

Judging Original Oratory



Ballot Instructions

Since the contestants delivering them have written these orations, the judges should consider thought, composition, and delivery. However, since this is a contest in speech rather than in essay writing, the emphasis should be placed on the speech phase. Thought and composition should be considered primarily in the way they are employed to make effective speaking possible.

The orator should not be expected to solve any of the great problems of the day. Rather, s/he should be expected to discuss intelligently, with a degree of originality, in an interesting manner, and with some profit to his/her audience the topic s/he has chosen. Any appropriate subject may be chosen but the orator must be truthful. Any non-factual reference, especially a personal one, **MUST** be so identified.

Although many orations deal with a current problem and propose a solution, the judge is expressly reminded that this is not the only acceptable form of oratory. The oration may simply alert the audience to a threatening danger, strengthen its devotion to an accepted cause, or eulogize a person. The orator should be given free choice of subject and judged solely on the effectiveness of its development and presentation.

The composition should be considered carefully for its rhetoric and diction. The use of appropriate figures of speech, similes and metaphors, balanced sentences, allusions, and other rhetorical devices to make the oration more effective should be noted especially. Use of American English should be more than correct; it should reveal a discriminating choice of words and altogether fine literary qualities. It should be especially adapted to oral presentation.



Delivery should be judged for mastery of the usual mechanics of speech -- poise, quality and use of voice, bodily expressiveness, and for the qualities of directness and sincerity which impress the oration upon the minds of the audience. An orator should not be penalized for a few seconds overtime.

No particular style of delivery is to be set up as the one correct style to which all contestants must conform. Rather, each contestant is to be judged upon the effectiveness of his/her delivery, free to choose or develop whatever style will best give him/her that effectiveness with his/her particular oration. No visual aids are permitted.

Event Rules

1. **Contest:** This contest comprises only memorized orations actually composed by the contestants and not used by them during a previous contest season. No visual aids are permitted.
2. **Subject:** Any appropriate subject may be used, but the orator must be truthful. Any non-factual reference, especially a personal one, must be so identified.
3. **Length:** The time limit in Original Oratory is 10 minutes with a 30 second grace period. If the judges in the round agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st, but need not be ranked last based on time. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stop watch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.
4. **Quotation:** Not more than 150 words of the oration may be direct quotation from any other speech or writing and such quotations must be identified in a printed copy of the oration supplied prior to registration. Extensive paraphrasing from other sources is prohibited.
5. **Script:** The orator's script must be sent to the District Chair no later than two weeks prior to the district tournament. The script must identify the quoted materials, state the number of quoted words, include a work cited page in A.P.A. or M.L.A. format, and both the orator and the coach must attest by signature that the oration is the original work of the contestant.