



Massachusetts Lions Youth Speech Competition Committee

2025-2026

COMPETITION

GUIDELINES

Speech Topic:

WHAT CAN PAST
AMERICA TEACH FUTURE
AMERICA?

GUIDELINES

These guidelines have been published by the Massachusetts Lions Multiple District 33 (MD33) Youth Speech Competition Committee for the exclusive use of schools, clubs, zones, regions and districts who:

- Choose to participate in the multiple district statewide youth speech competition.
- Believe that all competitions should be conducted in a similar manner to be fair to all the contestants.

The Committee strongly urges that these guidelines be adopted and followed. **We firmly believe that it is in the student's best interest for ALL competitions to be alike.**

THE COMPETITION

The purpose of the competition is to provide an opportunity for students to speak publicly on a designated topic of general interest. The competition starts at the local club or school level and proceeds through levels of competition ending several months later with the statewide contest. After the club level, the student, if successful each time, moves through the zone, region and district levels. The competition culminates with the five statewide district winners vying for the title of BEST IN THE STATE.

ELIGIBILITY

The competition is open to all students who reside within or attend school located within MD33, including foreign exchange, charter school, private school, home schooled, or independent study students in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12, provided they are sponsored by a Massachusetts Lions or Leo Club. **Students must be enrolled in a high school grade equivalent when entering the competition at the club or school level in order to be eligible to compete in all levels of the competition.**

The speech is to be given in the English language only. Phrases in a non-English language must be immediately followed by a direct English translation.

A student can participate in only one club level competition in a school year. Each Club in the District may sponsor one student beyond the club level competition. A club may decide to sponsor students outside its geographical boundary.

RECOGNITION

There will be recognition of each contestant starting with the zone level competition.

CLUB RESPONSIBILITIES

Each club participating in the competition will be responsible for conducting a competition that meets these guidelines.

The Club President should appoint a member as the Chair of the Club Youth Speech competition. The Chair will be responsible for contacting eligible students and conduct the club level contest. The Chair will assist the Region Speech Chair in contests where the club student is involved and in matters pertaining to the competitions.

DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

Each District Speech Chair & Committee will be responsible for conducting zone, region and district competitions that meet these guidelines. The District Chair will resolve contest issues.

The District Governor will appoint members to the District Youth Speech Committee's rotating assignments. The Region Chair of the District Speech Committee is responsible to conduct or coordinate through the committee members, the zone, region and district competitions. The Chair is also to assist and inform contestants in any and all matters pertaining to the various levels in the competition.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Each contestant must submit an unsigned manuscript at each level of competition. All quoted material within a manuscript must be referenced by source. The manuscript should be reviewed by either a member of the sponsoring club or a member of the student's school faculty. The manuscript may be amended between each competition up to, and including, the District Final competition. **At that time, the manuscript will be 'frozen' for the State competition.**

Speakers are allowed the use of the following aides:

- School & Club competition **full manuscript**
- Zone competition **three 3" x 5" index cards, both sides**
- Region competition **three 3" x 5" index cards, both sides**
- District & State competition **one 3" x 5" index card, both sides**
- The person-in-charge will bring copies of all the needed forms to the competition.
 - Note that there are two versions of the Teller form, one for a panel of three judges and one for a panel of 4 judges.
- Prior to the competition, the person-in-charge will review the rules with both the students and the judges. The person-in-charge will also collect a Student Profile and a Release Form from each student.
- Prior to a competition, contestants will draw speaking order by lot.
- All contestants must assemble prior to the competition, enter and sit together and remain for all speeches.
- **Once a contestant returns to his or her seat, they may not return to the podium.**
- Contestants will NOT be introduced by name before a competition is complete. Each competitor will be introduced by number only to indicate their speaking order, until all speakers have finished.
- A podium and public address system will be made available at the district and state levels for use by the contestants.

TIME LIMITATIONS & PENALTIES

Each speech should last no less than five (5) minutes and no longer than eight (8) minutes. Penalties will be imposed and points deducted from the Judges' scores as follows:

TIME DIFFERENTIAL	POINTS DEDUCTED
0 – 15 seconds	0
16 – 30 seconds	1
31 – 60 seconds	2
61 – 90 seconds	3
91 – 120 seconds	4
more than 120 seconds	5

JUDGES

The scores of three judges will decide the outcome of the competition. The person-in-charge of the competition will select the judges unless that person is a family member of a contestant. In that case, another responsible Lion will secure the judges. The following criteria apply in the selection of judges:

- **Lions and Leos are not permitted to be judges.**
- A person may judge **only one competition** in a year.
- Judges may not be related to, or acquainted with any of the contestants.
- A member of a competing school's faculty may not be a judge.

The responsibility of the judges will be

- To determine the place of each speaker independent of the other judges using the scoring method outlined in the official *Judge's Worksheet*.

The Tellers will determine the final placement of each speaker by compiling the places and scores of the three judges. Each judge must select one person to be his or her winner. Ties are **NOT** allowed for any place. Judges will tally their scores using the official *Judge's Worksheet* which will be supplied by the person-in-charge.

Judges are to be given all the time needed to complete their scoring. Judges **will not confer with one another** until after the tally sheets have been given to the Tellers. *Judge's Worksheets* are considered confidential. The person-in-charge may **only** provide individual scores to a speaker or his/her parent or guardian, being certain not to release the scores of any other contestant.

