



# Oratorical Contest

2019-2020

## Club Chair Planning Guide

### Topic:

**"Just iMagine a World without Boundaries"**

**\*"iMagine" represents the organization's theme for 2019-2020 and it is written as shown for branding purposes. It does not replace the linguistic interpretation, intent, or spelling of the word "imagine or Imagine". As such, contestants are free to use the correct spelling for any contest or communications without penalty.**

### Purpose

Since its start in 1928, the Optimist Oratorical Contest has become the longest-running program sponsored by Optimist International. The contest is designed for youth to gain experience in public speaking, perfect self-expression, gain self-assurance, improve communication skills, and provide them with the opportunity to compete for a college scholarship.

### Funding

The Optimist Oratorical Scholarships are funded by member donations to the Optimist International Foundation and Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation. It is important that all Members understand the significance of supporting the Foundations in order to continue the funding for the contest. Please make sure to recognize the Foundations and any member that donates funds to the scholarships. Without them, there are no scholarships!

### Club Contests

A Club may be represented at District level by only two qualified contestants. All Club submissions should be run through a plagiarism checker before being forwarded to the next level.

### District Contests

Each winner of the District level contest will receive a scholarship for use at a college, university or trade school only. There will be three winners awarded scholarships of **\$2,500, \$1,500 and \$1,000** respectively for first, second and third place.

### The World Championship Oratorical Contest

Districts may enter one contestant into the World Regional and World Championship Contests held **July 15-17, 2020** at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri. Please encourage your District Clubs and Members to help fund your District Winner and chaperone to attend the Optimist International World Championships.

Effective **October 1, 2021**, all District winners will compete at the Oratorical World Championships in person at the designated locations.

### How to Enter

Interested youth should prepare a 4 to 5 minute speech on the assigned topic to be presented at their local Optimist Club's contest. The speeches are judged at the Club level, Zone level, District Regional level (if needed) and then at the District level prior to the Optimist International Oratorical World Championships. Clubs and Districts may choose to allow contestants to compete via online streaming.

### Eligibility Criteria

The contest is open to youth under the age of **19** as of October 1<sup>st</sup> of the current Optimist International contest year (October 1 – September 30) **and is not enrolled as a degree seeking student of a post-secondary institution.** There is no minimum age.

### Minimum Number of Participants

There is no minimum required number of participants for Club Contests. Zone, Regional and District Contests must have no fewer than three participants.

In cases where the minimum number of three contestants at the Zone or District Regional contest cannot be met, there are two options:

- A. Send winners directly to the next level of the contest.
- B. Combine Zone or District Regional level contests.



## Club Oratorical 2019-2020

date is set by the District Oratorical Chair. **The deadline to submit District winners to Optimist International is May 15, 2020.**

District winners will be notified by a letter from Optimist International between May 30<sup>th</sup> and June 15<sup>th</sup>. Districts should notify the Programs Department if they would like winner notification to be delayed.

Districts may enter one contestant to participate in the World Championship Contests held at Saint Louis University. The Entry Form for the World Championships must be received by Optimist International no later than **May 15, 2020.**

### Prizes

Scholarships are awarded to contestants in the United States and the Caribbean in US dollars and in Canadian dollars for Canadian contestants.

#### Club Level - medallion

Clubs are allowed to give up to \$500 in monetary/cash\* awards for the Oratorical contest in addition to the official medallions. The Club level awards may be given in the form of a scholarship, savings bond or cash prize but are completely discretionary. Please contact the Optimist International Foundation or Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation for setting up a Club scholarship.

\* Disclaimer - Clubs planning to present cash or savings bond awards to contestant winners should first consult the association for their state or province that coordinates scholastic activities and competitions to determine if such payments would result in the recipient's forfeiture of amateur status. If a contestant loses their amateur status, they may be unable to compete in collegiate athletics and activities.

#### Zone and District Regional Level – plaque

Certificates may be created by the Zone or District and templates are available on [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org).

#### District Level - plaque and a college scholarship

Districts should order plaques directly from Shumsky in the U.S. and Caribbean or Ansell's in Canada.

Districts award scholarships in the amount of \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$1,000.

Districts choosing to increase funding for the scholarships or fund additional scholarships will need to manage those funds through other resources. Optimist

International will not handle the awarding of any scholarships not funded by the Optimist International Foundations. The responsibility for record-keeping and awarding of additional funds or scholarships will be the District's. Districts may choose to hold the additional funds in District accounts or contribute those funds to the Optimist International Foundations.

The Foundations will process requests from the Districts to have scholarship funds returned to them. Requests must be in writing and specify the type of scholarship and the amount. The Foundations will not award the scholarships or write checks to the individual scholarship recipients or their schools.

**World Championships** – Scholarships are awarded to each Regional winner in United States dollars in the US, Caribbean, and the Global Region winners and in Canadian dollars to winners in Canada in the amount of at least \$5,000. In addition, scholarships in the amounts of \$15,000, \$10,000, and \$5,000 will be given to the first, second, and third place World Champions, respectively. An additional scholarship may be awarded to participants by Saint Louis University at its discretion.

Each Regional winner and World Champion will receive a certificate of participation. The first place World Champion will have his/her speech presented to the delegates of the Optimist International Convention.

