

**2021 Frederick Douglass Oratorical Contest Guidelines**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will develop their own oratorical skills while learning about history through the powerful messages delivered by Frederick Douglass.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Students in Ages 6-18

**GUIDELINES:** New for the 2021 contest, 4 Douglass speeches have been selected for this year’s contest and are available online at [Virtual Oratorical Contest - Frederick Douglass National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov)](https://www.nps.gov/frdo/learn/kidsyouth/virtual-oratorical-contest.htm). **Participants must choose one of these 4 speeches** for their oration for this year’s contest. These speeches represent specific events that the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site will be highlighting in 2022:

* Women’s History Month and the speech selected is one Douglass gave in Washington, DC on March 31st, 1888 at the International Council of Women.
* Dedication of the Emancipation Statue in “Lincoln Park” on April 14th, 1876
* Memorial Day, originally known as “Decoration Day” highlighting a speech Douglass gave in Arlington National Cemetery to honor the day and Black soldiers who fought in the Civil War on May 30th, 1871.
* Speech Douglass gave in Cork, Ireland on October 14th 1845. Douglass’ visit to Ireland in October is why Ireland celebrates its Black History Month in October

Contestants need to memorize the speech they have selected and will deliver an excerpt of the speech based on the time requirement of the student’s age group. Speeches will be done by Frederick Douglass via the internet on a platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

**LENGTH OF PRESENTATION:**

Division Ages\* Time

Elementary 6 - 8 2-4 minutes

Junior 9 - 11 4-6 minutes

Junior High 12-14 6-8 minutes

Senior High 15 - 18 8-10 minutes

\**Use the age that you will be the second week of January 2022*

**DATES:** Students will deliver their oration over a computer platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, in competition with other students between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. EST on the following dates:

• Tuesday, January 11, 2022 (Elementary Division, Ages 6 - 8)

• Wednesday, January 12, 2022 (Junior Division, Ages 9 - 11)

• Thursday, January 13, 2022 (Junior High Division, Ages 12 -14)

• Friday, January 14, 2022 (High School Division, Ages 15 -18) *University Students not eligible*

**Contestants will be notified of their scheduled appointment time via email**

**Application Requirements:**

**Applications will be accepted by email** on a first come, first selected basis beginning on Wednesday, December 1st and will be accepted until we have received 25 applications per category or until Wednesday, December 15th, whichever comes first. The Park will also maintain a waiting list in the event that someone changes their mind about participation or if there are fewer applications in some categories, we may allow students from the waiting list to fill in the additional spaces.

Applications will be returned under the following conditions:

• The application is incomplete/ lacks information required

• Is received before December 1 or after the December 15th deadline

• The subject line is not labeled correctly

Please address your email subject line as follows:

Oratorical Division (i.e. Elementary) [Last name] [First name]

Sample: Oratorical/ Elementary Division/ Smith, Jane

**Email address:** [**DouglassNHS@nps.gov**](mailto:DouglassNHS@nps.gov)

**Contest Sponsors:** The Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association and the Frederick Douglass Housing Corporation.

**Frederick Douglass National Historic Site Oratorical Contest Rules**

• Students must reside in the United States or Ireland order to participate in this contest.

• The contest will be held between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on January 11 to 14th. We will do our best to schedule students who live in other time zones at times that are close to their regular school day but there is no guarantee that we will be able to accommodate everyone’s schedules.

• The contest is open to a total of 100 students (25 per division) on a first come, first served basis.

• Contestants should memorize and deliver an excerpt of one of the 4 speeches outlined in the contest guidelines.

• The use of props and costumes is permitted. Students are permitted to dress up in costume appropriate to the time period or the role. Students are also allowed the limited use of props in their presentation. However, this is a speech competition. The emphasis of the contest is on the delivery, accuracy and emotional appeal to the audience. Not points will be given for costumes or props.

• **Students should be standing** when they present their speeches and may not be reading from cue cards, computer screens or teleprompters as the contest is being held in a virtual format. It is okay to have a parent help you run the technology or to assist you with a phone, iPad or computer camera to make sure you look your best while you give your speech. If the judges feel that a student is reading their speech, they may be disqualified from the contest.

* Students need to begin by introducing themselves with the following information:
  + Name
  + Age
  + Where they are from (city/state or city/country in the case of Irish Students)
  + School Attended
  + Name of the speech that they will be reciting. Students may also choose to say something about the speech in the introduction such as when and where Douglass delivered the speech.

• Students must meet the meet the minimum time requirements for their speech while not going over time. A judge will begin the timer as soon as a contestant begins speaking (introduction is included). A one-point deduction will be taken for every 10 seconds that a student is under or over the time required for their division. The only exception will be if a student is doing one of the shorter speeches that is about 5 minutes long and with their introduction the time is over as it does not make sense to cut off a small amount of an already short speech in order to also fit in the introduction. This will mainly apply to students in the Junior Division. During the contest, the contestant may request a 30 second timeout for a penalty of 2.5 points to regain composure or recover part of his/her speech. The timer for the overall speech length will be paused during the timeout period however once a student has gone 30 seconds over the maximum length of a speech for their division level, they will be asked to stop.

• A contestant who reads their speech from note cards, paper, cue cards, computer screens, etc.…will be disqualified as the speeches must be given from memory.

• Contestants must be on time. Students may incur a penalty or be disqualified for a late arrival. More details will be sent to all contestants once they are selected.

• The National Park Service will notify all winners within one week of the completion of the 4-day contest (Friday, January 21st by email) and park staff may follow up by telephone for additional communication.

• All judges’ rulings are final.

• National Park Service retains the right to amend the rules without notice.

**Early, late or incomplete applications WILL NOT be accepted and will be returned to the applicant.**