

Words and Phrases That Should Not Be Used in Oral Reasons

There are several words and phrases that should not be used in a proper set of oral reasons. Many of these words add no value to the reasons content or are not specific enough in their meaning. Oral reasons should be given in two minutes or less. Therefore, it is important to eliminate those words or phrases that are considered “too wordy” and replaced with terms that have the same meaning, but require less time to say. Terms that are “trendy” or “regional” in their meaning may cause confusion and the listener will spend time trying to figure out the meaning. This will distract the listener from hearing the additional content of the reasons. Good livestock terminology that is common to the industry should be used. Eliminating the “wordy” phrases or meaningless words and replacing them with more specific words or phrases will improve a set of reasons. The following is a list of words and phrases that should not be used and their correct usage.

1. I placed this class of Angus heifers in the order of 1-2-3-4. The phrases “this class of” and “in the order of” are not necessary. Instead, the correct way to introduce a class is, “I placed the Angus heifers 1-2-3-4.” Say this statement with confidence and slightly louder than a normal conversational voice. You need to catch the attention of the listener/official, but don’t shout!
2. I placed the number 1 heifer over the number 2 heifer because... The phrase “the number 1 heifer” is too wordy. It can be shortened to just, “I placed 1 over 2 because..”
3. 1 is a heifer that is thicker and wider sprung. Unnecessary words are used in the phrase “is a heifer that is”. The proper sentence structure would be, “1 is a thicker heifer that is wider sprung.” More emphasis is now placed on the fact that 1 is thicker rather than that she is a heifer.
4. In coming to my middle pair 1 places over 2. This is another phrase that is too wordy. The proper way to introduce a pair would be, “In the middle pair, 1 places over 2.” A more specific way to introduce a pair would be, “Rib shape and structural correctness compelled me to place 1 over 2 in the middle pair.” This allows the presenter to introduce the pair with two or three terms that had a significant impact on the placing. After the opening statement of the pair, the presenter should provide a more detailed explanation for placing 1 over 2.
5. I would like to see 1 straighter about her legs. This criticism is very vague and is not convincing. The presenter should be as specific as possible. Instead, say, “I criticize 1 because she is sickle hocked.”

6. The term “lacks” should never be used in a set or reasons. Rather than saying an animal lacks muscle, say what is really there. A more effective way to describe the animal would be to say that he/she is light muscled. The word “lacks” is not descriptive enough.

7. Never refer to an animal as an “individual”, “animal”, or “it”. Instead of saying “it was a heavier muscled animal or individual”, it is better to say, “she was a heavier muscled heifer.” A contestant can use gender or use steer, heifer, bull, barrow, boar, gilt, wether, ram, or ewe.

8. Words such as “kind of”, “slightly”, and “somewhat” should be avoided. If a contestant tells an official that a barrow is slightly heavier muscled than another, the official will most likely doubt the confidence of the contestant and award them a lower score. Be confident and say what you really think. If you feel that a barrow is heavier muscled then simply state, “1 is heavier muscled than 2.” If you are not sure, then do not include it in your reasons.

9. A lot of contestants will end their reasons with a phrase such as, “for these reasons I placed this class 1-2-3-4.” This extra phrase is not necessary. It is important for the contestant to end their reasons with a definite and truly accurate statement. For example, “4 was the lightest muscled, shallowest bodied, and most structurally incorrect heifer in the class.” The phrase “in the class” is an excellent way to end a set of reasons and to really drive home the big picture. Remember, the last statement you make must be accurate, as the official will remember what you said.

Presentation of Oral Reasons

Many contestants make the mistake of memorizing their reasons from their notes. The notes taken on each reasons class are to be used as reminders as to how each animal looked. It is critical that any student interested in livestock judging be able to develop the skills required to recall a class of livestock. If a student is familiar with the terminology and can picture the class in their mind while presenting the reasons, then notes are not needed.