### Interested in Providing a Club Scholarship to Your Winner(s)?

Setting up a Club Campaign Fund through the Optimist International Foundation is an excellent way to establish a scholarship program from your individual club. It is a great vehicle to all tax-deductible gifts from members and non-members. For more information, contact OIF at [info@oifoundation.org](mailto:info@oifoundation.org)

### Getting the Contest Started in Your Community

Your Club may approach local schools to distribute information and coach interested students in preparation for the Club level contest. The program is recommended by both the **National Association of Secondary School Principals** and the **American Association of School Administrators**. This endorsement can go a long way when your Club is requesting that principals and teachers offer this program to their students. Reach out to the Department of Education to get contacts for home-schooled students. Contact local, private,



everyone you contacted with a Club Member's name and phone number.

### **Judges' Criteria and Duties**

Select three qualified judges who are not acquainted with the contestants. At the Club level, the judges may be Optimist Members. At all other levels of the competition, judges must be non-Optimists (Friends of Optimists are excluded and may be used as judges). Judges should have expertise in the field of public speaking. Consider using past Oratorical contestants, current or retired debate, speech, or drama teachers, and community business leaders.

Always have a back-up judge, in case of an emergency. Judges are also potential new Members, so don't forget to recruit them!

**The Oratorical Contest Chair should supply each judge with a copy of the rules and the judging forms and review them with each judge prior to the day of the contest.**

Judges should never discuss or compare their impressions of the speakers or their scores. Each judge must score independently from other judges and Optimists. No one is permitted to view the scores except the Oratorical Contest Chair.

### **Timekeepers**

One timekeeper should be appointed. This person can be an Optimist Club Member (but it is suggested that you do not use an Optimist member, if possible). The timekeeper is responsible for recording the official length of each speech and assessing penalties if needed, noting failure to announce the topic in the first sentence, verbal identification of non-original material as noted in the printed copy of the speech and totaling all penalties on the timekeeper's score sheet. The timekeeper will need the official form, pen, stopwatch and a copy of each participant's speech. The completed timekeeper's score sheet is turned in to the Contest Chair to be included in the master scores of each speaker.

### **Handling Protests**

A Sergeant-at-Arms should be the contact for protests and given index cards and pens/pencils to distribute when necessary. Anyone who wishes to protest should raise their hand at the completion of the contestant's speech

before the next speaker begins. The Sergeant-at-Arms gives the person protesting an index card and pen/pencil. The protest must be written on the card. The Sergeant-at-Arms collects the card as soon as it is completed. This process is repeated for any person who wishes to make a protest. The Contest Chair collects the protest cards before leaving the room to compile scores. Protests are addressed at that time by the Chair and decided. Any adjustments judges need to be aware of will be made at that time. This procedure allows the students to compete without interruption or embarrassment, allows for an accurate description of the protest to be reviewed and should prevent any disturbance or public discussion.

### **Videotaping Guidelines**

All Oratorical contests must be conducted live, not judged on videotape. However, you may allow for the use of one video camera at a contest to give participants a take-home copy of their speech. Each contestant shall have the option of having the camera off during his/her presentation. An Optimist Club Member should run the camera. A tape supplied by the Club or contestant is put into the camcorder at each break between speakers. The tape should be labeled with the speaker's order designation. When the speaker is finished, the tape is removed and a new one is inserted. This process is repeated for each contestant who wants a copy of their speech. A master copy could also be recorded of all speakers, and then copied for contestants. This gives everyone the chance to have a copy of their speech, and allows the contestants to make their speech with minimal interference.

### **Photography**

Be sure the Application Form includes the Parent or Guardian Release statement for the use of photographs.



2019-2020

**The District Oratorical Contest Chair is responsible for all phases of the Oratorical Contests in the District. All District competitions must be conducted by Optimists only, and this responsibility must not be delegated to outside groups.**

### **Club Contest Day Checklist**

Get to the contest location early and make sure:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Seating is sufficient
- \_\_\_\_\_ Podium/lectern is present (with portable steps is suggested)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Microphone is working
- \_\_\_\_\_ Awards are present
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certificates are signed and present
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recognition Certificates or Plaques are present to any Club sponsor or donor to the program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Video camera (optional) is set up in an appropriate place
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assistants are aware of their responsibilities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sergeants-at-Arms are aware of their responsibilities in recording protest (see guidelines)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contestant's briefing is held
- \_\_\_\_\_ Judges' briefing is held (it is strongly suggested that the same judges be used for boy/girl contests)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contestants draw letters for speaking order
- \_\_\_\_\_ The emcee begins the contest on time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Remember to talk about your Club between speakers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have membership brochures handy
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Be sure to recognize sponsors and/or donors**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Introduce the judges and timekeeper
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take lots of pictures for press releases
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have the first-place winners sign any required forms for the next contest level before they leave

### **After the Club Contest**

The Club Chair should:

1. Announce the winners to the audience and present their medallions.
2. Have the winners sign their Zone/District Regional/District Entry Form
3. Announce the date and location of the Zone contest.

