**Original Oratory: Structure and Rules**

### **Purpose of Original Oratory**

Original Oratory, also known as simply Oratory or “OO”, is an individual event where the student writes, memorizes, and then delivers a speech arising from her/his personal feelings, convictions, or a source of concern. The speech can be written on any subject the student chooses, but MUST be written by the student. The speech must be persuasive, meaning the speech should influence, convince, motivate, preach or stimulate an action. An original oratory might also be informative (designed to explain, instruct, define, clarify, or teach) or evocative (entertains, inspires, or helps listeners to celebrate, bond, or commemorate) depending on the contest rules. The student may write about subject matter related to their community, beliefs and/or the larger world.

The speaker chooses a topic of interest to them, researches it, writes a speech about it, and then delivers it in competition. An introduction is required during the performance. Speeches can be eulogies, an alert to the audience about an imposing danger, a strengthening of an accepted cause, or most often a persuasive topic. Try to be somewhat original. A judge does not want to hear three similar speeches on animal rights in one round.

• Speech is to be memorized
• Eye contact is critical
• An introduction is required (topic, gives any necessary information, and sets the tone) and given after a minute or so of the piece has been delivered, at a natural break-point
• No notes are allowed
• Time limits are to be adhered to (generally, time limits range from 7-10 minutes)
• No more than 150 quoted words or 30 seconds of quoted speech
• No props, diagrams, charts, etc
• All gestures, movements (as transitions/emphasis), facials, intonation/vocals, etc. need to be clear and help support the piece
• Must be truthful, honest, and factual
• Speech must have excellent support
• Speech effectiveness will be judged—did the speech clearly present an idea, motivate?
• Your passion on the topic will help you rank higher; be enthusiastic
• Judged solely on the “effectiveness of development and presentation”
• Speaking skills such as diction, tone, loudness, intonation, etc.

### **The Topic for an Original Oration**

Topics for the original oration may be selected by the student and with the aid of the coach or teacher, but the oration itself must be the product of the contestant alone. The coach or teacher cannot help the student write or develop the content of the speech. The oration may simply alert the audience to a threatening danger, strengthen its devotion to an accepted cause, or eulogize a person.

[**Choose an excellent topic**](http://www.wikihow.com/Select-a-Topic-for-a-Speech)**.** With 7 or 10 minutes to work with, you have a lot to write. Great topics are:

* Generally interesting and widely-appealing
* Culturally relevant
* Able to connect with the speaker
* Full of energy that the audience and judge will feel
* Something that the audience and judge can take with them

1. **[Brainstorm](http://www.wikihow.com/Brainstorm%22%20%5Co%20%22Brainstorm).** Once you think of your topic, you'll probably have lots of information and facts flowing through your head. It's vital to get these on paper or typed up as soon as possible, so the idea and wording doesn't leave you.
2. **Decide whether your speech will be informative or persuasive.**
3. **Sort through your thoughts to develop a thesis and three points.** As you progress from here, develop sub-points that you intend to back up with evidence.
4. **Explain your three points in relation to the thesis statement.** In doing this, use a variety of sources. Do not use Web-sources only - Some older people (whom you may have as judges) may view the Internet as less reliable than a book, person, or other "physical" source. Furthermore, your judge may not be familiar with all your sources.Make sure to cite your sources well in your speech - enough that your audience could find them on their own for further research.
5. **Write a catchy intro and solid conclusion.** The introduction will set the "first impression" that the audience is likely to keep with them throughout your speech; The conclusion must be the strong so that the audience can "take something" from all you've said.
6. **Have others read through your speech to**[**critique its contents**](http://www.wikihow.com/Critique-a-Speech)**.** Their feedback may help you to tailor your speech to appeal to a wider audience.