



Oratory Contest Rules

1. Contestants are to research, write, and present an original pro-life speech on abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, or embryonic stem cell research. The speech should address one of these topics directly using other topics only as support.
2. To enter the contest, follow the instructions under **How to Enter** on the Oratory Contest page on the LifeFirst website.
3. Participant must be a resident of Texas.
4. Students classified as a high school junior or senior by February 1, 2022, are eligible to compete. In 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 will enter college.
5. Students who have competed as a junior may compete the following year as a senior with an entirely new speech. If a student places first in the national contest they are not eligible to compete further in the local contest.
6. **A written copy of the contestant's speech must be submitted upon check-in on the day of the local contest.**
7. 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 5–7-minute 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.
8. 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?

9. The contestant should use up-to-date factual information.
10. Although quotes to support a position or statement are appropriate, quotes should be appropriately cited and should not dominate the speech.
11. No copyrighted speeches shall be used in the contest.
12. Appropriate gestures are allowed. Props are not allowed.
13. 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.
14. 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, infanticide, and embryonic stem cell research 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.
15. The contest may be videotaped or recorded. The tape will remain the property of LifeFirst.
16. Contestants may use note cards.
17. A microphone may not be available, so contestants need to be prepared to speak without a microphone.
18. Speech content may not be significantly changed as a contestant advances. Fine-tuning for minor corrections or to adjust time is allowed and encouraged.
19. The judges’ decision will be final.
20. The decision of the contest director concerning the application of the contest rules will be final.
21. Please email any questions to oratorycontest@lifefirst.org.