



# Public Speaking Training Guide

*Training speakers is a continual process. There is never enough time to adequately prepare students for everything they need to know in Extemp, Oratory, or Informative Speaking. Therefore, this guide identifies the features most critical for students to understand when starting in these events.*

## OVERVIEW

Ultimately, students need to recognize that they are not capable of knowing everything prior to their first tournament. They may encounter scenarios in a round for which you have not prepared them. The goal is not for them to feel lost or frustrated, but to come back to you after the tournament to discuss the things they did not know. Former student member Grant Nelson of Dowling Catholic once said “I learned everything I don’t know yet.” He was optimistic because he felt that by knowing the deficits he could improve using the resources at his disposal. If your students can attend tournaments and identify things they need to learn about in the future - regardless of outcome - it was a worthwhile competitive experience.

## OVERALL PUBLIC SPEAKING CONCEPTS

Regardless of the event, there are important concepts each student should understand. All of the public speaking events involve advancing an overall argument. As a result, understanding Aristotle’s three modes of persuasion is a solid starting point for new students.

The three modes of persuasion are **ethos, pathos, and logos**. **Ethos**, or **ethical appeal**, establishes credibility by convincing the audience on the character of the speaker. Ethos is accomplished through delivery and use of evidence in the speech. **Pathos** appeals to the **emotions** of the audience such as including a relevant narrative in your speech to humanize the content. **Logos** is persuasion through the use of **reason or logic**, often manifesting itself as solid argumentation and sourcing throughout the speech. These factors can be useful in Extemporaneous Speaking, Original Oratory, and Informative Speaking.

## EVENT SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

It’s important to understand both the basic differences between events and the actual rules and regulations about how events are conducted. When preparing students for their event, it’s key to give them tools to be successful, while ensuring they understand there are multiple approaches that could be taken. The following rules reflect national standards -- local or state event regulations may differ from what you read below.

### EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

Students are presented with a choice of **three questions** related to national and international current events. The student has **30 minutes** to prepare a seven-minute speech answering the selected question. Students may consult articles and evidence they gather prior to the contest, but may not use the Internet during preparation. Tournaments may divide the students into **United States/Domestic** or **International Extemp**. Tournaments may also hold one division and refer to it as **Mixed Extemporaneous Speaking**, which is a combination of international and domestic questions.

To prepare, students need to do research in advance. If a tournament offers topic areas, this would serve as a guide to the research that should be conducted. Students should find articles, journals, and books from reputable sources on current events. If the topic area is Europe, questions could cover a range of issues from national security issues, the European Union, economic policy, and more. Students can organize the articles they find into specific topics. A student may have a folder on Europe, or they could have one on each country in Europe. A student could have a file on US Presidential elections, or they could have one on each candidate for President. Organization of

the files is largely an individual or team choice. Whatever system of organization works best for the student is the one that should be employed.

During the tournament, a student will pick their question as described above. Then they will go to their research and look for articles with facts, opinions, theories, and more that could be used to shape the speech. The student only has thirty minutes to organize the research, establish a thesis, outline their points, and commit to memory their outline and supporting details.

An extemp speech tends to follow a basic structure of providing an introduction, three main points of analysis, and a conclusion. This is not a rule, but a general understanding. The **introduction** should set to provide context, state the question, answer the question, and preview the main points of the speech. **Each main point** should be developed into an appropriate argument for why what they are claiming is justified. The **conclusion** should tie everything together, reviewing the main points, making a connection back to the introduction, and restating the answer to the question.

► **To learn more about Extemporaneous Speaking**, please visit [www.speechanddebate.org/competitionevents](http://www.speechanddebate.org/competitionevents).

#### ORIGINAL ORATORY

Students deliver a **self-written, ten-minute speech on a topic of their choosing**. Limited in their ability to quote words directly, competitors craft an argument using evidence, logic, and emotional appeals. Topics range widely, and can be **informative** or **persuasive** in nature. The speech is delivered from memory.

