



THE NEW JERSEY SPEECH & DEBATE LEAGUE
STUDENT VIDEO FESTIVALS
Featuring
online public speaking and dramatic presentations for
middle school and high school students.

Open to all students from New Jersey public and private schools as well as students from other states!

Offering middle school and high school divisions!

Students can enter video submissions in multiple categories!

Schools and students will receive recognition for participation.

Special themed-events are connected to calendar celebrations during the year!



Your school is invited to participate in the 2025-2026 New Jersey Speech and Debate League Online Speech Festival Series. These festivals are designed to provide students an avenue to develop and share their public speaking and performance skills in a convenient, educational, and fun way!

For three festivals, teachers will upload videos of student performances to be evaluated by a selection of educators and experienced judges! Students will receive commentary and feedback aimed at helping them improve their speaking, performance, and communication skills! This year, we are excited to announce that for one additional festival, students will be able to compete synchronously in a live virtual festival!

Students will receive recognition for their video submissions along with feedback from the evaluators! Teachers will also receive school recognition to display in their classroom, offices, or trophy cases!

Would you like to serve as a volunteer judge?

We will be using a rubric based evaluation system so all parents, teachers, and college students are welcome to judge. For Middle-School divisions, students in grades 11 or 12 can also serve as judges. This is the best way to learn more about our online events.

Email gyablon@hudsoncharter.org

About the New Jersey Speech & Debate League



The New Jersey Speech and Debate League is a volunteer, member-led, not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization that exists to promote the arts of effective communication among students in public and independent schools in New Jersey. The League is registered as an incorporated non-profit entity with the State of New Jersey. The League is also affiliated with the [National Speech and Debate Association \(NSDA\)](#), The [National Federation of High Schools \(NFHS\)](#), and works in conjunction with the New Jersey District Committee as the governing body for NSDA activity in the state.

Visit our website at www.NJSDL.org

What are the events?

Repeated Events (offered on all festival dates)

Middle School Division (Grades 5-8)	High School Division (Grades 9-12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declamation • Prose Reading • Poetry Reading • Original Oratory • Informative Speaking • Memorized Interpretation of Literature (Dramatic, Humorous, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declamation • Original Oratory • Prose • Poetry • Dramatic Interp Humorous Interp Duo Interp Informative POI Children's Literature <p>High School students can enter a maximum of four events.</p>

Special events (offered on specific festival dates) - Open to Middle School & High School

<p>October 2025 - Video</p> <p>Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month</p> <p>Registration on SpeechWire.com</p> <p>Video Submissions Due October 12, 2025</p> <p>Preliminary Round Judging October 13-16, 2025</p> <p>Finals Round Judging October 17-19, 2025</p> <p>Awards Ceremony October 20, 2025</p>	<p>THEMED Congressional Debate Authorship Challenge - Students will choose two pieces of legislation to write and deliver authorship speeches introducing each piece of legislation and urging passage of each resolution/bill. The Legislation Packet was released on September 29, 2025.</p> <p>NOTE: The Pro Con Challenge will still be offered this month as well but with NSDA Topics not a special themed resolution</p> <p>THEMED Prepared Prompt - Students will present a short speech based on their choice of prompts related to Hispanic Heritage Month. The Prompt List was released on October 3, 2025.</p> <p>THEMED Original Poetry - Students will write and present an original poem inspired by Hispanic Heritage Month.</p>
<p>January 31, 2025 - Synchronous Live</p> <p>Observing Martin Luther King Jr. Day</p> <p>Registration Coming Soon to Tabroom.com</p>	<p>Congressional Debate - Students will make speeches based on a legislation packet of bills that may or may not be related to the theme of the event. Students can also submit their own pieces of legislation for consideration for the packet, but bills related to the theme will be given more consideration for inclusion. The Legislation Packet will be released on January 16, 2026.</p> <p>Impromptu Speaking - Students will present a short speech based on their choice of prompts given to them during each round. At least one round of prompts will be related to the theme of the event.</p> <p>Extemporaneous Speaking (HS Only) - Students will present a short speech based on their choice of prompts given to them during each round. At least one round of prompts will be related to the theme of the event.</p> <p>THEMED Original Spoken Word Poetry - Students will write and present an original poem inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. Day.</p>