#### **4. Submit for each winner:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Zone/District Regional/District Entry Form
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Application Form
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of speech
- \_\_\_\_\_ Entry fee (if applicable)

**\*\*A copy of the contestants ID (passport/birth certificate) is only needed for District winners.**

### **To the Zone/District Regional/District Chair**

5. Complete the Club Chair Evaluation Form and mail or email it to:

Optimist International  
Attn: Oratorical Coordinator  
4494 Lindell Blvd  
St. Louis, MO 63108  
Or  
Email: [programs@optimist.org](mailto:programs@optimist.org)

### **Once All Speakers have Finished:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Judges and timekeepers total their individual scores for each contestant, sign their score sheets, and give them to the Contest Chair
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contest Chair leaves the room to review and rule on protests, and to complete scoring procedure
- \_\_\_\_\_ Announce the winners
- \_\_\_\_\_ Present each winner with their award and give the date and location of the next contest level

# Application for 2019-2020 Optimist International Oratorical Contest

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province/Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Have you participated in any other Optimist Club's Oratorical Contest this school year? ☐ Yes ☐ No

## Contestant Agreement:

*I have studied the rules of the contest, and I will be bound by all of the requirements.*

Contestant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

For more information contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parent or Guardian Permission:

*I give my permission for my child/ward to participate in this contest.*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

*I, \_\_\_\_\_ grant the Optimist Club/International my permission to use a picture/video of my son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ for their public relations purposes. Optimist Club/International may use the photo/video in any publication they see fit.*

Sponsoring Optimist Club Name \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsoring Optimist Club Number \_\_\_\_\_

Language speech will be spoken in: ☐ English ☐ French

## Topic: "Just iMagine a World without Boundaries?"

**"iMagine" represents the organization's theme for 2019-2020 and it is written as shown for branding purposes. It does not replace the linguistic interpretation, intent, or spelling of the word "imagine or Imagine". As such, contestants are free to use the correct spelling for any contest or communications without penalty.**

### Official Rules

#### Section I — General Rules

1. The Optimist International Oratorical contest will begin at the Club level, proceed to the Zone and District level and end with a contest at World Championships level.
2. Contestants must enter through a local Optimist Club.
3. The official application must be completed by each contestant and submitted to the sponsoring Club's Contest Chair.
4. Clubs, Zones and Districts **will** have a combined gender contests.
5. No Zone, Regional, or District level contest shall have fewer than 3 or more than 20 contestants competing.
6. Optimist International has the right to edit, publish and record any speech used in any contest without payment to the author.

#### Section II — Qualifications for Contestants

1. The contest is open to contestants under the age of 19 as of October 1st of the current Optimist International Contest year (October 1 – September 30) and is not enrolled as a degree seeking student of a post-secondary institution. There is no minimum age.
2. A contestant is eligible to enter/compete in only one Optimist Oratorical contest during a contest year. Once a contestant wins 1st place at the District level and/or competes at the World Regional level, they are ineligible to compete in the Optimist Oratorical Contest in a subsequent year.
3. Each contestant shall prepare his or her own speech. The contestant may receive advice in the preparation of the speech and may make minor changes or improvements in the speech at any time.
4. All contestants at each level of the contest must show proof of age before competing. Optimist Clubs may require a copy of birth certificate or passport if offering a club scholarship separate from Optimist International.

District winners must provide a copy of the birth certificate or passport with District entry documentation

5. A printed copy of the speech must be furnished either before or after the speech.

#### Section III — Contest Rules

1. All contestants must speak on the official topic.
2. A speech may be delivered in English or French.
3. All contestants must state the official topic in the first sentence of the speech. Timing will begin with the first spoken word. A 3-point penalty is automatically assessed by the timekeeper for failure to state the official topic in the first sentence.
4. Any quotation, copyrighted, or largely paraphrased material used in the speech must be identified verbally during the presentation and in the written copy of the speech with the original author's name. The contestant shall be fully responsible for the use of any quoted material and Optimist International shall assume no responsibility. Failure to identify non-original material will result in up to 10 penalty points.
5. The use of props, special costumes or clothing, will result in 10 penalty points
6. The use of audience prompters will result in disqualification
7. Notes and lecterns can be used if the contestant desires.
8. The time allowed will be not under 4 minutes or over 5 minutes. Contestants going over or under will not be cautioned, and will be penalized one point for each 15 seconds or fraction of over or under the allotted time. This penalty will be determined by the official timekeeper.
9. Timing will begin at the first word spoken. Timing will stop when the contestant finishes.
10. No reference can be made that identifies the contestant, parents, school, community, sponsoring Optimist Club or District. This will result in a deduction of up to 5 points. Contestants shall not be identified by name or sponsoring Clubs until after the last oration has been presented and the judges and timekeeper have started deliberations.

11. Any protest in the conduct at any level of this contest must be made immediately after the condition is noted. Protests received after the next contestant has been introduced, or in the case of the last contestant, after the judges leave to total the scores, will not be accepted under any circumstances.

12. The Contest Chairperson will decide all protests in accordance with the official rules. The decision of the Contest Chair is final and no higher appeals will be recognized. In the case of Club contests, the Club Contest Chair has this authority. In the case of Zone and District contests, the final authority is vested in the District Contest Chair. The Zone Chair has the authority to handle protests that may arise during the Zone competition with the District Chair having the final authority.

#### Section IV — Scoring

Scoring in all Club, Zone, District, and World Championships contests will conform to the following criteria.

