



Creative Speaking Contest Guidelines

Preliminary Round

Spring 2020 was among the most consequential periods in history. We will tell our children, and our grandchildren about the dramatic events that still swirl about us today.

Your generation will inherit this whirlwind. We invite you to reflect: What has it all meant to you? What have you learned? We will never be the same. What has changed? We all have a story to tell: so, what's yours?

This contest challenges you to create an original and compelling, *three minute (180 seconds)* speech - **about anything you want**. You can riff or rant **on any subject** as long as it is meaningful to you and pertains to current events (and as long as you are respectful: tip - hate won't win). You are the boss of your talk and we **encourage you to be creative**: you are free to incorporate **multimedia elements** such as external video, background music and a greenscreen - if you want (and you are free to choose not to as well!). See below for more specific instructions on adding such elements.

External video: You are allowed to incorporate up to 18 seconds of an external video clip to supplement your speech. You can weave your external videos into your presentation in any way you see fit - you can open or close your speech with external video or embed it in the middle - as long as the display time is under 18 seconds. Note, however, that your speech should be filmed as a "live" presentation. In other words, **it must be shot in one continuous "take" and cannot be edited together from multiple takes.**

You may either present external video on a physical screen in the room from which you are filming (for example, from a handheld device or desktop screen) or, if you know how, digitally edit them into your video file. If you are playing the clips from a physical screen, be sure to test the brightness/audio levels very carefully before you record. If you choose to edit the clips into your video file, you should still deliver your entire speech in one continuous take, simply pausing at any point that the external video will be edited in later.

Music: You are invited to add music to your video if you like, but be sure the audio quality is good and clear - and that music does not overwhelm your voice in any way: above all, it is your voice and your words that matter most.

The administrators will be available throughout this process to answer questions you may have via email. We will host a live Q&A Session and provide a FAQ.

Structure:

The contest will be held in two rounds: **Preliminaries** and **Championship**. All students in the preliminary round will have the opportunity to participate first in a **Free Intro Public Speaking Workshop and Q&A** with a **well known, professional public speaking and acting coach** on July 28th, 7:30 pm EDT. The workshop will be valuable preparation for internship and job interviews, college admissions, class participation, debate team practice, creating an online “presence” and building the skills of an “influencer.”

Students will upload and submit their preliminary round entries by **Monday, July 6th, 11:59 EDT** through this [Google Form](#).

Our judges will then choose six finalists out of the preliminary rounds to advance into the **live, Championship round**, which will be held on **Sunday, July 19th, 7pm EDT**. Students participating in the championship round will perform their speech live **in front of** a group of celebrity judges. Separate guidelines will be sent out for the Championship round to finalists.

The judges are eager to hear many different voices and perspectives, and examples of empathy, critical thinking skills, and global citizenship; we are particularly interested in the creativity and originality of your ideas.

Sample Prompt Questions

While students are encouraged to speak about any topic they wish, here are some sample prompts successful competitors have used in our previous contests:

What have you learned during these tumultuous months - about your family or friends or neighbors - that you didn't know before?

Who has been the best, strongest role model for you during this time? What did that person teach you?

What is one personal story that you experienced during this time that you will never forget? A story that you will tell your kids about one day?

What is one thing that you believe the world does not understand about what’s happening in the America/New York region right now? If there were one thing you want to tell the world about you, your family, your neighbors, that the world doesn’t know or understand, what would it be? (tell us a story as an example.

Judge’s Parameters

Each student’s three minute speech will be judged according to the following Assessment Rubric. Judges Score each category based on how well the speaker satisfies the following rubrics, which we will review in detail in the intro public speaking workshop:

Expression (20 points)

- Does the speaker use facial expressions and hand gestures to convey emotion?
- Does the speaker vary their pace and tone appropriately?
- Does the speaker maintain a clear, engaging pace, with pauses to highlight points?
- Does the speaker speak in a clear, audible volume throughout and vary it accordingly?
- Does the student's body language convey confidence or appropriate expression through their posture?

Storytelling Components: (20 points)

- Does the story start with a clearly defined introductory thesis or situation, including physical *setting* of time and place?
- Does the story *develop a main character, or a clear, central, coherent story telling theme or subject* that takes off from the introductory situation?
- Does the story or thesis evolve and develop with a clear *beginning, middle, and end*?
- Does the *character, story or paint theme change* from beginning to end of the story, across *movement in time*, so that the resolution, or end, is different from the beginning?
- Can the audience relate or empathize with the topic? Does the speaker invoke emotion in the audience?

Organization and Development: (20 points)

- Is the main idea (thesis or "lesson learned") of the speech clear?
- Is the main idea supported or illustrated by new and interesting examples?
- Does speech begin with a compelling 'hook'?
- Does the speech conclude with a satisfying and clear ending?

Creativity (40 points)

- Does the speech convey a novel and original point?
- Does the audience find the speech engaging and compelling?
- Does the speaker paint a vivid and complete picture in the audience's mind?
- Does the speaker present an insightful, original message through the stories presented in their speech?
- Does the student skillfully and creatively use external media to support their message?
- Does the student demonstrate deep reflection and curiosity about a significant idea?
- Did the audience learn something new from the speaker?

