**2021 Oratorical Contest Judging Rubric**

**Vocal Category**

Each area in this category is worth 1 to 5 points for a possible total of 25 points in this category.

1. **Pace**- is how fast a student speaks. Practice so you can give your speech at a steady pace. Try not to talk too fast so everyone can easily understand what you are saying.
2. **Emphasis-** *stress laid on a words or phrase to make it stand out.* When you are typing words or phrases that you want to stress or make stand out, you might underline them, highlight them, or **use the bold feature** or put an exclamation point at the end of the sentence!! How can you emphasize words with your voice? Maybe you can emphasize what you are saying by speaking louder or softer. You can also use hand gestures as you are speaking to help emphasize something. Use emphasis for important points in your speech.
3. **Diction / Enunciation-***the accent, inflection, intonation, and speech-sound quality manifested by an individual speaker*. Judges will be listening for how well you enunciate your words or say them clearly. If you aren’t sure how to pronounce a word correctly, you can use an on-line dictionary. Most online dictionaries will have a sound button so you can use that to have the dictionary read the word out loud to you so you know how to say it.
4. **Tone-** has two meanings when it comes to giving a speech. It can be used to describe the sound of someone’s voice like a deep strong tone or a high-pitched tone. Tone can also describe the overall mood of the speech. Comedians give talks that are light-hearted and funny. If you are speaking at a sad occasion like a funeral, the tone might be serious or somber. For some speeches Douglass’ tone was described as “fiery” meaning he was giving a passionate speech where he was trying to get the audience “stirred up or moved to action.” Make sure to read your speech and the background information to learn about where the speech was given and who the audience was so you can think about what Douglass’ tone might have been.

Here’s another way to think about tone. How do people’s voices sound when they are talking to a cute baby, kitten, or puppy? What does a someone’s voice sound like when they are mad? Does their voice get louder or softer?

You need to pay attention to both kind of tone in your speech. The tone of the speech (i.e., is it a serious speech or meant to be more friendly?) and the tone of your voice (soft, strong, fiery and passionate…) because this also helps the judges see that you understood the kind of speech Douglass was giving.

1. **Volume** is pretty simple, are you speaking loud enough that we can hear you or are you whispering? You can change the volume some in your speech to help with emphasis or stressing something important.

**Physical Category**

Each area of this category is on a scale of 1 to 5 points, for a total of 25 points.

It is a little trickier to give a speech on-line instead of coming to the Frederick Douglass site to give your speech in person. When you are on a stage, you can walk around, and you see your audience. On-line, you can’t see your audience and if you walk around too much, you may walk out of view! Doing a speech over the computer takes practice and a little more creativity. What you want to avoid is standing there like a boring robot.

Look for some examples, google different kinds of speeches and see how people look and what they act like. For example, look for someone like Oprah giving a graduation speech. At graduation speeches the speaker often has to stand behind a podium but watch their body language, posture, facial expressions, how they may or may not use their arms and hands to make points. Watch a politician give a speech, especially when they are running for office. Politicians often get a little fired up and gesture or pound their fist down for emphasis. A politician wants to appear confident in front of an audience so people feel confident that this person can be a leader. TED Talks are short talks or speeches given by all kinds of people that you can watch to look at a speaker’s posture, observe how they make points and how they use their body as they tell their stories.

**Presence-** *the ability to project a sense of ease, poise, or self-assurance, especially the quality or manner of a person's bearing before an audience (aka stage presence).* If you stand in front of the camera stiff like a robot and just say your speech, people may get bored and tune you out. Speakers have to do a little bit of “acting” to use their bodies to communicate that they are confident, comfortable, authentic, believable…. Would you vote for someone who hid behind the podium and didn’t seem sure about what they were doing?

**Posture-** *the position of the limbs or the carriage of the body as a whole.*  You need to stand for your speech and of course you should stand up straight to project confidence. Other synonyms for posture include: bearing, attitude, pose, demeanor, disposition… So while good posture which according to most Mothers would be to stand up straight is part of what the judges will look for here, they are also looking at how your body is demonstrating your bearing, attitude, etc…

**Eye Contact**- *is look at your audience*. Of course, over a screen or on camera, that is a little harder but your focus here needs to be on the camera. When you watch the news, the news anchors focus their gaze on the camera, so it looks like they are talking directly to you through the TV. That’s what you want to practice. A good way to practice this is to have someone record you with their phone so you can practice looking at the phone camera as you are speaking.

**Gesture-** *a movement or position of the hand, arm, body, head, or face that is expressive of an idea, opinion, emotion, etc.* Gestures are another way to *show* your audience that you are animated (not robotic and interesting) and to help emphasize points you are making. Synonyms include: action, body language, expression, nod, salute, signal, bow or curtsy, shrug, pantomime, wave, wink…

**Appearance**- *the state, condition, manner, or style in which a person or object*[*appears*](https://www.dictionary.com/browse/appear)*; outward look or aspect.* While some students choose to dress like Frederick Douglass, you don’t need to do that to have a good appearance. Out of respect for an audience, it was important for Douglass to look good when he went on stage. His wife Anna ironed his cloths, so he wasn’t wrinkled for example. Douglass wanted to appear as a professional. So, when giving a Douglass speech, you need to be prepared to look professional. You don’t have to wear a suit to look professional, but you want to look nice or a little “dressed up.”

**Memorization/ Comprehension/ Impression**

This category is worth 25 points and the judges will be looking at how well you have memorized the speech, if you understand what the speech is talking about and judges will be able to score their overall impression of you.

**Memorization-** for this contest, you are required to learn the speech you are giving from memory. Using a teleprompter, cue cards, a computer screen, or other means to read the speech is not permitted. If the judges think you are reading the speech, they will score you lower in this category or may not give you any points at all. Also, if we hear someone in the background giving you clues or hints on what to say next, we know you have forgotten part of the speech and your scores will go down. Stopping and starting your speech could happen because you are nervous, but this is often interpreted as you temporarily forgetting part of the speech and will affect your score.

**Comprehension-** *perception or understanding*. Memorizing words are one thing but understanding what the speaker is trying to say is another. Maybe the best way to explain this is to use music as an example. Memorization is like learning the lyrics to the song (being able to say the words) but to sing the song, you have to know the notes to sing, what the tempo or speed of the music is (when to speed up or slow down), what notes get emphasized or held out longer, where do you sing a little louder or softer. If you can do all that when singing the song, then we know you understand the music.

For example, if the Douglass speech you are giving has an angry tone Douglass’ voice may have gotten deeper or louder in that part or he may have used his fist for emphasis or slowed the speech down a little bit so he could emphasize certain parts of the speech… So, when giving this same speech, you would show the judges you understand what Douglass was trying to say by using different techniques to communicate that you understand that a part of the speech is “angry” by showing “anger” or “outrage” when you give the speech. You would then use angry facial expressions perhaps or pound your fist, get louder, etc.

**Impression-** for this score, the judge is being asked to rate their overall impression of you. The park rangers aren’t judges for the contest (we use volunteer judges) but we are in the room or are running the technology, so we hear the students giving speeches. There are students that look good, speak well, understand the speech, create a presence…. and after watching them, your impression is “WOW!) and there are students who do a good job but they just don’t have as much presence or animation when they give their speech so they likely would fall somewhere in the middle of the scoring…. And some students who just aren’t that prepared and it shows and creates an impression.