1. Poise – appearance and personality: 10 points
2. Content of Speech – subject adherence, theme, content, logic and color: 40 points
3. Delivery & Presentation – voice, volume, pronunciation, gestures, eye contact, sincerity and emphasis: 35 points
4. Overall Effectiveness – appeal, impression, attitude and effect: 15 points

#### Section V — Penalties

1. Failure to announce the official topic in the first sentence – 3 points
2. Failure to identify non-original material – up to 10 points
3. Use of props, costume, etc. - 10 points
4. Time penalties – 1 point for each 15 seconds or fraction of over or under the allotted time.
5. Self-identification – up to 5 points

6. Failure to complete speech – disqualification
7. Use of audience prompters - disqualification

#### Section VI — Awards

1. Club Level – Medallion
2. Zone Level – Plaque
3. District Regional Level – Plaque
4. District – Plaque and Scholarship

Each winner of the District level contest will receive a scholarship for use at a college, university or trade school only. Three winners awarded scholarships of \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$1,000 respectively for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

All scholarships will be payable to the educational institution of the recipient's choice, subject to the approval of Optimist International. All scholarships will be administered by Optimist International Winners of an Optimist International scholarship must claim their scholarship by the age of 25.

5. World Championship Optimist Oratorical Contests – Plaque and Scholarship
  - A. Each winner of the World Regional level contest will receive a scholarship for use at a college, university or trade school only. There will be one winner awarded a \$5000 scholarship at the World Regional Level. All winners of the World Regional Contests will be eligible to compete in the World Championship Contest with awards for first, second, and third place of \$15,000, \$10,000, and \$5,000 respectively at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri.
  - B. All scholarships will be payable to the educational institution of the recipient's choice, subject to the approval of Optimist International.
  - C. All scholarships will be administered by Optimist International.
  - D. Winners of an Optimist International scholarship must claim their scholarship by the age of 25.





## Official Rules

### Section I — Contest Organization

1. All Optimist Oratorical contests must be sponsored in their entirety by an Optimist Club, Zone or District.
2. Zone and District contests should be conducted by the District administration.
3. An Optimist Club must be in good standing in its District and with Optimist International to be eligible to sponsor participants in the Zone or District Oratorical contests.
4. The contest will begin at the Club level, proceed to the Zone level, then the District Regional level (if needed) and end with a contest at the World Championships level.
5. Club Contests
  - A. A Club may be represented by no more than two qualified contestants and will be a combined gender contest.
6. Zone contests
  - A. Zone contests will be held at times and places determined by the District. The Chairperson of the Zone contests will be determined by the District and supervised by the District Oratorical Chair.
  - B. All Zone contests must comply with the official rules and only the Zone winners shall be eligible to compete at the District contest.
  - C. Each Zone is allowed to send up to two contestants to the next level and will be a combined gender contest.
  - D. Zone level contests shall have no fewer than 3 or more than 20 contestants participating.
  - E. In cases where the minimum number of 3 contestants at the Zone or Regional contest cannot be met, there are two options:
    1. Send winners directly to the next level of the contest.
    2. Combine Zone or District Regional level contests.
7. District Contest
  - A. The District administration shall determine the date and location of the District contest.
  - B. If District preliminary contests or Regionals are necessary, they may be held as determined by the District administration, at locations other than at the site of the District contest.
  - C. The District Oratorical Chair is responsible for all phases of the Oratorical contest in the District. All District competitions must be conducted by

Optimists only and this responsibility must not be delegated to outside groups. The District will hold a combined gender contest.

- D. District level contests shall have no fewer than 3 or more than 20 contestants participating.

### Section II- General Rules

#### Contestants must enter through a local Optimist Club.

1. The official application must be completed by each contestant and submitted to the sponsoring Club's Contest Chair.
2. No Zone, District Regional or District-level contest shall have fewer than 3 or more than 20 contestants competing. In cases where the minimum number of 3 contestants at the Zone or District Regional contest cannot be met, there are two options:
  - A. Send winners directly to the next level of the contest.
  - B. Combine Zone or Regional level contests.
3. Optimist International has the right to edit, publish and record any speech used in any contest without payment to the author.
4. In keeping with the prestige of the Oratorical contest and Optimist International, alcoholic beverages shall not be sold, consumed or possessed at any Optimist Oratorical contest.
5. Any award bearing the words "Optimist Oratorical Contest," "Optimist International," "Friend of Youth" and/or the emblem of Optimist International must be obtained from Shumsky in the U.S. and Caribbean or Ansell's Awards in Canada. These marks are owned by Optimist International and may not be manufactured without the permission of the Optimist International Board of Directors.

### Section III - Qualifications for Contestants

1. The contest is open to contestants under the age of 19 as of October 1<sup>st</sup> of the current Optimist International Contest year (October 1 to September 30) and is not enrolled as a degree seeking student of a post-secondary institution. There is no minimum age.

2. A contestant is eligible to enter/compete in only one Optimist Oratorical contest during a contest year (October 1 to September 30). Once a contestant wins 1<sup>st</sup> Place at the District level and/or competes at the World Regional level, they are ineligible to compete in the Optimist Oratorical Contest in subsequent years.
3. Each contestant shall prepare his or her own speech and submit a written copy. The contestant may receive advice in the preparation of the speech and may make minor changes or improvements in the speech at any time.
4. All contestants at each level of the contest must show proof of their birth certificate or passport with their entry before competing.
5. Each contestant entered in the Zone or District contest must present one typewritten copy of their speech, double-spaced and identified with the contestant's name and sponsoring Optimist Club. This copy must be attached to the official entry form with the contestant's birth certificate or passport or driver's license before competing in the contest. The contestant must sign the entry form.

