level will involve discussions around the above theme and various related issues. We hope to encourage an understanding of the Gurmat values based on Gurbani, History and Rehat, as well as promote the habits of critical thinking. This will also help in developing skills to discuss difficult issues with other Sikhs and with non-Sikhs.

For the speech competition at the Center and the Regional levels, the participants should address the three specific questions given below.

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. • Context: In contrast to Gurus' message of equality for all, we see significant social discrimination in today's world based on religion, caste, race, skin color, nationality, language, and much else. Even many Sikhs engage in such discriminatory practices.
• Question: Suggest some specific practical ways to promote living by Guru Sahib's vision as well as make the world at large aware of that vision.
2. Does the shabad 'Begumpura Sehar Kau Naon' describe not only a state of spiritual liberation from the suffering caused by our vices, but also the concept of human dignity and freedom from social injustice of all kinds? If so, then how does this relate to some of the United Nations' SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), and to what extent? Explain.
3. Our interfaith partners feel envious of the institution of langar in Sikhi, and often say that if they had the institution of langar they would have dominated the entire world. What do you understand about the concept of langar? Is langar a good model for addressing social divisions and can langar be considered a manifestation of a just, peaceful and harmonious world? Explain your answer.

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 **8 minutes**. There is no penalty for finishing the speech either earlier than 8 minutes or during the grace period of the next 30 seconds. After the grace period, i.e., after 8 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.



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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 youth 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 independently research the theme and answer questions and ask adults for support only as reference points or to ask for guidance on Gurbani references.

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.