



Component Events Speakers Spotlight

Competition Guidelines



SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT (SS) COMPETITION GUIDELINES

The Speakers Spotlight event requires students to use one of the competitive SPS topics of the current season to craft and deliver a speech that informs, persuades, or inspires the audience.

Rules and Requirements

Content: Failure to follow the rules and requirements listed below may result in the disqualification of the final submission.

Eligibility and Divisions

1. The Speaker Spotlight Competition is open to students from K-12.
 - a. K-5th - Elementary Division
 - b. 6th-8th - Middle Division
 - c. 9th - 12th - High School Division
2. Students compete as individuals in their respective division listed above.
3. All participating students must be enrolled in a KAAC member school.
4. All students participating in the Speaker Spotlight competition must sign a publication consent form.

Submission Requirements

1. The speech submission must be video recorded.
 - a. Audio-only submissions will result in disqualification.
2. The total runtime for submissions must be between 3 and 8 minutes.
 - a. A 5 point deduction will be applied to submissions that run under or over the time parameter.
3. All student work must be original.
4. Students must not use generative AI to create their speech submissions. The use of AI-generative platforms (for more than brainstorming purposes) will result in disqualification from the competition.
5. All speeches must be submitted by the deadline posted on the KAAC website. Late submissions will not be accepted.
6. Submissions must adhere to general school-appropriate standards. Speeches containing explicit violence, hate speech, or inappropriate language will be disqualified.

Submission Formats

1. Final speeches must be submitted as a private youtube link or a Google Drive link.
 - a. Email submission to Chill@kaac.com
 - b. Subject line: School, Student Name, Division
 - c. Attachments: Publication Consent Forms for the individual(s) submitting speeches.

The top 5 submissions will be announced in February. The rankings of these submissions will be announced at the Governor's Cup State Finals Component Event Award Ceremony.

Speakers Spotlight Publication Consent and Release Form

1. Subject Information

Full Name of Subject/Participant: _____

Parent or Guardian Name (if subject is under 18): _____

Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

2. Project Title

Project/Publication Title: _____

3. Consent and Grant of Rights

I hereby give Kentucky Association for Academic Competition the irrevocable right and permission to use, publish, and copyright my name, likeness, image, voice, written statements, or photographic/video materials (collectively called the "Materials") captured in connection with the project named above.

I understand that the Materials may be published in print, online, video, social media, or any other media format for educational or promotional purposes.

4. Release and Waiver

I release Kentucky Association for Academic Competition from any and all claims, demands, or liability arising out of or in connection with the use of the Materials, including any claims for defamation or invasion of privacy.

I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age or the legal guardian of the minor named above and have the full legal capacity to sign this release.

I understand that this consent is voluntary and that I will not receive financial compensation or payment for this use.

5. Original Work and Citation

I agree that all submitted work is entirely original, written by me, and that I did not use artificial intelligence to generate the speech submitted.

6. Signature

Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature [If under 18]: _____

Date: _____

Examples of Common Approaches and Concepts

Narrative/Anecdotal Approach

Content: A rhetorical and structural style in which a speech is built around a central story, real-life experience, or historical anecdote.

Problem-Cause Solution

Content: A speech structure that clearly identifies a specific problem, analyzes its underlying causes, and presents a logical, actionable solution.

Thematic Motif

Content: A speech structure built around a recurring symbol, metaphor, or central phrase that anchors different ideas and deepens the emotional meaning.

Historical or Chronological Trace

Content: A speech structure that explores a topic by moving through a timeline such as past, present, and future or by contrasting historical background with modern reality to highlight changes, progress, or cyclical patterns over time.

Comparative/Dialectical Approach

Content: A speech structure that explores a topic by weighing two opposing philosophies, perspectives, or scenarios, guiding the audience through a comparison before arriving at a final, synthesized conclusion.

Direct Address

Content: A speech structure that breaks the traditional fourth wall to speak directly to the judges or audience as active participants, using immediate framing and questions to make them feel personally implicated in the topic.

Vignette Mosaic

Content: A speech structure composed of several short, vivid snapshots or scene descriptions loosely connected by a central theme to build cumulative emotional impact.

Exploratory Approach

Content: A speech structure that breaks down a complex subject by examining it through several separate, distinct angles or lenses.