#### **Section IV - Contest Rules**

1. All contestants must receive a copy of the official rules and be instructed to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the rules.
2. The Contest Chair, prior to the beginning of the contest, shall conduct a drawing with all the contestants present for the speaking order. All contestants will then be introduced as "Speaker A," "Speaker B," etc.
3. All contestants must speak on the official topic in the first sentence of the speech.
4. A speech may be delivered in English or French.
5. Timing will begin with the first spoken word.  
A 3-point penalty is automatically assessed by the timekeeper for failure to state the official topic in the first sentence.
6. Any quotation or copyrighted material used in the speech must be identified verbally during the presentation and in the written copy of the speech with the original author's name. The contestant shall be fully responsible for the use of any quoted material and Optimist International shall assume no responsibility. Failure to identify non-original material will result in up to 10 penalty points.
7. The use of props, special costumes or clothing will not be permitted (10 penalty pts).
8. Contestants may use notes and lecterns.



9. The time allowed will be not under 4 minutes or over 5 minutes. Contestants going over or under will not be cautioned and will be penalized one point for each 15 seconds or fraction of over or under the allotted time. These penalties will be determined by the official timekeeper.
10. An interval of at least one minute shall be allowed between contestants.
11. At all District final contests, a wireless and lectern microphone will be available for contestant's use, if desired.
12. No spectator may enter or leave the audience while a contestant is speaking. The audience must be alerted to these rules before the competition begins, and at various intervals by the Contest Chair. A Sergeant-at-Arms should be appointed to enforce these rules.
13. Contestants shall not be identified by name or sponsoring Clubs until after the last oration has been presented and the judges and timekeeper have started deliberations.
14. No contest shall have more than 20 contestants competing. When a contest has more than 20 contestants, preliminary contests, in turn, shall have no more than 20 contestants. In the event that a first-place winner in a Club or Zone contest cannot compete in a subsequent contest for any reason, the second-place winner shall be declared as an alternate contestant.
15. Any protest in the conduct at any level of this contest must be made immediately after the condition is noted. Protests received after the next contestant has been introduced, or in the case of the last contestant, after the judges leave to total the scores, will not be accepted under any circumstances.
16. The Contest Chair will decide all protests in accordance with the official rules. The decision of the Contest Chair is final and no higher appeals will be recognized. In the case of Club contests, the Club Contest Chair has this authority. In the case of Zone and District contests, the final authority is vested in the District Contest Chair. The Zone Chair has the authority to handle protests that may arise during the Zone competition with the District Chair having the final authority.



## Section V — Judging and Timing

1. Each contest shall have three qualified judges and one timekeeper. At the Club level, judges may be Optimist Members. At all other levels of the competition, judges must be non-Optimists. Judges must not be acquainted with the contestants.
2. The judges and the timekeepers cannot be identified at the time of the contest or by advance publicity, but only after the last oration has been presented.
3. Judges and the timekeeper must use the official score sheets provided in this guide.
4. During the contest, the judges and timekeeper shall each be in different locations within the room.
5. The timekeeper shall be provided with a stopwatch or equivalent timing device.
6. Each judge must render a final decision on all contestants without consultation with other judges or any other person. Each judge and timekeeper must sign his/her official score sheet.
7. The result of a judge's decision must be kept confidential. No one shall attempt to discuss a contestant's score with a judge.
8. After the judges have totaled their scores for each contestant, deducted penalty points and ranked each contestant, the judges shall sign their score sheets and give them to the Contest Chair. Each judge's score and rank for each contestant shall then be entered and tabulated on the Official Contest Report Form. From this form, the winner will be determined.
9. In all Club and Zone contests, the first, second and third runner-up contestants shall be determined and announced. However, if preliminary contests are held, then only the first-place winner will be announced; or if desired, the top two or three contestants, without reference to their actual position in the contest.
10. There will be three winners awarded scholarships of \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$1,000 respectively for first, second and third place.
11. No judge may serve at more than one level of competition in the contest, i.e. Club, Zone, Regional or District.

## Section VI – Scoring

Scoring in all Club, Zone, District Regional and District contests will conform to the following criteria:

1. Poise – appearance and personality: 10 points
2. Content of Speech – subject adherence, theme, content, logic and color: 40 points
3. Delivery & Presentation – voice, volume, pronunciation, gestures, eye contact, sincerity and emphasis: 35 points
4. Overall Effectiveness – appeal, impression, attitude and effect: 15 points

## 1. Section VII – Penalties

1. Failure to announce the official topic in the first sentence - 3 points
2. Failure to identify non-original material - up to 10 points
3. Use of props, costume, etc. – 10 points
4. Time penalties – 1 point for each 15 seconds or fraction of over or under the allotted time
5. Self-identification – up to 5 points
6. Failure to complete speech – disqualification
7. Use of audience prompters – disqualification

## Section VIII - Awards

The following are the only awards to be given in the Optimist International Oratorical Contest at all Club, Zone, District Regional and District contests. These official Optimist International awards are available from Shumsky in the U.S. or Caribbean or Ansell in Canada. Awards will not be ordered or sent automatically.

