

SPEECH POINTERS

The following tips are provided as advice and are meant to complement, not replace, Oratory Contest Rules. Contact the State Contest Director with questions. (See also 'Oratory Ballot' and 'CARS Criteria'.)

CONTENT:

The rules state that your speech should address one of these topics directly: 'abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, embryonic or adult stem cell research.'

No matter what type of speech you write, it should have a claim or theory that you are attempting to prove, (i.e., a hypothesis). The hypothesis can be one that you've come up with on your own, but remember that, because it is yours, it is subjective, so try to prove what you are claiming with objective facts. It's recommended that you have others listen to, or read your speech and ask them if there are any claims that you make, that need to be clarified or supported. You don't need to use the word 'hypothesis' in your speech; your introduction should make it clear to the audience, what that is.

Your speech should not be solely allegorical. You are encouraged to use stories, commentary, analogies, and anecdotes, in your presentation, but it must also include some amount of objective, measurable, accurate, up-to-date data (i.e. social science and/or natural science) to prove your claim. See Rule # 7. A good speech balances interesting anecdotal information, with key pieces of solid data.

If you choose to use a metaphor as the basis for your speech, you must make sure that the comparison is very clear and strong. If there is a way to use objective facts to do this, it will make the comparison even more clear.

Organization is the key to writing a winning speech.

An organized speech uses the **introduction** to state your hypothesis. The introduction then lays out the main points that you intend to cover in order to prove your main claim. The fewer points there are in your speech, the easier it is for your listeners to remember what they are when you cover them in the body and then again in your conclusion.

You need to make your speech unique to catch the judges' attention. You can do this by beginning it with a 'hook'; for instance an anecdote that will grab your audience's attention and make them interested in hearing more of what you have to say.

The **body of your speech** should expand on the main points which were laid out in your introduction. Make it clear to the listeners where the information came from, especially if it is very general or subjective information. Some examples of this might be: a general attitude held by society or your personal feelings about a problem or solution.

Your speech should also use evidence that is convincing to a broad audience, i.e. listeners who are pro-abortion and/or non-Christian.

Your **conclusion** should summarize the main points in order to show that they support your hypothesis. It should end on a memorable note. Finding a way to refer to the 'hook' again in your conclusion helps make your speech memorable and underscores your general message.

It is very important to keep the length of your speech within the ideal time limit of 5-7 minutes.

PRESENTATION:

It is recommended that you memorize your entire speech in order to concentrate on your delivery, (i.e. body movement, eye contact, audibility, rate of delivery) while you are speaking. You may use notes or a copy of the speech while you are speaking, however, if you rely on them too much, it may detract from your delivery and cause you to lose points. Memorizing your speech will also give you the appearance of being more prepared and confident than someone who has not. Your rate of delivery should be slow, loud, and you should enunciate your words. The use of some emotion and body movement (such as: hand gestures, head movement, eye contact, changing your stance or even moving to a different place in the front of the room) are necessary in order to keep you from appearing stiff, but moderation is best; too little or too much of any of the above can be distracting.

Audibility-Remember to make your voice loud enough so that the judges do not have to strain to hear you. It's easy for a speaker to hear their own voice, but it may not be easy for their listeners to hear them. *Ladies, this advice cannot be over-emphasized, because most gentlemen have a natural advantage in this area.*

Good Luck!