



Massachusetts Lions Youth Speech Competition Committee

2025-2026

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Speech Topic:

***WHAT CAN PAST
AMERICA TEACH FUTURE
AMERICA?***



2025-2026 STUDENT HANDBOOK

To all participating students,

The Lions of Massachusetts welcome your participation in our statewide youth speech competition. The topic has been selected to provide you a tremendous avenue to express your thoughts on the subject and demonstrate your skills of persuasion and research.

As a student today, you represent the leadership of the future. This is an excellent forum through which to display your talents and accomplishments. This competition will test your ability to develop the subject matter and express your opinions to your community.

In addition to the experience gained in an endeavor such as this, there are, at certain levels of the contest, monetary awards worth pursuing. We look forward to **learning from you**.

On behalf of all the Massachusetts Lions, Lioness and Leos, **thank you for participating**.

Your Lions Club, District & State Youth Speech Committees

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. When including quotations, the source must be cited.

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.

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 |
- Prior to the competition, the person-in-charge will review the rules with both the students and the judges.
 - 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 a public address system will be made available at the district and state levels for use by the contestants.

TIME LIMITATIONS

Each speech should last no less than five (5) minutes and no longer than eight (8) minutes. There are time penalties for not adhering to these requirements.

JUDGING

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

RECOGNITION

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

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.

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 (April/May)

The actual dates will be made available by your Region or District Youth Speech Chairperson.

PAPERWORK

Students entering the competition must complete the following forms and submit them before their first competition:

- The student profile, which provides contact information
- The student release form, which gives the Lions permission to publicize the student's participation in the competition. Please answer the question about Artificial Intelligence honestly. There is no penalty, nor is there a bonus, for using generative AI when preparing your speech.

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.

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 Massachusetts Lions Youth Speech Committee.

Thank You

**Your Lions Club, District and State
Youth Speech Committees**



We Serve

www.lionsyouthspeech.org