Board of Mentors

Kenneth Cain

Ken is an Honors graduate of Harvard Law School and Wesleyan University, where he was an award winning scholar-athlete. He was a Fulbright Scholar in Sri Lanka, a Visiting Scholar at the National Law School of India University in Bangalore, India, and a Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. He served for many years as an officer in UN Peacekeeping Operations in Somalia, Rwanda, Cambodia, Liberia and Haiti. His book on the subject was an international bestseller and has been optioned for film by Russell Crowe and for the stage by Cate Blanchett. He has spoken widely on international issues, appeared on CNN, FOX, CBC, the BBC, et al., and has written for the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, GQ and many scholarly publications, including a National Magazine Award nomination. Ken has worked in a senior capacity on several start-ups, and in global private equity. He often lectures at Columbia University and NYU, and has wide experience living and working throughout Asia, in both the private and public sectors. Ken is a Harvard College alumni interviewer.

Peter Keum

Peter is an Honors graduate of Harvard College. His *magna cum laude* thesis in Economics, "Ethnicity And Occupational Choice," examined Asian-American students' academic and career decisions. Peter holds an MBA from the Wharton School. He is a digital media entrepreneur and co-founder of Admaru Network, a leading multicultural ad tech company that connects multinational brands with key Asian-American demo segments. Peter began as a management consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton in telecom and media. He has been a board member of the Mirae Foundation, backer of the largest Korean-American undergraduate conference (KASCON), and of the NY Nanum Foundation (formerly "the Beautiful Foundation"), a community service organization.

Susan Cain

Susan is an Honors graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School. She is the author of the global bestseller *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in A World That Can't Stop Talking*, which has been translated into 40 languages, has been on the New York Times bestseller list for seven years, and was named the #1 best book of the year by *Fast Company* magazine, which also named her one of its Most Creative People in Business. *Quiet* is a runaway bestseller in Korea, Japan and Taiwan. Her record-smashing TED talk has been viewed over 40 million times and was named by Bill Gates one of his all-time favorite talks. Susan's keynote speech on personality and leadership is in high demand globally - from Google, Amazon and West Point, to London, Seoul and Tokyo. Susan has appeared on a very long list of major media outlets world-wide. She received Harvard Law School's Celebration Award for Thought Leadership, the Toastmasters International Golden Gavel Award for Communication and Leadership, and was named one of the world's top 50 Leadership and Management Experts by *Inc. Magazine*.

Jeff Kaplan

Jeff is an Honors graduate of Yale College and Harvard Law School. He is a senior executive at the venture-backed tech company, Carto -- and has been a business leader at software start-ups for the past 6 years. He was a Fulbright Scholar in Malaysia, and has decades of experience

working and living in East Asia with the UN, World Bank, and in the private sector. He speaks several ASEAN languages. His career began as a law clerk for a federal judge and a corporate lawyer. Jeff is married to the World Bank economist, Dr. Hitomi Komatsu, and lives in the Washington, DC area with their daughter.

Dr. Ken Petersen

Dr. Petersen is the Technical Director for Online Learning and Assessment at American Councils for International Education, where he has overseen the development of Web-based language learning and assessment systems for over two decades. He is the principle architect of the ACLASS test development and administration system which has been used to assess language proficiency for tens of thousands of learners. He spent many years as an ESL teacher and a foreign language learner in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Uzbekistan. He holds a Ph.D. in Applied/Computational Linguistics from Georgetown University and an M.A. from the University of Washington in Near Eastern Languages. His areas of expertise include instructional design, language testing, natural language processing, software systems architecture and multimedia.

Min Kym

Min is an internationally renowned violin virtuoso, and author of the critically acclaimed book, “*Gone*,” South Korean-born and raised in the UK, Min Kym made her international debut at the age of thirteen and her Korean debut at the invitation of Kyung Wha Chung. At the age of sixteen she became the youngest student ever to be awarded a Foundation Scholarship at the Royal College of Music in London and in 2005, became the first ever recipient of the prestigious Heifetz Prize as awarded by the Jascha Heifetz Society in Los Angeles. Min has performed with many of the world’s leading orchestras including The Philharmonia, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the Dresden Staatskapelle and has worked with eminent conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Sir Andrew Davis and Giuseppe Sinopoli. Min is a goodwill ambassador for the city of Seoul.

Tom Sugiura

Tom is an Honors graduate of Harvard College and received an MBA from the Yale School of Management. He brings a diverse set of work experiences, spanning efforts on behalf of the homeless and low-income communities in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco, to a two decade career as an equity derivatives trader on Wall Street. Tom has long served as a Harvard College alumni interviewer. He is currently working on his first novel.

Kaidi Wu

Kaidi is a multi-award winning doctoral candidate in social psychology at the University of Michigan, where she graduated with dual degrees in psychology and piano performance. Her research focuses on how people of diverse cultures grapple with notions of success and the decisions they make to achieve it. A remarkable accomplishment for a young scholar, her peer-reviewed research has been featured in distinguished academic journals such as *Social Psychological and Personality Science* and *American Psychologist* as well as in popular media outlets such as *The Atlantic*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and *Quartz*. She is also a guest contributor at *Scientific American* and has appeared on Freakonomics Radio Live.

Jasmin Liu

Jasmin is a senior at Harvard University studying History of Science and Economics. Jasmin served as Ja-Tek's first summer intern, where she played a central role forming the original Public Speaking & Leadership curriculum. On campus, she has done everything from dance, band, business, to backpacking trips in the outdoors, as a Leader in the Harvard Freshman Orientation Program (FOP). She recently accepted a position with Deloitte as a consultant. Jasmin is originally from Boston and is very excited about Ja-Tek!