Each contestant will be judged as follows:

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	POINTS
DELIVERY	Emphasis, voice control, enunciation, pronunciation, sincerity, enthusiasm, poise	Maximum 30 Points
EFFECTIVENESS	Well rounded, cohesive, logical, organized, emotional impact	Maximum 30 Points
TEXT	Originality, quality of material, adherence to the subject. Did the student adhere to the topic?	Maximum 40 Points

TIMEKEEPER

A person at each competition will be designated the Timekeeper. The Timekeeper may be a Lion or Leo.

The responsibilities of the Timekeeper are:

- To measure the length of time it takes each speaker to complete his or her speech.
- The Timekeeper will record the length of time each contestant speaks using the *Timekeeper's Worksheet* supplied by the person-in-charge.

- The Timekeeper will sit in the audience in full view of the speakers. The person-in-charge will introduce the Timekeeper to all speakers prior to the start of the competition.
- The Timekeeper will give a warning to each speaker at the seven (7) minute mark by raising an arm. The speakers will be aware of this gesture prior to the start of the competition.

SCRIPT READER

One person at each competition **above** the club or school level will be designated the Script Reader. This person may be a Lion or Leo.

The responsibilities of the Script Reader will be:

- To determine how closely each speaker follows his or her manuscript by recording the number of missed or added sentences.
- To indicate penalties for missed or added sentences.

The Script Reader will record the number of missed or added sentences of each speaker using the *Script Reader's Worksheet*, supplied by the person-in-charge.

Penalties will be imposed and points deducted from the Judges' scores as follows:

MISSED OR ADDED SENTENCES	POINTS DEDUCTED
1 – 2	0
3 – 5	1
6 – 7	3
8 or more	5

The Tellers will deduct the penalties from the final scores on each Judge's worksheet.

TELLERS

Two persons at each competition will be designated as Tellers. The Tellers may be Lions or Leos.

The responsibilities of the Tellers will be:

- To collect the worksheets from the Judges, Timekeeper and Script Reader.
- To tally the Judges' scores after deducting any penalties for time infractions and missed sentences.
- To designate the places earned by each speaker based on the revised scores and list these on the *Teller's Worksheet*.
- To declare the winner of the competition to the person-in-charge.

The speaker with the **most first place finishes** will be declared the winner. If there is no speaker with more first place finishes than the others, eliminate any speaker without a first place finish. Places for the remaining speakers will be tallied: 1st place = 1 point, 2nd place = 2 points, etc. The speaker with the **LOWEST** score will be declared the winner.

If the lowest score of places results in a tie, then the revised Judges' scores of each of the tied speakers will be added together. The speaker with the HIGHEST score will be declared the winner.

If the highest score results in a tie, the tie will be settled by using the *Timekeeper's Worksheet*. The contest will be awarded to the speaker who comes the closest to, without going over, the (eight 8) minute limit. That person will be declared the winner.

AUDITOR

At the District and State levels it is suggested to have an Auditor to oversee and assist the Tellers.

DISQUALIFICATION

Failure to comply with the *General Instructions* or any of the following are grounds for disqualification:

- The use or display of props of any kind.
- Uniforms or any other forms of identification, including apparel, lapel pins, buckles or jewelry with logos, patches, etc.
- Use of identifying location(s) such as school, town or sponsoring club, family members or name.
- Identification of family by surname, personal affiliations or accomplishments during the competition.

Before disqualifying a student, consult the District Speech Chair.

COMPETITION DATES

It is suggested that competitions should be conducted within the following time frame:

COMPETITION	TIME FRAME
Club or School	Four (4) weeks prior to the Zone Competition (November/December)
Zone	Two (2) weeks prior to the Region Competition (December/January)
Region	Two (2) weeks prior to the District Competition (December/January)
District	District Mid-Winter Conference (January/February)
State	State Convention (March/April)

OFFICIAL COMPETITION RESULTS FORM

At the conclusion of each contest at all levels, a Competition Results Form must be completed by the contest organizer and submitted to the District Speech Chair.

TOPIC SUGGESTIONS

The topic for the following year is selected by the Massachusetts Lions Multiple District 33 Youth Speech Committee prior to the Mid-Winter Conferences so that it may be announced at the District competitions. Topics are selected that are meaningful to our society and that will stimulate the student.

Any interested persons especially speech coaches, are encouraged and invited to submit topics to the Multiple District 33 Youth Speech Committee.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

The Massachusetts Lions (MD 33) Youth Speech Competition Committee recognizes the pride and excitement the Youth Speech competition creates at the club and all other competition levels leading up to the final "Best in the State" competition that is held at the annual MD33 convention each spring.

The committee recognizes the value of effective and timely publicity and encourages appropriate News Releases of each Youth Speech event. However, in this age of social media, it is also critical to maintain the integrity of the competition.

While the Committee no longer prohibits publicity of the speech competitions, we strongly suggest that any information (in electronic or print form, via social media of any kind) not include any excerpts or videos of the individual speeches, especially those of the winners. This is in the best interests of the speakers as it is in an effort to restrict use of this material by successive speakers. Recording of speeches at any competition except by express intent of the Committee continues to be prohibited.

THANK YOU

Your Lions Club, District & State Youth Speech Committees



We Serve

Please go to our web site for complete instructions and details:

www.lionsyouthspeech.org