Attention: The Principal and Coordinator of Public Speaking

The Queensland division of Rostrum Voice of Youth, the national public speaking competition for secondary school students, will be conducted in various centres throughout the State during April and May. Rostrum invites students from your school to take part in this major competition.

The goal of the competition is to encourage high school students to further develop their verbal communication skills, increase their self-esteem and self-confidence and to provide them with an avenue to speak out on topics that are important to them. In every heat adjudicators are available to provide positive and constructive feed-back to all participants.

The State final will held in Brisbane in on Saturday 4 July 2015. The winners from the State final then represent Queensland in the National final to be held in Sydney on Saturday 25 July 2015.

Although ultimately there can only be one winner in each division our main emphasis is on participation. Rostrum endeavours to make this a positive experience for everyone who is willing to take part.

Wherever possible publicity in local newspapers is given to regional and State winners and their schools.

Attached is the list of speech topics for this year’s competition, competition rules, guidelines on how the adjudication is assessed and adjudicators top tips for participants. Also, enclosed is a poster for your student notice board. Entry forms and further information about Rostrum Voice of Youth is available from our new website www.rostrum.com.au/rvoy-qld

Yours faithfully

Meg Olsson
Queensland Coordinator
Rostrum Voice of Youth
Rostrum Voice of Youth 2015

Speech Topics

The following topics are for the Junior and Senior heats of the competition. New topics will be set for the State and National Finals.

Topics for the prepared speeches at the State heats are:

**Junior**

- Community Spirit
- A Light Bulb Moment
- A Lucky Escape
- Rewind
- The Price of Progress

The prepared speech will be 6 minutes with a warning bell at 5 minutes. The adjudication criteria will be 50% for the impact on the intellect and 50% for the impact on the emotions.

**Senior**

- On History’s Page
- Friend or Foe
- Bridge Over Troubled Waters
- Detour
- Mind Games

The prepared speech will be 8 minutes with a warning bell at 6 minutes. The adjudication criteria will be 50% for the impact on the intellect and 50% for the impact on the emotions.

**Note**

At the area, state and national finals both junior and senior contestants will be required to give a 3 minute short notice speech. They will be given a choice from 3 topics and 15 minutes preparation time.
Rules for the Rostrum Voice of Youth competition
1. The Rostrum Voice of Youth competition is open to all full-time secondary school students who satisfy the age criteria.
2. There are two age divisions:
   • Junior: students must be at least 11 and under 15 years of age at 1st January
   • Senior: students under 18 years of age at 1st January
3. In each age division there are two speaking segments:
   • A prepared speech of six minutes for juniors and eight minutes for seniors, from a selection of five topics. This segment carries a maximum of 100 marks.
   • A short notice speech of three minutes from a selection of three topics (preparation time 15 minutes). This segment carries a maximum of 70 marks. (Please note that a short notice speech is compulsory only for the State and National finals and the round immediately preceding the State final. In some zones a short notice speech may not be required in earlier rounds. Check local requirements.)
4. A warning bell will be sounded at two minutes for the three minute speech, at five minutes for the six minute speech and at six minutes for the eight minute speech. (At State and National finals, a card showing 1st or 2nd bell will be held up also signalling that bells have been sounded)
5. Timing begins when the contestant starts speaking and continues until the speech is finished or the contestant leaves the platform. No restart of the timer is permitted.
6. A variation in a speaker’s timing in the prepared and short notice speeches is acceptable if it does not exceed 30 seconds either side of the time limit. Outside these limits, adjudicators may choose to deduct marks.
7. Guidelines for adjudicators are those approved by the Australian Rostrum Council.
8. At the State final and where possible at earlier levels of the competition, there will be at least three adjudicators.
9. The ultimate placing of each competitor is based on the aggregate of the rankings awarded by the adjudicators for that competitor.
10. The adjudicators’ decision is final.
11. Competitors must use their own, original content. Reference to other texts or direct quotation is allowed, but any speech must be substantially the work of the speaker. If plagiarism is suspected, a competitor may be automatically disqualified from the competition.
12. Entry fees are non-refundable. (Please note, it is an ENTRY fee, NOT a participation fee).
13. Lecterns are not required. Microphones may be used at Zone Finals (check local requirements).
14. The use of electronic devices (e.g. phones, iPads) is not permitted in any stage of the short notice competition.
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Adjudication Guidelines

Adjudicators will assess each speech as a whole paying particular attention to relevance to the topic in relation to both impact on the intellect and impact on the emotions. In particular the student will need to show that the speech related to the topic selected.

**Impact on the Intellect**  
(50% of the total marks)

This rates the ability of the speaker to achieve a clear purpose using relevant material presented in a logical order.

- **Material** – scope, accuracy, clarity, relevance, logic, adequacy
- **Arrangement** – introduction, body, conclusion, general construction
- **Progression** – cohesion, timing, logic, development, evidence of research and preparation
- **Language** – words, sentences, phrases, grammar, word pictures, figures of speech
- **Appeal** – imagination, originality, wit, illustrations, highlights

**Impact on the Emotion**  
(50% of the total marks)

This rates the ability of the speaker to present material so as to affect or influence the audience.

- **Visual Impact** – appearance, stance, gesture, notes, use of eyes, aids
- **Vocal Impact** – quality, clarity, variety, volume, pitch, use of pause, pace, pronunciation
- **Empathy** – contact, understanding, acceptance, audience involvement
- **Mood** – feeling, emphasis, enthusiasm, sincerity, speaker’s involvement
- **Appeal** – credible, entertaining, memorable, motivating, convincing.
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Adjudicators Top Tips for Participants

These are the top comments from our adjudicators over the last couple of years. When preparing your presentation please take these comments into consideration.

1. Choose a topic that you think will give you the scope to produce something interesting and original. Start generating some ideas about the subject.
2. Once you have thought about the topic, decide what your purpose is going to be, i.e. try to express in a single sentence what your ‘take home’ message for the audience is going to be: what you want them to know and how you want them to feel at the end of your six or eight minutes.
3. Start to gather material and develop ideas -- from reading, talking to family, friends and teachers. They may be examples, explanations, illustrations, anecdotes and statistics. Make sure that these ideas maintain and reinforce your theme and purpose. Try to introduce some human interest.
4. Prepare your conclusion first, and in such a way that it leaves the audience with a message which will achieve the purpose.
5. Devise an opening that will grasp the attention of the audience and engage their interest. In the first minute give the adjudicators a hint of what your purpose is going to be.
6. Revise and integrate the material. Edit it so that it supports the purpose (if it doesn’t, reject it) and so that it is going to be easy to follow and interesting to the audience.
7. Write the key words on palm cards.
8. Do NOT write you speech out on palm cards and read it to the audience.
9. Take full responsibility for what you can control, e.g. prepare thoroughly and practise speaking the speech aloud; practise meaningful gesture and have the opening and closing ‘off pat’. Be subject-conscious, not self-conscious. All of this will help you keep your nerves in check.
10. Try to visualise what you want to happen: walking to the front of the room; where & how you are going to stand; pausing before you speak; smile and the effect you intend to create.
11. Use your eyes to maintain contact with the audience, and your hands to good effect.
12. Use of Voice - project your voice; vary the rate, pitch and volume to reflect the mood; take care with the pronunciation of vowels and the articulation of consonants; use the power of the pause to let ideas sink in.
13. Communicate your purpose enthusiastically and sincerely to the audience.
15. Do NOT end with thank you - the audience will applaud you for your efforts.
16. Enjoy the experience!