<p>March 2026 - Video</p> <p>Celebrating Women's History Month</p> <p><i>Registration Coming Soon to SpeechWire.com</i></p> <p><i>Video Submissions Due March 8, 2026</i></p> <p><i>Preliminary Judging March 9-12, 2026</i></p> <p><i>Finals Judging March 13-15, 2026</i></p> <p><i>Awards Ceremony March 16, 2026</i></p>	<p><i>THEMED Congressional Debate Authorship Challenge</i> - Students will choose two pieces of legislation to write and deliver authorship speeches introducing each piece of legislation and urging passage of each resolution/bill. The Legislation Packet will be released on February 23, 2026.</p> <p><i>NOTE: The Pro Con Challenge will still be offered this month as well but with NSDA Topics not a special themed resolution</i></p> <p><i>THEMED Prepared Prompt</i> - Students will present a short speech based on their choice of prompts related to Women's History Month. The Prompt List will be released on February 27, 2026.</p> <p><i>THEMED Original Poetry</i> - Students will write and present an original poem inspired by Women's History Month</p>
<p>April 2026 - Video</p> <p>Celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month</p> <p><i>Registration Coming Soon to SpeechWire.com</i></p> <p><i>Video Submissions Due April 19, 2026</i></p> <p><i>Preliminary Round Judging April 20-23, 2026</i></p> <p><i>Finals Round Judging April 24-26, 2026</i></p> <p><i>Awards Ceremony April 27, 2026</i></p>	<p><i>THEMED Congressional Debate Authorship Challenge</i> - Students will choose two pieces of legislation to write and deliver authorship speeches introducing each piece of legislation and urging passage of each resolution/bill. The Legislation Packet will be released on April 6, 2026.</p> <p><i>NOTE: The Pro Con Challenge will still be offered this month as well but with NSDA Topics not a special themed resolution</i></p> <p><i>THEMED Prepared Prompt</i> - Students will present a short speech based on their choice of prompts related to Mental Health Awareness Month. The Prompt List will be released on April 10, 2026.</p> <p><i>THEMED Original Poetry</i> - Students will write and present an original poem inspired by Mental Health Awareness Month.</p>

How do I get involved?

If you are interested in submitting your students' work, [complete this form](#). We will need permission forms from your school administrator and students' parents. We do ask that teachers who submit videos help with the judging of other student videos. You will not be asked to provide feedback on any student from your own school. If you have other educators who would like to help, please let us know. We will provide all feedback forms, rubrics, and models to help you provide feedback!



What is the cost?

Those schools who have the capability of offering a \$10 registration fee for each student submission will be welcomed. All collected fees will be used toward student recognition at the end of the year.

If you are a school that is having difficulty with paying the registration fee, especially if you are a new program, please contact gyablon@hudsoncharter.org to see if we can provide accommodations for your program.

What recognition will my students receive?

All student submissions, provided they meet the event criteria, will be evaluated and receive a designation such as Gold, Silver, or Bronze. Students will receive certificates or medals highlighting their achievement!

Teachers will also receive a framed certificate to display in their classrooms or schools!

Do I need to join the NJSDL in order to participate?



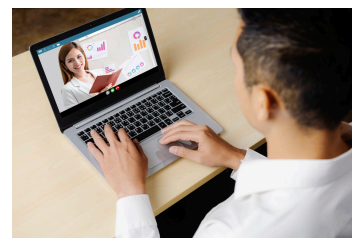
New Jersey schools who register will receive an introductory school membership to the league, free of charge. **If you would like to participate in additional league events, beyond the online festival series**, you may join as a full member by paying the league registration fee of \$200.00. Again, schools who are only participating in the online speech festival will not need to pay any registration fees.

What other types of events does the NJSDL offer schools and students?

The NJSDL is the New Jersey district affiliate of the National Speech and Debate Association. Our league schools offer in-person competitions throughout the year, culminating in the NJSDL State Championships in March.

Do we need to supply judges?

We ask schools to supply one judge for every 5 entries (or fraction thereof). We will be using a rubric based evaluation system so all parents, teachers, and college students are welcome to judge. For Middle-School divisions, students in grades 11 or 12 can also serve as judges. All judges need to be mindful of the due dates for each round's rankings, and be available for both preliminary and finals rounds.



Event Descriptions / Rules

Rounds in Tournaments

- Each event will have at least four rounds (ideally three preliminary rounds and one finals round).
 - If all competitors in an event are in a single panel for all preliminary rounds, no final round is required. A subsequent preliminary round may be held at the discretion of the tournament director.
 - Events with less than or equal to 30 total entries will have one finals round.
 - Events with 31+ entries will have two elimination rounds (a semifinals AND finals) scheduling permitted.

For High School Events:

- Please refer to the NJSDL website.
- All high school events except Declamation, Prose, and Poetry will follow [NSDA rules found in the High School Unified Manual](#), including Pro Con Challenge, Congressional Debate Authorship Challenge, Prepared Prompt, and Original Spoken Word Poetry.
 - For Pro/Con Challenge and Congressional Debate Authorship Challenge, students would submit one unedited video showing two separate speeches.
 - Pro/Con's time limit is 3-5 minutes per speech, while showing the Pro and Con side to the same topic.
 - Congressional Debate Authorship's time limit is 2-3 minutes per speech, while showing a Pro or Con speech for two separate pieces of legislation.
- Declamation, Prose, and Poetry will follow [NCFL rules](#).

For Middle School Events:

- Please refer to the NJSDL website.
- All middle school events will follow [NSDA rules found in the Middle School Unified Manual](#).

**Please feel free to contact
Gary Yablon gyablon@hudsoncharter.org with any questions!**