



BLUEPRINT FOR A SUCCESSFUL ORATORICAL CONTEST

Here is a calendar with suggestions that other clubs have found helpful in the past.

A. September

- i. Each local club needs to designate an Oratorical Leader. This is needed even if the club doesn't participate in the contest.
- ii. It would be helpful for the club to have a committee to hear student speeches.

B. October

- i. A promotional poster will be sent to High School Principals which will include instructions for downloading, distributing and posting the promotional poster.
- ii. Try creating interest among parents with a table at an open house or a PTA meeting.
- iii. Some high schools have a system which allows a teacher or other staff person to post a personal recording that then is auto-dialed to every home that has a junior! Try posting a simple message like: Want your HS Junior to win a college scholarship? Encourage them to let the high school-point-of-contact know they are interested in the Rotary Oratorical Contest on Ethics. One speech could be worth as much as \$40,000!

C. November

- i. It is recommended that the Rotarian fostering the contest meets with the parents as well as the students and interested faculty to explain the contest and give written copies of the contest rules and timelines.
- ii. The people who are coaching the students need to emphasize correct grammar, connections with the ethical principles of the 4- Way Test, and effective speaking techniques. Good speaking techniques including voice modulation, movement, eye contact and hand gestures need to be employed judiciously. The students create their own content based upon their life experiences and future goals. Finding a public speaking expert to critique speeches once the first draft is ready, would be super!
- iii. The District 7120 Rotary website has several videos showing the successful speeches given by past winners of the contest. These can be viewed and discussed prior to the final speech writing. Coaches need to tell students that the 5-7 minute speech length requirement is enforced with penalties for going over or under.

NOTE:

students may use cue cards but should become so familiar with the content that they are not reading from the cards. For some students, having the cue cards



Oratorical Contest

*Build Public
Speaking Skills
and Confidence*



with just their outline or key transition points is all they need.

- D. November – Coaches should encourage students to practice by making presentations before the Club’s Oratorical Contest Committee, or groups such as their English class, Social Studies class or a local community groups such as 4-H or Scouts. Give those in the audience parts of the Judging Criteria for evaluation of speeches and ask for scores and comments that can help the student improve their speech. (Download Judging Criteria from website.)
- E. Early December – Students deliver their speech to the local Rotary Club. Try delivering from memory, even with cue cards if needed. Coaches encourage and remind contestants about the 5 –7 minute rule. Use of a stopwatch is helpful. Penalty is one point per second over 7 minutes or under 5 minutes.
 - i. Give members of the club the Judging Criteria for evaluating speeches. A good idea used by some clubs is to cut the Judging Criteria into parts, giving each club member just one part to evaluate. Again, give students the notes from club members/judges to use to improve upon their speeches.
 - ii. Club members or Judges decide which student will continue to the semi-finals. If there are two students within 20 points or 5% of each other two contestants from the same school may continue on to the semi-final contest.
 - iii. Prizes to reward participation are optional but certainly encouraged.
- F. No Later Than January 15 Deadline (see <https://rotary7120.org/SitePage/oratorical-contest/oratorical-contest-home-page> for exact date), the local Rotary Club will forward the winner’s registration entry and the \$200.00 fee check made out to Rotary District 7120; checks to be sent to the Oratorical Contest Chair.
- G. Semi-final and Final dates and locations for the contest will be found on the Oratorical Home Page.. The club or school coach for each contestant is encouraged to attend both the semi-final competition, and for those moving forward, the final contest. Contestants appreciate the support!

The Oratorical Contest is really a three-way partnership between the student, the sponsoring club’s designated Oratorical Leader and a dedicated teacher in the school. Each needs to do his or her part for a successful outcome.