1. Club Level – The official Optimist International medallions must be awarded. They may be awarded as first, second and third, or as first, second and runner-up. Any combination of medallions may be presented at the option of the Club. Clubs are allowed to give monetary awards of up to \$500 per winner in addition to the official medallions. The Club level awards may be given in the form of a scholarship, savings bond or cash prize but are completely discretionary.
2. Zone Level – Zone winner plaques and Certificates of Participation





3. District Regional Level – District Regional winner plaques and Certificates of Participation
4. District Level – District winner plaques
  - A. Each winner of the District level contest will receive a scholarship for use at a college, university or trade school only. There will be three winners awarded scholarships of \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$1,000 for first, second and third place, respectively.
  - B. Scholarships are paid through the Optimist International Foundation in the United States and Caribbean and the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation in Canada.
  - C. All scholarships will be administered by Optimist International.
  - D. All scholarships will be payable to the educational institution of the recipient's choice, subject to the approval of Optimist International.
  - E. Winners of an Optimist International scholarship must claim their scholarship by the age of 25.
  - F. If a District chooses to raise the amount of a scholarship funded by either of the Optimist International Foundations or award additional scholarships, the District will be responsible for the management and awarding of those funds.
5. World Regionals Championships
  - A. Each winner of the Optimist World Regional level contest will receive a scholarship of \$5,000 for use at college, university or trade school only.
  - B. Scholarships are paid through the Optimist International Foundation in the United States and Caribbean and the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation in Canada.
  - C. All scholarships will be administered by Optimist International.
  - D. All scholarships will be payable to the educational institution of the recipient's choice, subject to the approval of Optimist International.
  - E. Winner of an Optimist International scholarship must claim their scholarship by the age of 25.
6. The World Championship Optimist Oratorical Contest -
  - A. Each winner of the Optimist Regional level contest will be eligible to compete in the World Championship Optimist Contest. Contestants will be comprised of each Optimist Regional winner and the Saint Louis University Global Regional winner. Scholarships will be awarded for first, second, and third place in the amounts of \$15,000, \$10,000, and \$5,000 respectively for use at a college, university or trade school only.
  - B. Scholarships are paid through the Optimist International Foundation in the United States and Caribbean, the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation in Canada, or Saint Louis University.
  - C. All scholarships will be administered by Optimist International or Saint Louis University.
  - D. All scholarships will be payable to the educational institution of the recipient's choice, subject to the approval of Optimist International or Saint Louis University.
  - E. Winners of The World Championship Oratorical Contest scholarship must claim their scholarship by the age of 25.



# Visitor Sign-In Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Bringing Out the Best in Kids. . .Join Today! [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org)**



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## Club Contest Worksheet

Zone \_\_\_\_\_ Facility \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Speaking Order	Contestant's Name	Contest Application	Verification of Age/ID	Student Evaluation Form	Place in Contest

### Instructions:

1. Check applications and verify age/identification submitted by the contestants. All items must be presented before your contest begins. Make sure that each contestant has a printed copy of their speech.
2. When all contestants are present, have them draw for speaking order using slips with letters on them and record the information on the chart above. (Speaker A, Speaker B, etc.)
3. Give each contestant a folded Student Evaluation Form to fill out before and after the contest. **This form is a requirement for contestant to be awarded the District Scholarship** so make sure every student completes the form. **Please send all evaluation forms to Optimist International after the contest.**
4. When the official results of the contest are confirmed, transfer the results to this worksheet by writing “first, second and runner up” in the appropriate column. Introduce the runner-up first, then the second-place winner and then the first- place winner. This worksheet should be made a part of the Club’s records. It should not be forwarded with information to the next level of the contest.

Facility \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_



## Instructions to Judges

*The contest scoring has been divided into four phases.  
The general intent of each phase is as follows:*

- 1. Poise . . . . . 10 points**
- 2. Content of Speech . . . . . 40 points**  
(Subject Adherence, Theme, Logic, Content, Color)  
In this category just the material and its organization as presented by the contestant should be judged. A judge should consider the importance of adherence to the subject of the speech, the proper introduction and the logic and coherent development of the theme which brings about a successful and adequate conclusion. Figures of speech, similes, metaphors, colorful choice of words and zestful, descriptive phrases are important qualities.
- 3. Delivery and Presentation . . . . . 35 points**  
(Voice, Pronunciation, Enunciation, Gestures, Emphasis)  
Delivery and presentation shall be judged on several factors. Voice quality should be recognized in tone, pitch and volume. Delivery should be continuous without hesitation or halting. Enunciation and pronunciation are most important. Gestures should be appraised for frequency, nature and effectiveness. Desire to be convincing should be obvious and emphasis should be well placed and dynamic.
- 4. Overall Effectiveness . . . . . 15 points**  
(Appeal, Impression, Attitude, Effect)  
In this category the overall impression created by the speaker and the speech should be rated. In this phase of scoring, the general overall impression is given actual point values. While it must not be used as such, it is in making this particular score that a judge would most closely approach a conclusion that would actually rank the contestants in his or her own opinion.

