

ORIGINAL ORATORY

In Original Oratory (OO), competitors perform an original, memorized speech about a topic of their choosing. The speech has a central theme, purpose or message and is often inspiring or persuasive.

RULES

- ◆ Speeches must be fully memorized. The use of a script or note card is not allowed. A competitor using notes must be ranked last.
- ◆ No visual aids or props are permitted.

JUDGING

Judges should use the rubric below to determine speech scores and as a guideline for rankings.

TIME LIMIT

Speeches are limited to ten minutes with a grace period of thirty seconds. Competitors exceeding 10:30 may not be ranked first.

Speaker Points	10 - 11 POOR	12 - 13 BELOW AVERAGE	14 - 15 AVERAGE	16 - 17 ABOVE AVERAGE	18 - 20 EXCELLENT
Vocal Performance	Rate, volume, pronunciation and/or enunciation frequently interfere with understanding. No use of tone, emphasis and/or vocal variety.	Rate, volume, pronunciation and/or enunciation sometimes impedes understanding. Limited/ineffective use of tone, emphasis and/or vocal variety.	Rate, volume, pronunciation and/or enunciation are generally well-suited. Some use of tone, emphasis and vocal variety to support understanding.	Clear and consistent rate, volume, pronunciation and enunciation. Tone, emphasis and vocal variety enhances audience interest and understanding.	Outstanding rate, volume, pronunciation and enunciation. Tone, emphasis and vocal variety skillfully aid understanding and engagement.
Physical Performance	No/limited eye contact and use of facial expressions, body language or gestures. Posture and movement may detract from performance.	Inconsistent eye contact and use of facial expressions, body language or gestures. Posture or movement may sometimes support delivery but may also distract.	Consistent eye contact, facial expressions, body language and gestures generally support delivery. Posture and movement appear mostly purposeful.	Eye contact and use of facial expressions, body language and gestures reinforce understanding well. Posture and movement are controlled and confident.	Eye contact and dynamic facial expressions, body language and gestures elevate delivery. Confident posture and strategic movement improve engagement.
Organization	No clear or explicit organizational structure or roadmap; lacks introduction, body and/or conclusion. Ideas and/or support are disconnected.	Explicit structure with some structural elements present, but ineffective or poorly developed. Limited transitions; ideas or support not well connected.	Logically organized, explicit structure with a hook, introduction, body and conclusion. Ideas and support generally connect and transitions are somewhat effective.	Explicit structure is easy to follow and well-fit to the topic. Structural elements are clear and cohesive. Transitions effectively connect and support ideas.	Organization is highly clear, cohesive and reflects the topic. Structural elements synergize to reinforce information with vivid transitions.
Content	Problem or need for change is missing or unclear. Central message is weak or unsupported. Little or no use of examples or rhetorical appeals.	Problem is identified but unclear, underdeveloped or ill-suited. Message is weakly supported by examples and rhetorical appeals. Limited rhetorical awareness.	Problem and central message are generally clear and developed. Examples and rhetorical appeals present but may lack depth. Basic rhetorical awareness. Evidence/support is cited properly.	Clear and manageable problem and strong central message. Relevant examples with rhetorical appeals. Adapts to the rhetorical situation. Powerful evidence/support is woven throughout.	Compelling problem and exceptional central message. Sophisticated examples and rhetorical appeals persuasively call the audience to action. Rhetorical situation fully addressed. Powerful evidence legitimizes.
Overall	Speech time is significantly under- or over-time. Poor pacing or uneven development. Limited control of delivery.	Speech time is under 7 minutes or over 10 minutes. Inconsistent pacing and uneven or ineffective use of time. Most ideas or support are underdeveloped.	Speech time is within 7-8 minutes. Mostly balanced pacing and development. Absence of effective thematic or stylistic flair.	Speech time is within 9-10 minutes. Well-paced, consistent development of ideas. Presence is controlled and engaging.	Appropriate time with excellent pacing and development. Delivery confidently integrates vocal, physical and content elements. Includes style and theme.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

ORIGINAL ORATORY

VOCAL PERFORMANCE

Proper rate, pace, volume, pronunciation and enunciation contribute to clear communication. Emphasis, tone and vocal variety are used to improve audience understanding and maintain engagement.

PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE

Eye contact, facial expressions, body language and gestures reinforce delivery. Stance and posture are confident and controlled, and movement is purposeful. Repetitive or unintentional movement does not distract from the performance.

ORGANIZATION

The organization of an Original Oratory is explicitly explained in the introduction using a roadmap and should be easily recognizable throughout the speech. The way the speaker chooses to organize the speech should logically fit the topic and contribute to audience understanding. All structural elements are present, body sections are clearly defined and the conclusion effectively summarizes and circles back to the introduction. Transitions are used as effective tools to connect ideas, enhance cohesion and maintain audience interest.

CONTENT

Speakers identify a clear problem or need for change and persuade the audience through a well-developed and meaningful central message. Speeches clearly demonstrate a problem or need for change that can be meaningfully addressed through a speech and responds with logical reasoning, credible evidence and emotional and ethical appeals. Strong speeches demonstrate awareness of the rhetorical situation, including audience beliefs, values and constraints, and adapt accordingly. Evidence, examples and narratives should illustrate the problem, support a compelling solution or change and encourage reflection or action.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Judges should consider the length of the speech and how effectively the available time is used. Strong performances demonstrate appropriate pacing and balanced development of ideas throughout the speech. Creativity, individuality and the integration of vocal, physical and content elements may be taken into account when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the overall performance.

As a reminder when considering overall performance, speeches that exceed the designated grace period may not be awarded first place and judges should record all speech times in the ballot.