

Speaking Proudly

Answers to Students' Frequently Asked Questions

Deciding about competing

Q) Why should I take part in Speaking Proudly 2021?

A) There are a lot of possible reasons; for instance:

- I'm really proud to be an American and not afraid to say so.
- I've never competed in this kind of event and would like to give it a try.
- I love oratory competitions and enter every one I can.
- It will require me to think deeply about an important topic.
- The prize money (\$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500) is tempting.
- I have something to say about my country and want people to hear it.
- It will astound my family and teachers.
- It will look great on my college-entrance application.
- It gives me a chance to make a speech at the State Capitol – just like a legislator!
- Other: _____

Q) Will this be a lot of work?

A) It probably will be, if you're serious about giving an excellent speech. It also can be a rewarding experience, academically, emotionally and, perhaps, financially.

Applying

Q) When should I start preparing?

A) The earlier the better, so you have a chance to think about this year's topic, develop your thoughts, complete the [application form](#) and write a speech description that will impress the selection committee and earn you an invitation to compete. You'll also want to review carefully the competition's [rules and procedures](#) and the [Getting Started](#) information.

Q) When should I apply?

A) Applications *must* be received or postmarked **between August 1, 2021, and September 11, 2021**.

Q) Can I get a little more time to apply?

A) No. The application deadline and all other deadlines are absolute – no extensions allowed.

Q) Why shouldn't I identify myself on the speech description?

A) We want Speaking Proudly to be as fair as possible. We're Republicans, so we believe everyone should have an equal opportunity to succeed and everyone should be judged solely on the basis of merit, meaning the quality of your application and speech.

The selection committee and competition judges will not know competitors' names, schools or other personal information. The Speaking Proudly registrar, to whom you mail your application will have this data. (Her address is on the application form.) She will assign a number to identify each applicant for selection and judging.

Q) Why do I have to submit a \$50 deposit?

A) We want students to apply who are committed to actually competing. The \$50 deposit is an incentive to accomplish that. Any student who accepts an invitation to compete but fails to participate deprives another applicant of the opportunity.

Deposits will be refunded promptly by mail to students who are not invited to compete. Competitors and alternates will receive their deposits back promptly after the competition. We cannot return deposits on competition day because Capitol rules prohibit all monetary exchanges on the premises.

Q) May both my sister and I apply?

A) Yes, definitely. There's no restriction on having more than one student from the same family or same school or town.

Q) I use a wheelchair. Will it be difficult for me to navigate the competition site?

A) No. Do not let mobility problems keep you from participating. Capitol Complex facilities are handicapped accessible, with elevators serving all floors and accessible competition rooms, restrooms and other spaces. A Speaking Proudly volunteer can help you, if you wish.

Applicant Selection

Q) Who selects the students who compete?

A) The Speaking Proudly Steering Committee will review all speech descriptions submitted and select competitors and alternates. The committee is made up of members of Metro Republican Women, the competition's organizer. The Steering Committee will not see application forms or other identifying information about a competitor.

Q) When will I know if I'm invited to Speaking Proudly?

A) We will send invitations to compete no later than Sept. 20, 2021.

Q) If I'm chosen, what will I need to know?

A) The invitation to compete will include details about the deadline to accept, when and where you should arrive on competition day, parking, lunch and Capitol tour (both free to you) and other essential information

Q) What about alternates?

A) Alternates will be ranked on the basis of their speech description and will be called to compete in that order, in the event an invited competitor cancels in advance or does not

compete. Alternates not selected to compete in advance are welcome to attend the competition and be on call to fill a vacancy.

Pre-Competition Prep

Q) What tips can you give me about preparing for competition?

A) Be sure to read [Getting Started](#). It provides a lot of helpful information about oratory competition. Also, read and follow closely the [Rules and Procedures](#). To know how the judges will evaluate you, check the [Judge's Ballot](#).

Q) Do I need to memorize my speech?

A) The official answer is “no.” Competition rules make clear that speakers may use notecards or a manuscript. That said, you may want to consider that the quality of the Speaking Proudly competition is high and all three 2019 winners memorized their speeches. Keep in mind, too, that judges will expect that notes or a manuscript not interfere with your presentation.

Q) What about COVID-19?

A) We expect that the State Capitol will be reopened to the public before Speaking Proudly 2021 takes place. If COVID-19 mitigation rules are in place, we will, of course, abide by them. Even if all rules are lifted, competitors and other Capitol visitors are free to wear masks and take other reasonable measures to protect themselves.

Q) Who will be the judges?

A) They will include speech teachers and Minnesota government officials and public figures. We'll list the judges and their titles in the competition's printed program.

Q) What should I wear to compete?

A) The dress code for Speaking Proudly is basically common sense. Impress the judges by being clean, tidy and well groomed. Dresses, skirts and pants are all acceptable.

Q) May my family and friends be present when I give my speech?

A) Space in most of the competition rooms is quite limited. Room managers will decide how many persons, if any, can be present with the competitors and judges. All persons admitted to competition rooms must be totally quiet and respectful of every competitor. Relatives and friends are welcome to attend the competition's final round in the Capitol Rotunda.

Q) What if I get sick or for some other reason cannot compete?

A) Email us at <mailto:masexton@bitstream.net> as soon as possible!

If you cancel before October 4, 2021, we will refund your \$50 deposit. If you cancel after that date, you forfeit your deposit. All cancellations are final, because we will notify the highest-ranking alternate to take your place.

Saturday, October 23

Q) I've never been to the State Capitol Complex. How will I know where to go?

A) In advance we'll provide you with as much detail as we can. Volunteers will be on hand to escort or direct you to the registration area, competition rooms and other locations.

Q) May we tour the Capitol?

A) Definitely! The day includes a special tour for competitors. It takes about 45 minutes and is free of charge to you. Relatives and friends may schedule tours through the Minnesota Historical Society's office near the south entrance to the Capitol.

Q) What about lunch?

A) Competitors' lunches are available at no charge. You and your guests will be able to pre-order box lunches; guests will pay in advance for their lunches. All food and beverages must be consumed in the Capitol's Rathskeller. If you have special dietary needs, be sure to tell us so we can make arrangements for you.

Q) May we bring our own lunches and snacks?

A) No. Capitol rules require that all food be provided by its approved vendor, unless you have special dietary needs we cannot accommodate through the vendor. The Rathskeller will not sell other food or beverages October 23 so you will need to pre-order lunch through Speaking Proudly.

Q) When will we know who wins?

A) Tabulating of scores will be done as quickly as possible, so you know which competitors advance to subsequent rounds. All competitors, guests, judges and volunteers are invited to attend the afternoon final round and awards ceremony.