



Rules for the First Annual Youth Speech Contest

- Youth who live or attend school in Bronx, New York, Richmond, or Westchester Counties in the State of New York, or in Bermuda, and are enrolled in grades 9 through 12 are eligible to participate in the contest. Immediate family members of any Rotary Club member are not eligible to participate in the contest.
- Students wishing to participate in the contest must register no later than **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, April 19, 2024**. Students may register by completing the online registration form available at <https://bit.ly/speechcontest24>.
- Students wishing to participate in the contest must also submit a video of their speech, as described below, no later than **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, May 3, 2024**. Students will be provided with a link to use in order to upload their video after registering for the contest.
- Contestants are to prepare and deliver an original, English-language speech on the following topic:

Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship: What Can You Do?

Civic participation is essential to self-government. There are many ways to participate and contribute to preserving and protecting democracy, including becoming an informed citizen, voting, serving on a jury, serving in the armed forces, paying taxes, running for office, and public protest/petitioning the government. Examine one (or several) of the rights and duties of citizenship, explore its/their history (including barriers and change over time), and discuss its/their importance and relevance today.

Suggestions to examine:

- Informed citizenship
- Voting
- Jury Service
- Serving in armed forces
- Petition government/Public protest
- Paying taxes
- Running for Federal/State/Local Political Office



- The allotted time for each speech is between five and seven minutes. Contestants will be penalized if their speech is less than 4 minutes and 30 seconds or exceeds 7 minutes and 30 seconds.
- Speeches are meant to be delivered, not read. While notes are permitted, contestants should not read their speeches from a script.
- **During their speeches, contestants may not identify the school that they attend, either by words, symbols, clothing, or otherwise.**
- All contestants must submit video recordings of their speeches, made in accordance with the video recording requirements set forth below, at or before **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, April 19, 2024**. Contestants who are not able, or do not wish, to make their own video recording may contact the Contest Coordinator to schedule a time to have their speech video recorded for them. Contestants are not scored differently whether they submit their own recording or schedule a time to have their speech video recorded for them.
 - To the extent possible, contestants who wish to upload their own video recordings should submit their videos in one of the following formats (listed in no particular order): MP4; MPG; MPEG; MOV; WMV; AVI; FLV; or, MKV.
 - To the extent possible, contestants who wish to have their speech video recorded for them should be accompanied to the video recording session by a parent or legal guardian, but in any event may be accompanied to the video recording session by up to two guests.
 - Contestants who wish to have their speech video recorded for them will be offered time signals during their speech. If the contestant accepts, a Rotarian present in the contest room will display a green card when five minutes of speaking time have elapsed, a yellow card when six minutes of speaking time have elapsed, and a red card when seven minutes of speaking time have elapsed.
- After the submission deadline has passed, contestants will be scored by at least three judges on demeanor, introduction, content, conclusion, and delivery. A sample scoresheet is available on the Rotary District 7230 website. Once the results of the preliminary round have been announced, contestants may email the Contest Coordinator a request for copies of their scoresheets.



- The three contestants with the highest combined scores from the preliminary round judges (“finalists”) in each area (Manhattan, Bermuda, Staten Island, the Bronx and Southern Westchester, Yonkers, Central Westchester, and Northern Westchester) will be invited to deliver their speeches at an in-person area contest.
 - The dates, times, and locations for each area contest will be announced as soon as possible.
 - Rotary District 7230 reserves the right to split, consolidate, or modify the areas in which students are assigned based on the total number of registered contestants. The area to which each student is assigned will be confirmed after the close of registration.
- All contestants will receive a certificate of achievement recognizing their participation in the contest.
- Finalists must appear and speak at their assigned area contest. If a contestant is unable or unavailable to appear and speak at their area contest, the contestant(s) with the next highest combined scores from the preliminary round judges will be contacted and invited to appear and speak.
- Finalists will be scored at each area contest by a panel of at least five judges on the same criteria as the preliminary round.
- Based on the scores of the final round judges, the finalists will receive plaques recognizing their participation in the final round, as well as cash prizes. The prize for first place is \$500; second place is \$300; and, the prize for third place is \$200.
- The first-place student at each area contest held for Bronx, Manhattan/New York, Staten Island/Richmond, and Westchester will then be scored in a semifinal round by a new panel of at least five judges on the same criteria as the preliminary round and area contests. The manner and means by which this scoring will occur will be confirmed no later than the close of registration.
- The two contestants with the highest combined scores from the semifinal round judges will be invited, together with the first-place student at the area contest held for Bermuda, to deliver their speeches at an in-person final round, to be held at **the Annual District 7230 Conference that will take place at Yankee Stadium on Saturday, June 29, 2024.**



