

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

The Impromptu Speaking contest serves as a format for helping students develop skills in oral communication which are essential to the educational process. This relatively non-threatening contest can be fun and is easily incorporated into almost any subject area.

- evaluate speeches given by others;
- explore the use of the voice and body in speaking situations;
- examine the different purposes for speaking;
- organize ideas;
- prepare and deliver various speeches; and
- develop self-confidence.

The skill of communicating with an audience should be introduced for development early in a student's education. As early as the kindergarten year, students should be given opportunities to communicate orally with an audience, no matter how small. In the contest, students will select one of three topics drawn from an envelope or container. They will then have three minutes to prepare the presentations. Note cards may not be used during the speech.

Students should be given simple, familiar topics for practice. Some should be humorous and some serious. Students will become interested if the topics have an appeal to their particular age group.

After several practice experiences, the student should be led to consider some of the questions listed on the individual evaluation sheet. These questions and the criteria for evaluating the speech may assist the sponsor in planning several activities to develop the skills that are so vital to effective oral communication.

Let's face it — it is not easy to speak before a group. But it is a skill that every student will benefit from having developed.