Evaluator Scoresheet

Criteria		1-2 (Poor)	3-4 (Below Average)	5-6 (Competent)	7-8 (Above Average)	9-10 (Exceptional)	Score
Delivery & Presentation	Vocal Projection & Clarity	Inaudible or unintelligible for large portions; extreme vocal strain or lack of clarity severely impedes comprehension.	Frequently difficult to hear or understand; lacks proper breath support, leading to muffled words or a distracting monotone delivery.	Generally audible and clear, though volume may occasionally dip or articulation may blur during rapid phrases.	Consistently clear and well-projected; articulation is strong with only minor, isolated instances of mumbled or dropped words.	Voice effortlessly fills the space or records with pristine clarity; articulation is flawless, and dynamic modulation expertly enhances the message.	
	Pacing and Rhythm	Erratic and chaotic delivery; speech is overwhelmingly rushed or halting, making it difficult for listeners to follow or comprehend.	Consistently uneven pacing—either rushed through complex ideas or dragging slowly; heavy reliance on filler words disrupts the flow.	Acceptable rhythm, but occasionally drifts into rushing or dragging; noticeable use of filler words (e.g., "um," "like") begins to distract.	Well-paced and steady; handles transitions smoothly with purposeful pauses and rare, unobtrusive filler words.	Pacing is masterfully controlled; strategic pauses are used to maximize impact, and speech flows with a natural, engaging rhythm completely free of fillers.	
	Body Language & Gestures	Slouched, completely static, or excessively erratic physical presentation that undermines speaker credibility and engagement.	Closed or rigid body language; distracting physical habits (swaying, fidgeting, crossed arms) detract significantly from the speech.	Posture is generally acceptable, but gestures may feel stiff, mechanical, or sparse, adding limited value to the presentation.	Professional and open posture; gestures are natural and supportive, though occasional repetitive movements may occur.	Posture is exceptionally poised and natural; hand gestures and physical framing are purposeful, highly expressive, and perfectly synchronized with spoken points.	
	Engagement	Completely disengaged presentation style that alienates the audience and fails to establish any rapport.	Weak connection; speaker appears detached, reading mechanically or avoiding eye contact almost entirely.	Moderate connection; occasional lapses in eye contact or brief drops in energetic presence cause the audience's attention to wane.	Maintains strong, consistent connection and eye contact with the audience or camera throughout the duration.	Captivates the audience entirely through magnetic energy, masterful gaze distribution, and a palpable connection that makes every listener feel directly addressed.	
Content & Structure	Organization	Completely unstructured and chaotic; thoughts are presented randomly with no discernible beginning, middle, or end.	Disorganized framework; difficult to track the logical progression of ideas due to missing transitions or a muddled structural sequence.	Generally structured, though transitions between points may feel abrupt, or the introduction/conclusion lacks distinct framing.	Logical and structured; clear introduction and conclusion with smooth transitions that guide the listener effortlessly through the arguments.	Flawless architecture; features a magnetic hook, a razor-sharp thesis, seamless transitions between distinct points, and an unforgettable concluding impact.	
	Arguments & Depth	Absent or incomprehensible argumentation; ideas are entirely underdeveloped or built on invalid reasoning.	Shallow or flawed logic; arguments contain significant gaps, contradictions, or lack necessary developmental depth.	Competent reasoning, but some arguments remain surface-level, relying on broad assertions rather than rigorous exploration.	Strong, well-reasoned arguments that demonstrate clear analytical depth and logical consistency across all main points.	Arguments are brilliantly conceived, thoroughly analyzed, and deeply nuanced; explores underlying complexities with exceptional critical insight.	
	Language & Word Choice	Weak language undermined by frequent grammatical errors, inappropriate slang, or constant redundancy.	Limited or repetitive word choice; frequent imprecise terminology or awkward phrasing weakens the overall impact.	Functional vocabulary; language is clear enough to convey meaning, but relies occasionally on clichés or repetitive phrasing.	Strong, articulate word choice; language is formal, precise, and elevates the material effectively.	Vocabulary is exceptionally precise, vivid, and evocative; sentence structures are varied for maximum rhetorical impact without redundancy.	
	Evidence & Support	Complete absence of supporting evidence; assertions are entirely unbacked and unsubstantiated.	Weak or sparse evidence; arguments are heavily reliant on unsupported opinions with few valid examples.	Adequate support is provided, though some claims rely on generalized assertions rather than specific, concrete evidence.	Solid evidence and relevant examples back up core assertions effectively and consistently.	Claims are seamlessly reinforced with compelling, highly relevant evidence, vivid examples, and robust supporting details that render the logic irrefutable.	
Holistic	Persuasiveness and Resonance	Entirely unpersuasive; actively alienates or uses uninspired rhetoric leaving the audience detached.	Low persuasiveness; fails to convince or inspire the listener, remaining unconvincing or flat.	Moderately persuasive; presents a coherent case, but lacks the emotional or rhetorical force required to truly move the audience.	Highly persuasive; successfully champions its viewpoint and engages the listener's conviction throughout.	Deeply compelling and transformative; shifts perspectives masterfully and leaves a powerful, enduring emotional or intellectual impression.	
	Originality & Authenticity	Entirely unoriginal and insincere; feels heavily borrowed, robotic, or disconnected from the speaker's actual voice.	Derivative or formulaic; heavily mimics standard tropes without demonstrating a personal voice or creative spin.	Competent but conventional; hits standard expectations without introducing truly unique or memorable perspectives.	Highly authentic presentation style; brings a unique creative angle and genuine voice to the topic.	Contains a distinct, striking voice and a truly fresh perspective; demonstrates a deeply personal intellectual investment that sets the work apart.	
	Relevance to the Topic	Completely disconnected; the oration fails to address the topic.	Weak connection; the topic is acknowledged but never effectively integrated into the oration.	Relevant; the oration addresses the topic and meets the core requirements.	Strong alignment; the topic is thoughtfully explored and central to the oration's message.	Exceptional integration; the topic is central to the oration, explored with unique insight and depth.	

Parameters	Outside 3-8 Minutes	
	Uses cues/prompting	

Total Score	0
-------------	---