

Speaking Proudly 2019

Getting Started

Congratulations! You've decided to take part in the 2019 Speaking Proudly oratory competition that will bring girls from all over our state to the Minnesota State Capitol on Saturday, October 26, 2019. The Speaking Proudly organizers are hard at work to give you an enjoyable and rewarding experience you will remember all your life.

Some of you have been part of speech contests before. For others, public speaking—especially speaking competitively for prize money—is a brand-new experience. But each one of you will likely appreciate a few suggestions about how you can do your best in Speaking Proudly. That's the aim of this document—to provide information that will help you get started on a successful speech.

Understanding the Process

Familiarize yourself with the Competition Rules that govern Speaking Proudly and find answers to Frequently Asked Questions. You will want to visit this site frequently as you prepare for October 26.

Take note of and abide STRICTLY by deadlines and time limits. Exceptions cannot be made.

Thinking About the Topic: “A Republic, if you can keep it.” Rising to Benjamin Franklin’s Challenge

The 2019 Speaking Proudly topic is drawn from a 1787 encounter between Benjamin Franklin and a Philadelphia woman who was curious about the outcome of the Constitutional Convention that had just completed its work. It's a brief, but remarkable story that may help you begin thinking about how to approach the topic.

The following items set forth one possible approach to writing your speech. It is NOT the only way—or even the best way. It is meant only as a suggestion.

Identify a particular threat or challenge—past, present, or future—to our republic. Judges will expect you to make clear the significance of the threat or challenge you are focusing on. Of course, you'll do well to deal with an issue that won't have been chosen by other speakers.

Identify and explain the work of an individual or group or movement that was/is/will be key to overcoming the threat or challenge you're focusing on.

Inspire a response in your audience. In some conceptualizations of the persuasive speech, this step is referred to as a “call to action.” Whatever it’s called, the idea is that a persuasive speech (an oration, that is) sends listeners away changed—whether in large ways or small

Researching the Speech

Use a broad range of reputable sources of information; a speech based largely on a Wikipedia article won’t score well.

You will be expected to cite sources for the information and quotations used in your speech. Crediting sources will require you to keep track of those sources throughout the research phase of your speech writing. Find a method for doing so; use that method scrupulously.

Submitting the Application

Carefully follow the process set forth in the Speaking Proudly 2019 Application Form.

In addition to the completed, signed application form and the deposit check or money order, you must submit **by September 14, 2019**, a one-page speech description document which contains **no information that identifies you** but which includes the following:

- The title of your speech
- A summary of your speech
- An outline of your speech

This “blind” document will be evaluated by a selection committee. Your participation in the October 26 competition will rest on the committee’s decision. The title, summary and outline you submit must convince the selection committee that your speech is deserving of one of the fifty spots in the competition. Make it your best work.

Writing the Speech

Know how a persuasive speech (an oration, as it’s sometimes called) differs from an informative speech. As part of your effort to persuade, you will also inform, but your task is to give a persuasive speech. There are many on-line resources to guide you.

Give your speech a clear structure. Online sources can help you to learn the components of a persuasive speech. As you write, highlight your speech’s structure with signposting.

Remember that you are writing to be heard—not to be read. Use shorter sentences. Employ repetition and other rhetorical devices. Work to gracefully weave source cites into the text of your speech. You must reveal the sources of information and quotations used in your speech, but do so in a way that does not interrupt the flow of your ideas. Keep in mind that a speech's source cites need not be as detailed as those in a printed document.

Practicing Your Speech

Review the Judge's Ballot to familiarize yourself with the judging criteria.

Practice establishing and maintaining a confident stance. As you begin your speech, your feet should be planted squarely on the floor, a little less than a shoulder's width apart, with weight evenly distributed on both feet. Never yield to the temptation to cross your legs or shift your weight to one side or the other. Doing so communicates lack of confidence or disinterest.

Practice projecting your voice in rooms of different sizes. You must make yourself clearly heard in every corner of whatever space you are assigned to speak. The State Capitol hearing rooms, where preliminary and semi-final rounds will be held, are of various sizes. There will be no microphones in those rooms. The three speakers who advance to the final round will speak in the Capitol Rotunda, which will require the use of a microphone. There will be no opportunity to practice with that Rotunda sound system. If possible, find and practice with a microphone during your preparation for the competition.

Be aware that there will not be a podium for use by speakers in the preliminary and semi-final rounds. The three speakers who advance to the final round will speak from a podium. Prepare by practicing for each situation.

If you intend to use a script or notecards as you deliver your speech, practice so that those items do not interfere with your delivery. The script or notecards should not hide your face or impair your ability to gesture or distract from your message.

Practice until you are consistent with the delivery time for your speech. During the competition, the timekeeper in your round(s) will signal the end of your eight-minute time allowance. When time expires, you will be permitted to finish **only** the sentence you are speaking. Judges will be instructed to penalize speakers who continue beyond that point.

Use your face and body to help you communicate. Facial expressions, head movements, and hand and arm gestures should seem natural—not practiced; they should connect to and enhance the content of the speech. Likewise, movement (transitional steps) should serve a communicative purpose—to point out a transition from one key point to another, for example. Avoid random pacing.

Student Schedule for October 26

More detailed information will be provided closer to competition day.

10:00 a.m.	State Capitol doors are opened Competitors admitted
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Preliminary round, Sections A and B Lunch and Capitol tours
12:20 – 2:25 p.m.	Semi-final round, Sections A and B
2:45 p.m.	Finalists announced
3:00 – 3:45 p.m.	Final round and award ceremony

One Final Thing

The organizers of Speaking Proudly are grateful for your interest in this year's competition. To speak in our magnificent Minnesota State Capitol about issues that matter to you will be, we hope, a highlight of your high school career. We are eager to welcome you and your family to the Capitol for a successful and memorable experience.

© 2019 Metro Republican Women, Minnesota