



Gold Merit Contest

The purpose of the Gold Merit competition is to recognize individual members of the TLBT for outstanding achievement with respect to their promotion of the Texas Longhorn breed and their Gold Merit project. Awards will be presented at the annual Texas Longhorn Junior National Show.

Selection Criteria:

- A. Entrants must adhere to the guidelines set forth in the Gold Merit Packet.
- B. Entrants must have participated in at least one affiliate sponsored youth event.
- C. Entrants must participate in all portions of the contest: Public Speaking, Interview, & Project Book.
 - Standard record book forms have been prepared and are available on the TLBAA website. Paper copies can be supplied to TLBT members upon request. All record books must use the approved forms and be placed in a colored folder (3 holes with brads).
 - All requested information must be submitted at check-in for the Texas Longhorn Junior National Show, June 2025 in Abilene, TX.
- D. An appointed committee will judge all entries.
- E. Awards will be presented in each of the 4 age divisions to individuals placing first, second, or third.

Divisions:

Junior	up to 9 years of age as of January 1, 2026
Intermediate	10 to 12 years of age as of January 1, 2026
Teen	13 to 15 years of age as of January 1, 2026
Senior	16 to 19 years of age as of January 1, 2026



I. Public Speaking

Topic:

What was the most unexpected lesson learned, or skill gained during your Gold Merit project?

-Junior participants will present a 1 to 3-minute speech on the given topic.

-Intermediate, Teen, and Senior participants will present a 3 to 5-minute speech on the given topic.

-Points will be deducted for speeches that do not conform to the required time allocations. See Judges' Rubric for specific deductions.

-A copy of the speech must accompany the record book that is turned in at check in.

-The speech should be memorized, but the contestant may use note cards, for reference. Speeches may not be read.

-PowerPoint presentations or appropriate visual aids, such as posters or photographs, may be used to enhance the impact of the speech. Contestants are responsible for any necessary electronic equipment required for their presentation. Set up of equipment should be kept to a minimum. Any descriptions or use of the visual aid will be counted as part of the speech time; this does not include set up time.

-All contestants are required to dress in show ring or professional attire for the public speaking portion.

The criteria for judging include(s):

1. Relevance of subject matter
2. Delivery; speaking ability, volume, clarity, speed
3. Knowledge of the subject matter
4. Grammar
5. Time limits for each age category; deductions will be taken for speeches under or over time limits
6. Creativity



II. Interview

At the conclusion of the participant's speech, the judging committee will interview each contestant.

The criteria for judging include(s):

1. Spontaneity of response
2. Sincerity of response
3. Ability to answer questions concerning the subject matter of the speech
4. Knowledge of the Texas Longhorn breed
5. Familiarity with your project

III. Project Book

- The Gold Merit Project Book should be based on one animal that is owned by or in the care of the contestant. Information about that animal should be collected throughout the year to make up the record book contents.

- All contestants must submit completed record book at the time of check-in at the Texas Longhorn Junior National Show.

- The project book must clearly reflect that it is the contestant's own work. Contestants who can type are encouraged to do so. Otherwise, the record book should be completed in the contestant's own, legible, handwriting.

- All record books must be completed on the standardized record book forms. These record book forms are available on the TLBAA website. Paper copies can be supplied to TLBT members upon request.

- The record book forms must be placed in a colored folder (3 holes with brads).

- Additional pictures or drawings can be added if pages are kept in order. Remember, this is a record book and should be easy for the judges to read the required information. Points may be deducted if the book becomes too cluttered or disorganized.



Gold Merit Contest Checklist

- Submit Participation Form to the TLBAA office by entry deadline for Texas Longhorn Junior National Show.

- Submit completed record book at the time of check in at the Texas Longhorn Junior National Show

- Submit a copy of your speech at the time of check in at the Texas Longhorn Junior National Show

Judging

Judges will use a scoring sheet and a point system to evaluate the project book, speech presentation, and interview.

Contestants will receive a copy of their scores upon request.



Tips on Developing Your Gold Merit Speech

Choose a Subject

Select subject matter that you are familiar with or is of interest to you related to your given topic. Often, material from your daily experience with the animals will make an outstanding talk.

The selection of your subject can indicate to the judges your personal involvement with your Gold Merit project. The judges will be listening to hear if this something you understand, or did you just memorize material.

Research Your Material

Research your subject, talk to people, and be sure that all your facts are correct. Make this a learning experience for YOU – not just something you do for the judge.

Develop an Outline

- List the important points to be covered
- Arrange the points in a logical order

Consider the Title

The most effective Titles are: Short! Descriptive! Image making!

Organize the Presentation

Introduction: This is the interest-getter. The presenter must make the audience feel that the subject is important. Be original and clever but keep the introduction brief to save time for the main part of the presentation. Remember to introduce yourself at the beginning of your speech.

Body: This is the “show and tell” part where TLBT members exhibit “know how” and skill in relaying information. A convincing presenter uses his own words and avoids memorizing the talking part of the presentation. You should talk to, not at, the audience. Practice talking in complete sentences. Avoid using slang expressions or just trailing off in the middle of a thought.

Summary: The summary reviews the important points of the presentation. A good summary is short, concise, and pertinent. This is the last chance to sell the idea, give information, and motivate the audience to follow the suggestions given.



Make the Presentation Effective

Practice good posture; stand tall. Do not lean on the table or twist one foot behind the other. Maintain eye contact with the audience and talk to someone. Know your material well enough that you can present it, not just recite, or read it. Speak in a voice that is natural, distinct, and loud enough to be heard. A friendly and confident tone of voice is recommended when speaking.

Avoid mannerisms such as pushing back hair or rocking back and forth as these are distracting to the audience. Dress to go in the Show Ring. Be neat and well groomed. Refer to the dress code in the TLBT Handbook for the showing of cattle. Smile to indicate interest and enthusiasm for the subject. Avoid using such phrases as “you know” and “all that stuff”. Be sure your grammar is correct. Look and act as if you are enjoying the presentation.

Know the time limit and keep your presentation within the limit.