There are a variety of structures than an Oratory could take. We suggest reading our Oratory textbook for complete details

on these structures. Generally speaking, there are some common aspects of an Oratory speech. For example, one of the most commonly used structures is problem, cause, solution. Similar to a five paragraph essay, this means **the Oratory will have an introduction, the three main body points outlined above, and a conclusion**. By breaking a topic down into three easy to grasp areas of analysis, the student is making it easy for an audience to keep track of the arguments.

To prepare writing an Oratory, students should begin **brainstorming issues that they experience personally or witness in society**. While there is no perfect jumping off point to find a topic, an easy and reliable method is to consider what the student would change about the world if they had the power. When looking at the list of changes, find the entries they feel most passionate about and encourage them to start researching. They should focus their research on better understanding the causes of that problem, the harms of the problem, and ways to effectively combat the problem. By focusing their research on these areas, they can translate their research into a problem, cause, solution structure with ease!

**Oratory is a process**, and once the draft is written, a great Oratory will be revised continually throughout the competitive season. It begins with an idea, further exploration (research), and an outline. Students should focus on working through the main aspects of the speech before getting caught up in the personal example, vehicle, or humor. Creating a solid foundation for an Oratory by putting in the necessary work in the research and outline phase will pay dividends throughout the year.

► **To learn more about Oratory**, visit [www.speechanddebate.org/oratory](http://www.speechanddebate.org/oratory)



## INFORMATIVE SPEAKING

Students **author and deliver a ten-minute speech on a topic of their choosing**. Competitors create the speech to educate the audience on a particular topic. All topics must be **informative** in nature; the goal is to educate, not to advocate. Visual aids are permitted, but not required. The speech is delivered from memory.

Structures for Informative speaking vary greatly across the country, which means the student has a large degree of creative control over their speech organization. The tried and true method in all public speaking events is to have **an introduction, three main body points, and a conclusion**. It's no coincidence that we see this structure so often, in fact, creating easy to follow structures benefits the speaker precisely because of the familiarity we have with the structure. So, whatever structure is chosen, be sure that it is; easy to follow, builds logically from one point to the next, and keeps the audience interested throughout the speech.

**Visual aids** can be an incredibly useful tool in allowing the audience to understand what the student is informing them about. For example, if the student is talking about a new product or technology, it would be useful to show a picture of that object in action. However, that does not mean visual aids are necessary or required. There are many great topics out there that can be adequately described and dissected without visual aids, the choice to use them is entirely up to the student.

To adequately prepare a visual aid the student must prepare it before the tournament. Since most visual aids are photographs used during the round, we will cover how to prepare those. The most common style is to hold the picture on a portable easel to hold the visual aid. Many students choose to paste the picture onto a neutral colored piece of poster board, with a blank piece of poster board used to cover up the visual aid until the student reveals it while speaking. Keep in mind that visual aids must be set up quickly and efficiently, so be certain that visual aid materials are easily transportable and durable.

Keep in mind that **Informative Speaking is not merely the recitation of facts about a certain topic**. When researching, pay special attention to how a particular topic works, how it has affected society at large and what this topic might mean in a broader context. A good goal for Informative is to create a speech that is thorough enough that an audience member could explain your topic to someone who has not seen the speech and interesting enough that an audience member would want to tell somebody about the topic.

► **To learn more about Informative Speaking**, visit [www.speechanddebate.org/informativespeaking](http://www.speechanddebate.org/informativespeaking)

## OTHER RESOURCES

**The National Speech & Debate Association** provides a plethora of resources for all events. Members should access their dashboards for **lesson plans, videos, classroom activities, and more**. There are videos on how to understand basic, foundational concepts. There are so many resources at your disposal - familiarize yourself with our site and begin exploring at [www.speechanddebate.org](http://www.speechanddebate.org)!



## EVALUATION

It's important to assess your student's understanding after tournaments. Check with them about the things they felt good about. **Every tournament - every student - does something effectively**. It's important to remember that, and always keep it at the forefront of what you teach your novices. After this is established, ask what they could've done better. Then have them outline steps they can take to work on that issue.

## QUESTIONS?

**We're here to help!** Supporting materials can be found at [www.speechanddebate.org](http://www.speechanddebate.org) by logging in to the **District Leader Dashboard**, or contact your National Speech & Debate Association staff liaison for more information.