### **Penalty Explanations**

- 1. Use of props, costumes, etc.** - The use of props, special costumes or clothing **will result in a 10 point penalty.** Notes and lecterns may be used if the speaker desires to do so.
- 2. Use of audience prompters will not be permitted and will result in disqualification.**
- 3. Self-identification** - To eliminate any potential bias or prejudice, no reference can be made that identifies the contestant, parents, school, community, sponsoring Optimist Club or District. This will result in a deduction of **up to 5 points.**
- 4. Time penalties** - The time limit for speeches is not less than 4 minutes or over 5 minutes in length. Contestants going over or under the time limit will not be cautioned, but will be penalized 1 point for each 15 seconds or portion thereof over or under the limits. These penalties will be determined by the timekeeper. Timing will begin at the first word spoken.
- 5. Failure to announce the official topic in the first sentence of the speech** - All contestants must express the official topic in the first sentence of the speech. A 3-point penalty must be assessed by the timekeeper for failure to state the official topic.
- 6. Failure to complete the speech.** Each contestant must complete the entire speech. The penalty is disqualification.
- 7. Failure to identify non-original material.** Any quotation or copyrighted material used must be identified verbally. The failure to do so will result in a **penalty of up to 10 points.**



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## Official Oratorical Contest Judge's Score Sheet

SPEAKERS' ORDER	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
<b>Judging Criteria</b>										
Poise 10 points (Appearance, Personality)										
Content of Speech 40 points (Subject Adherence, Theme, Logic, Content, Color)										
Delivery & Presentation 35 points (Voice, Volume, Pronunciation, Gestures, Eye Contact, Sincerity, Emphasis)										
Overall Effectiveness 15 points (Appeal, Impression, Attitude, Effect)										
<b>Total Judge's Points</b>										
<b>Each judge shall assess the following penalties against a contestant as infractions of the rules occur.</b>										
<b>Contestant</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>
Use of props, costume (10 points)										
Self-Identification (up to 5 points)										
<b>The timekeeper will assess the following penalties only after a judge has totaled the speech score for each contestant.</b>										
(1 point each 15 seconds or portion over or under official limits)										
Failure to announce official topic in the first sentence of the speech (3 points)										
Use of audience prompters (Disqualification)										
Failure to complete speech (Disqualification)										
Failure to identify non-original material verbally (up to 10 points)										
<b>Total Penalty Points</b>										
<b>Net scores of points</b> (no ties permitted)										
<b>Contestant's rank</b>										

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Judge's Name \_\_\_\_\_





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## Official Timekeeper's Score Sheet

### **For all Zone, District Regional and District contests**

The official timekeeper shall use a regulation stopwatch or equivalent timing device which will be supplied by the Contest Chairperson.

### **Time Penalties**

The time limit for speeches will be not under 4 minutes or over 5 minutes in length. Contestants going over or under the time limits will not be cautioned, but will be penalized one point for each 15 seconds or fraction over or under the time limit. These penalties will be determined by the official timekeeper.

Timing will begin immediately after the first word spoken. Timing will stop when the contestant finishes the speech.

**Use of Audience Prompters** - Use of audience prompters will not be permitted and will result in disqualification

### **Failure to Announce the Official Topic in the First Sentence of the Speech**

All contestants must express the official topic in the first sentence of the speech, or a 3-point penalty is automatically assessed by the timekeeper.

### **Failure to Identify Non-original Material Verbally**

Any non-original material in the speech must be noted verbally and in the written copy of the speech. If a contestant fails to identify non-original material, the result will be up to 10 penalty points. The printed copy of the speech is to be followed to verify the verbal identification. The penalty is assessed by the timekeeper.

Speakers in order of appearance	Time minutes/sections	Over/Under time-point penalties	Use of Audience Prompter	Failure to announce topic at the beginning of the oration	Verbal ID of non-original material

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Timekeeper's Name



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## Official Report Form

### For all Zone, District Regional and District Contests

The Oratorical Contest Chair should check the math for each contestant's score. Enter the final point grades and ranks on this report form. The Contest Chair should announce the results from this form. For preliminary contests, the Chair will name by letter the two or three best contestants without announcing first, second or third place. For final contests, the Chair will name by letter the third, second, then first place winner.

Contestant's Speaking Order	First Judge		Second Judge		Third Judge		Total of Point Grades	Total of Rank	Place
	Point Grades	Rank	Point Grades	Rank	Point Grades	Rank			
A									
B									
C									
D									
E									
F									
G									
H									
I									
J									

To determine rank in Zone, District Regional and District each judge ranks the speakers as 1, 2, 3, etc., according to their scores. Ties are not permitted. At the end of the contest, the Chair collects the judges' score sheets and checks the math. The point grade and position of rank for each contestant is entered on this form. The winning contestant is then determined as follows:

1. If any contestant is ranked first by a majority of the judges, he or she is automatically declared the winner.
2. All other contestants are ranked by the "total of rank" system. This means that the rank, not the points each judge has given each contestant, is added and this figure is placed in the Total of Rank column. First place is determined by this means also, if no one qualifies under the method explained in #1 above. The lowest total wins first place, the next lowest wins second place and so on.

3. If a two-way tie results for any place, it is broken by a preferential vote. Using the rankings given on the ballots, a tabulation is made on the number of judges who placed one of the tied contestants higher than the other. Example: Two contestants, speakers D and H, are tied for third place and each has received a rank of nine.

**Speaker H would be declared the third-place winner as two judges (#2 and 3) ranked H higher than speaker D, who would be ranked fourth in the contest.**

4. If a three-way tie results by the total of rank system, then and only then, are the point grades for each contestant totaled to break the three-way tie.