Reasons should be presented in a fashion which is pleasant to listen to. One must speak with conviction, but do not scream or shout your reasons. It is equally important not to talk so fast that the official cannot comprehend everything that was said. Reasons should be presented in a voice slightly louder than conversational. The tone should be convincing and sincere, but not overbearing. Terms or phrases that were important to the class placing should be emphasized with a slightly louder tone of voice. Emphasizing terms and phrases allows the presenter to fluctuate his/her voice. Avoid dry, monotone delivery. It is also important to pause at the commas and stop at the periods. This makes the reasons more conversational and pleasing to listen to. Stopping at the periods at the end of each sentence also allows contestants a chance to get a breath of air. Students should also make sure that terms are clearly enunciated and the sentences are grammatically correct. If your reasons are accurate, contain good livestock terminology, are presented convincingly, and your words are enunciated clearly then you should be rewarded with a good score.

Example Reasons

The following paragraphs are examples of a poorly organized, and a well organized set of oral reasons.

Poor Set:

I placed the class of Angus heifers in the order of 1-2-3-4. In starting with my first pair of animals I liked number 1, the heifer with the white on her udder best because it was long, tall, heavy muscled, and just looked overall better. Number 2 was also long and tall, but not as long and tall as number 1. Number 1 was also feminine. Number 2 had more middle and looked like she could have a calf easier. But I fault number 2 because it was smaller framed and not as muscular as 1.

This example set of reasons has many problems. The opening statement with the placing has too many "filler" words that can be taken out. It should also be noted that a comparison was never made between 1 and 2. Remember, words ending in "er" or "est" should be used to compare one animal to another. The phrases "just looked overall better" and "more middle" are not good, descriptive livestock terms and should be removed. Other words and phrases such as "number", "my first pair", and "it" should also be omitted or changed to the proper gender. The format for this example set of reasons is wrong. The sentence "number 2 was also long and tall, but not as long and tall as number 1" should have been excluded. Another big mistake observed is that the presenter projected 2 as being able to have a calf easier. A presenter of oral reasons should never make predictions about things that cannot be visually observed within the class. Lastly, the

criticism of 2 is very weak because the words end in “er” and they do not describe the actual fault of the animal. The following paragraph is an example of a proper set of oral reasons.

Good Set:

I placed the Angus heifers 1-2-3-4. In the top pair, the white uddered heifer wins the class because she is a bolder sprung heifer that is heavier muscled and more feminine than 2. 1 was especially longer with more natural thickness down her top and through her quarter. Additionally, 1 was more feminine about her face, longer and cleaner through her neck and smoother shouldered. I’ll admit that 2 had more circumference of bone. However, I criticized 2 because she was narrow in her top and the flattest ribbed heifer in the class.

Summary

The skills required to give a good set of reasons takes hours of practice. Reasons that are accurate, spoken with conviction, and contain good livestock terminology will garner high scores. It is very important that the opening statement of the top pair and the closing statement of the last place animal be accurate and fault free. Many officials will form an opinion about the abilities of the presenter of oral reasons within the first 2 or 3 sentences. Just as importantly, make sure your reasons end as strong, or stronger, than they started because this is the last impression the official has of the presenter. A perfect set of reasons should clearly describe and compare each animal in the class. Success in the reasons room depends upon hard work prior to the competition. “Success” comes before “work” in the dictionary, but not in real life!

Hints to Presenting Oral Reasons

There are several schools of thought concerning style of reasons. The specific style you use is not very important. The truly important factors to consider in evaluating a set of oral reasons are listed as follows:

- A powerful and precise opening statement is a must.
- Be prompt, confident, and courteous when it is your turn to give reasons.
- Never carry any notes into the reasons room.
- Do not be arrogant. Be professional, polite, and display confidence and personality when delivering a set of oral reasons.
- Always be prepared to give your reasons without a placing card.
- Place your feet apart approximately the same width as your shoulders, and stand with your feet parallel with correct posture.
- Depending on room size, conditions, and voice, stand about eight to ten feet away from the reason taker.
- Look the official squarely in the eye or at least give that impression.
- Talk in a firm and confident voice, but be sure not to shout. Your delivery should be sincere, emphatic, persuasive, and conversational.
- Emphasis is very important in reasons. Fluctuating both speed and volume should be used to accomplish this.
- A very slight head movement is acceptable. Any other body movement is distracting to the listener.
- When giving reasons you should "paint" an accurate picture of the animals that the listener can mentally see.
- Use ID's such as color and sex classification to identify certain animals whenever possible to make your reasons more interesting and aid in developing a mental picture for the reasons taker.
- The length of your reasons should be between 1 minute and 20 seconds to 1 minute and 45 seconds. NEVER exceed 2 minutes.
- Do not use more than three terms in succession, because it is difficult for the listener to hear and evaluate them all. Instead, put terms together in interesting phrases that aren't simply a list of terms.

- Accuracy of statements is of great importance. If something is close between 2 animals and you are not sure about it, don't mention it in your reasons. You have to be absolutely sure if you are going to use it to justify a placing.
- Use a complete vocabulary of livestock-oriented terms. Always adapt your terminology and reasons format to fit each particular class.
- Be comfortable with a wide array of terminology for any specific trait. This will enable you to avoid repetition within a set of reasons.
- Use correct grammar. A reasons taker is likely to not believe your discussion of a class if you can't use phrases or sentences that are grammatically correct.
- A logical reasons format that is easy for the listener to follow is a must. Prioritize your reasons by talking about the most important factor that places a pair first and follow with those of lesser importance.

General Terms and Transitions

Time Transitions

In my final decision,

As I look to my final pair

When I turned to the class

Then

Now

Next

I initiated the class

Now it comes to the ___ pair

But as I focus on a more competitive and challenging middle pair

After evaluating the Performance Yorkshire Gilts on paper and phenotypically,

Faults

Ideally

Preferably

To change this gilt

I know she was not

If I could change her

She needs to have (or to be)

Two things I would like to change

Because of these limitations, she

But at the same time

But after this he is the

But to his disadvantage

But this works against him

But that's where it ends

Fails to compensate

But I left her 3rd, as her ___ concerns me

But I liked him 3rd

Regardless of ___ advantage in ___ and ___ she is still 3rd as she is simply...

Of the four

So I left her second

Than ___ or my top pair

When compared to my class winner

Simply does not have the ___ found in ___

I realize that 1 is.....

But I criticized 2 and left him second...

But I faulted 2 and placed him second...

Emphasis

In relation to

Not only, but also

Just as importantly

More importantly

4 was tremendously

Not nearly

Ideally, I would like to see ___ leaner designed. But nonetheless, it's ___ over ___ in the top pair, because she is undoubtedly a

Fault free

Problem free

She is the gilt that is not without fault though, as she is...

Emphasis Terms

More compositionally correct
I easily used him
Relatively fault free
Readily surfaces to the top of the class
Most effectively combined
Best package of ___ & ___, with more than adequate ___
Far superior
Offers
Logically
Relatively
Decided advantage
His advantage in
Possessed a decisive advantage
By far
Easily
Simply
Certainly
Obviously
Considerably
Unquestionably
Without question
Understandably
Undoubtedly
There is no doubt
Slightly
Adequate
Somewhat

In the middle pair, I sacrificed structural design to get muscle and leanness

Still, her advantage in muscle and volume places her over ___ in the middle pair

Maintaining an emphasis on muscle and volume, ___ places over ___ in the middle pair

Nonetheless, it was his advantage in muscle dimension, volume and length of body that compelled me to place ___ over ___ in the bottom pair

Additions

In addition
Additionally
Furthermore
While retaining
Coupled by the fact
While at the same time
Yet retains or maintains
This is complimented by
To compliment this he is
Reinforced by the fact

Grants

Yes
I admire
I admit
Admittedly
I appreciate
Acknowledge
4 does have

Grants

I recognize

Now I realize

On the other hand

There is no doubt

I did not fail to recognize

I personally liked the fact

Yet

Another

__ ranked near the top as she was., but I placed her 2nd

Cause/Effect Transitions

Earning

Therefore

Thus

Hence

Enabling her

Conesquently

Leads me to believe

All this combined

These factors would enable her

..., with that she would rail a carcass that is....

