

Original Oratory

Judging Criteria

- **TOPIC:** The topic should be interesting, stimulating, and of some importance. The purpose of the oration may be to inspire, to persuade, to eulogize, or to inform. These purposes may overlap in the same oration.
- **STRUCTURE:** The introduction should gain attention, specify a clear thesis, and give some direction as to how the speech will unfold or develop. The body should be organized for easy understanding. Transitional words/devices should help to move the speech from point to point. The conclusion should recap, make you want to think more about the topic, and end interestingly.
- **DEVELOPMENT:** The speaker should be held accountable for substantiating and supporting main positions. There should be a variety of effective supporting material from qualified sources. There should be clear explanation that helps the listener follow the speech’s flow and appreciate the use of supporting material.
- **LANGUAGE:** The word choice should be clear and potent. Figures of speech and rhetorical devices should be used effectively.
- **VOCAL DELIVERY:** The speaker should be articulate and fluent. The speaker should make use of contrast, and make use of the elements of vocal variety: pitch, volume, rate, pausing, phrasing, stress, and tone. The speaker should stress words to enhance meaning. The speaker should be conversational and concerned, passionate and pleasing. The speaker should be in control of the words and the emotions.
- **PHYSICAL DELIVERY:** The speaker should vary facial expression to accentuate the natural flow of thoughts and feelings. The speaker should make eye contact with the audience. The speaker’s stance should be erect and controlled, without distracting movements. Movement, if used, should be motivated by transitions in thought or mood. Gestures should be visible, effectively used for emphasis, and varied.
- Delivery and content should be evaluated equally.

Rules of Procedure

- The speaker should be expected to discuss with a degree of originality, and in an interesting manner, the topic chosen.
- The speakers should be given wide latitude in the ideas they express, but they should be held closely accountable for the manner in which they are expressed.
- Speakers must not be penalized for expressing views with which the judge happens to disagree.
- It is suggested, but not obligatory, that the topic be a subject of contemporary significance.
- The speech must be one that has been composed by the student delivering it.
- Original orations shall be composed from the standpoint of the present speaker. However, the use of a persona for a maximum length of 1 minute shall be permitted.
- The speech must be memorized. If the speaker refers to prepared notes of any kind or a script during the presentation, the speaker must be ranked last.
- The number of words quoted from authors other than the contestant must not exceed 150. Extensive paraphrasing of other sources is prohibited.
- Visual and audio-visual aids are not permitted. No properties or costumes of any kind may be used. Using “properties” means manipulating articles of clothing or objects to enhance the performance. Speakers using properties and/or wearing costumes must be ranked last.
- While singing is permitted it should not be excessive or dominate the performance. Judges' ranks may reflect if singing has dominated the performance.
- Positions other than standing should not be excessive in length or dominate the performance.
- **TIME LIMIT:** Maximum 10 minutes. If the speaker goes over a 30 second grace period, that contestant must not be awarded first place. No minimum time.

SPEAKER POINT SCALE

(whole number points only)

99-100	Exemplary [A+]
96-98	Accomplished [A/A-]
94-95	Competent [B+/B]
92-93	Developing [B-/C+]
90-91	Emerging [C or below]
< 90	Justify to Tab

We are all influenced by implicit bias or stereotypes that, when unchecked, influence our judging in ways that may negatively impact the students we are called to judge impartially. Before writing comments or making a decision, please take a moment to reflect on any preconceived notions you may hold that may impact your decision-making process and/or jeopardize the student experience.

To ensure a more equitable experience for our participants, please be sure your decision-making process and comments are related only to the content and quality of the presentation or speech itself.