



Oratory Contest Rules

1. Contestants are to research, write, present, and videotape an original pro-life speech on abortion, infanticide, or euthanasia.
2. The speech is to be 5 – 7 minutes in length. Judges are instructed to use their judgment regarding whether to penalize speeches that are under or over the time limit. However, a contestant will be disqualified if the speech is timed to be less than 4 minutes or over 8 minutes in length.
3. Contestants will videotape speech, adhering to the guidelines below:
 - a. **Background:** Choose a neutral, light-colored background, such as a blank wall.
 - b. **Sound:** Viewers should be able to hear and understand the speaker clearly without straining.
 - c. **Speaker Position:** Speaker should remain stationary as if having a conversation with a person in front of them.
 - d. **Camera set-up:** When positioning the camera, please allow room for a clear view of the speaker, with some space above his/her head in the frame. The speaker's face and body, from the waist up, should be visible. Use a tripod or other steadying device for stability.
4. Create a URL for your video by uploading it to YouTube or Vimeo.
5. **Register for the contest by March 24, 2025**, at lifefirst.org/oratory-contest/. Upon registering, you will be asked to upload the **YouTube or Vimeo link to your speech** as well as a **pdf version of your written speech**, saved using this protocol: 2025-title of speech.pdf. For example: 2024-Glory Baby.pdf.
6. Awards:

1st place winner - \$1,000

2nd place winner - \$500

3rd place winner - \$250

7. The judges score the contestants in 4 areas: introduction, content, presentation, and conclusion.
 - a. Introduction: Does the introduction make you want to hear more? Does it have a clear thesis? How well is the beginning laid out?
 - b. Content: Is each point relevant to the topic and substantiated with current documentation? Are the facts and figures used current? Good word usage?
 - c. Presentation: Appropriate eye contact, audibility, rate of delivery, voice inflection, fluency, tone, gestures, pronunciation, general sense of confidence, etc.
 - d. Conclusion: Does the conclusion sum up the main points of the speech?
8. No copyrighted speeches shall be used in the contest.
9. Appropriate gestures are allowed. Props are not allowed.
10. The style should be appropriate to the message of the speech. A dramatic presentation is not acceptable. A dramatic presentation is considered a literary piece written by another author that is read or performed (e.g., a short story, a poem, etc.); or acting as someone (e.g., acting out the life of an unborn child). This rule is not to be interpreted to rule out the use of emotion.
11. Your speech should be focused on speaking to people who are not pro-life. Please be mindful of your word choice. We want to communicate the truth that abortion, euthanasia, and infanticide are unequivocally wrong and take innocent lives, but we want to do so in a manner that will build bridges of communication. For example, using terms such as “baby killers” can often erect barriers rather than facilitate discussion and change. Please strive to communicate the truth but with grace and love.
12. The recording of your video will remain the property of LifeFirst.
13. Contestants may use note cards.
14. Speech content should generally adhere to the submitted pdf version. Fine-tuning for minor corrections or to adjust time is allowed and encouraged.
15. The judges’ decision will be final.
16. The decision of the contest director concerning the application of the contest rules will be final.
17. Participant must reside in Texas.
18. **Students classified as a high school junior or senior by February 1, 2025, are eligible to compete.** In the case of advanced students, non-traditional students, or homeschool students, the school must recognize the student as a junior or senior; or eligibility will be determined by the year the student would enter college.

19. Students who have competed as a junior may compete the following year as a senior with an entirely new speech.
20. Please email any questions to oratorycontest@lifefirst.org.