**Caution: Scores and rankings should be checked by a second person to ensure accuracy, but remember this information is confidential! Announcing winners incorrectly can be disastrous!**



**Make 2 copies**

## **2019-2020 Official Zone/District Regional/District Entry Form**

**Be sure that your contestants are fully qualified to compete by filling in each line of this entry form. Your Club should complete all requirements including signatures. Attach a copy of the speech and check for proof of ID from a birth certificate or passport (only District winners need to submit a copy of their birth certificate or passport to OI). Submit all paperwork to the Chair of the next level at least two weeks prior to the contest date.**

District Oratorical Chair is \_\_\_\_\_

Contestant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

*"As a contestant, I received a copy of the official rules for the Optimist International Oratorical Contest and fully understand them. I agree to be bound by all requirements. I have prepared my own speech with limited assistance on the topic, and have given due credit in writing and verbally in my speech. I understand that any omission or violation of the rules on my part will mean immediate disqualification."*

Contestant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### **To Club and District Officers:**

**The following contest information should be completed by the appropriate level's Chair as the paperwork progresses with the winner.**

Number of youth in **Club** contest \_\_\_\_\_

Was Zone contest held? ☐ yes ☐ no

Number of youth in **Zone** contest \_\_\_\_\_

Number of youth in **Regional** contest \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of District Donors to the Contest: \_\_\_\_\_

### **For Club, Zone, District Regional Chairs' signatures**

*"We, the undersigned, in full compliance with the Optimist International Oratorical Contest rules, enter this contestant in the Zone/District Regional/District Contest. We understand that this form, the speech and proof of the birth certificate or passport must be submitted to the Contest Chair before this contestant competes in the next level of the contest."*

Optimist Club of \_\_\_\_\_ District Name \_\_\_\_\_

Club Number \_\_\_\_\_

Club President's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Club Contest Chair's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Zone Chair's Signature (to enter District Regional or District level) \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Chair's Signature (to enter District level) \_\_\_\_\_

**DO NOT FORGET TO INCLUDE THE CONTESTANT'S CLUB CONTEST EVALUATION FORM!**

**ORATORICAL CONTEST  
CONTESTANT  
EVALUATION FORM  
BEFORE CONTEST**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Place where contest was held: \_\_\_\_\_

**BEFORE THE CONTEST:**

I feel: \_\_\_\_\_  
(nervous, excited, scared, bored, etc. )

I have enough information on what to expect:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ No

I know I will be able to express my thoughts clearly:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat  
\_\_\_\_\_ Not very well  
\_\_\_\_\_ Not at all

I am planning to attend college/university:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ Probably  
\_\_\_\_\_ Probably not  
\_\_\_\_\_ No

My outlook on life right now:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Things are pretty dismal  
\_\_\_\_\_ Things are just what they are  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes Good/Sometimes Bad  
\_\_\_\_\_ For the most part – pretty good  
\_\_\_\_\_ Great! Bring on the Future!!!

**ORATORICAL CONTEST  
CONTESTANT  
EVALUATION FORM  
AFTER CONTEST**

**AFTER THE CONTEST:**

I now feel: \_\_\_\_\_  
(nervous, excited, scared, bored, etc. )

I was told what to expect next:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ No

I will participate in this contest again, if eligible:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ No

I was able to express my thoughts clearly:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat  
\_\_\_\_\_ Not very well  
\_\_\_\_\_ Not at all

I am planning to attend college/university:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ Probably  
\_\_\_\_\_ Probably not  
\_\_\_\_\_ No

My outlook on life right now is:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Things are pretty dismal  
\_\_\_\_\_ Things are just what they are  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes Good/Sometimes Bad  
\_\_\_\_\_ For the most part – pretty good  
\_\_\_\_\_ Great! Bring on the Future!!!

FOLD HERE





\_\_\_\_\_Zone/District Regional/District Entry Form

- **Must have number of students that participated in all levels of the contest**
- Must have appropriate signatures, including the contestant's

\_\_\_\_\_Student's Application for 2019-2020 Contest

\_\_\_\_\_Age/ID verification by Contest Chair

- (Only District winners will need copies of ID)

\_\_\_\_\_Printed copy of speech

\_\_\_\_\_Copy of Student Evaluation

\_\_\_\_\_Entry fee (if applicable)

- Contact the District Oratorical Chair to find out if there is a fee

**Contact the District Chair for  
deadline to submit Club entries!**





## **2019-2020 Oratorical Contest Club Chair Evaluation Form**

Club Name \_\_\_\_\_ Club # \_\_\_\_\_  
Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Number of male \_\_\_\_\_, female \_\_\_\_\_, youth competing in contest.  
Are you a first-time or repeating Chair? \_\_\_\_\_

What was your favorite part of the contest as a Chair?

---

---

---

Please list ways your club is able to obtain contestants for your contest:

---

---

Please list the names of schools that you worked with:

---

---

What was your opinion on this year's topic? Do you have suggestions for future topics?

---

---

---

What recommendations, if any, would you propose for improving the Oratorical contest?

---

---

---

Please share any procedures that worked well for your Club.

---

---

This form should be submitted to:

**Optimist International Programs Department**  
**Attn: Oratorical Coordinator**  
**4494 Lindell Blvd. • St. Louis, MO 63108**  
or fax to: 314-371-6006;  
or email: [programs@optimist.org](mailto:programs@optimist.org)

**Optimist International Programs Department**  
**Attn: Oratorical Coordinator**  
**5205 Metropolitan Blvd. East, Suite 200**  
**Montreal, QC H1R 1Z7 Canada**  
or fax to: 514-721-1104 or email: [service@optimist.org](mailto:service@optimist.org)