Contrast Transitions

However

Even so, it is still

Nonetheless

Nevertheless

Still

Although

Whereas

With these faults aside

Despite these cricisms

Due to her combined advantage

With this aside, I still prefer him

In spite of these criticisms, I placed him over __ in the final pair

But I gave the nod to __

Differing types

Contrasting types

Controversial pair

General to Specific Transitions

More specifically

Particularly

Which was indicated by

Most evidently

Especially

General

One of the two

Similar conformation

Pair of gilts similar in design

Opting

Electing

Opening Statements/Transitions

- ❖ I find more useful advantages in 1 over 3
- ❖ She bears the same herd brand as my class winner
- ❖ When breaking this pair apart
- ❖ Pair whose strengths lie in different areas
- ❖ Now in my middle pair, there's no question 4 reads more progressive in her growth and carcass figures
- ❖ Collectively, these advantages imply
- ❖ She just can't match the image of the heifer above her
- ❖ Still, I'll sacrifice some muscle to use 3 over 4 in my middle pair. To me, it's her added balance and structure that gives her the edge
- ❖ He is, by quite some margin, the stoutest made and heaviest muscled
- ❖ It quickly becomes apparent that she is here to win
- ❖ Her obvious advantage in performance and volume quickly runs/sorts her to the top
- ❖ The light red heifer quickly surfaces as the high quality, attractive heifer of the four
- ❖ From a breeders perspective, I can appreciate (personally like)
- ❖ But still, given her definite balance advantage it just seems obvious to use her over 4 in the middle pair
- ❖ Obviously, it's not so much quality issues that keeps her third. Today, there's simply not enough of her
- ❖ With a top pair of this caliber, it becomes a combination of the little things that keep her third
- ❖ In the big picture, it's obvious she gives up too much performance to compete with my initial pair
- ❖ To me, it comes down to the little things that sort this pair
- ❖ In a close initial decision, I liked the subtle advantages of 2 over 4
- ❖ In my mind, finding 1 to win is the logical decision
- ❖ Personally, I'm confident in using 1 to win

- ❖ In my mind, sorting 2 over 3 into the top pair is logical. However, to me the decision offers a challenge because they are so different in type. Personally, I selected the added...
- ❖ As I step/turn to the class, I quickly find a trio of extremely high quality females that are each a touch different in their type
- ❖ Elite representatives of the Limousin Breed
- ❖ As I approach the class, I'm immediately impressed by the depth and quality of all four herdsire prospects
- ❖ However, this alone can't keep her out of fourth
- ❖ Therefore, I tend to question his/her value given the ranch's needs
- ❖ I'm skeptical of her value as a herd replacement
- ❖ However, with this comes a sacrifice in growth and muscle
- ❖ However, in a class of this caliber-she clearly comes at a performance disadvantage
- ❖ Despite these harsh criticisms, in a challenging final pair I just see 3 as an easier fleshing, more functional replacement
- ❖ The one clear decision for me was to finish with 4
- ❖ Now I'm left with a trio of wethers that all have their problems
- ❖ Now the tradeoff for me is that...
- ❖ I left/marked her third on my card today
- ❖ Still, I like her balance advantage and use it as the basis for placing 3 over 4 in my bottom pair
- ❖ But she stays in third
- ❖ She just gives up too much volume and performance to be deemed a top pair candidate
- ❖ From a breeder's perspective, I can appreciate (personally like)
- ❖ With a top pair of this caliber, it becomes the little things that keep her third
- ❖ In my opinion, finding 1 to win is the logical decision
- ❖ In my opinion, 1 quickly surfaces to the top
- ❖ As I step to the class, I quickly recognize the depth and quality of all four herd sire prospects