- Each final-round contestant must appear and speak at the final round. If a final-round contestant from New York State is unable or unavailable to appear and speak at the final round, the finalist(s) with the next highest combined scores from the semifinal round judges will be contacted and invited to appear and speak. If the final-round contestant from Bermuda is unable or unavailable to appear and speak at the final round, the finalist with the next highest combined scores from the area contest held for Bermuda will be contacted and invited to appear and speak.
- Each final-round contestant will be scored in the final round by a panel of at least five judges on the same criteria as the preliminary round, area contest, and semifinal round.
- Based on the scores of the final round judges, each final-round contestant will receive a plaque recognizing their participation in the final round, as well as an additional cash prize. ~~The amount of the cash prizes to be awarded to each final-round contest will be confirmed as soon as possible.~~ The prize for first place is \$750; second place is \$500; and, the prize for third place is \$250.
- In the event of a tie among contestants at any stage of the contest, ties will be broken, first, by that round's judges' preference (i.e., which tied contestant/finalist was scored higher than the other tied contestant/finalist by more judges). If the tie remains, then ties will next be broken by determining which contestant or finalist has the highest combined score after subtracting that contestant or finalist's lowest score in the round. If the tie remains, then ties will next be broken by determining which contestant or finalist was awarded more 5s on that contestant or finalist's scoresheets among all of the round's judges, then, if the tie remains, determining which contestant or finalist was awarded more 4s, then 3s, and then 2s.
- Rotary District 7230 reserves the right to amend or change these rules at any time as it deems necessary. **Contestants are responsible for checking whether these rules have been updated prior to submitting their videos, and are responsible for complying with these rules as they may be updated.**



Video Recording Requirements

Videos submitted as part of the Youth Speech Contest must conform with the following requirements:

- The audio must be clear and without echo, static, ambient, background, or other excessive noise.
- Only single-camera setup is permitted; use of multiple camera angles is not allowed.
- The camera must have an unobstructed, in-focus view of the contestant.
- The camera must be mounted or secured to avoid unwanted movement.
- Zooming is not permitted.
- The speaking area must be fully lit.
- The speaker's facial expressions must be visible throughout the speech; the image should not be too bright or too dark; the speaker should remain in frame through the entire speech. Contestants should be visible at least from the torso up, although contestants may determine how close or distant the camera is set up in order to maximize both verbal and nonverbal communication.
- No lighting, artificial or natural, should point directly at the camera. Professional lighting equipment is NOT allowed. The use of lighting tricks (e.g., shadow puppets) is NOT permitted.
- To the extent possible, contestants should position themselves in front of a neutral background, such as a blank wall or a backdrop of a solid color with no special markings. Green screens, virtual backdrops, and professional equipment are NOT allowed.
- The recording must only contain the contestant's speech, and must contain the contestant's entire speech.
- The recording may not be edited in any way, such as by adding text, graphics, images, effects, or anything that does not meet these requirements.



- Contestants may NOT trim a recording, even to remove the seconds that they walk to and from the recording device to push start/stop. Contestants who submit their own video recording will not be penalized for being seen walking to and from the recording device to push start/stop, although they may, if they so choose, have someone off-camera assist with starting and stopping the recording.
- Other individuals may be present while filming, but audience interaction (e.g., laughing, applause) may NOT be included in the speech.
- The camera must remain on throughout the duration of the speech. Contestants may NOT turn off their video at any point during their recording.
- Professional business attire is encouraged, but not required.
- Contestants may use a lectern while speaking. The use of any other audio/visual aids or props is NOT permitted.
- **Contestants who submit their own video recordings are accountable for the video recordings that they submit. Accordingly, contestants are strongly encouraged to review their video recordings prior to submission in order to ensure compliance with these requirements.**